

Let's
talk
Bayside

Winter 2008
ISSUE ONE

meet the
CEO

navigating the
planning
permit
process

confronting Bayside's
infrastructure
gap



Bayside
CITY COUNCIL

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Strategic Intent

Let's Talk Bayside aspires to be a valued magazine where the Bayside community can hear about what's going on, be informed on local matters, read a range of opinions on issues affecting local amenity and have a say on issues of interest.



Let's Talk Bayside is Bayside City Council's official community newsletter.

It is printed on 80% recycled paper and 20% chlorine free pulp which is manufactured under environmental management system ISO 14001. Vegetable based, biodegradable printing inks have also been used. The cost per copy including printing and distribution is approximately 53 cents.



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'Expressions of Young Artists' Exhibition

Youth Services has put out the call for art submissions for a public exhibition to be held in the ARTrium at Council's Corporate Centre at 76 Royal Ave, Sandringham. Entries in any medium, from ceramics to paintings to 3D creations, will be considered. For full details on entry procedure, contact Fran Power at youth_services@bayside.vic.gov.au

VillageLife

Do you know what the most fascinating thing in Bayside is?

It might be the Bayside Coastal Art Trail, a series of walks that matches local vistas to the Australian artworks they inspired. Then again, perhaps it's the Bright 'n' Sandy Food and Wine Festival, a celebration of the gastronomic best of Bayside held every February. On the other hand, Bayside's best could be just a summer stroll along the Beaumaris cliffs. Who can say? Or more accurately, who can say if not you?

For this regular feature of *Let's Talk Bayside*, we need your help. Write to the editors at communications@bayside.vic.gov.au to suggest a subject we might want to cover in a future issue. No one knows Bayside the way you do. Favourite restaurants, fundraisers, sporting events, local heroes, and anything else that highlights the best of Bayside is welcome and encouraged. Keep in mind that we publish quarterly, so we need plenty of advance notice for time-sensitive events, please.

This is a vibrant community, especially when we come together to participate. Share your Bayside with Village Life and watch our community grow. ■



Meet the CEO

Adrian Robb

According to Adrian Robb, it's through the fostering of a sense of community identity that our lives become more satisfying, safer, and happier. This isn't always such an easy task to accomplish, but our new CEO is no novice. He's been involved in building communities since he grew up in Geelong.

Beginning with lifesaver work at Barwon Heads and competitive mini bike racing, Robb saw the effects local groups and organisations had on the wellbeing of those involved. At home, with his policeman father, he caught an insider's glimpse of how communities struggle to build a sense of belonging and security.

"It is essential," Robb says, "for communities to provide the means for people, young and old, to participate in educational, social, and recreational opportunities."

These interests guided the new CEO through university at Deakin and towards a degree in social work from the University of Melbourne.

"Working in local government is a tremendous privilege and it's a great opportunity to understand communities and the forces that shape them. We can start by listening to how our communities value themselves and by supporting local organisations."

"We need to make sure that the things we value are functional, attractive, and in condition to meet the needs they were designed for, whether we're talking about a multi-purpose community centre or shopping strip."

Previously the CEO of the Mount Alexander Shire Council and a Director for the City of Moreland, Adrian Robb describes himself as one who enjoys his work as an integral part of his life. Also well worth his attention are his two secondary school aged children and helping them to be active in the community. In their case that means participating in soccer and rowing.

Robb enthuses about working in Bayside with the councillors, staff, and the whole community from organisations to individuals. "Collaboratively," he says, "we're sure to achieve positive things." ■

A portrait of Adrian Robb, a middle-aged man with a shaved head and a short beard, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored checkered shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

Bayside City Council's new Chief Executive Officer, Adrian Robb, speaks passionately about community.

Mind the Gap:

Confronting Bayside's infrastructure gap

Bayside, like many other communities across the world, faces an infrastructure gap. Essentially, this means that we as a city own more than we can easily afford to maintain.

An infrastructure gap refers to the disparity between the costs of renewing existing infrastructure—facilities, roads, bridges, drains, etc.—and the funds available to do so, whether they are gathered through rates or via state and federal funding. Having an infrastructure gap means the Bayside City Council needs to carefully assess the state of their existing infrastructure and, together with the community, decide how to most wisely deal with the financial shortfall. Luckily, although some compromises need to be made, there are no drastic measures required.

For many communities around the world, the origins of this issue can be found in the infrastructure boom that followed the Second World War. Many of the facilities constructed during that period are now both falling into disrepair and failing to suit modern needs.

