



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 13th February 2020

Meeting commenced at 6.22pm

MJ –Lui’s images of the Katoomba Christmas shop windows are on the screen tonight. Thanks for taking these Lui, they are fabulous – the street looked lovely!

MJ - met with the Tourism Minister this morning to talk about tourism recovery - will talk more about this tonight - it affects all of us. It’s not just the Blue Mountains - it’s the whole country.

1. Attendance & Apologies – 9th January 2020

Present: Mark Jarvis (MJ); Juliet Green (JG); David Hodgekiss (DH); Tom Colless (TC); Christine Killinger (CK); Anne Elliott (AE); Paul McLaughlin (PMc); Carole Box (CB); Harry Box (HB); Louise Florence (LF); Lui Friscioni (LF); Chris Davidson (CD); Helen Jones (HJ); Margaret Brown (MB); Lynne Curan (LC); Kerry Brown (KB); Matthew Bohman (MBoh); Gary Godkin (GG); Damien Beaumont (DB); Jason Cronshaw (JC); Marion Hall (MH); Trevor Hall (TH); Bob Kemnitz (BK); Charlie Brown (CBR); Patrick Leonard (PL); Bruce Ferrier (BF); Patricia Lane-Gonzalez (PLG); Bruce Cash (BC); Deb Campbell (DC);

Apologies: Peter Carroll (PC); Pam Seaborn (PS); Jenny McLaughlin (JMc); Jennifer Scott (JS);

2. Minutes of Meeting –14th November 2019

Acceptance proposed – LC; seconded – KB; motion carried

3. Correspondence - MJ

MJ - Tom sent a letter about parking in Katoomba to BMCC Councillors Kerry, Don & Kevin – this will be useful for the Master Plan.

Also, Tom, Patrick & Robert (the graffiti removal team) looked at how much the graffiti removal is costing us. Tom estimated that they have done over \$108,000 worth of work over the last 5 years.

MJ - Gary Godkin also sent put an excellent letter about the vandalism of our Christmas tree to the Gazette.

4. Treasurers Report – David

Expenses: Misc Christmas (Charlie & Margaret) - \$807.25; Stralia Web - \$525; Nectar Garden Care - \$647; Christmas Event (5th Dec) - \$1283.55;

Income: reimbursement for garlands - \$130; payment from Council for Christmas window competition - \$500;

Membership Fees Received: \$200

BALANCE: \$ 9078.11

Acceptance proposed - BF; seconded - CK; motion carried

5. Christmas wrap-up – CB/MB/LF/LC/BC

MJ – a great job was done by everyone involved. Sent the cheque for \$3052 to BlazeAid. It was a good night & great for the town.

MJ - Gary wrote an excellent letter to the Gazette expressing our frustration at the vandalism to the Christmas tree. Have better ideas about how to protect it next year. Went to the police station twice and tried to get a ranger to check it but nothing was done.

RR – you need to get an event number if you go to the police for anything – then my must log it.

MJ – overall, we are going to do it again next year. Can't understand why we've never had Christmas events such as these when other towns do. There was a lot of goodwill. The tree is now in the repair shop.

BF – Damien did a fabulous job MC'ing on that night (claps all around).

KB – and thank you Charlie for organising the Blaze Aid collection.

6. Gardening/Katoomba St update – KGB

MH– the garden beds look beautiful!

MJ– let's get new pots out there in Katoomba St. Give me the order and we can start putting them out.

KB – shopkeepers will look after them and there are 4 we can get out now.

MJ – there is some stump grinding required outside the Katoomba Town Centre - have contacted Dan Long @ BMCC – we have another tree we would like to put in.

MJ – regarding the Telstra fund, we want a nice big mural on that building and Hank (from Telstra) has been asked to have their mural artist do the work.

MJ – I will stay on top of that one.

