

## Aurora Community Association Coffee and Chat 19 April 2015 Minutes

Date/ Time: Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2015, 3- 4.30pm

Venue: Creeds Farm Living and Learning Centre, Snugburgh way Epping North

Special Guests: Ben Rodgers, Whittlesea Community Connections; Mary Agostino, City of Whittlesea.

Apologies: Bronwyn Halfpenny MP (Member for Thomastown), Lily D'Ambrosio MP (Member for Mill Park), Councilor Kris Pavlidis.

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1. Welcome: Kathleen Ager, ACA President

2. 3.15pm, ACA updates:

- a. ACA Secretary Ann Distefano recently resigned due to being over committed across the community. ACA are looking for someone to cover the role of Secretary till AGM at end of July- job is to answer ACA general emails and do agenda/ minutes for meetings once per month. Please see Kath or other committee members if interested in taking on the role. Email [president@aurora.asn.au](mailto:president@aurora.asn.au) to express your interest.
- b. ACA committee roles are renewed at the end of every July. Now is the time to start thinking about coming on the ACA committee. Please see Kath or other committee members if interested in taking on the role. Email [president@aurora.asn.au](mailto:president@aurora.asn.au) to express your interest.
- c. Harvest Home Road- Peter Gurkin from Places Victoria has reported to us that the lights should be operational in 4 weeks. This is a little behind schedule (should have been the end of April). We will keep you updated if the intersection is further delayed.
- d. ACA Bin Stickers- Where's our Roads, Rail and Buses stickers are now available from the ACA to stick on the rubbish or recycling bin to keep reminding our politicians and community there are lots of infrastructure projects that need to be completed in our area. Please email [enquiry@aurora.asn.au](mailto:enquiry@aurora.asn.au) if you would like a sticker.
- e. Multicultural event- Saturday 23rd May 2015, Epping Memorial Hall, 827 High Street, Epping, 1.00pm - 4.00pm. In partnership with Whittlesea Multicultural Communities Council. We are looking for cultural groups in the City of Whittlesea area who would like to share food samples, show off costumes, dances, artwork or activities from their cultures. Please let us know by 30 April so that we can let you know by 8 May if your activity fits in our celebration – We hope to work with you! You can express interest to participate online at <http://goo.gl/forms/OnRWCGVktB> or email [events@aurora.asn.au](mailto:events@aurora.asn.au).



3. 3.25pm, Ben Rodgers, Whittlesea Community Connections- **Impact of Pokies on City of Whittlesea.**

- WCC- based at Epping Plaza, 25 staff, over 300 volunteers, free services for City of Whittlesea residents, sees over 500 people per week, <http://www.whittleseacommunityconnections.org.au/>
- \$ 99.8 million lost annually in city of Whittlesea on Pokies. Epping Plaza is top in state for losses on pokies, takes in over \$22 million/ year (\$60,000/ day), open 8am – 4am every day.
- We have two Pokies venues close by- Epping RSL and also Casa d'Abruzzo
- Average Pokies losses in CoW is \$700/ year per person (every man, woman and child).
- For every \$1 you spend on pokies, you only get 87c back- lose 13c every time on average. Over \$100/ hr can be lost on many machines due to the way they are designed and how people can play.
- 40% of pokies money comes from people with addictions- 6/10 people not problem gamblers.
- Some people think that pokies venues fund community assets/ give community grants- this may be the case, but the most vulnerable people and those least able to afford it in the community are giving their money to these venues.

What can be done?

- Therapy if effective, however stigma is a huge issue, people often don't get help till at rock bottom, when it is too late, need more enforcement and change to laws/ rules rather than just focus on people's behaviour.
- How people connect with community (social isolation), employment, transport all risk factors.
- More an issue in outer growth areas than more affluent inner suburbs.
- Out of all forms of gambling, pokies more addictive and most harmful
- WA has bipartisan support for continuing to have no poker machines. 14% of Victorian state revenue is from Pokies.

There are a few things that people can do if they are interested in supporting the campaign:

- Get more in-depth information from <http://www.pokermachinesharmwhittlesea.org/>
- Like the Facebook page, share with other people and invite them to like it too. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Poker-Machines-Harm-Whittlesea/302345609905401>
- Invite Ben to speak with other groups in the area you are involved in! 0415 731 134
- Sign up to receive our emails <http://www.pokermachinesharmwhittlesea.org/get-in-touch.html>
- Have a chat with Ben about other ways to raise the issue. 0415 731 134

#### 4. Mary Agostino, Manager Advocacy City of Whittlesea, - **Infrastructure Update**

- Mary handed out a map showing our local area and what infrastructure is needed and what has been promised and funded.