This failing to meet modern needs adds another dimension to the infrastructure gap – that goes beyond renewal, it means additional or modernised facilities. Take for example the Trevor Barker Beach Oval, home of the Sandringham Zebras. Built in the 1950s with the help of state and federal funding, the stadium was designed to support traditional sports at the standard of the times. Today, our expectations of what a stadium should offer differ. Now we need changing rooms for both men and women, more equipment storage space, and a facility able to host increasingly diverse needs. More sensitive to energy wastage and sustainability, we also need efficient insulation and hot water systems that don't stay on regardless of whether or not the oval is in use.



To meet the challenge of infrastructure renewal and provision we needed to identify our assets and set up an asset management plan. We have been working very hard on this and the plan is nearly complete. We will then implement the renewal plan and get on with planning for better provision of infrastructure in line with community expectations.

Many municipal facilities are half a century old and in need of renewal.

As things currently stand Bayside cannot afford the upkeep of all of its infrastructure components. Thanks to the efforts of previous councils, we have little worry for the state of our



“It would be negligent to depend on the federal or state government to ride to the rescue.”



Banksia Reserve

roads and footpaths. Municipal buildings, drains and sports pavilions, however, do pose a greater challenge.

Bayside Mayor, Councillor Andrew McLorinan, talks frankly about the issues the Council and the community face and posits a few possible avenues towards closing our infrastructure gap. “It would be negligent,” he says, “to depend on the federal or state government to ride to the rescue. Bayside must accept responsibility for this problem and come to its own solution.”

One option would be to reduce our infrastructure burden. “If you look at some of our facilities, they’re only occupied at certain times. That’s not

good use of our assets,” says Cr McLorinan. Instead of funding four buildings to support one service, we could move towards funding one building to deliver four services.

Creating multi-function centres that maximise the return on our investment, and decommissioning facilities that we can do without, will reduce our infrastructure gap.

Naturally, people have strong feelings about facilities coming up or going down in their neighbourhoods. Any response to the infrastructure gap issue will have a downside.

Another possible solution is to raise rates or reduce services. Community dialogue about how funds can be used more effectively to address our needs may reveal pressure-reducing opportunities.

Creating public-private partnerships (PPPs) is yet another way Bayside could close its infrastructure gap. PPPs however are more suited to new projects not to renewal and refurbishment of existing assets. PPPs, such as Southern Cross Station and the

Eastlink tollway, use combined public and private funding to build or develop infrastructure. On the positive side, PPPs don’t require the community to finance the entire cost of a project. On the down side, the public likewise does not reap a full share of rewards from what would otherwise be a wholly owned community asset.

The infrastructure gap is on the table as one of the Council’s four strategic challenges. Over the next five months, the existing Bayside infrastructure will continue to be evaluated so we can more accurately measure our needs.

Councillor McLorinan stresses that no decisions have been made yet. With new Bayside City Council CEO, Adrian Robb, having recently started in June and elections scheduled later in the year, a community dialogue process has yet to be settled upon. That dialogue is essential, as the options are controversial. “There are a lot of requests for renewal and we need to start making the decisions that will affect our future,” he said. ■

THE GAP

Let's Talk Bayside

You asked for it!

You asked for it: your feedback, as part of the *Bayside News* evaluation project, has transformed *Bayside News* into *Let's Talk Bayside*. Thanks for your help!

We heard that *Let's Talk Bayside* needs to be a valued magazine where the Bayside community can hear about what's going on, be informed on local matters, read a range of opinions on issues affecting local amenity and have a say on issues of interest.

Specific content will include:

- Consultations
- Agenda setting/issues/education opinion pieces or feature articles
- Behaviour changing info/articles
- In brief updates

The *Bayside News* evaluation project was undertaken to better understand the communication needs of the community and organisation, to ensure that the publication delivered on expectations and presented value for money.

The project research told us that no single source of information can meet all expectations, but there remains a role for a regular Council communication delivered to residents. So here are some of the changes we are piloting in this edition; feel free to give us feedback.

- It will be delivered by Australia Post and we will audit delivery rates
- It will be published four times a year (it was six times a year)
- The look and format have changed

- An interactive copy of the magazine will be available on the internet
- The Council news column in *Melbourne Weekly Bayside* will be more frequent and used for 'news' now not being published in *Bayside News*
- The staff, councillors and community will be encouraged to write for the publication and start a dialogue for contribution and content within the agreed strategic intent
- We will look at offering writing, editing, publishing and citizen journalism training for the community through the Bayside library network in 2009
- Community groups will be encouraged to promote their major events

The look of this publication has changed, but remaining mindful of our environmental impact, we will continue to rely on sustainable

materials for production. The paper used here is composed of 80% recycled fibre and 20% chlorine free pulp derived from well-managed forests. The 'Biowrap' protecting each issue is 100% biodegradable. Within about 18 months it will disintegrate completely, causing no harm to the environment.

