



## **Point Lonsdale Civic Association Inc.**

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*Representing Point Lonsdale Residents since 1910*

## **Borough of Queenscliffe - Caravan Park Master Plan Submission.**

The PLCA's feedback on the Borough's draft Caravan Park Master Plan released to the public in April 2018 is as follows:

Of greatest concern to the PLCA members is that there is no comprehensive business plan accompanying the draft Master-plan.

On page 8 of the Draft Master Plan, point 1.2 Project Aims, the following are financial goals clearly stated without supporting financial documents for the development. They are the first 3 aims.

They are:

1. "Increase revenue from Council managed caravan parks etc"
2. "Increase revenue from caravan parks operations to enable Council to direct additional income to improve the management of coastal crown land and minimise future rate increases."
3. "Ensure minimal or no impact on Councils annual tourist park revenue during the redevelopment phase."

Whilst these are admirable goals they are also meaningless without a supporting business plan. It is easy to increase revenue but at what cost? Who is to fund this ambitious project which could be somewhere between \$10 and \$20 million? What is the return on such an expenditure? Will we the rate payers be saddled with a large debt in the future?

The council has funding for 6 eco cabins in the destination Queenscliffe Government funded project. They are proposing to build 10 cabins, but who is funding the other 4?

We are seeing the recreation reserve project ballooning beyond grant funding and may require council to borrow up to \$1 million to complete, this gives rise to concerns re the BOQ ability to manage such projects.

Without the supporting documentation (Financial Modelling) the Draft Plan cannot be supported as it is impossible to tell if the stated aims can be met. It is also impossible to tell what impact there is on the neighbourhood amenity and what is to be lost to ratepayers for the long term.

We would say the Council fails to meet these Aims.

The next 2 objectives deal with year round use of crown and public land which translates as opening seasonal caravan parks and converting a park that is used by residents to the primary use as a year round caravan park. E.g. Victoria Park and Royal Park.

### Stated Project Aims:

4. "Provide more all year round accommodation options in the caravan parks."
5. "Improve the standard of infrastructure and amenities to enable sections of some parks to be open all year round."

On the grounds that the residents of the Borough will lose access to its open spaces for the entire year and the loss of Victoria Park almost entirely the PLCA committee and members have expressed they cannot support these aims.

Project Aim number 6 is related to 4 and 5 above as it covers resident amenity. We assume this means both during the development and post completion.

6. "Minimise impact to neighbourhood amenity."

The loss of public space that is part of the amenity of any community would in this case be impossible to be regarded as minimal.

For that reason the aims stated in 4, 5 & 6 are also a fail to achieve.

The final 3 Aims within the draft Caravan Park Master Plan deal with environmental impacts, government regulations and compliance. These words should put fear into the hearts of residents as they all mean loss of vegetation.

### Aims:

7. "Meet current day caravan and camping standards/requirements."
8. "Ensure full compliance with legislation and regulations."
9. "Minimise environmental impacts and ensure that plans limit removal of existing significant vegetation and improve future vegetation planning and management."

These aims deal with upgrades of facilities and removal of hazards that threaten user safety. The PLCA have no issue where safety is concerned and we must offer our guests and residents facilities that meet their needs and imperatively must have a maintenance program associated with them as they generate income to Council and residents.

The major problem here is if we change the usage of the parks and start an up-grade on the general areas we must bring the entire park up to standard which requires major change. This would mean each camping spot would get more area, better roads in the camp ground and boom gate entrance and exits with security fencing. Overall a changed view of what the coastal feel of our parks is.

The major locations that would be effected are Victoria Park in Queenscliff and Royal Park in Point Lonsdale. Access to facilities by sporting teams using Point Lonsdale oval at Royal Park will most probably be restricted as it is mentioned in the document. Also, would the restrictions impact on the emergency helicopter landing on the oval and ambulance access?

The effect on the amenity for ratepayers of the Borough will be long and painful. The needs of regulations will see change and disruption as inevitable and unavoidable. It is still unclear what purpose is being served by the plan.

In the clear knowledge there will be disruption on a major scale the aims as stated are unrealistic and largely not achievable.

In response to the overall plan there are a number of details that should be covered but do not appear in the document.

In Particular;

- No Business case or plan.
- No projected occupancy modelling.
- Referenced Documents not included in the Master-plan.
- Single sheet costing document release inadequate.
- Nott report must be released with Master-plan.

For these reasons we submit that all the extra financial documentation should be released to the public so an informed decision can be made by the community. In addition, seem to be inconsistencies with version one of the document (initially released to the community) and the final version that concerns us as the status and rationale for such changes is not clear.

We also feel that the public amenity and neighbourhood character will be negatively impacted with the proposed master-plan, as per and contrary to the Point Lonsdale Structure plan.

The plan has no mention of operating costs. Also the lack of clarity on who will manage parks.

Overall, the Master-plan does not address how Fire regulations will impact the options presented and at what point in the development of the parks are they triggered.

We note there is no mention of any black-water discharge facility for 3225 in the Master Plan.