#### **Schools**

- Epping North Primary School- one of 13 schools being built as a public private partnership by the Department of education. Due to number of schools being built simultaneously the school won't open till 2017 if all goes well- many of the 13 won't open till 2018.
- Edgars Creek P- 12 will either be in 2015-16 or 2016-17 budget. Karen Woo from Lend Lease told the group that the Department is keen to purchase land this budget cycle (2015-16) so school build can hopefully be budgeted in 2016-17. Discussions well underway and ACA have been invited to have someone on the working group to represent the committee. Mary said that they are trying to get the high school fast tracked, even if they start the secondary school in portables while rest of school gets built!!
- Epping Views PS is currently under great strain. Over 1200 students and continuing to grow. Emergency meeting occurred on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April to discuss lack of space next year for preps and other new students given Epping North PS isn't opening till 2017. Idea is to try to have some portables as an annex in some council land next to the school. Discussions only just started, Mary to keep us updated on developments.
- EVPS is telling people it is capping student enrolments at 210 preps next year and giving preference to some estates/ areas yet the Department of Education is officially saying that can't happen. Mary's comment is that if there isn't physically space to put classrooms then how can they keep taking kids? Comment from room is that we don't want to or shouldn't have to drive our kids to Epping and beyond when we should have a local school here, so a solution needs to be found locally. Council is exploring solutions with Department.
- Minute writer's note: Get your enrolment forms for prep next year at EVPS in ASAP!!

#### **Buses**

- Labor promised a number of things for this area before winning state election in 'Labor's Plan for Victoria's Bus Network'- reorganise bus routes in Epping North and also improve services.

- PTV will be coming to area in May to conduct community consultation on bus routes- Mary to make sure we know about consultation
- Additional service announcements will not be being made till after the Regional Rail project is announced in June (Mary not sure why)

Comment from Steven B:

Local bus services not good enough- 40- min frequency is woeful, footpaths need improving, train line to Epping North- Federal MP Andrew Giles Member for Scullin has told him 'forget it, you won't get it'

### **O'Herns Rd Interchange**

- Mary along with Whittlesea Mayor and CEO met State Minister for Roads Luke Donellan to discuss how to move forward with project
- Mary confident/ convinced Labor is committed to funding the project and that it is a high priority for them.
- State Government are writing a business case for Federal Government at moment- so funding will not be in this year's upcoming 2015-16 State or Federal Budget- hopefully in 2016-17 budget.
- Mary has been trying to meet with Warren Truss at Federal Level- no response from them in past fortnight. They will continue to try to get in contact to meet with him, including Mayor.

Toni-Marie wanted to know how long it will take the Interchange project to be built and to open once the project is funded. Mary not sure but will follow up.

### **Epping North Railway**

- Top 10 City of Whittlesea Advocacy Priorities- Epping Nth railway line and also Epping road have been included in the Top 10 and approved by Councilors.
- Tony Francis has been part of a working group working with a consultant alongside Council planners and managers on getting a strong business case together for the Epping North Railway.
- One thing they have already identified is that some land is yet to be purchased along the easement so we will need to be advocating for its purchase

Steve S asked if the train could come in from Craigieburn as it said in paper the other day that when metro rail is finished 17 extra trains a day can go out to Craigieburn- seems like more capacity. Mary not sure.

Kathleen mentioned about possible use of transverse lines to connect city rather than continuing with radial lines.

Karen Woo- Lend Lease- question about **changing suburb boundary** to make it Epping North and not Epping or Wollert in this area, up to Craigieburn East Rd. Mary would look into it and suggested we needed to start some conversations with local Councilors about it.

- Mary confirmed Edgars Rd extension & O'Herns Rd upgrade all part of the Interchange project.
- **Melbourne Market** opening in August. Community tour has been promised to ACA. Will keep people posted.\

Toni-Marie asked about the impact of market on local roads- what expected, what council will be doing to monitor its impact. Mary to follow up

- **Costco** is still coming to Epping!! No date mentioned

### **5. Closure (4.25pm)**

Kathleen thanked Mary and Council for all their hard work on advocacy in part couple of years. She also thanked Ben and Mary for the presentations.

Date of next meeting- Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> May- Multicultural event. Wed 17<sup>th</sup> June General Meeting.