Thanks to your feedback, *Let's Talk Bayside* stands ready to open a new chapter in community communication.

Please continue to let us know your thoughts. If you have a criticism, story idea, or opinion you want to share with us, we will welcome them.

Please email the editors at communications@bayside.vic.gov.au ■



Beumaris Theatre Group celebrates

55 years

Fifty-five years after springing to life in Bill and Angela Martin's attic, the Beumaris Theatre Group continues to thrive.

This comes as no surprise

to those who regularly attend their productions. Staging everything from traditional Christmas shows to the avant-garde, Beumaris Theatre Group has managed to stay in the spotlight with a practiced flair and grace.

To mark the occasion of its 55th anniversary, the group held a celebratory brunch for current and previous members, including one of its founding thespians, Michael Coultas. Member, David Bowler, also unveiled a new logo for the group featuring the motto, 'theatre for all'. In it, the traditional masks of comedy and tragedy are depicted in blue for the bay and orange for the bluffs of Bayside.

In another stroke of luck local group, Men's Shed, found a home directly behind the Beumaris Theatre. The gentlemen of the club have already built and contributed a wonderful new set of configurable stage walls and will hopefully be pitching in on future productions.



Debbie Keyt of the Beumaris Theatre Group

This season the Beumaris Theatre Group stages its fourth Anonymous Theatre production, the English farce *Bedside Manners*.

In the form created by Darius Pierce, actors rehearse individually and do not come together until opening night, maximizing spontaneity. *Anne of Green Gables* is also on the schedule as this year's family show, a production in which people across generations are encouraged to participate, whether behind the curtain or on stage. This long-standing contributor to the Bayside community long ago outgrew the Martin's attic and moved to its bigger, and frequently full, theatre on Wells Road.

To learn more about the Beumaris Theatre Group visit www.beumaristheatre.com.au or phone the booking line 9583 6896.

If you have a great community story to share, please email the editors at communications@bayside.vic.gov.au or call 9599 4444. ■



Men's Shed hard at work

Navigating the planning permit process

(part 1)

Being told what you can or cannot do in your own home is not something many people eagerly anticipate. It is no surprise, then, that those applying for a planning permit frequently wear scowls of discontent.



Let's Talk Bayside, over a series of four articles, hopes to reveal how planning permits are issued and to investigate the challenges involved for applicants.

Starting with the big picture, consider the strictures under which the Planning Department operates. Bayside planning schemes—representing local concerns regarding, for example, building height, heritage, and character—rest on top of VCAT (Victorian Civil and Administrative

Tribunal) guidelines to form a multi-layer web of regulations. While the Bayside Planning Department strives to represent our local interests fairly, it is VCAT that ultimately holds the final say. This adds complexity to an already confusing process. Permit applications most often are approved, however. Roughly two-thirds of applications can be handled by the Planning staff, without debate at a Council meeting, let alone taken to VCAT. In this first article in this four-part series, *Let's Talk Bayside* speaks with Kerri Brodie of Black Rock about one such successful planning permit application.

The Brodies first dealt with the planning office when they wanted to build a second-story balcony on the roof of their existing garage. By Kerri Brodie's account, everything went really smoothly. "We went through planning like a breeze," she says. Part of the reason for that can be accredited to their draftsman. It was no small help that he had significant knowledge concerning the planning side of the equation and that he took the time to visit the Planning Department and talk the plan through before filing an application. Through this process, he learned that their project could be considered an addendum to the Brodies' existing permit as their house was newly built.

As the Bayside Planning Office points out, anyone who wants to is

The Planning Permit Process



Before making the application

- Find out about the planning scheme
- Talk to the council planner
- Talk to the neighbours
- Consider getting professional advice

Prepare and submit the application

- Application information
- Application form
- Fee

Council checks the application

- More information?
- Referral?

encouraged to take advantage of a free consultation with a planning officer. If your plan doesn't meet the requirements of the applicable scheme, it has no chance of being approved. Avoiding such an outcome through a free consultation is one way to simplify the process.

By talking with their neighbours about their plans prior to filing the application, the Brodies also saved themselves having to arrange further meetings with the Council, and—in some unfortunate cases—the need to appeal to VCAT for a settlement.

