

Free Beach Action NSW

Group Meeting

Wednesday 18 February 2008

Malabar RSL Club

In Attendance: Katina Mellado, Lorraine Martin, Colin Martin, Mark Trenholme, Shelly Bahl, Chris Mansergh, Linda Grant, Juan Mellado, Luke Bigucci, Gerald Ganglbauer, Stuart Baanstra, Chris Efstathiou (chair), John Martin, Vince Bussa

Apologies: Kevin Boggs, Silvana Boggs, Mario Conti, and Ikumi Sekine

The 5th FBA NSW Meeting was opened at 7:15pm

The minutes from the 4th meeting on Wednesday, 12 November 2008, St George Rowing Club were adopted. The December meeting was informal only and therefore no minutes were tabled. Chris reminded everyone to access the Free Beach Action NSW website to read the minutes prior to each meeting. www.freebeach.info

New attendees were introduced:

Chris Mansergh (CAAH) and Shelly Bahl, Lorraine Martin, Colin Martin.

Update on Authorities:

Correspondence from Deputy Premier Carmel Tebbutt MP and The Hon. Barbara Perry MP was tabled. Download from www.freebeach.info > Archive.

Gerald informed the group of his meeting with the NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, which will be during the NSW Climate Summit from 19th to 21st February. He will continue pressing the point that the State Government can and should change the beach status.

Chris and Kat will visit the Minister after the meeting with Gerald.

Clover Moore MP was also asked by Gerald as his local member to continue her support with our matter on State Government level.

Councillor Belleli has on many occasions claimed to have correspondence / complaints from local constituents re nudity on the beach. It was suggested that the FBA request to see this documentation under The Freedom of Information Act. Chris (CAAH) suggested that we contact Greg Bond, who is a local resident and frequent user of the beach, for his support.

Gerald again makes the point that any member of parliament can put forward a motion to amend the Local Government Act. Constituents from within our group can and should approach their local members.

Media Relations:

Following up on the full page Sun Herald article published on 28 December, Channel Nine approached the group over the Christmas period wanting to do a segment on the campaign on their morning program. After much talk with the producers the story was shelved due to not being able to agree on who would actually participate.

Either party has made no further contact since.

The group was reminded that all media driven polls suggest that naturism has wide support in NSW, and the Sun Herald article in particular had created a wave of positive feedback. However, the group seems to believe that other media contacts should be left as a last resort.

CAAH representatives indicated that an article appearing in the Southern Courier ('Councillor's kiddie scare at Congwong', 7 January 2009) contained a number of homophobic remarks. Clarification was requested if the commentaries were the views from the FBA group, the views from individuals or a misrepresentation in the media.

The group states that articles that have appeared in the media from members were not an accurate description of what was said, rather a way to make the views more appealing and generate controversy by using a tone that was not necessarily representative of the group.

There was much discussion on this point to make clear to the CAAH representatives the group's position with regards to the sexuality of the beach goers. The groups' only interest is to obtain legality to practice naturism at Little Congwong Beach. The group also wants the behaviour of the beach goers not to be confrontational beyond nudity. The rights of naturists at Little Congwong Beach have been affected and attacked in the media by the council because of the wrong doings of a few bad elements. FBA acknowledged that perhaps these could have also been members of the heterosexual community behaving inappropriately, but ask CAAH to also pay attention to the behaviour of their homosexual members.

Finally a motion was presented and accepted by the group.

Motion: FBA will send a statement to the Southern Courier to clarify the group's position in regards to homophobia.

The motion was tabled and approved. 1 person voted against and 1 abstention.

The meeting resolved that it has to be reiterated that the group is not homophobic in its campaign to have Little Congwong Beach designated as clothing optional beach. Gerald will write a draft letter to the editor to be shared with FBA core members. The group will also ask CAAH for comment. The statement will then be published on the Free Beach Forum.

Textiles and Youngsters:

A larger number of people wearing textiles have been frequenting the beach in recent weeks. Some are former naturists, who do not want to be troubled by the ongoing disputes with the council and the occasional presence of Rangers or Police in the area. The media and their genuine interest in understanding naturism and perhaps even joining in may attract some. Some ladies in

particular tend to remove their gear once noticing the peaceful environment the naturist community provides. However, there was mention of a group of young people from ethnic backgrounds (around ten), who have frequented the beach of late. It seems their only objective was just to make fun of the naturists... particularly trying to laugh from a distance to the female component of the naturist community. Some proposals were discussed, ranging from doing nothing and or to establish a group to protect and chase away antisocial elements. However the pacific position of the group, or the Australian way as it was also described, prevailed, and we will continue attending the beach ignoring these elements. If there is a threat in any way, police will be notified. The group was also presented with the suggestion to approach the beach lifeguard association; this will be discussed further.

Beach Etiquette:

Due to the extended time taken by the discussion of item 2 this point was not debated. It will be tabled again for the next meeting.

Legal Aid:

The motion of taking Randwick Council to court under the discrimination act was presented; much more information is needed before this will be discussed further.

Other Matters:

It was reported that not further police presence at the beach had occurred apart from the recent visit from a police boat.

Two remaining agenda items, Spencer Tunick – Invited to Sydney by FBA NSW for Sydney Festival 2010, and ANF – Child Protection Policy drafted by a member of FBA NSW were not discussed as time had run out.

Meeting closed at 8:40pm

Chris Efstathiou