



## **FCA PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2021**

### **AGM 28 February 2021**

The 2021 meeting was attended by some 52 members, the maximum permitted at the time. The presentation by Melisa Burrage – MPS Manager Climate Change, Energy and Water on “Climate, Energy and Zero Carbon Communities” was well received.

### **Newsletters & Website**

**News of local issues and events were sent to members in** February, early April, late April, June and November.

In September we said goodbye to Kim Little, who, in association with the Flinders Golf Club, managed the Flinders Community Association website and sent out the newsletter.

This important role has now been taken over by Mary Iles, who has recently joined the FCA Committee.

A new FCA website has now been constructed by Merrin Munroe, launched in January. We are still fine-tuning the details, and to date it is working well.

### **Survey**

A community survey was held early in 2021 asking what local people consider the FCA should regard as priorities. The top results were:

- Land use planning to protect village character (97 responses)
- Conservation of Landscape Surrounding Flinders (96)
- Fighting inappropriate Development applications at VCAT (91)
- Protection of Western Port Bay ecosystems (73)
- Working toward a Sustainable community and Region (64)

This followed a similar survey conducted in 2017. There appeared to be a preponderance of older respondents (76% aged 60+) and full time residents in Flinders (66%). It should also be noted that more than 70% of dwellings in Flinders are holiday houses.

### **Flinders Community Hall**

We put plans of the hall on a wall in the Hall, and also on the noticeboard in the Flinders General Store. A successful Council Drop-In presentation was held in the Hall on 22 April. The community was invited to view a display of plans, with Shire staff available to answer questions and receive feedback.

## **SUBGROUPS**

### **1. Zero Carbon**

Friends of Flinders Coastline is not a subgroup of the FCA, but Mark Aarons, being an FCA Committee member, has regularly updated the Committee on the work undertaken by the Friends.

A Biodiversity Forum sponsored by Friends of Flinders Coastline was organised in April, intended to attract more volunteers to the Friends group and tell the community what the various stakeholders were doing in the area. Various groups had information tables including Zero Carbon Communities, Land Care, and the W P Biosphere group. The Forum was held with a capacity audience of 130.

Arising out of this the Flinders Zero Carbon Community group was formed, subsequently seeking to become a sub-committee of the FCA. This was approved by the FCA Committee. The FZCC has initially been supported by FCA funds. As an incorporated body the FCA will cover such matters as public and legal liability insurance and grant applications.

So what does it do? The Flinders Zero Carbon Community aims to work with the wider Flinders community toward achievement of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 in partnership with the MP Shire and other like-minded groups. In October an FZCC community energy forum on renewable energy and community batteries was held via zoom, with 115 bookings. The group now has its own email and Facebook page. To find out more, have a look at the FZCC Facebook page.

### **2. Flinders Icebergers and the Winch Shed**

The Flinders swimming group known as the Icebergers (FIB) meets at 7.30 am every day at the beach adjacent to the former slipway. The group has sought Council approval for the adaptation of the former winch shed to provide facilities for a hot shower. The shed is to be equipped with gas hot water system with an external shower and platform. Council indicated that this is feasible under license, and that the license would need to be assigned to an incorporated body. The Icebergers have proposed that the FCA become the licensee to MPSC. A core license requirement is to provide public liability insurance.

Advice was then sought from David Gibbs (FCA Hon Legal Advisor) concerning the legal position. One of the issues was whether the group could be covered by the FCA public liability insurance. The FCA insurer responded that the Winch Shed would be covered under our policy.

It was agreed that the FCA was willing to become the licensee from Council for the Winch Shed, provided that:

- One member of the FIB joins the FCA Committee, to report on relevant matters
- The shower facility in the Shed be installed by a licensed plumber to comply with building regulations
- All costs, including annual rental, to be covered by the FIB members.
- A first aid kit be kept in the Shed

All of this was then thrown into limbo by the current question of whether the pier precinct, which includes the Winch Shed, is to receive heritage protection. More about that in the next part of this report. Meanwhile the Icebergers peacefully swim on.

## **CAMPAIGNS:**

### **1. SAVE FLINDERS PIER**

At our April meeting we discussed an email from Cr David Gill expressing concern that 180m of the Flinders Pier parallel to the new concrete section was to be demolished. The committee decided to hold a public meeting on 8 May, and Charles Reis volunteered to run our campaign.