All told, Kerri Brodie estimates her application was approved within three weeks, much quicker than they expected.

Things do not always go so smoothly, though, not even for the Brodies. Recently a planning permit application was submitted to turn the single-story dwelling across the road from their property into two adjoining townhouses, each with a basement level, two stories, a roof deck, and a balcony. So much for the privacy of their roof deck.

If these townhouses were built, the new residents would see over the Brodies' screens onto their new deck. For this, and other reasons, the Brodies and five of their neighbours lodged objections. Unfortunately, they were frustrated



“The better the communication, the faster the process, the easier for everyone involved”

Kerri Brodie on her deck

by a breakdown in the Council's communication process. “We were either not informed of meetings, or received notice of them at the last minute,” says Kerri. In the end, their objections were overruled and the townhouse plans were approved with only minor modifications.

Council's Planning Manager, Angela Meinke, looked into the matter and acknowledged the problems the Brodie's experienced. “I can only apologise. This is certainly not the service we strive to achieve and it should never have happened. It is particularly frustrating because we know how important communication is and how much smoother the process can be when all parties deliver.”

Kerri Brodie admits that they didn't really expect their objections to stymie the development, but says that the way the process was

handled left her feeling dissatisfied. Between her own permit application and the process for the one across the way, she learned a lesson. “The better the communication, the faster the process, the easier for everyone involved.”

And Council agrees. As part of a strategy to further improve communication, those who are looking at submitting an application, or have one in the pipeline, will soon be able to view their progress online. Ms Meinke believes that the new tool, available later this year, “will bring more transparency to the planning process within Bayside”.

Next in this series of articles, we'll discuss a planning permit application that didn't go as smoothly as the Brodies'. Look for it in the next issue of *Let's Talk Bayside*. ■

Application is advertised if required for at least 14 days

- Usually by letter to neighbours and a sign on-site
- People affected may object

Council assesses the application

- Considers any objections
- Holds mediation meeting if needed
- Considers any referral comments
- Assesses planning scheme provisions
- Negotiates with permit applicant
- Prepares report

Council decides the application

- Permit with conditions
- Notice of decision with conditions
- Refusal

Review by VCAT if applied for

- By the permit applicant against conditions or refusal
- By an objector against notice of decision

Be a **Lets Talk Bayside** letterbox auditor

Council is seeking your help to improve the distribution of *Lets Talk Bayside*.

We are looking for residents with email to help us detect distribution problems. Following the distribution of *Lets Talk Bayside*, which occurs quarterly, you will receive an email from Council saying that the newsletter is on its way. You simply reply by email telling us if you received your edition, or not. If you want to be a letterbox auditor email your details to communications@bayside.vic.gov.au ■

Council meetings

Council Committee Meetings are held at 7pm on Tuesday evenings at the Council Chambers - Civic Centre, Boxshall Street, Brighton. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

If you would like to submit a question at the Ordinary Meeting of Council or speak on an agenda item at either an Approvals or General Committee Meeting please call council on 9599 4444 or visit the website at <http://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/councilmeetings.htm>

Upcoming meetings

Approvals Committee.....	Tuesday 15 July
General Committee	Tuesday 22 July
Ordinary Meeting of Council followed by Approvals Committee	Tuesday 29 July
Approvals Committee.....	Tuesday 12 August
General Committee	Tuesday 19 August
Ordinary Meeting of Council followed by Approvals Committee	Tuesday 26 August
Approvals Committee.....	Tuesday 9 September
General Committee.....	Tuesday 16 September
Ordinary Meeting of Council followed by Approvals Committee	Tuesday 23 September
Approvals Committee.....	Tuesday 14 October
General Committee.....	Tuesday 21 October
Ordinary Meeting of Council followed by Approvals Committee	Tuesday 28 October
Approvals Committee.....	Tuesday 11 November
General Committee.....	Tuesday 18 November
Ordinary Meeting of Council followed by Approvals Committee	Tuesday 25 November
Election Day.....	Saturday 29 November

Bayside in brief

Bayside **Film Festival** 2008

The fifth annual Bayside Film Festival invites you to join in celebrating the new talent of Australian and international cinema. The Festival will be screening short youth documentary films alongside a program of award winning short films. As an addition to this year's line-up Artistic Director, Sally Hussey, has introduced a series of works commissioned specially for the festival. The works, entitled *New Directions*, will showcase emerging talent in Australia. The inaugural film in the series will be a short documentary by filmmaker Amiel Courtin-Wilson. The 2008 Festival will be held from 16 to 19 July. For more information, visit www.bayside.vic.gov.au/filmfestival ■



