

## MINUTES

### **BONDI BEACH PRECINCT SPECIAL MEETING CONCERNING LAMROCK LODGE BACKPACKERS BONDI 23 MARCH 2016 AT 12:00 MIDDAY TO 1:00PM DOLPHIN ROOM BONDI PAVILION**

Meeting opened 12:04

**Present:** Jacqueline Wasserman, Crime Prevention Officer, Waverly Police, Scott Field, Executive Officer Safe Waverley, Waverley Council, Lenore Kulakauskas Convenor Bondi Beach Precinct, Igor Pogrebinsky, Owner Lamrock Lodge, Laura, Manager Lamrock Lodge, Brooke and Ben Eichhorn, Gai Steele, Haydn Keenan, Sean Kruck, residents.

**Chair:** Lenore Kulakauskas Convenor Bondi Beach Precinct

#### **1. Welcome and apologies**

We acknowledge this land as the traditional lands of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People of Australia, and specifically the Kadigal people, who traditionally occupied the Sydney Coast. We acknowledge the Aboriginal Elders both past and present.

No apologies

#### **2. Discussion about residents' concerns with backpacker behaviour at Lamrock Lodge (LL) ensued**

An overview compiled by resident Brooke Eichhorn was presented (see attached *Problem Discussion*)

Residents stated their issues and complaints:

- Frequent noise disturbance between the hours of 10pm and 5am, causing sleep disturbance. (E.g. Talking loudly in groups when inebriated, making long distance phone calls in the street)
- Rowdy and argumentative behaviour, offensive language. (E.g. fighting with each other, rebutting aggressively when asked to be quiet)
- Violent brawls, resulting in police being called
- safety of young kids,
- dangers associated with backpackers kicking footballs in street into cars/stopping cars/ being abusive when told to stop
- pot smoking (not hidden) takes place openly in front courtyard
- drug dealing has been observed/ word on the street is Lamrock Lodge is where drugs can be obtained
- backpackers urinate in adjacent buildings in common areas and doorways. Residents in nos 30, 32 and 34 Lamrock have witnessed this behaviour
- there is an impact on parking due to dumped cars/ people who sleep in their cars/ campervans when their mates are staying in LL
- Skyping/ using phones to call overseas at all hours of the night while outside LL

Suggested actions were then read out

- Improve signage

- Policy & culture document
- Warning enforcement process
- Security presence
- Enforce no drinking, no drugs
- Common rooms
- Registered Security guards to be employed for LL and to patrol the area surrounding LL
- A lockout at midnight be instigated

Igor Pogrebinsky, the owner replied to the concerns and suggested actions.

He maintained that LL had been operating pretty much the same for 19 years that it was quieter in winter.

The establishment operates in the current fashion as a result of a court decision made in 1998.

LL has full-time employed staff including 3 rotating night managers who, as well as attending to housekeeping matters, are also responsible for security.

Igor was on a Waverley Council committee determining house rules for backpacker establishments. Those at LL were adopted.

After the recent knifing incident, he had 10 people sent away from LL.

He is not aware of any drug taking or dealing at LL.

There is a rule that there is to be no drinking in the courtyard however it is not always enforced.

He stated they have a common room.

He said they do their best.

### **3. Summation of proposed actions:**

Undertakings were then taken by Igor as follows:

- i. The signage will be improved
- ii. The policy will be upgraded and have a passage about backpackers having to vacate immediately in the case of unacceptable behaviour. The new policy wording to be emailed to Lenore for distribution to and commentary on by residents.
- iii. A Warning Log will be created to keep records of wrongdoings and action taken. This will also serve as formal evidence when repeat offenders need to be evicted.
- iv. A Complaints Register will be created with all complaints from neighbours logged showing the time of the call and the action taken. The Complaints Register will be available to police, council staff, and residents.
- v. Igor will look into how to best deal with Security guards and security generally, the enforcement of no drinking and no drugs, and a midnight lockout. A document outlining a proposed plan regarding these issues will be emailed to Lenore for distribution to and commentary on by residents.

