



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 sole traders; and \$10 for individual community members.

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

www.katoombachamber.com

There is no meeting in July.
The next meeting will on Thursday 11th August 2022

Meeting commenced at 6.10 pm

We have a good representation from Council here tonight - Rosemary Dillon (CEO), Tomas Van Der Meer (who has taken over from Patricia Lane-Gonzales) and Kevin Schreiber (councillor).

1. Attendance & Apologies – 9th June 2022

Present: Mark Jarvis (MJ); Juliet Green (JG); Greg Hansen (GH); Deb Cash (DC); Bruce Cash (BC); Jessica Lawn (JL); Paul McLaughlin (PMcL); Jenny McLaughlin (JMc); Kathryn Aiken (KA); Lui Friscioni (LF); Louise Florence (LFI); Margaret Brown (MB); Charlie Brown (CB); A Neimeyer (AN); Craig Leighton (CL); Kevin Schreiber (KS); Rosemary Dillon (RD); Lowell; Tomas Van Der Meer (TVDM); Andrew White (AW); David Griffiths (DG); Bruce Ferrier (BF); Robyn McAdam (RMc); Michael Small (MS); Stephanie Moxham (SM); Kiam Aiken (KA); Christine Killinger (CK); Michael Paag (MP).

Apologies: Wendy Craig (WC); David Hodgekiss (DH); Penny Pryor (PP).

2. Minutes of Meeting – 12th May 2022

Acceptance proposed - CB; seconded - DC; motion carried

3. Correspondence – MJ

MJ – Penny Pryor and a friend have rented out some offices in Katoomba and they are going to sub-rent these as co-working spaces – they were going to come tonight but are an apology. They will hopefully come to the next meeting in August to talk about their plans.

MJ - Wendy Tsai has finished the murals and they are ready to go up – we've paid her - and she sent us a thank you letter.

4. Treasurers Report – MJ

Expenses: Wendy Tsai - \$3000 (for murals).

Income: 0

Membership Fees Received: \$20

BALANCE: \$ 23,150

Acceptance proposed - KS; seconded - GH; motion carried

5. Cultural Centre Hours – RD/MJ

MJ – we discussed the Cultural Centre opening hours at the last meeting and have since sent a letter to Rosemary Dillon - she said she'd look into it.

RD – it will probably take a slight budget adjustment, but we think it's critical that we have something for visitors when they come up here. Into the future we might look to activating some of the spaces there.

MJ – regarding information centre – very supportive of having people come to the Cultural Centre.
RD – Westinvest and Treeline Lurline –we need to put more investment into the Civic Centre – would like to use it as a community hub –need injection of funding to the fix building (drainage etc) – seriously thinking of information for visitors there. Need to change the whole façade and make it beautiful – feel it’s ugly at the moment.
In addition, we have put in for a \$2M grant for Katoomba activation and improvement – it’s a competitive bid and we are not certain that we can get these proposals over the line – any letters of support are welcome.
MJ– we did quite a big submission to BMCC on the Civic Centre last year but were a bit disappointed with the result. A lot of it was about greening – and the toilets are shocking. Understand that the toilets are now being closed down and new ones will be used just for staff. Not overly impressed with the art hanging on the dirty white wall – we need greenery! Am happy to cooperate in any way – have often said that to generate activity there you need good signage. Good to hear that something will happen.
MJ – there are a lot of people that would be interested in volunteering if there was another information centre.
MJ– the trains will return and Destination NSW have done a great job with encouraging tourists.
MJ– David from the café at the Hotel Gerin is present. One of the things Dave has mentioned to me is the lack of trade due to people (mainly council workers) still working from home.
RD – there’s a certain number still working from home as we have a major problem with a leaking roof – we’re going to get them back to work there in a couple of days.
MJ – how about selling the building and building new chambers in the mid-mountains - rather than spending lots of money over a building that’s past it’s use-by date?
RD – it’s been assessed and structurally it’s still sound – it’s mainly just the roof – if we leave Katoomba there will be quite an economic hit to Katoomba.
MJ – there was a discussion about the longer-term plans for this building in the Masterplan.
RS – maybe we could do more with the various floors.
DG –I’d like to raise the economic impact on the town, regardless of whether the roof is leaking – roughly 300 staff spending \$10 a day has a big economic impact
– its significant and needs to carry some weight in the decision making process. I think there’s value in having the staff back more of the time.
RD – I hear you – will certainly try to get the staff back – it’s affecting the work culture as well – but we need to address the damp & black mould.

