



Stuarts Point & District Community Organisation

A stronger future together.

Postal Address 21 Ocean Avenue Stuarts Point NSW 2441 Email chair@spadco.community

SPADCO Community Meeting minutes 25th Sep 2024

Meeting opened at 6.30pm

Present: Total 30 including Committee members Mary-Lou Lewis (ML), Chris Parke, Liz Jerome, Genevieve Lovell, Ian Chegwiddden, Jen Hetherington, Margaret Breust, Chris Kaczan and Kempsey Shire Councillor Arthur Bain.

Apologies: Michael Kemp, Wes Trotter

Acknowledgment of Country

Meeting started with our speaker Todd Graham who has been an oyster farmer on the Macleay River for the last 20 years, see summary of what Todd spoke about at end of minutes

Business Arising: Mary Lou called for the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted, this was seconded by Genevieve Lovell.

Grants: Seniors Festival Grants program has been submitted and activities for March 2025 starting to be planned. Up and coming grants round one shire community projects and environmental fund is being submitted due 16/10 (this was previously known as the mayoral grant. Grant will be for Santa in the park, weed control at Grassy Head of Bitou bush.

Submissions from SPaDCO to council,

- Traffic calming proposal for Stuarts Point
- Lower Macleay Flood Risk Study and Management plan
- Kempsey shire Coastal Management

All submissions were available at the meeting to review.

Correspondence

Grassy Head Playground project is going ahead against what the community wanted. Council decided that the 64 letter about suitability and location were form letters and therefore counted as one letter. GM of council made this decision and it would seem the democratic process was ignored. Council decided to go ahead because contractor would be losing money & claim these losses from council. There was a motion at last council meeting regarding how decision was made with little or no community consultation. New council says they will be strategic, planning and consultation. A motion was moved that the way forward is for Mary Lou to write a letter of complaint to the Ombudsman, this was seconded by Heather Kind and a show of hands showed the motion moved unanimously.

Council elections, most votes have been counted, there were just postal votes to still be counted. Results would be generated Mon and results announced Wed. Question from the floor around whether there would be an investigation into how the campaigns were ran as all mayoral candidates



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indicated they were independent, but some were heavily backed by certain parties. Councillor Bain said no investigation, but electoral commission will publish results.

Development at 322 Stuarts Point Rd is on public exhibitions (after Grassy head playground result) recognised form letters don't carry as much weight as a written letter. Submissions open until 2nd Oct and there were letters available for people to sign at the meeting. Stephen Jones spoke about the development, says the rezoning has been approved but the planning Dept in the development control plan has written a new chapter (E4) regarding issues relating to this subdivision. DA's still have to be submitted & must address Chapter E4. At the Aug council meeting it was said that the DCP is only a guideline, the Local environmental plan is the legislative plan.

Lyndal Harper who was previously with council is now Regional Resilience Project Manager has invited community to do resilience training, A DRAFT program with tentative dates include 14th, 18th, 20th, 26th November. Contact Lyndall Harper at Kempsey Shire

Central Coast Environment Network/Landcare has invited SPADCO to join **water watch**, meeting thinks this is a good idea- MI to follow up.

Council sent out a letter to all residents on program explaining delay in completing EIS for **Stuarts Point Sewer project**. This means they need to do surveys through summer and investigations regarding dunal discharge. "In light of above, we have decided to postpone the community drop-in session planned for Thursday 3 October and virtual community session planned for Friday 4 October. These have been rescheduled to Thursday 28 November and Friday 29 November respectively and the format will be slightly different to the previous drop-in sessions. The project team will provide a briefing about the EIS, its findings and next steps, as well as an update on the pressure sewer system. Project team members will be on hand to answer any questions. We would also like to talk about the year ahead and the preferred way to keep you informed as the project progresses."

Learning the Macleay invited community to attend talk/training on understanding insulin, sugar & metabolism on the 22nd Oct at 10am in Kempsey. Contact Chonny

MI and Jane Ford attended a Presentation by Kate Bourke from PSA consulting Council planner Simon Morrison and Council communication manager Mick Hanly regarding the rewriting of the **DCP (Development Control Plan)** which will be streamlined from a 600-page document, it covers whole shire council with chapters on town centres including Yarrahapinni and Stuarts Point. Their first presentation was delivered to interested and active developer cohort of the shire

Mary Lou presented a **23/24 SPADCO in review**, was tabled at meeting and can be accessed if anyone wants to see it. Please ask.

SES recruitment discussed as currently there is only one SES person in this area, calling for volunteers, Heather to add to Stuarts Point Share page and will be on community noticeboard.

An audit was conducted on **SPADCO equipment**; the document was presented for all to review. An aerial booster is being installed Walkie talkies range review will take place to ensure the separate



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localities can talk to each other and can be instructed by RFS etc. Supply up to date emergency information over whole area.

Anthology of 2023 writing competition has been put together by Jen and now all 16 entries are published in a book called **Getting to The Point**, its available for sale at \$20. All authors can purchase at a discounted price of \$10. Also, the book is available at SP and Kempsey library to borrow. A great, funny and informative read.

