



Coastwatchers

Eurobodalla's environment group

Newsletter 19 September 2016

Reminder

Coastwatchers Annual General Meeting

To be held on
Saturday 8 October 2016 @ 2.00 pm
at the Tomakin Hall, Tomakin

Agenda

Open Meeting

1. Confirm AGM Minutes of 17 October 2015
2. President's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
3. Auditor's Financial Statements
5. Appointment of Auditor for 2016-17
6. Election of Office Bearers
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - 3 Ordinary Members
7. Appointment of Public Officer

Close Meeting

If you are interested in joining the Executive of the Association, please contact the President, John Perkins on 0427 009 044.

The Coastwatchers Association Inc.
PO Box 521,
Batemans Bay
NSW 2536
Email:
coastwatchers.committee@gmail.com

Dargues Reef Gold Mine Update

Members were previously notified that the Planning Assessment Commission had held public hearings into the Dargues Reef Gold Mine modification 3 application at Braidwood on 26 July 2016. Two weeks later, the PAC approved the modification application on 10 August 2016.

A further inquiry by the Commonwealth Government's Department of Environment is being undertaken. This inquiry is into impacts on Commonwealth listed threatened species and communities under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

7 public submissions were submitted to this inquiry, 6 from individuals and one from the Coastwatchers Association. Unity Mining's response has been, as expected, to reject all arguments submitted, because they believe their mine is fail safe, and can never cause any problems downstream. Reality and history do not support their view.

The final recommendation in the Coastwatchers' submission was:

"The Coastwatchers Association Inc recommends to the Australian Government that the project NOT be approved under the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act 1999, given the potential catastrophic impacts of the Dargues Reef Gold Mine on the Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable flora and fauna downstream from the mine. Spillages and Tailings Dam failures are a worldwide characteristic of

mining, especially mining at the top of a 700 meter escarpment whose river system runs through the Deua National Park, and is the source of the Eurobodalla Shire's water supply."

The matter is still to be determined by the Australian Government.

Assistance was received from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, who provided a detailed list of endangered and vulnerable species in the Deua Valley. That document included species on the NSW and Commonwealth lists and was of invaluable assistance. It was ignored by the NSW Government in all its considerations.

Consideration is being given to an appeal to the NSW Land and Environment Court regarding the PAC decision. The Association has 3 months to lodge that appeal.

The Association is also looking at other options.

Eurobodalla Shire Council Election Results

In summary, a new Mayor and 6 new Councillors in the 9 member Council. Lindsay Brown was defeated by Liz Innes for the Mayoral position and only 3 sitting Councillors re-contested.

The new Councillors are:

Liz Innes* (Mayor)
Lindsay Brown*
Phil Constable
Patrick McGinlay
Anthony Mayne
Maureen Nathan
Rob Pollock*
Jack Tait
James Thomson

* existing Councillors.

Coastwatchers congratulates these successful candidates, and looks forward to working cooperatively with them during their 4 year term.

Patrick McGinlay replaced Gabi Harding as the Greens representative. Gabi is thanked for her tireless service. Anthony Mayne who headed the ticket for 'Community Voice Eurobodalla'. has been a member of Coastwatchers for a number of years.

Newly elected Councilor James Thomson's father (Fergus) and grandfather (Douglas) were both Councillors as well as Mayors /Presidents. Likewise Liz Innes is the daughter of the former Councillor Robin Innes.

Membership Drive

The Association will be shortly undertaking a membership drive. It will be sending 3 or 4 new application forms to all members in the hope they can pass them to like-minded friends. The Association will also be approaching many locals who were involved in the Dargues Reef Gold Mine campaign.

Batemans Marine Park

There are six marine parks in NSW, which cover an area of approximately 345,100 hectares. The NSW Government has recently reviewed and restructured the management and operations of NSW Marine Parks. It has established the Marine Estate Management Authority and the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel, to provide advice on management of the marine estate, including marine parks.

Following the recent Eurobodalla Shire Council's CEMAC meeting (Coastal Environment Management Advisory Committee) Coastwatchers representative Reina Hill, reported the

committee's concern regarding the future management of the Batemans Marine Park, as well as the future of the Batemans Marine Park Advisory Committee.