7. Katoomba Street BMCC role – PLG

PLG – the Council have started some initiatives that we will roll out over the next weeks and months. We will be encouraging businesses to fill in a survey – Council will be then able to advocate on behalf of the businesses. We will be attending Chamber meetings and getting out into the community and talking to businesses. Will start in Katoomba town centre next Monday to speak to shopkeepers. We will then be able to gauge how they are and can give them info regarding support services. We will be offering counselling if necessary.

DC – will you be going from shop to shop?

PLG – we will be visiting all the businesses and stressing the importance of completing the survey - starting with Katoomba and then doing all the upper mountains towns.

MJ – a lot of well-meaning people have been trying to put similar things together – ie. stats & facts.

PLG - the conversation with us (Council) is more about how they are going – ie. mental health.

TC – Colless foods have done a survey – we have 43 customers at the moment who say they can't pay their bills – 2 have been completely burnt out and cant pay their bill at all.

MJ – apparently the Federal Government is putting money into Local Government coffers tonight but this doesn't help the immediate problem. People have to somehow muddle through.

MJ – we are about 50% down and this is usually the busiest time of the year.

BC – we're about the same figure down.

BC – if all this takes 6 months to implement Katoomba is going to be empty.

MJ - this (tenants) will come up at the Mayoral Reference Group - people need to be given rent free periods – ie. rent relief from some of the landlords.

PLG – I will leave cards so that you can contact me by email – and also cards for counselling to help with some services.

KB – I've put in an emergency motion with Council about their own properties and their rent – it's about setting a benchmark – and raises the whole rent issue – it's not a lot of money for Council and it's something that they can do. If we can get a few other properties to do the same it will become a peer pressure thing. I think this fire situation is a long-term situation.

KB - What we need to build on in terms of tourism is our amazing built heritage – that's the thing we should focus on.

TH – when living in Sydney there was a substantial fire. I went the afternoon after the fire and photographed the area – then went back 3 months later and there was so much recovery - 9 months later there was so much more growth. Can we use the fact that nature recovers quickly to get the tourists back here?

AE – we have done incredibly well under very difficult circumstances – and have many other things of interest that we can hang our hat on here.

MJ – am very impressed with what Council have started. We are doing as much as we can.

MJ – Patricia is working within the Council as 'Place Manager' and heads up the Place Management Team in Katoomba Street.

PLG – the Place Management Team is all about having and activating good places- ie. town centres. We have had them in the past and they are the eyes and ears - working with the community – helping to drive projects. There will be 2 more Place Managers recruited and they will be out there talking to people - boosting and lifting the level of our town centres. This will also help push for funding. We will be coming to Chamber meetings and can be contacted at any time. We will be working with Police in the problem areas and working with the graffiti volunteers. Will also contact Telstra & Energy companies to get them to remove graffiti from their buildings. It's about having the initiatives to try to lift our town centres and to advocate internally for better resources.

PLG - We can't manage/control absentee landlords. We would like to be able to have the ability to get landlords to maintain their facades.

MJ – the rent reduction thing is a shaming exercise for some of these landlords.

PLG – we have ordered new flags for Carrington Place & Studleigh Place – they should be here next week and we will put them up. Regarding festive banners, they are looking a bit tired – will have some new artwork done for some fresh banners.

AE – food security is an important part of the climate emergency – would like to see us become known for this – there could be funding put towards this and towards vertical gardens. Modular farms can be put up anywhere in the world and this could be a great fit for Katoomba.

8. Bush Fire Recovery – KS/KB/MJ

MJ - we have strong evidence that we need help here in Katoomba. The Carrington have been losing a lot of bookings. The fires have been going for more than 5 weeks and have had a major effect on everyone here.

BF – negative media has had a big impact on Katoomba.

AE – people are actually cancelling 3 month in advance.

MJ – it was very frustrating up here when the weather wasn't too bad but people still weren't coming because of the perception. People are being told not to come to the Blue Mountains. There's apparently a sign at Central Station saying that the Blue Mountains are closed. The media have played a really bad part.

MH – I was chatting to someone in the bar who is so pleased that he came up here but there's nowhere to get info about what the weather is like. Tourists can't get the information they need about what the towns are like. There is false info being circulated saying that the Mountains are closed.

