



Club Newsletter October 2017

Gaming entitlements

Last Tuesday, 26 September, President Marilyn Mooney, CEO Ron Stockdale, and staff member Jacqui James attended the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) to give evidence in support of our application to increase our gaming entitlements from 55 to 65. We also had three independent expert witnesses present evidence from their research and analysis. This evidence included – the socio economic impact on the local community; an expenditure analysis predicting the revenue to be generated; and an audit of the Club's responsible service of gambling practices.

At a Council meeting the Administrators of the CoGG opposed our submission but did not attend the VCGLR hearing nor did they make a submission to the Hearing. A Geelong interfaith church group opposed our submission but did not provide a written or formal submission to the Hearing. Incongruously the Commission granted a representative of this church group a last minute opportunity to make an informal statement. The statement was substantially against Government policy and legislation rather than against the Portarlington Golf Club. In essence it holds no weight.

I can report that all of the Club's witnesses presented their sworn evidence in a compelling and professional manner, and according to our legal team, such evidence was received well by the commissioners. We came away from the Hearing very optimistic that the Commission will within 28 days hand down a decision in our favour.

If our application is successful the Club will need to comply with certain conditions within a particular timeframe. They involve increasing our annual community benefits by \$10k; and substantially implementing Stage 2 of the Master Plan. This last condition is complicated by the State Government drastically altering its gaming entitlements system post 2022 to a new system that is really still being developed. What we were looking forward to once we made our final payment in August 2017 was 4-5 clear years of revenue from our gaming program. HOWEVER the Government has in the very recent past and with absolutely no warning introduced a new regime so that in February 2018 we must pay around \$90k and by August 2022 pay approx \$1.75m.

Although the goalposts have been moved substantially, and very unfairly, we are confident that the Club will be able to meet its responsibilities.

20 acres

The Club made application to the City of Greater Geelong to alter the current zoning - Special Use Zone (Schedule 3 – Private Golf Courses). After a lengthy process the CoGG has agreed to the following note being added to the Portarlington Structure Plan: “*Opportunity for short term tourist accommodation to be developed in conjunction with the existing clubhouse facilities.*” In short the Council agrees that there is strategic justification for tourism accommodation in the Bellarine area. It supports short-term accommodation for the Golf Club’s facility but not long-term accommodation.

This decision obviously opens up many options for the Club and substantially increases the value of the asset. All options will be appropriately considered and researched by the Board and members will be kept informed and provided the opportunity to respond to any possible ventures that may arise.

The Planning Amendment is currently with the Minister for signing and gazetting.

Pro shop

Members will have seen that construction work has started on the Pro Shop. Delays occurred in gaining the appropriate permits from Council so completion date is now sometime around mid-December. As members would be aware the Pro Shop was to be included in Stage 2 of the Master Plan however it became apparent that an upgrade was essential resulting in the Board making the decision to go ahead with this expansion.

Energy alternatives

As energy costs are soaring the Board is investigating alternative power sources such as wind power and solar.

If members require more detailed information re our finances please refer to the “Year in Brief” which is being sent out now with AGM papers. Also the Annual Report is available on the website or you can attend the AGM for an update on this year to date.

As always if you need more information or clarification on any of the above, or any other issue, please contact me or CEO Ron Stockdale.

Marilyn Mooney
Club President