The State Government has made significant changes to the structure and management of marine areas, including:

- the establishment of a new Marine Estate Management Authority;
- the establishment of the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel;
- the responsibility for Marine Parks moving from the NSW National Parks to the Department of Primary Industries; and
- a review of the Batemans Marine Park boundaries.

Coastwatchers considers the move to DPI will inevitably see a change in emphasis from controls aimed at conserving and enhancing the fish resource, to more of an emphasis on facilitating the interests of the commercial and recreational fishers.

CEMAC noted the decline in resources to manage and operate the Batemans Marine Park, as well as reducing its research capacity following its relocation to Coffs Harbour. A lack of compliance officers will make it extremely difficult to monitor illegal fishing in sanctuary zones.

It appears the current NSW Government is more concerned with the short-term interests of the recreational fishers, than the long-term sustainability of the fish resource.

NCC Annual Conference

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW will host its Annual Conference on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd of October at the University of Sydney.

On Saturday the Conference will be part of the National Environment Meeting, co-hosted with Greenpeace, and in partnership with the Sydney University Environment Institute. Since 2014, the National Environment Meeting has been held annually, bringing people together from across the environmental movement.

On Sunday the Annual General Meeting of the NCC will take place to elect the NCC Executive.

If any member would like to attend the Conference, please contact the Coastwatchers Association.

Look Out for Nesting Pied Oystercatchers!

Pied Oystercatchers nest directly on the beach, foredune or in the dunes. Unfortunately, they nest during spring and summer when the beaches are busiest with people. Pied Oystercatchers have simple nest-scrapes in the sand and have well camouflaged eggs that are often hard to see. Therefore they are at great risk of being stepped on. Pied Oystercatcher chicks are just as vulnerable – they are tiny, camouflaged and cannot fly until they are 4-5 weeks old.



To assist in the survival of nesting Pied Oystercatchers, all that is needed is to

set aside a small amount of area over the spring and summer months for these most endearing shorebirds. Beach users need to provide a small space where these birds can nest safely.

Pied Oystercatchers are listed as an endangered species, and there are approximately 250 individuals remaining in NSW.



If you are aware of a nesting pair of Pied Oystercatchers please contact your local NPWS office to let them know, or send an email to Coastwatchers.

Victorian Report May Have Impact on Future NSW Electricity Household Feed-In Pricing Arrangements.

Last week Victoria's Essential Services Commission's report on "Energy Value of Distributed Generation" was tabled in the Victorian Parliament. It concluded that the Victoria's current feed-in tariff arrangements did not reflect the true value of rooftop solar and other small renewable electricity generators.

The report stated that tariffs should reflect the time of export to the grid, location of the generator, and the avoided greenhouse gas emissions.

The Feed in Tariff in Victoria is principally based on the price of electricity in the wholesale electricity

market. The Commission recommended an overarching Distributed Generation Tariff (DGT), which would be structured around a multi-tariff mechanism to mirror wholesale market prices and also taking into account environmental and social benefits.

There would be a flexible feed-in tariff, which would value exports from small solar and wind generators based on different rates for different times of day, and for different locations.

The other component of the tariff arrangement, would account for the annual monetary value of the environmental and social benefits.

Energy retailers have opposed this proposal claiming the RET already adequately compensates the value of greenhouse gas emissions reduction achieved by distributed generators.

To help defray the costs to retailers of this policy, the Commission has recommended staggering the introduction of the tariff changes over a period of three years, starting June 2017.

If the Victorian Government endorses these recommendations, they could become a precedent for all States and Territories.

Nature Conservation Council Changes Banks

The NCC has moved its commercial banking operations from the Westpac Banking Corporation to Bank Australia. Bank Australia is a customer owned bank, which has operated in Australia since 1957.

Westpac is currently the fourth biggest financier of fossil fuels in Australia, investing funds of just over \$5.9 billion. The ANZ, Commonwealth, and National Bank Australia exceed Westpac's investment in fossil fuels.