



## Katoomba Chamber of Commerce & Community

Minutes 12th May 2011

We would like to extend a welcome to Katoomba residents and business people who would like to come along and participate in future meetings, or as a way of keeping in touch with recent issues, receive a copy of the monthly minutes.

For more information, please contact Chrissie Thompson at [swaggy@westnet.com.au](mailto:swaggy@westnet.com.au) or [info@katoombachamber.com](mailto:info@katoombachamber.com)

[www.katoombachamber.com](http://www.katoombachamber.com)

Annual Subscription fees for membership of the Katoomba Chamber of Commerce & Community are just \$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

CittaSlow Katoomba Blue Mountains [www.cittaslow.org.au](http://www.cittaslow.org.au)

### **NEXT MEETING -9<sup>th</sup> June 2011**

Phone number to call for **Coles** trolley collection – and keep calling!  
**1800 876 553**

**Monthly Meeting** opened at 6.35pm, The Library, Carrington Hotel, Katoomba

1. Present: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011

Robert Stock (RS) (President), Chrissie Thompson(CT) (Secretary), Mark Jarvis(MJ) (Treasurer), Marie Wood(MarieW), Christine Killinger(CK), Guy Fordy(GF), Tim Goodwin(TG), Anton Curnow(AC), Juliet Green(JG), Eric Hall(EH), Malu Hall(MH), Karim Rizkalla(KR), Julie Head(JH), Anne Elliott(AE), Shane Desiatnik(Gazette), Tom Colless(TC), Harry Box(HB), Bruce Ferrier(BF), Robyn McAdam(RM), Carole Box(CB), Jane Canfield(JC), Margaret Weatherall(MW), Janet Cahill(JC), Charles Butcher(CB), Michael Brischetto(MB).

Apologies:

Susan Lattimer, Lyn Eyles, Cllr Janet Mays, Peter Carroll, Bob Kemnitz, Pam Seaborn.

A special welcome to Randall Walker, President of Blue Mountains, Lithgow & Oberon Tourism

2. Minutes from the previous meeting 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011-05-24

Moved accepted BF, seconded CK.

Matters arising from the previous minutes:

Quote received on updating the Katoomba Heritage & Art Walk for \$1590, proof to be sent around to Executive Comm. Meeting agreed to go ahead with update and printing. Unanimous.

3. Correspondence In:

Copy of letter from B. Kemnitz to Gazette Newspaper concerning the proposed statue of Peter Carol in Lawson.

4. Update on Rate Changes

Since the last chamber meeting, RS and all other Chambers have met with the Mayor and Neil Farquharson CFO of BMCC to discuss our 'rate' position. The new attitude seems to be based on perceived ability to pay but amounts calculated are not accurate.

Following the meeting more of our ads have been in the Gazette. A petition has been distributed from Glenbrook to Mt Victoria – aiming to get 10,000 signatures (Barry O'Farrell's benchmark figure before he'll take notice).

You can sign the petition at: Leura Newsagency, The Carrington Hotel, Greenwell & Thomas Pharmacy, The Hattery, Megalong Units Lunch Box, Gemglow Jewellers, Lynne Curan's 'Omnia Gift Shop'.

The Council will not vote on this until 28 June – we have a 5 week window. There will be a press release to keep the issue alive in the public mind.

**Everyone invited to attend Council's meeting Tuesday June 28 @7.30pm– please come along and show the numbers!** (business papers are available on Council's website, or at the office or library)

Ring your Councillor and make your feelings known.

KCCC are following up with a request for a meeting with the Ministers for Small Business and Local Government to have 4 people meet with them to discuss our concerns. Will contact Rosa Sage to seek her involvement also.

It was noted the Valuer-General has re-valued properties recently and this compounds the Council increase. Point is, business is tough enough with a 2-3% inflation rate. Businesses don't expect or plan to face increases like this. Tourism operators are a big part of business in the Mountains. The small decrease offered to some residential owners in some areas is individually neither here nor there, whereas business is being asked to finance this huge increase, when there are proportionally only a small number of businesses in the area compared to residential properties. KCCC President RS has already met with Rosa Sage.

All members are urged to vent their displeasure to the councillors, especially those that voted for the proposal. Members should also be encouraged to contact those councillors that were not present at the meeting to lobby them not to proceed with this proposal.

Those councillors were Searle (Labor), Luchetti & Hamilton (Independents) and Clarke (Greens). Contact details for these councillors can be found on the Blue Mountains City Council website.

At Council's meeting on the 15th March a Rate Review was proposed and agreed to by 5 of the 8 councillors present. The 5 councillors who agreed to the proposal were Councillors Greenhill & McLaren (Labor), Councillor McCallum (Greens), Councillor Gibbs (Independent, formerly Greens) and Councillor Creed (Liberal).

