**PWS UPDATES ST HELENS POINT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION**

**The MONA effect is rippling out of Hobart into the Northeastern Regions** stated A/ Parks & Reserves Manager for the North-East Linda Overend as she opened her address to the St Helens Point Progress Association (SHPPA) at their April meeting. The plus side of this flow of tourists, is an increase of funding so PWS can employ extra staff and take a more strategic approach to the way they operate in our area. A government grant of $1.6 million will allow improvements, such as campgrounds and the building of fences to control visitors so they do not encroach beyond designated areas.

A lot of PWS employees’ time is taken up by fire management, controlling off-road vehicles, dogs, rubbish and camping. Booking fees might be controversial with traditional campers, but they help the management of the sites. Unfortunately, not all campers and visitors have the same high standards of respect for the area so some sort of control and authority is required. PWS provide this service.

When invited to speak to SHPPA, Ms Overend was asked to clarify the areas of the **St Helens Point** that were designated as the responsibility of Parks. A map showed that the bulk of the land on the peninsular was conservation area. With an eye to the future to make it a **walking and cycling environment**, Parks recognised that work needs to be done. A site plan had been prepared improving access, constructing bollards to control vehicles and upgrading tracks to prevent erosion.

Linda continued her talk by outlining the progress of the **Burns Bay Boat Ramp Car Park**. The $500,000 State Government grant is sitting there ready to be used when all permits and approvals have been received. In consideration is the preserving of any Aboriginal relics or sites. However, they don’t foresee problems because this area is already used as an unsealed car park.

Another area of improvement where Parks is working with the BODC is the controlling of the **Parnella erosion**. Currently works are in progress involving the upsizing of existing stormwater mains, and provision of new kerbing and channelling on St Helens Point Road and Parnella Drive. Once this has been done other stabilisation can proceed.

As for SHPPA’s suggestion of Parks and Wildlife **upgrading and sealing the Dunes Road** (that runs from opposite Rock St and comes out past Barrack St), authorities have acknowledged it was worth serious consideration. It would certainly reduce the towing traffic on the dangerous blind crest near Akaroa Ave by giving these vehicles a more direct route already preferred by many, conditional to the state of the dirt road. PWS planned to discuss the idea with BODC. However, it would depend on the priorities of the Government whether funding could be obtained.

Linda’s Overend concluded her talk by answering questions from members. These ranged from a discussion about campsite fees; position of long-term campers particularly in the light of the increasing number of homeless; and the authority responsible for the maintenance of the walking track around Stieglitz Beach and whether members could trim Boobialla that was encroaching thus reducing the accessibility. Although sections of this road is leased by BODC the part in question was PWS. Unfortunately they could not give permission for private people to work on the track because of the restrictions of insurance.