



THE ENTRANCE PENINSULA COMMUNITY PRECINCT

ENCOMPASSING: THE ENTRANCE; THE ENTRANCE NORTH; LONG JETTY TOOWOON BAY; BLUE BAY; SHELLY BEACH & MAGENTA

www.theentranceprecinct.org

The Member for The Entrance Mr (Chris) Christopher Edward Spence, MP's presentation on 20th September, 2011 at 7:00pm.



The Chairperson of TEPCP, Vivienne Scott gave Chris Spence a warm welcome and thanked Chris for attending tonight's meeting to address issues raised by TEPCP's Executive.

Chris thanked TEPCP for the opportunity to present and began by informing the meeting that the last three months, since the new Government was elected in May, 2011 has been very demanding with a very busy sitting schedule of State Parliament. This had kept him out of The Entrance electorate for more than half the time since Parliament started. He believes that next year things will settle down and the routine will return to the normal sixty days between sittings. The Governments first months have not been all plain sailing with the controversies such as the Solar Rebate Scheme and the new wages policy.

Chris then addressed each of the issues raised by TEPCP in turn:

1. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2011 STATE BUDGET

Chris handed out copies of NSW Government document "Budget 2011-12 Rebuilding New South Wales - Budget delivers on Growing needs of NSW Central Coast" (see copy attached) Chris was able to point to a number of projects in his Electorate such as:

- The Entrance Channel - \$100,000 for engineering model for a solution
- Wyong Road Intersections - \$2million allocated in 2011-12 for planning and design
- Gosford Horticulture Institute in Ourimbah - \$2.5million in 2011-12 to complete relocation
- Cycleways at The Entrance - \$540,000 allocated in 2011-12 for Tuggerah Lakes
- Boost in funding for Community Transport to local services including those provided by Coastwide Community Transport, Wyong Community Transport and Bungree Aboriginal Transport.

2. SEA LEVEL RISE

TEPCP had asked: – what is happening or proposed at the State government level ?

- *Current ad hoc approach to this issue needs to become a national/state priority. Let's see some consistency in how local councils across Australia are responding to the forecasts in sea level rises. At present there is a lot of confusion, cynicism and community angst that has arisen primarily as a result of neighbouring councils adopting different approaches and subsequently implementing completely different policies and procedures.*
- *The WSC Draft Coastal Zone Management Plan predicts that most of The Entrance North will be eroded away in the next 100 years – the impact of this prediction has destroyed the real estate confidence and property values.*

Chris advised that he had meet with the Minister for the Environment, The Hon. Robyn Parker, MP, the Minister for the Central Coast, The Hon. Chris Hartcher, MP, the Member for Wyong, Darren Webber and council officers from both Wyong and Gosford Councils to discuss the issue. He advised that he has asked for a state wide approach to the issues arising from the current policy, pointing out the concern that Section 94 notifications has on property values..He noted the different approaches taken by Gosford and Wyong Councils in applying the regulations and stated that the Federal Government needs to do more to address the issues on a nation wide basis

He advised that Councils were acting to protect themselves from litigation. They have a duty of care to advise and if they fail to advise of a potential threat then they are liable. Chris pointed out that the current legislation prevented the building of retaining walls to protect their property. By 2100 a North Entrance property may have been sold three times. This is one of the points he has raised with the Department of the Environment. At this time Chris advised he had no definitive answer to the issues but told the meeting that the Government as looking at addressing the problems. He welcomed ideas and comments on what needed to be done.

Vivienne Scott advised that North Entrance residents were proposing to form a Coastal Zone Forum that would campaign for protection of properties rather than a policy of retreat.

Marlene Pennings advised that North Entrance residents had been told by Council officers that their properties will not exist in twenty years. Chris said he had heard this and believed that Council was now being more careful with their advice. He stated that scare mongering by Councils had to stop and this was one of the things he had asked the Department of Environment to fix quickly. He was aware of owners being told that they had to raise their floor level, only then to fall fowl of height restrictions.

Marlene Pennings advised that the Valuer General's valuation of North Entrance properties did not reflect the present value of properties and as a result their Council rates were higher than they should be. Chris made a note of this and commented that there is a change of in the way Council does business because of liability and has become reactive. People need to be able to make their own decisions and there is a need for change in the way things are done.

Anne Rowland asked if there was any hope that a consistent policy would be developed? Chris replied that there seems to be a reluctance to address this issue from the Federal Government. They have created the problems, but have done nothing to address these issues. A national approach is needed. The State Government has asked the Federal Government to look at this. The Minister for the Environment can not tell councils what to do. NSW could do something completely different to Queensland and this would complicate the issue.

Hervé Nayna asked if there was any likelihood of the government reviewing the 90mm sea level rise in ninety years and providing new guidelines? Chris answered that it is hard to be bi-partisan in the climate change debate. We need to put a common sense approach back into the debate and deal with facts, but it is a hard issue to deal with. Until we have had more time and more data we will not know the real impacts of climate change.

3. TRANSPORT IS STILL THE NO 1 ISSUE

TEPCP had asked: – what is the State Government proposing for our congested road system?

- *Future plans and timelines for The Central Coast Highway through The Entrance Peninsula Precinct area including money for RTA to investigate Central Coast Highway through Long Jetty/The Entrance.*
- *Pedestrian Traffic Control Signals Crossing on Wyong Road at Shelley Beach Road.*
- *Wyong Road intersection improvements*

Chris advised that there was no money in the 2011-12 State Budget for the RTA to investigate Central Coast Highway through Long Jetty/The Entrance. He recognised the importance of this the development of The Entrance and was trying to have funds made available in the 2012-13 budget. He was aware that the time line meant that it was unlikely that anything could be achieved in the sitting of this parliament as it takes years to do the studies and consultations necessary.