Those who voted against the proposal were Councillors Myles & Van Der Kley (Liberal) and Councillor Mays (Independent).

It was also noted, that if rates stayed the same as last year with a moderate increase to cover inflation, it would be roughly the same amount raised as Council proposes. There is a large residential rate base in the Mountains and a small business base. Members requested updates on the situation be emailed around to the database. Next Chamber meeting 9<sup>th</sup> June. Will consider some sort of action outside Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> June.

Some discussion followed on charging visitors to enter the 'World Heritage Park'.

A question from the floor – Can Council be asked for an itemised list of what it spends money on in regard to supporting business? Are there areas where the Chamber can be proactive in doing the things Council can't cover? Noted once again that cleaning in the Town Centre Arcade very poor – the toilets are dirty, there's rubbish on the ground etc. It shows an ongoing lack of commitment to Katoomba.

#### 5. Festival of Walking

Randall Walker from BM Lithgow & Oberon Tourism addressed the meeting. All credit to Marie Wood for continuing to keep this event on the agenda, with its genesis in the idea of the Isle of Wight's Festival of Walking. Marie is invited to be the inaugural member of committee. A group now formed called the Regional Festivals Taskforce.

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> till Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2011 has been chosen. NPWS will be announcing shortly a new product, a European idea, where walkers have their luggage sent on to commercial accommodation by pre arrangement. The Fairmont Resort and Dr Jerry Schwarz have shown enthusiasm and will host the finishing celebrations with a Gal Day on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The idea is that individuals, teams, company teams, families will get involved. There will also be mountain biking, paid guided walking tours with tour operators, and all accommodation operators. The BMLot database is 45,000 strong and expected to be 75,000 by the end of the year. BMLot + NPWS, check out

[www.visitbluemountains.com.au](http://www.visitbluemountains.com.au)

Discussion continued on Council matters:

- 'Council' has ideas but doesn't engage with anyone outside of Council and so they collapse, for example, Council wanted Tourism operators to collect a fee for Council, but it wasn't thought through.
- BMLot opposed to any impost on visitors paying to come here
- Glenbrook & Katoomba Tourism Offices run at half million dollar loss every year –why? They could look at revenue/expenses efficiencies, cost effectiveness, a business development levy added to the commercial rate but 'business' should determine where it is spent. Council could look to current avenues for raising money such as the parking police.
- Tourism letter to Council pointing out that most operators run on a 10% net profit and with the extra rate increase planned to begin on 1 July - where is the revenue to come from for businesses to pay for this?

#### 6. Chamber Website

Currently website shows 'Website being built' message. New hosting of website through Straliaweb means with your business membership to the Chamber you will receive 2 free web listings that will increase your exposure. There will be new links added to the website along with business links. Every business on it will be able to access their listing and update it and add information on 'specials' etc.

**Every business in Katoomba needs to be on the website** Let's get together for some collaborative marketing opportunities!

Meeting agreed to allow membership details to be given to Straliaweb. CT will send out to the database promoting and inviting business owners to join in this opportunity.

## 7. CCTV Update

Unfortunately the Police have not attended this evening to discuss this further. Acknowledged that downloading events for follow up is a bit of a burden but it's not long a long time before Police will be able to access it. Noted, we are actually delighted that the Police are ringing the Chamber for footage. Council negotiations have been a nightmare. Unofficially, it's working very well. Once recorders are connected to a Telstra network, with a stand alone PC Police can access direct. Noted, Mick Bostock said recently that CCTV had aided them in reducing crime in Katoomba – after all, the Police had signed off on this project before the Federal Govt gave us the funds.

### **General Business**

#### Local safety and security

Recently there have been incidences of arson, prowlers and burglaries in Sth Katoomba around the Leichhardt Street area. Reminder: call 000 if you see or suspect anyone or call the Katoomba station 4782 8199

Phone 131 400 to report an incident, and get an incident number. We all need to be a bit more vigilant.

#### Red Shield Day 28-29 May

Drivers and money counters needed to help out either day or even a few hours – call Tom Colless if you can help [tom@colless.com.au](mailto:tom@colless.com.au)

#### Bicentennial Crossing

Committee moving very slowly and now considering taking a different tack. This is a three year event 2013-15 and benefits are huge.

#### Trees on Lurline Street

RSL say they are waiting on Council, Council say they are waiting on RSL. The trees surrounding the RSL car park came down in November 2009. Still no progress. Secretary to write a letter to Council for an update on progress, after all, Council agreed the trees should be replaced.

Meeting closed 7.45pm

### **Next meeting Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 6pm - all welcome**

Signed by President, Robert Stock..... Date .....

Minutes by Chrissie Thompson, Secretary