We also note that existing accommodation providers have had no input into this process, and that the users of the caravan parks been surveyed to gauge their reaction to the master plan. We question the thinking behind the plan, given that there are two Big4 parks within the area - so why would the Borough plan to add more cabins?

We believe that the informal unmade and guttered roads within the parks add to the attraction and do not provide for excessive run off to be dealt with, and as custodians of Crown land, should we not be maintaining the natural vegetation while providing a casual environment for users and locals alike?

### Victoria Park

It is our belief that Victoria Park be excised from the Queenscliff Recreational Reserve and be a stand-alone site. It is a remnant of a major historic park and is there for the use of ratepayers. It will be too easy for interests to continue to nibble away at sections of the park and ultimately absorb it as tourism accommodation, sports facility or carpark.

Of concern to the PLCA is that access to Victoria Park may become restricted via carded boom gates or similar. High fencing is also part of the proposal. The trees that are in the park will become stressed due to year round camping at the park. We oppose the removal of any more trees in Victoria Park .

We question the need for the large Operations Centre in the Park. Perhaps this could be placed in the area of the netball courts that are soon to be vacated.

Finally, in Victoria Park, there is no mention of the old Neighbourhood House (old Infant Welfare centre), now QMF office when vacated in the plan, ditto with the existing annual sites adjacent to the Recreation reserve in the Plan. (Little Toorak)

### Recreation Reserve.

We are concerned here that carded (boom) access may restrict community access during sporting competitions (ie Juniors Football and netball.). We question on how overflows of on-site parking on major game days cannot impact caravan sites – something will have to give here. Also the new layout may cause

the existing arrangements during the very popular Hot-rod show in February/March could be disrupted, ditto with the QMF in November. The flow on effect a potential loss of revenue across the community.

The community needs a picture of how the Eco cabins will be incorporated on the recreation reserve. We also, again question occupancy rates and how they will impact the bottom line, the type of construction they will be and question whether or not any 3<sup>rd</sup> party will be involved in running these cabins, and what are the actual operating costs?

We question the Cost Benefit of the move of the Cabins from the Recreation Reserve to Golightly Park. In the absence of financial data we would suggest the new cabins be built in Golightly Park avoiding unnecessary costs and provide Point Lonsdale with some up market cabins.

### Golightly Park

The Master Plan proposes the selling of more public land. Documents show the land was originally transferred to the Borough from the Commonwealth. The sale of public land is completely at odds with public sentiment and again, we vehemently oppose this sale at Golightly Park.

Golightly Park plan is for high-density cabin placement and will have ramifications on Bowen Road traffic management. The condition of Bowen Road is one of the worst in the Borough and additional traffic movement will further exacerbate road verge disintegration and drainage issue not to mention impact on pedestrian and parking amenity. We also question this type of development so close to Point Lonsdale Primary school. The Conservation Zoning (PCRZ) on crown land component should be respected and kept on the site.

The undulating site, and the proposed high density layout of Golightly Park are incompatible and will surely require extensive earthworks to meet the design brief. We therefore raise concerns about primary and secondary dune fortification works that may need to be undertaken and vegetation removal similar to those currently used in the Recreation Reserve.

We also see it as unfair that existing long term site holders will be completely eliminated from Golightly park. There is no mention in the plan on how these residents (part time or semi permanent) are to be treated. It is a contradiction in treatment that Council would contact people who have used these parks for one night over the last 2 years yet provide no support or thought, according to their own plan for these families. Golightly Park families need to be treated with respect and consideration.

### Royal Park.

We do not see the benefit of large scale change to Royal Park or the change to year round operation. This would destroy amenity for nearby residents and the work that would be needed to bring the Park up to regulation as a 12 month facility would destroy this unique piece of coastal foreshore.

Within the plan it is clear that boom gates and fences to “restrict access” will be required. New amenities block at the south end of the oval is not required – It would be better to refurbish and upgrade the existing facilities and provide a new amenity block and toilet at the northern end of the sports oval to service campers, beach/foreshore users and community using the oval.

Traffic management will also be an issue on Pt Lonsdale Rd – not to mention parking. This also impacts amenity for residents near-by.

Royal Park and its adjacent foreshore area to the South provide valuable open area for the additional residents using the Point Lonsdale beach area, playground and picnic facilities. The expanded Point Lonsdale area including The Point and Golf Course developments are putting pressure on the beach front area. Open spaces are at a premium for all residents of Point Lonsdale.

Once public open space is gone it is gone forever.

It is our recommendation that the upgrade to Royal Park be restricted to the amenities and a new block built for sports facility users.

In conclusion, we think the Master Plan needs a lot more work, and the immediate release of relevant documents. The BoQ ratepayers cannot make a fair and reasonable judgement on what is presented without this information.

Decisions made to today are decisions made for the future, so we need to get it right and think carefully about the community we want others to enjoy into the future.

The selling of more Public Land should not take place.

We also would like to have the opportunity to speak on this submission at any hearing(s) the Borough convenes in relation to this matter.

Thank-you for the opportunity to submit this on behalf of our members.

Rob Minty

President PLCA

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