



We would like to extend a welcome to Katoomba residents and business people who are interested in coming along and participating in future meetings - or as a way of keeping in touch with recent issues by receiving a copy of the monthly minutes.

For more information please contact the Secretary at secretary@katoombachamber.com

Annual Subscription fees for membership of the Katoomba Chamber of Commerce & Community are \$250 for landlords; \$100 for companies; \$50 for a sole traders; and \$10 for individual community members.

Please join and help us grow our membership and our voice for Katoomba

www.katoombachamber.com CittaSlow Katoomba Blue Mountains www.cittaslow.org.au

NEXT MEETING – Thursday 12th March 2020

Meeting commenced at 6.26 pm

MJ – are you all aware that Bob Kemnitz had a heart attack last Thursday?

CD – he is doing well and will be coming to the RFS meeting next week.

MJ – please give him our best wishes Chris.

MJ – noted the ‘Surviving to Thriving’ section of the current KCCC newsletter and the BMEE courses & support groups that are available.

MJ – regarding the ‘meet me’ initiative - Michael Sperling from the VIC lives in Bilpin which was badly affected by the fires – Michael & Sarah Richards came up with the ‘back to Bilpin idea’ – it had 85,000 hits on social media. Together we have come up with ‘Meet me at the Blue Mountains’ and have had over 25,000 hits so far. We will be going around to various businesses and encouraging them to become involved. We take a photo & write a blurb – will release more over the next few weeks.

1. Attendance & Apologies – 13th February 2020

Present: Mark Jarvis (MJ); Juliet Green (JG); David Hodegekiss (DH); Christine Killinger (CK); Chris Davidson (CD); Lynne Curan (LC); Bruce Ferrier (BF); Helen Jones (HJ); Kevin Schreiber (KS); Carole Box (CB); Harry Box (HB); Lui Frisoni (LF); Kerry Brown (KB); Bruce Cash (BC); Angus Olsen (AO);

Apologies: Charlie Brown (CB); Margaret Brown (MB); Louise Florence (LF); Paul McLaughlin (PMc); Jenny McLaughlin (JMc); Peter Carroll (PC); Jennifer Scott (JS);

2. Minutes of Meeting – 9th January 2020

Acceptance proposed – CK; seconded – BF; motion carried

3. Correspondence - MJ

MJ – received a letter regarding the new parking permit scheme for workers @ Echo Point – this comes in on 1st April.

CD – 9,000 resident parking spots were once distributed from Council – so if you went there and said you were a resident you could get one - but this system was being abused – ie. Council weren’t checking this.

KB – we need to be getting some income to pay for the infrastructure for the tourists – (such as toilets) and they need to be paid for.

HJ – residents used to get 6 free parking spots if you live at Echo Point – now you only get 2 and have to pay \$36 if you want another 2.

KB – the principle is that we are not trying to charge residents but we need to be getting some income from tourism.

MJ – received an invitation to a morning tea with the DARE disability group on 6th March – I can’t go but would like someone from the Chamber to go – please let me know if anyone is interested.

BC – Deb is going as a representative for Beautiful Bags – she can perhaps represent the Chamber as well.

4. Treasurers Report – David

Expenses: \$75 – donation towards advertising for the square dance convention; \$350 – Christmas window prizes;

Income: \$676 - Christmas garland reimbursements;

Membership Fees Received: \$100

BALANCE: \$9,429.11

Acceptance proposed - CD; seconded - KB; motion carried

5. Wines of the West wrap-up – CK/MJ

- MJ – there were over \$43,000 worth of sales over the 2 days – it was the best ever. There was an element of everyone wanting to come and support it. A big thank you to Christine!
- MJ – There were 484 attendees – around the same number as previous years but there were fewer wineries – this gave us more room to talk which seemed to encourage the sales. We also offered delivery services.
- About 2 years ago we went after numbers but the sales didn't go up – works better this way with fewer wineries. This is our major fundraiser and we will end up with about \$8,000.
- MJ - There are not a lot of costs apart from advertising and having the booklets printed up. WOW is mainly run by volunteers and the Carrington staff did really well.
- MJ – we are moving the dates of the Festival to Aug/Sep (still haven't got the date yet) – so there will be two WOW's this year.
- LC – some regulars are worried that the dates might clash with the Mudgee & Cowra festivals.
- MJ – we are keeping this in mind.
- MJ – moving the date gives us the opportunity to do something else on the January long-weekend.
- CD – do you know where most of the visitors came from?
- MJ – I feel there was a lot more local element this year.
- CK – a lot of people didn't know about it until they saw the banners.
- BF – great idea to have an EFT now rather than expecting people to pay cash.
- CK – people have asked where they could buy the pink aprons – perhaps this could be a merchandising idea??