He said that he was disappointed in the delays in Wyong Council progressing planning for Long Jetty and The Entrance and hoped that Icon sites, such as the one at Lakeside Plaza. He said he supported the proposed hotel with conference centre proposal for the site and hoped that its development would help put pressure on the State Government to fund the much needed improvements to the Central Coast Highway in Long Jetty and The Entrance.

Chris advised that there was no proposals for Pedestrian Traffic Control Signals Crossing on Wyong Road at Shelley Beach Road and that the RTA had advised that the installation would be hard to achieve.

There was a \$2million allocation for a start to improving the operation of the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Wyong Road.

4. POLICE

TEPCP had asked: – what has the State Government planned for the Wyong Shire and in particular The Entrance Peninsula region?

Chris advised that The Entrance Police Station would remain open and that the Minister for Police, The Michael Gallacher, would be making major announcement on policing in Wyong Shire in December, 2011.

4. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

TEPCP had asked: – what changes are the State Government introducing – why has it stalled?

Chris handed out copies of a Media Release by the Minister for Planning & Infrastructure, Brad Hazzard, MP, "Developments that Destroy Communities Stopped." (see copy attached)

Chris said that the key words were that development will now be required to build in accordance with the existing character and landscape of neighbourhoods. Developers will also be stopped from producing a few small units to satisfy the 20% affordable housing rule, while delivering 80% as large money making housing.

Chris highlighted the problems of providing affordable housing in The Entrance electorate. We seem to be stuck in the dark ages with affordable housing being provided in high density developments. There are few jobs, little public transport as system problems such as the burden it is placing on local schools because they are not coping with the influx. Pacific Del Mar and Wyong should be reassessed.

Chris said that The Entrance can not sustain more public housing and already has more than its fair share. He advised that other adjoining areas were not getting their fair share and that he was campaigning to see a more equitable distribution of affordable housing across the region.

5. JOB CREATION.

TEPCP had asked: – Does the government have a plan to boost job opportunities in our area? If so, what?

Chris told the meeting that the biggest problem was the state economy, which is depressed, and improving this will improve the state as a whole was a Government priority. This will have a flow on to The Entrance.

He said he had been working with Ollie Philpot, Manager of Central Coast Tourism, on developing new strategies for tourism. \$250,000 of extra funding has been allocated. He is supporting the Iconic Site Development at Lakeside Plaza that would include a quality hotel and a 1200 seat convention centre. This development would add hundreds of jobs The Entrance.

He also advised that he is working to has a new sporting precinct established consisting of twelve full size playing fields. Townsville's Queen's Park and Coffs Harbour Sport and Leisure Park are able to host major state and national events that attract up to 4,000 players. With team support and followers this number expands ten times. The events can last up to a week and have a huge tourism and hospitality boost to the area. A complex like this in our area will be a huge boost to our economy and jobs.

One of the key priorities of the NSW Government is the Jobs Action Plan. This plan targets the creation of 100,000 new jobs in NSW from July 2011 and gives businesses the incentive to employ new workers and expand their enterprises. Businesses that increase their employment levels will receive a payroll tax rebate following the employment of each additional employee in a position that is a new job.

The Government has changed the first home owners grant with a new scheme. From 1 January 2012 First Home Plus exemptions and concessions will be replaced by the First Home - New Home Scheme. It is for the acquisition of a new home or vacant land intended to be used as the site for a new home only. It is hoped that this will boost the number of new homes being built on the Central Coast and as a result increase jobs. There are many old fibro houses this area and Chris hoped this amendment would encourage people to knock them down and rebuild.

Gerry Pennings asked Chris about the impact commercial fishing was shaving on Tuggerah Lakes fish stock, but Chris advised he didn't know enough on the matter to comment.

6. PRIVACY LEGISLATION

TEPCP had asked: – What is your government doing to resolve the privacy issue surrounding public submissions :

"Please note that in accordance with Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, your submission has been placed on Council's website in its entirety; including your name, address, contact telephone number and signature." (Wyong Shire Council advice to people making submissions)

Chris advised that this provision will not be removed. It was introduced to provide openness and fairness in the assessment of DA's and to stop vexatious complaints about DAs.

Chris also advised that if anyone had concerns about having their details made public he was willing to act as an intermediary on their behalf. He suggested they write to him about their objection to a DA and he volunteered to write to Council on their behalf, stating he had received the following concerns about the development from a member of his electorate, but not revealing their name or details. He suggested that the Precinct Committee could provide a similar service.

Chris also revealed that there were changes to the law involving petitions. If a petition received 500 or more signatures it had to be referred to the Minister for reply and if there were over 10,000 signatures the issue must be debated in parliament.

7. LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT AND GROWTH

TEPCP had asked: – what is your government doing about this issue? Many local small businesses are hurting at the present time and, as a result, some are closing their doors. There are numerous issues with red tape and government charges that certainly discourage business investment and growth. Does the government have plans to review and possibly change some of the current requirements? eg payroll tax, stamp duty etc

Chris said he had covered these issues in item 5 on Job Creation.

8. STUDY INTO THE OPERATION OF THE ENTRANCE CHANNEL

Chris advised he has just signed off on a \$100,000 study and that Wyong Council was working with the Office of Environment and Heritage to call tenders for the Hydrodynamic/Morphodynamic Modelling of the entrance to Tuggerah Lakes. The study will look at three breakwater configurations as well as modelling of the untrained entrance and review comparative dredging strategies.

Note taker: Doug Darlington

Chris had requested that his presentation not be recorded