



Point Lonsdale Civic Association Inc.

PO Box 28 Point Lonsdale VIC 3225

Reg. No. A0017883S

plcasecretary@gmail.com

www.plca.org.au

Representing Point Lonsdale Residents since 1910

11/8/19 3.31 PM

To: BoQ Mayor – Cr. Bob Merriman;
BoQ Councillors - Cr. Boyce Pizzey, Cr. Ross Ebbels, Cr. Susan Salter, Cr. Tony Francis

CC. Lenny Jenner - CEO BoQ;
CC. Phil Carruthers - General Manager Organisational Performance & Community Services.
CC. Johann Rajaratnam - General Manager Planning & Infrastructure.

Dear Mayor, Councillors & Officers;

DESTINATION QUEENSCLIFF SUBMISSION.

We believe the whole Destination Queenscliff process is now disjointed and piece-meal and in need of a rethink. Ideally the project needs to be integrated with Council's surrounding plans for the \$1.2 million (now revised \$1.37 m) Hesse Street South project (new path, reconfigured car parking, under grounding of power lines and new storm water works from King/Hesse streets), Fort Queenscliff Business Plan, the Caravan Parks Strategy for the Recreation Reserve/Victoria Park and the Bowling Club's latest plan for their crown land site. Council has also failed to follow its own Motion from September 2018 in progressing this project. This is a fundamental process issue flaw.

It should be noted that the status of Ocean View Car Park/Lighthouse Reserve/Bullring has changed - the site is now listed by Heritage Victoria - this change of status needs to be considered in the latest version of Destination Queenscliff. Also, the Ocean View Car Park area is still Commonwealth owned land with no State zoning applying. Council have applied to the Planning Minister for a Planning Scheme Amendment to PPRZ without a public engagement process. It is yet to be progressed. Therefore, the key site conditions have yet to be determined. To begin a major project without clearly established site conditions represents in our view a poor planning process and project design brief. It was apparent that Hassell may not have been adequately briefed by Council on the site conditions.

The Workshop session on Friday 2/8/19, confirmed there is very little understanding or appreciation of the social, environmental and heritage values of Shortland's Bluff. The revised design hardly references the concerns expressed by the community last year, instead what we have been presented with is another attempt (the third iteration) to shoehorn community feedback into a narrow set of parameters which align with a predetermined vision that has never been shared with the community. Baseline engagement has once again been inadequate.

It was said during the meeting that the Shortland's Bluff Site is being treated as a "green field" site, and not as a much used and much loved site of significant history and heritage value. This was most obvious during the first plan. Place units on site near the lighthouse with fences and remove the Bull Ring to make way for a cafe complex effectively locking up most of the site and removing it from public use.

Many of the concerns expressed by the invited groups were simply the articulation of social, heritage or environmental values which should have been readily identified through proper research. The demographics are clear and on the Boroughs website that shows the Borough has a population with an average age of near 65 years etc, the complex history of the area that informs the social and heritage importance can be obtained from the many groups and museums that are run with volunteer help. By way of example, those who have worked on Shortland's Bluff's history were exasperated to see how little understood the nationally important military and maritime values

have been acknowledged and that fact that the variation request to Hassells included the provision for removal of existing Cypress trees from the Bull Ring is staggering. This proposal was contained in the non-circulated Brief to Hassell.

The area was and still is one of opportunity to reflect and spend time. To take a break regardless of weather and contemplate what has gone before including the families that watched the ships depart to war with loved ones that may not return or view nature from a location that is rare to find in a time when value per square meter determines who gets access or by what it generates financially rather than what it gives socially and emotionally.

We note this is already a destination. The popularity of the current kiosk, ship viewing from cars, a car park for football followers and beach goers, ANZAC Day Dawn Service and other memorial commemorations. There is little referencing of how this project will attract more people. There has been no revised market analysis.

The Financials

There is very little financial information regarding the project in particular the income and cost projections. In addition the linking of the spending for the Recreational Reserve and the Shortland's Bluff project under the Destination Queenscliff Development further adds to lack of clarity. We understand that the grants intent is to generate economic activity for the Borough, The Bellarine and Victoria, but the financial information would give real insight into the overall plan and detail of what is driving the design.

The inability of Council to provide the Revised Funding agreement, revised Business Plan, budget and updated relevant costings undermines the financial legitimacy of the Project. It is our understanding the Commonwealth Grant does not fund planning processes. This places a huge potential financial burden on ratepayers. There is no cost benefit analysis and no available revised financials.

An example of this is:

- The additional five cabins are now said to be very similar to the current cabins that will be re-sited, and presumably refurbished. They are a modest comfortable cabin aimed at middle level comfort and family friendly. They are not 5 or 6 star Eco-cabins. If correct, the cabins' income would be in a middle range and ensuring family friendly environment would be important to their success and a high occupancy rate.
- This positioning would inform the project and could see a children's play area close by, beach access plus an upgrade for the sea pool below the look out. Native planting would be child friendly and a low speed limit in the area would be applied.
- Marketing planning would result to target families and visitor's alike and promotional material would emphasise the family benefit.

The NSRF grant rightly recommends a Cost Benefit Analysis for those projects seeking funding of more than \$1 million. So, before we spend millions, surely there should be an options analysis phase.

It was also made clear by council representatives there is plenty of time as "little would be done this year". It was also explained there would be a concept stage for the development. All groups that attended indicated their interest in attending.

Recommendation:

1. There needs to be a **community-based working group** established by Council to have formal input into the project known as Destination Queenscliff. Any such group should be convened as a formal body recognised under S.86 of the Local Government Act. This recommendation is not made lightly but must be seen in the context of the amount of work requiring focus in the Borough, and the obvious lack of resources, application and time. Projects requiring attention include The Hub project, Point Lonsdale Lighthouse Reserve, completion required for the Caravan Park Study, Avenue of Honour, Harbour area work plus Hesse street upgrade to mention a few. The detail and practical elements of the plan can be
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further developed by such a group, however there were a number of issues that have been raised and should be commented on.

2. No tree removal at the Bull Ring.
3. The car park should enable close up rip viewing from vehicles, as it does now, providing an all weather opportunity for visitors of all ages and abilities, to the area.
4. The grassed area proposed could be incorporated at the east end of the area, along with the proposed native planting. This would be a good area away from traffic for visiting children.
5. Opening up of channel views, through sensitive management of the vegetation at the east end.
6. The car park revamp should not include curbs or trees as this could restrict use and create trip hazards for visitors to special events e.g. the ANZAC Dawn Service.
7. Review the location of the entry roundabout to avoid traffic problems on busy Queenscliff Football And Cricket game days. Also it should be noted that even on 'away' game days, junior sport commitments ensure this area is busy most Saturdays and Sundays.
8. Introduce Rubbish Bin covers in keeping with the good design.

Cultural & Environmental Concerns.

A major weeding and replanting program is needed for the Queenscliff Lighthouse Reserve and Shortland's Bluff to make it more attractive and usable for visitors and locals. The site is currently heavily infested by invasive weed species which need to be removed and the site replanted and beautified with native species. A local environment group has offered to undertake the planting work if Council organises the removal of the invasive pest plant species.

In regards to the future of the Bullring and existing trees - we are unsure what the "focal point" will include, however the trees should remain for shade and their historic importance and the bullring remain as a commemorative open space and historic ship viewing area for visitors and locals alike.

We are also concerned that not enough emphasis is being placed on the first nations cultural aspects of the Destination Queenscliff Plan.

Thank-you for the opportunity to make this submission.

PLCA Committee of Management, on behalf of PLCA Membership.

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