6. Gardening/Katoomba St update – KGB

- MJ – watering isn't a problem now!
- KB – going to do a petunia plant-out so they are ready for Autumn.
- KB – have sent a letter to Council about terracing some of the beds so that water doesn't run off – will ask the Men's Shed to do if Council can't.
- KB – am planting the golden elm outside the Town Centre Arcade – and the rain has been fantastic.
- LF – we have some new volunteers – so we need some new jackets.

7. Bush Fire Recovery – KS/KB/MJ

- MJ – we've had great support from the ABC. On the weekend of the 8th & 9th February (during the Ukulele Festival) Simon Marnie broadcast from here on the Sunday morning as part of the 'Road to Recovery' series on the ABC. Simon has a great ability to add a bit of humour but to still get the message across. He spoke to many people (the Mayor, business owners etc) about their businesses and about what's going on up here.
- MJ – the Ukulele Festival went really well despite the weather – the rain made it difficult but there were a lot of people around and spending money.
- MJ – Bruce Ferrier has proposed that he (or others) move the following motion at this meeting:

“That this Chamber writes/communicates to Ita Buttrose as Chair of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to express our heartfelt thanks on behalf of the KCCC, the businesses and citizens of the Blue Mountains for the outstanding on-air work by ABC Sydney's Simon Marnie and his team in promoting the Blue Mountains & environs in their 'Road To Recovery' series of outside broadcasts (OB's) over the weekend of 8 -9 February at Bilpin & Katoomba.

This State-wide exposure encouraging people to return to our District is of significant importance to us as we try to rebuild confidence in the minds of tourists (local, State, national & international) was, we believe, of immense value to us. We could not have asked more of Simon Marnie in presenting us, our Community and our recent plight with the bushfires in such a positive light.

We commend Simon, his team and ABC Radio for such invaluable - and heartfelt - support”

- MJ - Motion carried by all here tonight
- BF – Simon has done a great job promoting the Blue Mountains and other areas struggling during the bushfire period. Would like to send the letter not just to him, but to the head of the ABC.
- MJ – a lot of the campaigns are about educating people and encouraging them to come up here.
- MJ – the BMCC have come up with the 'Love Local' campaign – encouraging people to shop locally and asking residents to spend at least \$20 a week extra locally in 2020 to help local businesses.
- For more details visit: bmcc.nsw.gov.au/business

MJ – wrote a letter about rent relief from the KCCC and have been giving it to various tenants to pass on to their landlords. Rent relief is immediate relief.

KS – thanks MJ for your assistance in getting around and talking to businesses in the Street. Went to see James McHarg from the Leura Village Association and they were very happy that people care about this issue. It's a good start and will get people like Peter Poulos out there and speaking to some of his tenants about this. Kerry and I are putting this up to Council as well. Back to the Ukulele Festival – it seemed that every 10 minutes during the festival the ABC were saying to get to Katoomba – it was very well promoted.

KS – taking the next Mayoral Reference Group to the Vic & Albert at Mt Vic – want Council to promote the steam train weekend. Kerry & I have been getting out and trying to support many local events such as these – and to help out our retailers across the mountains. Mark has helped a lot with this and I couldn't have done it without Kerry. The Reference Group is doing very well.

LF – the Council has given rent relief to their tenants – do you know what sort of response people are getting from other landlords?

KS – don't know yet but it's important that the Council give the rent relief so that other people will care as well.

KS – there are 4 or 5 shops that will be closing in the next 2 months.

LF – what about a reduction in Council rates for landlords?

KS – can't be done – it's not legal.

MJ – this bushfire has affected all of us and we are all hurting and should do our share to help.

CD – we're in negotiation with our landlord – he's a local – we are trying to get a 50% reduction.

KS – the letter from the Chamber is very good as it backs up what Council has done.

MJ – had a meeting with the NSW Business Chamber – there's an advisory group – we were able to talk about this stuff and the Destination Management Plan. Raises the question about the fact that in this town the Council has no clout. We are advocating far greater power if we live in a town like this – no-one seems to have the clout to speak to the owners about doing something about this. Unfortunately people aren't conscious of time and the urgency of it.

KB – will need to follow up the details of the Councils rent relief as there are conflicting reports as to what they are actually doing.

MJ – we don't want to lose our critical mass of shops.

MJ – the best website I've found is Service NSW for loans and support – you need to register.

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/bushfire-customer-care-service>

CD – Centrelink is also good for casual employees and self-employed if your income has dropped below under a certain level.

MJ – there are also a few courses – see our current newsletter.

MJ - we should start picking up around Easter.

LC – a lot of the retailers are getting together and discussing what we can do.

