

Chairman's Address – SPOA AGM, 5 September 2025 – Eric Annegarn

I was reflecting on the past year, a line from Shakespeare comes to mind:

Brutus proclaims in Julius Caesar:

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

It feels fitting for us here in Southbroom, doesn't it?

This year, we've certainly ridden a high tide of success and community spirit. But we also see a different, more challenging tide approaching, one that will require our collective strength to navigate.

Let's talk about that high tide of success. This past year has been a testament to what makes Southbroom, well, *Southbroom*. It's not just the stunning beaches, the pristine golf course, or the lush subtropical greenery. It's the people. It's the spirit of a community that punches well above its weight.

The Southbroom CPF lead by Bennie Kruger and our security providers, who work tirelessly to keep us safe. Their vigilance is the reason we can sleep a little more soundly at night.

The sustained energy of Paul Longmoor and his team to deal with complaints and potholes and RNM and everything else that goes on with running the SRA. To his dedicated committee members, who volunteer countless hours navigating everything from municipal bylaws to blocked toilets, to burst pipes—often at the most inconvenient times.

And of course the money! Our UIP funds are flowing and we are building up reserves as Peter has shown us. We at least have money to employ some staff and tackle some of the larger projects. Thank you for paying your levies.

We are more than just a collection of individuals; we have fostered an enabling community—a place where good ideas are encouraged and initiatives can take root and thrive. It's a culture that allows someone to start a ballet class for children in the community hall, and see it flourish. To start and sustain recycling and indigenous gardens and fight the threat of unethical mining. To get every sports discipline thriving: golf and bowls and tennis and Padel. To decide we need village dustbins and get them and have them sponsored.

This spirit is the fertile ground from which our successes grow and is the source of our happiness and pride in Southbroom.

This brings me to the challenging tide on the horizon. These are issues that require our unwavering attention, as they could fundamentally alter the fabric of our village.

The first is the ongoing saga of our water supply. To call it a crisis is not an exaggeration. The constant interruptions, the failing infrastructure—it's a situation that would test the patience of a saint. For those of you have studied quantum physics, we seem to be living in a state of what I can only describe as "**infrastructural Schrödinger's cat**"—we simultaneously have and do not have water at any given moment. Alan Hall's report is included in the bundle and he cannot be here today. Paul Longmoor will deal with this in more detail.

Secondly is the sustainability of the golf club and bowls club leases. These are being negotiated as we speak and I know that Craig McDougall and Cleve Walker and their advisors are doing their level best. We need to fully engage and support both clubs.

Finally and perhaps the more insidious threat, is the proposed prospecting and mining for lithium just across the N2. The idea of an open-cast mine on our doorstep is, frankly, alarming. The potential for environmental devastation—the dust, the noise, the pollution of our water sources, the destruction of delicate ecosystems—is immense. **However we support sustainable and ethical and responsible mining that brings employment and tax revenue and does not destroy our water, our air or our communities.**

To this end the **UMILA Association** was formed. This stands for UGU Mining Integrity and land Action and means “growth” in Zulu. It was started here in Southbroom but is really an UGU wide endeavour and is the responsibility of every resident in UGU.

The association is a public non-profit organisation established for the following objectives:

Engaging in conservation, rehabilitation or protection of the natural world, including flora fauna, biosphere and the preservation of and education/training programmes relating to the environmental awareness, cleanup or sustainable projects.

- To inform, grow and connect as custodians to the region.
- For the health of our biodiversity, including tourism, employment, wildlife, flora and fauna, marine life, water quality and food farming.
- Our vision is to ensure responsible, ethical and sustainable mining and prospecting in our region.

This isn't just a case of trying to stop mining or prospecting that will bring jobs and revenue. This is stopping unethical mining as we have seen at Umzumbe.

Have a look at the maps x 2.

And the applications so far are defective in the extreme ...

- Extensive misrepresentation
- Lack of advertising and notification
- Non-compliance with prescribed and published standards
- Geological inaccuracies – just a shopping list of unsurveyed minerals
- Lack of research and information on environmental and socio-economic impacts
- Non-compliance with legislative requirements for public participation

An initial round of funding led by Southbroom residents has raised over R300,000 currently in Bruce Burt's trust account. You are urged to donate what you can as this will be a fight that is likely to go on for a long time. Please PM me for contact information.

So, where does that leave us? It leaves us here, together, in this room. A community that has achieved much and has much to protect. The challenges are real, but so is our resolve.

In closing, let's be inspired by our surroundings. Let's be as resilient as the indigenous forests that cling to our coastline, as constant as the tides, and as strong as the community bond we all share. The year ahead will demand our unity, our vigilance, and our work.

Thank you.

Eric Annegarn

Chairman: Southbroom Property Owners Association