#### **THE DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN ii. AND v. ABOVE ARE TO BE SENT TO**

[lenorekulakauskas@gmail.com](mailto:lenorekulakauskas@gmail.com) **BY 15 APRIL 2016.**

The residents were advised that other action they could take would be to lodge a petition with Waverley Councillors at a Council meeting.

**LENORE TO EMAIL THE PETITIONS POLICY TO RESIDENTS.**

Igor and his manager Laura left the meeting.

**Issues were raised for Council:**

The bins used by LL are residential not commercial. Could this be changed due to problems with this usage?

**TO BE FOLLOWED UP BY SCOTT FIELD**

LL turns off the lights in the front courtyard at night, but this does nothing to deter the residents because there is a street light directly above this area. Could this be dimmed or turned off?

***NOT SURE WHO IS TO DEAL WITH THIS? SCOTT CAN YOU PLEASE ADVISE?***

LL tenants use the median strips as a party destination when they have been kicked out of the courtyard. Could these be converted into garden beds to deter people from gathering there?

**LENORE TO FOLLOW UP WITH COUNCIL.**

**NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2016 5:30PM DOLPHIN ROOM BONDI PAVILION**

Meeting closed 13:10

Lenore Kulakauskas  
Convenor Bondi Beach Precinct  
23 March 2016

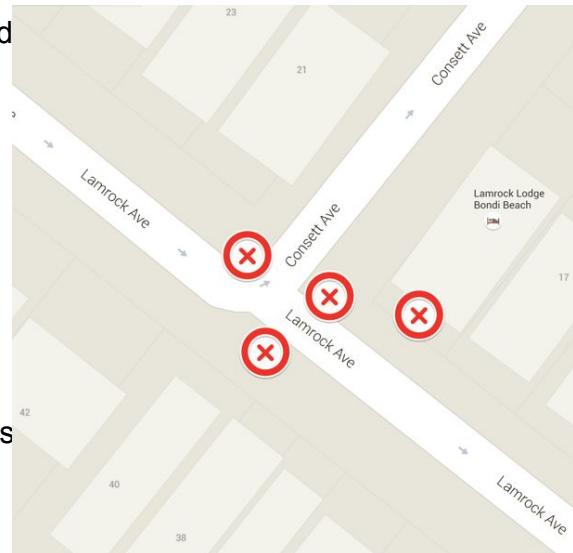
# Problem Discussion

Continuous disturbances emanating in and around Lamrock Lodge every week from December to March. Main trouble spots are courtyard in the front of the hostel between 3pm and 10pm and then on the 3 median strips on Lamrock Avenue after 10pm to 5am.

We have had to call the police or the Lamrock Lodge at least 2 times a week, usually more, due to these disturbances. It has caused stress and chronic sleep disturbance for our family and others in the building and neighbourhood.

## Summary of issues & complaints:

- Frequent noise disturbance between the hours of 10pm and 5am, causing sleep disturbance. (E.g. Talking loudly in groups when inebriated, making long distance phone calls in the street)
- Rowdy and argumentative behaviour, offensive language. (E.g. fighting with each other, rebutting aggressively when asked to be quiet)
- Violent brawls, resulting in police being called



Our complaints about disturbances to the Lamrock Lodge were largely ignored. The night manager does make an effort to ask people to be quiet but he is often not effective. When we notified the council a case officer contacted the Lamrock Lodge who replied saying that the "problems have been caused by people unrelated to the lodge" (reference customer request 16003783 and 16004268.) This simply isn't true and makes us feel that Lamrock Lodge were not taking responsibility for the issues.

When talking in person with the management of Lamrock Lodge I was told that "it's not our fault", "there is nothing we can do" and "it will go away soon at the end of March". There is clearly a lack of acknowledgement of responsibility or willingness to act.

## Questions for the Council / Police

We seem to continually have problems without change because there is no incentive for the Lamrock Lodge to address the disturbances their tenants are causing to the neighbourhood. Is there a way that a fine or other form of penalty can be issued to the business owners to encourage them to take action?