MJ – need to get Jeannie Curtin from the Gazette there – need some naming & shaming.

MJ – the Council have already received \$1M from the Federal Govt for this.

MJ – it's a great idea to support the events that are going on in town – it's what draws people up here.

MJ - The square dancing convention will be on here the week before Easter and there will be people around before & after that event.

CD – I thought the Mayor seemed to have the most unbiased & level view of what was going on his Facebook page.

MJ – Introduced Angus, from CafeXpresso at Katoomba railway station ...

AO - I'm the 'gatekeeper' – have been giving people info for 13 years – have been working on a draft of a map of Katoomba. The map is looking at landmarks to enter Katoomba from – have interest from Leura Village Assoc, BMATA and various other people. I understand that there's not a lot of money but feel that this can be done very cost effectively. Need to shift our thinking of how we do things in our town – thought about the discover Melbourne advertising that was done a few years ago and think their idea would be good for us. Want a versatile map that we can quickly adapt for the various events that are on in town as well as landmarks & locations. We need Council's printing to be able to have his done. Would do a separate map for Leura & Wentworth Falls. Have also thought of adding such things as music venues, the brewery etc.

MJ – maybe we can use this draft as a basis for a map – have spoken about things like this before such as the 'Plate Up' group who wanted people to know that there were many great places to eat around town.

MJ - the map could be put in the VIC and in the shops around town.

MJ – we don't make enough of our built environment.

BC – if it could be developed it would be a souvenir to take home as well.

MJ - we may be able to contribute to the printing.

AO – I really think Council should pay for this.

MJ – it's good to see you being pro-active.

MJ - mentioned Council rates in areas of Sydney that are much less than ours – why is this?

BF – we are the 3rd highest rate paying area in Sydney!

8. Mayoral Reference Group – KS/MJ

MJ – we meet every couple of months – the bushfire meeting was very good – there is a representative from just about every town in the Mountains. Kevin chairs the group and Kerry & Don are Vice Chairs. The next topic at the March meeting is: EVENTS and how important they are in the Mountains.

KS – we try to get people to work together and not cross over – everybody now has a voice from each village – this never happened here before.

LF – have we had feedback as to what has been discussed and agreed upon?

MJ – have discussed aged care and why we can't build more here as 'it's a catchment area'.

KS – we have sites that could be adapted to aged care but many of them are in the catchment area.

MJ – have asked for an exception from the Council for this.

KB – can't reveal much of what's discussed as it's 'confidential' (according to Council).

MJ – I'm happy to talk about it ... there will be a lot of info from this upcoming EVENTS meeting.

KB – a lot of the presentations are things that eventually end up on the 'have your say' section of the Council's website.

9. Blue Mountains Public Inquiry – KB/KS/MJ

MJ – the idea of a public enquiry is to make recommendations for improvement. Our Council are going armed with lawyers and a QC - it must be costing millions of dollars. The Gazette aren't reporting this.

KB – other councils don't do this.

MJ – they could be using these funds for much better uses.

KB – why have we spent 11 million dollars on 18 months on asbestos removal?

KB – the rest of the inquiry will start at the beginning of March and it will run until the end of March.

KB – with the asbestos – the EPA did a lot of investigating – we spent 6.5 million dollars and it still isn't fixed. There was no asbestos management plan in place – this has been admitted by Council. The first death from this happened last month. It's a very real thing and it's really important that I see this through. The Council will not be prosecuted but will end up with gold standard accreditation now with all the changes that will be made. There were laws in place and the Council has avoided prosecution by taking the recommendations. They didn't want to spend the money and the Inquiry has cost far more than if they'd spent the money on safety in the first place.

The Inquiry is about how the Council & the government body managed to not know about what was going on.

MJ – it's a very important issue that we've seen very little of – it should be far more prominent in our newspaper.

KB – there have been massive changes in the Council but the sad thing is that they won't acknowledge or apologise to the people that have suffered.

KB – I'd like to see them create a Trust for the people that are sick or have died.

Other Matters:

HB – there's been no tree trimming done in the last 30 or 40 years – how do we get this done?

MJ – since the fires they seem to be making more of an effort.

KB – the Council don't have enough arborists but have recently doubled the numbers. They don't have the staffing that there should be for the physical environment – they are totally under-resourced.

MJ – this is worth a letter and would be more powerful coming from you.

LF – introduced Carl from Little Lost Bookshop – a new KCCC member.

Carl - The Christian Convention had 15K emails on their database to invite people to come up to Katoomba to spend money in our town.

Meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Next meeting - Thursday 12th March @ 6.15pm in the Carrington Hotel Library

Signed by President, Mark Jarvis



Minutes by Secretary, Juliet Green

Date: 13/2/20