Residential Energy Assessment Program

This program, offered free to Bayside residents, trains you to assess the energy usage in your home and asks you in exchange to commit to implementing energy reducing steps. In signing up for the Residential Energy Assessment Program, householders agree to try to reduce their energy consumption (and energy expenses) by 20%. Making changes such as draft sealing your home and using compact-fluorescent light bulbs can save you money and reduce your environmental impact. The sooner you join the program, the sooner you start reaping the rewards. Call Environmental Planning Officer Narelle Chambers on 9599 4444 and learn how you can take advantage of free training. ■

Battle of the Bands

Are you ready to rock? Bayside Youth Services announces their 2008 Push Start Battle of the Bands. Come see your peers duel for the top spot at one, or both, of the all-ages heats held on the 8 and 22 August at the Hampton Community Centre, or at the final on 12 September at the Brighton Town Hall. All events are from 6.30pm to 10.30pm and are drug, alcohol and smoke free. For more information contact Fran Power at youth_services@bayside.vic.gov.au ■

Bayside wins

Compost Australia recently awarded Bayside with its Organics Recovery Contract Innovation Award for a pilot study on recycling seaweed into compost. In the study, a sample of seaweed collected off Bayside beaches was processed with other green waste into a compost suitable for commercial landscaping purposes. With the success of the study, any future seaweed that requires removal can be transformed into a sustainable resource instead of going to landfill.

Bayside was also a finalist in the Community Education Award for leadership in community compost education. ■



Built Environment Awards

The 2008 Bayside Built Environment Awards were formed to create public awareness and encourage quality urban design. The people of Bayside are invited to nominate properties under categories ranging from Most Creative Building Design to Best Environmentally Sustainable Design. The nomination deadline is 11 July 2008. Finalists and category winners will be announced on 22 October 2008. More information is available at www.bayside.vic.au/builtenvironment ■



Keep your community connected—host a street party!

When neighbours know each other, neighbourhoods are safer. That's why the Social Planning Department has developed a kit containing all the information you need to organise a fun and safe street party. Street parties give neighbours the opportunity to socialise, develop friendships, and reduce any feelings of isolation. A successful street party has the potential to enhance the health and safety of your community by fostering a sense of belonging. For a copy of the kit contact Council on 9599 4444 . ■

Resonance Music

Series 2008

The Early Arts Guild of Victoria sponsored concert series of early and new music continues at St. Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church, 10 Wilson Street Brighton. Come on the first Sunday of the month through to September to hear early music performances titled *The Musical Entertainer* (6 July), *Three of a Kind* (3 August), and *Parthenia* (7 September). All shows are at 2.15pm. Admission is \$5, or free if under 18. Further information can be found at www.bayside.vic.gov.au/arts_events_resonance_music_series.htm ■

An evening with Don Watson

Don Watson, one of Australia's most distinguished writers and presenters, speaks as part of the Arts and Culture Department's seminar series. Winner of numerous Book of the Year awards and author of *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart: Paul Keating Prime Minister*, Mr Watson will appear at The International of Brighton, 81 Bay Street, on 13 August at 7pm. As one would expect with a writer of Mr Watson's calibre, bookings are essential. Tickets are \$35 or \$30 concession and can be purchased online at www.bayside.vic.gov.au/donwatson or by calling 9599 4444. Beverages and light snacks will be provided. ■



Local ingenuity saves lake

Due to the drought, Landcox Park has seen better days. However, thanks to the efforts of local Year 8 student, Maro Ash, those better days might be back before we know it.

A regular visitor to the well-known Brighton East park, Maro noticed the lake dwindling down to nothing. When he deduced that a lack of water meant that foxes could reach the island where ducks nested, he thought up his own solution.

"I have an old fish tank with a pump. It made me think, why not pump rain water into the lake from

the canal that's just 700 meters down the road," Maro relates.

Working with friend, Jake Nemirobsky, on a project for the King David School's Science Talent Search, Maro constructed a model demonstrating just how feasible his idea was. Neighbour and Councillor, Alex del Porto, heard about Maro's brainstorm and offered to bring it to the Council's attention.

Speaking with David Powell, Group Manager Infrastructure Services, it sounds like Maro's career in public service is off to a rollicking start.

"Feasibility studies are underway to assess the environmental impact of re-directing the runoff to the lake. Should those studies come to a good result, the ducks in Landcox Park will owe their lives to Marco," Mr Powell said.

"The big thing is that this young bloke had a good idea and put it forward."

We couldn't agree more. ■



Maro Ash's assignment

Your voice at Council

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