6. Treeline Lurline Update/Katoomba Masterplan - MJ

MJ - one of the most exciting things that we’ve had in our town – it’s good that Rosemary is here – this is the way forward with these projects – the state & federal govt give the council some money and it’s not always what we want – the governments have responded well by giving the money to community groups. This project is going to be transformational to our town – it’s fair to say that we’ve got the agreement with the Commonwealth in place but are getting bogged down with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Council.
AW – there have been some delays and I think we could resolve the issue with the Councils’ solicitor and members of the Treeline group - and I think we could finalise it in a short meeting. We are at a stage where we’re backwards and forwards a little bit and a meeting would be a good way to do that. If that could be organised in the next week it would be good.
MJ – mentioned that the funding is unusually done by the government giving the money to the community group and then the council has to agree. We’re the ones that have to sign off on it.
AW – if we can get the MOU then further funding could be possible.
Lowell – on 17th May I went to Council and Mark Greenhill said that he feels comfortable that this is a project that we could pursue - and he said that we can get on with it. That was 2 months ago!
BF – we need the solicitors, but we need a head-to-head so that it can be resolved quickly.
RD – I was told we have submitted things and that we were waiting for you to give things back – I think the agreement was just nutting out some difference of options on some things. I think it’s sorted out now and is ready to be signed.
KB – there are over 20 people involved in this project – it’s all pro bono work – there’s so much detail and all the info is there. Ron Powell pulled in all these experts – the amazing work with the artists and people doing the website – we’ve always responded as quickly as we should – what’s being suggested is right – just sit down and get it done – there’s so much community support – it’s the one project that’s got money and we can do it – we’ve lost nearly 3 months from the schedule now due to this delay. We’re so close!
RD – I didn’t think it was us that were holding it up.
KB – this is not a councilor issue – it’s an operational issue – this really concerns me.
RD – it’s a governance matter as to who control the funds.
MJ – We have an agreement with the Commonwealth which is a far more important agreement and if it’s not right we have to account for it. This is the way forward.
RMc– Marie Wood thought of this many years ago – is it possible that we can see the trees being planted before too long – she would love to see this?

JMc – getting back to the MOU – we’ve basically been told that you are in charge of the money but understand that the Council will be in control once the money is handed over – once tenders come in and money is paid out we have to know who is in control.

RD – that’s what’s in the agreement – we need to have it very clear when the money is handed over.

KB – I think we’re close on that.

RD – do it with good will.

JMc – there’s so much red tape now and it’s 2 months since the meeting.

KB – we have a nominated project manager and are afraid that we’ll lose him.

PMc – the political platform is changing and there’s so many councils going into administration – communities can do better – processes of councils are slowing things up.

BF – Treeline Lurline is going to be a 40-year project – lets’ not make it 45 or 50 years – we need to act now!

MJ – the aim is to sign it next week.

MJ – I had a meeting with Kim Barrett and Michelle Maher– they are comfortable that this fits in with the Katoomba Master Plan.

7. Blackheath Tunnel – Michael Paag (Blackheath Alliance) /MJ

MP – have been working on the highway project since May 2008 but there has been talk about upgrading the highway since the 1970’s. There was going to be a tunnel from Medlow bath to Hartley – has been a lot of press and this project has sadly become a political football.

Felt that a long tunnel be properly investigated but unfortunately Transport for NSW made it clear that they wanted to have a meeting about this – they brought in all their people and it became clear that our proposals for the 19km tunnel had some fundamental floors - the costing model was wrong (\$8 billion to \$11 billion). The second issue was ventilation – with a 19 km tunnel there were significant ventilation issues and the longer you go the worse it gets. Also, when you go to 19km you have an issue in relation to safety – came to conclusion that 19km is too expensive and with the issues around ventilation and safety we just had to stop. The State Govt want to go ahead with the surface project - not the tunnel.

MJ – what’s your impression of what’s in the press – Paul Toole quite adamant that this is not one of the projects that’s going to be affected?

MP – the Premier and other ministers have said that it’s full steam ahead. Regarding landslip between Katoomba and Medlow Bath – we were at a point last March where we were almost cut off from Sydney – it pointed out how vulnerable we are to aging infrastructure right now. The main road between Sydney and the Central West was built by convicts in 1832.