When I spoke to the management of the Lamrock Lodge it wasn't obvious that they were taking any action to address the disturbances. Is there another avenue for raising complaints about hostel tenants? (i.e. is a licence or permit issued to run a hostel through council or association? normally complaints could be escalated through a strata manager in a residential building)

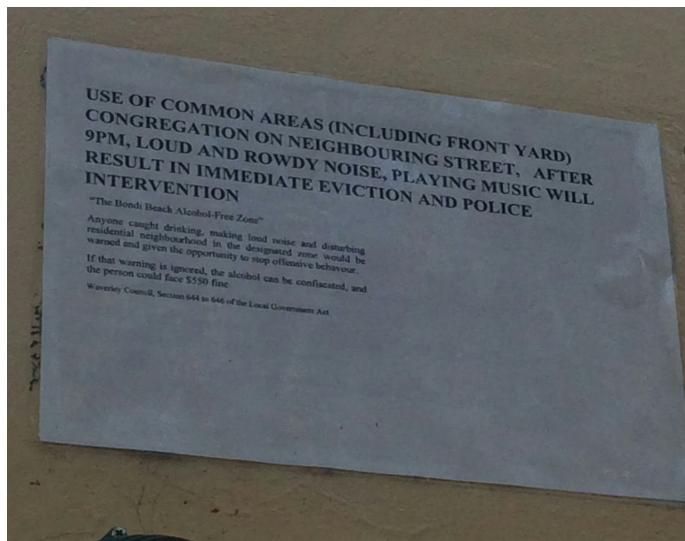
There was a tenant of the hostel whose stay lasted at least 3 months over summer who was involved in the majority of the disturbance, parties, fights etc that occurred. Is there a licensing restriction that limits the maximum term that tenants can stay in the hostel and can we take action through however monitors this?

## Suggested action items for Lamrock Lodge

### **Suggestion 1: Improve signage**

The current signs are ineffective (see below) and you don't appear to enforce them. Appeal to people's good nature and change the signs to say things like "Please respect our neighbours and keep noise to a minimum" and "We operate a no alcohol or drugs policy in our hostel" rather than stating the rules/laws. Young people will be happy to break rules but will respect your culture if you create one.

#### *Existing signs at Lamrock Lodge*



Examples of venue signs that could appeal to young people:

*Graffiti style on ground*



*High impact messaging that is easy to read*



### **Suggestion 2: Policy & culture document**

Create a Policy Document that informs your guests in simple terms your culture and policies and give this to them when they book and check in. This should include things such as noise, drugs & alcohol and respect and impact on other guests, the neighbourhood and the environment. In this policy you also inform your tenants that those who fail to adhere to your policies will be evicted.

### **Suggestion 3: Warning enforcement process**

Create a Warning Process and a Warning Document which is used to issue warnings to tenants and explains that they are breaking one of your policies. Each time you issue a warning to a tenant you record it in a Warning Log. Doing this informs tenants what they are doing is wrong and you have formal evidence when it comes time to evict the repeat offenders. You can also use this to provide evidence that you are doing something to take action to local council, police and your neighbours.

Have these documents translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese etc.

**Suggestion 4: Security presence**

Have your night manager wear a uniform or security vest and badge, torch etc as he seems to have little influence and the fact that his english is not very good doesn't help. Hire a dedicated security person Thursday-Sunday nights from December-March.

**Suggestion 5: Enforce no drinking, no drugs**

Don't allow tenants to drink and smoke drugs in the courtyard in the afternoons and evenings. This often fuels the disturbances and violence that occurs later at night.

**Suggestion 6: Common rooms**

Provide a room within the hostel for your residents to make phone calls so they don't have to do it in the street in the middle of the night.

## For Waverley Council to consider

Currently the Lamrock Lodge turns off the lights in the front courtyard at night, but this does nothing to deter the residents because there is a street light directly above this area. Could this be dimmed or turned off?

The Lamrock Lodge tenants use the median strips as their favourite party destination when they have been kicked out of the courtyard of the hostel. Could these be converted into garden beds to deter people from gathering there?



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