? – there needs to be somewhere where tourists can go to get a good and balanced idea of what's really going on.

Jason Cronshaw - tourism update: most people are about 80% down – it's pretty drastic – we spoke to Council last year and have spoken to a few people about potentially organising a forum for businesses (at the Fairmont) to talk about what can happen now with State & Federal Government support.

BC – to have us all come together is what we need to do so that we don't feel that we are alone.

MJ – we will go via the Council - this is the only way that it can work.

9. Mayoral Reference Group – KS/MJ

KS – have called an urgent meeting next Wednesday about the Mayoral Reference Group with all Chambers up & down the mountains. Need to get info about what's been going on with the businesses in the mountains so that we can take it to the State & Federal Governments. The Tourism Minister will be up here on Saturday. The assistance that we can get from the State Government is pretty big and we need this to help our businesses. A lot of people at the Council don't really know how bad it is – they don't get to go around the shops to see what's really going on. There will be a ¼ page ad about 'shop local' in next weeks Gazette.

KS - we, at Council have to lift our game to get the message out there – that's why the Reference Group is so important. We have to show the Government exactly what's happening so that we can get to the top of the queue.

PMc – where will you get the figures from?

KS – they will come from all the Chambers.

10. Local Strategic Planning Statement – KB/KS/MJ

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

KB – it starts again in March

12. Radiata Plateau – KS/KB

KS – managed to speak to the environment minister Matt Kean and mentioned how important it was for the Government to have this land - they ended up buying it – it is now part of the National Park.

MJ – it's a good result.

13. Wines of the West – Saturday 25th & Sunday 26th January 2020

MJ – Wines of the West will be held in the grand dining room (which has just been air-conditioned) and there will be 18 wineries this year. It is our main fundraiser but as numbers are down we don't expect to make as much this year.

This is the last time we will have WOW in January as it always falls on the Australia day long-weekend. We are now planning on having it in August/September. WOW will therefore be held twice this year – and from then on, every August.

CK – it's all been organized and the rosters have gone out.

Other Matters:

MJ – re. the square dancing convention – have mentioned paying for an ad – would like to put forward a motion for the Chamber to pay for the cost of the ad which is \$75. All those in favour? YES - motion carried.

MJ – re. purchasing a composting system for Katoomba – it's about composting all scraps – it's a really good project for Katoomba – I think it's a good Bendigo angle.

KB – the thing about this is that the composting machine reduces the waste to 10% of its bulk – there's microbes in the machine. The Leura Garage are now working with the Blackheath Community Farm and supplying them with compost. All that waste that would be going to landfill is staying here – it's local! Leura Garage paid \$10k for a machine. We could have one for Katoomba Street. It's closed loop – ie. it's not leaving the area. It doesn't need to be sorted but it needs to be managed so that cutlery for example doesn't go in. It would be cheaper for businesses to have this rather than to pay to pick up waste. There's a financial benefit to do it.

MJ – Marion & Trevor Hall are moving away in early February – they have been very involved with the Chamber – it's a shame to lose 2 such great community people. Thank you!

MJ – we are at the beginning of our year and are happy to hear about the Council's new approach and about beautifying our street.

KB – want to acknowledge Patricia's work - we seem to be into a new era with the Council. As a Katoomba volunteer and a Councillor I really feel that we are getting there.

MJ – I think the clock tower should have some decoration on it most of the time.

CK – will the hanging baskets ever happen?

MJ – that and the mural ?? I hope so ...

BC – as we are all struggling as retailers, would it be a good opportunity to be able to put some info into the VIC?

MJ – the answer is yes. I have offered to pay from the Chamber as members. We will install tourist brochures on shelves as we have done here.

Meeting closed at 7.47 pm

Next meeting - Thursday 13th February @ 6.15pm in the Carrington Hotel Library

Signed by President, Mark Jarvis



Minutes by Secretary, Juliet Green

Date: 9/1/20