During the worst of the event in March it took me just over 4 hours to get from Katoomba to Mt Victoria. This went on for weeks every Friday night - because of all the chaos schoolchildren were still on the bus at 8.50pm – the driver says I’ve gone way past my overtime and legally not able to be driving – had to get the kids off – there was gridlock & it was a shemozzle – this happened Easter last year – also 2021 – it’s starting to happen too frequently. It got that bad that Paul Toole was telling people not to come to the Mountains and the Central West. We can’t live like this anymore. No government will support the Bells Line of Road upgrade – all parties have agreed that the way forward is to upgrade the road from Katoomba. We have to be constructive as a community & with Council & State Govt to try and get the result that we want. Things need to be clarified as to where we’re going with this. They want a dual carriageway and to make it similar to the road between Katoomba & Lapstone – it’s going to be like Bullaburra and Boddington Hill when they’ve done a cutback. When they do the work they intend to open up the road to B-doubles – we are concerned about this and various bodies that we’ve spoken to about this say that they want to support the Blue Mtns community regarding this. Again, I know there is an intention to looking at some of the black spots – the highway must be safe.

- All the current info is on the Transport NSW website

MP - Heritage NSW are working on softening the design of the bridge in the current plan at Medlow Bath.

The project outcome is not ideal for all but the road is failing us and unfortunately there is no other way to take the road west across the Mountains.

The issue with Blackheath to Mt Victoria is that there will be 2 x 2 lane tunnels because they think they can vent them without having to vent with stacks by using the latest technology and equipment from Europe .The spill will go to filling in old coal mines. Blackheath gets a tunnel due to it’s topography – the width through the centre of town is too narrow to put a 4 lane highway. The community fought very hard to have the preferred option of the tunnel.

Mt Victoria is the same as Blackheath – heritage listed buildings and it’s too narrow - tunnel with start at the bottom of the pass and will come up underneath Mt Victoria.

MP – given both sides of politics are for upgrading the road between Katoomba and Mt Victoria, our view is to take politics out of it and just get on with it!

8. Gary Sim, Chief Inspector, BM Police Area Command

MJ – Greg & I went down to Springwood Police Station - a whole lot of new community groups went there just to express their views – we want to see the police come here more often with updates and so that we can express some of our concerns – spoke about the bird man for example – and the kids smashing bottles on the stairs of the Cultural Centre – the cops weren't interested when we went to the Police Station. Unfortunately, Gary couldn't come tonight.

MJ - Tomas van der Meer has taken over from Patricia Lane Gonzales. We'd like to have a system in place so that when we see something that needs doing we can go through you Tomas.

TVDM – I am now a local – have been working on the Katoomba Master Plan – have about 15 years experience in achieving good outcomes in the community in urban design – Patricia had a lot of expertise in this role and I am very open to having these walkthroughs and streamlining some of the management.

MJ– it would great to have some good design come to Katoomba street!

MJ – the look and feel of our street is of upmost importance.

Welcome aboard.

9. New Retail Brochure – Carrington – MJ

Have pretty much finished a brochure – we're happy to pay for it here at the hotel – would like to have it in operation by the end of the month.

10. Snowmania – Committee

MJ – will organise a committee meeting to get updates – has been well done and well received.

11. General Business

BF – Would like to have Rosemary along more often to the meetings – it's really good to have council representation – much appreciated.

MJ – Patricia used to come along fairly regularly. We are a community group not just 'white-haired men'.

MJ - What's happening with the culvert in Leura?

RD – Cliff Drive is one of the things in the Westinvest submission – there's heritage issues – a water main and other issues – it's a priority but very complex from an engineering point of view.

CK – Wines of the West – 20th August – degustation dinner on the Friday night – you can find all details on the Carrington website.

DC – Snowmania – a few months ago the retail sector got together – we felt that we needed to do something for Winter that was different and that kids would like to get involved with. We want to encourage shops to have snowmen in all their windows and there will be a ballot voting system for the best snowman. This will go for about 6 weeks – for registrations & enquires contact: secretary@katoombachamber .com

You can also check our Facebook page for updates.

LF – it's not just for kids – there will be a weekend getaway prize for anyone who votes.

MJ – Tourism BM gave a us free spot in the recent magazine.

MJ – have recently met the new owners at Mountain Heritage - they're keen to come to a meeting and be involved – it's good to have another major player in the town.

Meeting closed at 8.01 pm

Next meeting – Thursday 11th August @ 6.15pm in the Carrington Hotel Library

Signed by President, Mark Jarvis



Minutes by (acting) Secretary, Juliet Green

Date: 9/6/2022

