

1. **Attendance and Apologies**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

3. **Deputations**

4. **Confirmation of Minutes – 23 November, 2010**

A copy of the minutes of the previous meeting held 23 November, 2010 was distributed.

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 November, 2010 be accepted as a true and correct record.

5. **Business arising from Minutes – 23 November, 2010**

Richmond Room Chairs

Staff have advised that the purchase of the trolley's has been confirmed and that they are investigating options, modification may be required after purchase.

Main Street Flag

Staff have advised that a range of flags are displayed in River Street and Fawcett Park during the year. These include:

- Australia Day Flags
- Holiday Flags
- Specialist Flags ie: NAIDOC Week
- Corporate Flags (with BSC logo)

To display a Ballina Shire Flag on a permanent basis would not be cost effective and the maintenance of the flags outweighs the advantages. Currently all 13 corporate flags are in need of repair and there is no specific budget allowance for this.

The Corporate Communications and Tourism Section are investigating leasing out space in the Visitor Information Centre. The revenue raised from this activity may assist in paying for expenses such as flags and Christmas decorations. The expression of interest document for this is in the early development stages.

6. Items raised by members of the Committee

1. George Young - Further report on Proposed Site of a Public Facility at Porter Park - see General Business item.

7. General Business

1. Update on Proposed Site of a Public Facility at Porter Park

This item is provided in two parts. An update report from the General Manager and a submission from Mr George Young.

General Manager's Update

A comprehensive report on the Porter Park proposal was presented to the February 20110 monthly meeting of Council. Copies of that report are available from Council's web site www.ballina.nsw.gov.au (refer to the February 2011 meeting agenda).

As a result of this report Council resolved as follows:

1. *That Council prepare an amendment to the Ballina Shire Generic Plan of Management for Community Land that would have the effect of changing the categorization of part of Porter Park in West Ballina from "Sportsground" to "General Community Use".*
2. *The purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the establishment of the proposed Aboriginal Child and Family Centre as provided for under the Federal and State Government "Closing the Gap" initiatives. The section of the park to be re categorized contains an area of approximately 3,800m² within the north-eastern corner of the reserve, as per the attached concept plan.*
3. *That following exhibition of the proposed amendment for public comment, including the associated public hearing, this matter be brought back to Council for determination.*
4. *The purpose of approving the exhibition is to allow a structured consultation process to occur, as no formal Council consultation process has occurred to date, with the entire community.*
5. *In approving the exhibition of the proposed amendment Council wishes to emphasise that this does not provide a commitment that the land will be re-categorised as the outcomes from the consultation process will be reported back to Council for further consideration.*
6. *That Council authorises the Mayor and General Manager to hold discussions with the NSW State Government regarding Council's concerns and disappointment that our local community is being asked to provide land to a State and Federal Government project, without any compensation being provided back to Council.*

Council staff are now in the process of commencing the exhibition process required to change the categorisation of part of Porter Park from "sports ground" to "general community use".

A plan of the area to be re-categorised is also attached to this agenda for the information of Committee members.

The outcomes from the exhibition process are scheduled to be reported back to Council at the May 2011 monthly meeting.

In respect to point six of the resolution the Mayor and General Manager have already had discussions with Mr Don Page, the State Member for Ballina and Ms Sonja Stewart from the NSW Department of Human Services.

Submission from George Young

The submission is attached for your information.

8. Council Documents on Exhibition

The following is a list of recent documents that have been placed on exhibition in the period since the last meeting.

- Draft Review Pesticide Notification Plan - closing date 6 January 2011.
- Draft Review Pesticide Use Policy - closing date 6 January 2011.
- Draft Review Interaction Between Councillors and Staff - closing date 20 January 2011.
- Draft Cemetery Management Policy - closing date 20 January 2011.
- Draft Flat Rock Tent Park Fees 2011/2012 - closing date 20 January 2011.
- Final Draft - Lennox Foreshore Masterplan - closing date 3 February 2011.
- Draft Vehicle Signs Policy - closing date 10 March 2011.
- Draft Tender and Quotation Evaluations Policy - closing date 10 March 2011.
- Draft Child Protection Policy - closing date 10 March 2011.
- Draft Donations - Rates and Charges Policy - closing date 10 March 2011.
- Draft Markets Policy- closing date 10 March 2011
- Draft Concealed Water Leaks Policy - closing date 31 March 2011.
- Draft Financial Planning Policy - closing date 31 March 2011.
- Lennox Head Community Centre Draft Fees - closing date 31 March 2011.

9. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 10 May, 2011 at 4.00 p.m.

ASSIMILATION

Over forty years ago as a Board Member of Ballina District Hospital, I recall an Act of Parliament being introduced to encourage assimilation of all people living in Australia.

At that time Ballina Hospital had a special ward for aboriginal people, this was not because of discrimination, but because these people enjoyed their privacy and their families who visited them for a great deal of the time. These visitations were essential for the wellbeing of the patients and positive outcomes were achieved. The Board took a stance and prepared a case to the Government, that because of the success of its initiative, exemption from the assimilation law be allowed.

In no uncertain terms the Board was instructed by the Government to convert this special ward into a general ward and Aboriginal patients were to be integrated with other patients in the hospital or action would be taken against the Hospital.

Ballina Hospital was the main Hospital for people from the Aboriginal settlement of Cabbage Tree Island, and about a third of the hospital was occupied with these patients. The Hospital provided additional health services to the island people.

The result was, that because these people were rather shy, fewer family and friends visited them, because of strict visiting hours in the general wards, that weren't applicable in the special ward.

It was seen that these people with strong family ties were not doing as well in the assimilated environment. Some feeling isolated and lonely with fewer friends and relatives spending lesser time with them and helping with their emotional and personal needs.

The Home Care Service operated very successfully in Ballina since just after World War 2, servicing all eligible citizens in Ballina Shire. There was no discrimination as to who or what you were when applications for assistance were assessed. Home Aids were appointed without any restriction to creed, colour or background.

As President of the Ballina Home Care Committee for ten years, I was somewhat shocked to learn that there was to be a special Aboriginal Home Care Service being established in Ballina. The service to have its own office separate from Home Care Office, administration staff, Coordinators and all those expensive administrative requirements of a modern service.

The service was short lived, an audit found a number of anomalies including clients who had been dead for a number of years still being serviced and intoxicated home aids working in the system and a shortage of money. A coordinator was sent to jail.

To me assimilation means all people getting together, not separation, with each group having its own special facilities. If Council is concerned about the needs of certain groups of people, then surely they should have conditions placed on all subdivisions, or indeed their own subdivisions, to make sure provision has been made to assimilate these needy folk, by setting aside land for these people to live on, sharing it with the new

parts of the community.

It is understood that Ballina is to have a "Ballina Early Childhood Centre" for indigenous children built on Council land at Porter Park. Does it follow that, because this is necessary, following a statement by Sonja Stewart, without providing actual statistics, that there was a large increase in the indigenous population in Ballina which required this facility? Sonja also mentioned a large number of youth in her submission, these of course will not be helped with an Early Childhood Centre, numbers again were not quoted in the submission.

Council relies greatly on statistics in formulation of policies and planning, why has it approved this project without the knowledge of these statistics?

If this large increase in population reported by Cr Sue Meehan as "Ballina is having the highest rates of Aboriginal childbirth and youth population in the state", then should we not be looking forward to the near future when these children will require primary and secondary education. If we are to pursue segregation then it is necessary for us to prepare a case to provide further education for these children in their own schools.

While we are an affluent country, we cannot afford duplication of facilities to meet the needs of each of the many different groups of people and nationalities with different beliefs and expectations.

For many years Australia has provided public facilities for everyone, Hospitals, Courts, Police, Ambulance, Libraries, Swimming Pools, Centrelink and many more for the benefit of Australian citizens. Each of these services are under great pressure to provide services and are limited to the amount of finance available from the Government for each purpose.

If we were to separate, say, the Court System, which operates under Australian Law to accommodate the various groups of people in this land, then the system would fail because of increased costs of personnel and facilities to administer each separate court. All this for no gain, and weakening of the existing system, which, has been modernised on a regular basis and has stood the test of time for many decades.

Planning consumes a considerable amount of Council's time and resources. Perhaps another look should be taken and all boxes ticked before something is approved that may become a Council liability to be funded in the future.

George Young.

31.1.2011