Charles will provide a short report on the enthusiastic campaign now underway to save the pier, but I should mention that the **Flinders District Historical Society has made an application to the Heritage Council** for nomination of the Flinders foreshore precinct for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register. The precinct includes the pier, the Cargo Shed, the shed next to the pier, the former slipway and winch shed, and other nearby sites relating to the Cable Station. This application has, at the very least, postponed the proposed destruction of 180 metres of the wooden pier.

### **2. NO BOAT RAMP FOR FLINDERS**

In what some people regard as a related move, Better Boating Victoria met in May 2021 with representatives of the Bass Park Trust and Flinders Yacht Club, to discuss whether there was an opportunity to renew the existing facility for launching boats at Flinders. Following that meeting Better Boating Victoria informed the FCA that boating access operates satisfactorily at the moment and there is no need to plan for renewing the existing facility at Flinders.

Nonetheless, with the expert help of Leigh Glover, the FCA put in a submission to Better Boating Victoria, explaining that we oppose any future development of the Flinders launching facility based on concerns over negative environmental impacts, risks to public safety, loss of public amenity and public access issues that would arise from developing the launching facilities and associated works.

It is worth noting that the Director of Better Boating Victoria has expressed concern to FCA that some people may assume a link between the question of a boat ramp at Flinders and the proposed demolition of the Pier. The possibility of a boat ramp – and we quote - “was in no way connected the Flinders Pier issue”.

## **PLANNING**

As is our custom, Neville Wale will present a paper on the planning issues that have preoccupied the committee in the past year. I will mention one item. Neville and I spent a total of 6 days attending VCAT meetings via Zoom regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Flinders Cove Motor Inn.

In the end VCAT granted a permit that allows the use and development of the site for a residential hotel and conference centre. However, substantial changes are required to the original plans, particularly

**Parking spaces increased from 47 to 83**

While acknowledging this increase the FCA expressed our concern before the Tribunal that any overflow parking will occur on nearby streets, adding to the already tight parking situation in the village.

**Break of 8 metres to be made in the Cook Street frontage**

This should allow for visibility of landscaping between buildings and avoid a dominating façade. The FCA considers that this modification would go some way to addressing our concern about the planned excessive built facade along Cook Street, making a slightly less dominating frontage.

**SUPPORT FOR OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND EVENTS**

**Donations during 2021:**

January St John's virtual fete  
Fake or Fortune Fete 6 March  
Community Picnic 27 March  
Lions Christmas tree

**Purchase of additional Sound equipment and a digital projector:**

The FCA's existing high capability portable PA system was supplemented during the year by the purchase of a supplementary speaker system to improve performance in outdoor settings. We thank Peter Lain for his expert advice, in buying, storing and using the equipment.

Once lockdown was lifted, there was a brisk demand for the speakers:

Our 2021 AGM 28 February  
St John's Fake or Fortune Virtual Fete 6 March  
Community picnic 27 March, where leaflets aimed at encouraging younger people to become involved with the FCA were distributed.  
Lions Motoring Heritage 4 April  
Biodiversity forum 11 April  
Grandmothers for Refugees Picnic lunch 18 April  
ANZAC Day 25 April  
Save Our Pier 8 May  
St John's Fete 22 January 2022

The FCA has also purchased a new projector identical to the one purchased by Probus. And we bought a little Christmas Tree. *Picea glauca albertiana 'Conica'* (Dwarf Alberta Spruce) was the tree selected, an evergreen conifer with a traditional Christmas tree shape which Mark Aarons has planted near the Pre-School.

**FCA Committee**

There's a great deal that goes on behind the scenes. I'd like to thank the FCA Committee for all their hard work over the last year:

Mark Aarons

Maxine Cooper  
Ash Fraser  
Susan Grant  
Neil Hallam  
Mary Iles  
Jan Moffat  
Charles Reis  
Melissa Smith  
Judy Tillyard  
Neville Wale

Mark Holland resigned during 2021. As we all know, volunteer committees depend on a small number of people to take on considerable responsibility. People with experience such as Mark's in planning matters are invaluable to a committee which spends so much time and effort on matters relating to land use planning and neighbourhood character. Over many years Mark was actively involved in the work of the Committee and we wish him a happy and relaxed retirement.

**FCA Dinner**

As most of you will know, this year's dinner had to be postponed, and we now have a confirmed booking at the Golf Club for Saturday 11 June.

And with that cheering thought I conclude this FCA President's report for 2021.

**President – Jo Monie**