Treasurers report presented by Margaret Bruest. Margaret thanked SPADCO and the committee and all who attended meetings but will be standing down. Margaret was thanked for her time and hard work in keeping accurate records and reporting on SPADCO's financial position. Financial report was tabled for all to review described as yearly

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Opening Balance 1st July 2023 | \$39,243 |
| Payments | -\$45,581.84 |
| Income | \$24,460.55 |
| Balance as of 30 th June 2024 | \$18,122.19 |

Acceptance of report moved by Cherry Bambling, seconded by Liz Jerome

Maragret explained SPaDCO is a not-for-profit organisation and need to apply for exemption of tax by March 2025

Funday was a huge success, Chris Parke, organiser, thanked the committee and everyone who contributed to such a successful day

Raffles at the club will be done by SPADCO in October, volunteers called for. Great fundraising opportunity

Hannah Smith, Briana Earle & Shelly Blain were thanked for their work as SPADCO committee members as they will be leaving, they were wished well.

Liz Jerome was thanked for scribing and doing Secretary role as she will step out of this role to general committee member. Mary Lou applauded for all her hard work and effort throughout the year

Mary Lou handed the meeting over to Arthur Baines for the AGM to commence

Summary of guest speaker Todd Graham, local oyster farmer

There are unique issues in the Macleay River

Blackwater events i.e. water from swamps leads to Q X virus, this doesn't occur in the main flow and causes the river to be closed for 2-3 months after rain events where other rivers only close for 2-3 weeks. Takes time for the salt to come back at levels to harvest and means as this often happens at



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Christmas oysters have to be held back to spring. Last 4 years with fire and drought there has been leaf litter and ash, debris in oyster baskets. When it goes from drought to flood acid sulphate comes out of swamps, PH is at 3 where normally is between 7 & 9, this dissolves little oysters and bleaches shells and leads to QX virus attacking the oyster. 2020-2021 there was a 95% mortality rate, oysters take 2-3 years to grow so when you lose you lose years.

This year has been a good growth year but since the fires the oysters haven't conditioned as well, this may be due to changes in the algae. Todd works with a farmer at Port Stephens and takes his oysters there to condition them.

There are some projects that farmers are trying to gain support for. 1st is a pipe in the North Wall; at Elington Island (near white rocks) so that it increases the flow of the river. DPI thinks this may also alleviate QX virus, they have been finding funding hard to achieve but hoping that as the wall needs repairs at white rocks this may be done in conjunction.

Todd spoke about the Dough boy swamp, (2nd Project) which is at the back of the old BP Clybucca that they are trying to get back to salt water. Need water off the ground quickly after floods, may need to do weirs to get water into the wetlands. Local Lands dept are managing the project and Arthur Baine was able to contribute the progress they are making. This will stop acid sulphate from blackwater events going into the river. Yarrahapinni gates opening has seen the mangroves growing, more sea grass in the river and bait fish have increased substantially.

3rd project is farmers growing Pacific oysters instead of Sydney Rock oysters. Known that pacific oysters don't like the warmer weather so farmers will need to window farm (use Port Stephens for part of the growth cycle) so bring them here in March and sell them by December. This may be an answer as Pacific oysters aren't affected by QX disease but will need to be precise when transporting them as Pacific's can only be out of the water for 2-3 days where Sydney Rock Oysters can be out for 3-4 months. The DPI is also trying to breed oysters that are resistant to QX. This disease is related to water quality, Sydney always have it, causes closures when there's 50ml rain because oysters are filter feeders so they eat anything that is going past them. After rain the river needs to return to salt levels of 26 parts per million and farmers have to send water away, where it is tested for e-coli before they can harvest. Point was raised about the sewer, Todd says they don't see much affect from the septic systems but says the silting in the river is causing the temperatures to rise. Can be 32 degrees in the river and oysters don't like over 26 degrees.

There are currently 9 oyster farmers in the river who mainly work for themselves by themselves, there were 32 about 25-30 years ago and they had 3-4 people working for them, so it was a substantial industry. There are only 2 farmers on this side of the river the others are from SWR's. Most of the oysters go to Sydney and the Central coast to be sold. Oyster leases are managed by the DPI. At the end of the guest speaker talking SPADCO moved that they would support Todd with letters to receive funding for these projects.

A small gift was given to Todd with thanks for contributing to tonight's meeting



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AGM of SPADCO was declared open at 7.40pm, 25th Sept 2024

Arthur Bain declared all committee positions vacant and called for a round of applause for the office bearers of 2023-2024

Minutes of last year's AGM were called to be accepted by Mary-Lou Lewis, seconded by Genevieve Lovell

Arthur declared that it was great to see such a strong community with 15 positions called for and 15 nominations, he read the nominations below and a show of hands saw all positions filled by nominees.

Chairperson: Mary-Lou Lewis

Vice Chairperson and Public Officer: Chris Parke

Secretary: Jane Ford

Treasurer: Heather Kind

Committee member special projects: Genevieve Lovell

Committee member publicity: Jen Hetherington

Committee members: Ian Chegwidden, Chris Kaczan, Sigrid Langker, Nick McCafferty,

Dean Thomson, Elain Carmody, Stephen Jones, Liz Jerome, Lex Stewart

Mary-Lou thanked everyone for attending asked committee to stay briefly to explain roles and responsibilities.

It was agreed three signatories for BCU Bank account will include Treasurer Heather Kind, Chair Mary-Lou Lewis and Committee member Chris Kaczan. Paperwork and arrange an appointment with the bank will be done asap.

Meeting Closed at 8pm