



# Point Lonsdale Civic Association Inc.

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***Representing Point Lonsdale Residents since 1910***

15/8/2021

To: BoQ Mayor – Cr. Ross Ebbels;  
BoQ Councillors - Cr. Fleur Hewitt, Cr. Susan Salter, Cr. Donnie Grigau, Cr. Michael Grout.

CC. Mr. Martin Gill - CEO BoQ;  
CC. Johann Rajaratnam - General Manager Planning & Infrastructure;

Dear Mayor, Councillors, & Officers;

## **IMPROVING COUNCIL TOURIST PARKS REVIEW SUBMISSION**

In response to Queenscliffe Council's invitation to provide feedback on proposed changes to the management structure and operation of the Council's 4 caravan parks we understand that Council is currently developing a strategy to make our caravan parks more financially sustainable and competitive into the future. Council is investigating operational improvements, new services and opportunities to increase visitation in the winter months.

We also understand This review won't change the Caravan Park Masterplan adopted by Council. While the Masterplan focuses primarily on infrastructure and facilities, this investigation will consider operational and management improvements relating to the way the parks are run. This will help Council take a more holistic approach to managing and improving our tourist parks into the future. Some conclusions in the strategy may recommend amendments to the master-plan, but this would be subject to review following completion of the strategy for business and management.

The following Council resolution from 23 August 2018 Ordinary meeting pages 45 to 95, is last we have in respect of the Council Masterplan for each of the sites. We presume the above management review is consistent with item 2 below.

*Councillors Ebbels / Francis:*

*1. That Council adopt the 'Queenscliffe Council Managed Caravan Parks Masterplan' amended as required to include its preferred outcome for each site as follows:*

*a) **Queenscliff Recreation Reserve & Victoria Park:***

- i. Adopt a minimalist change approach to layout;*
- ii. Replacement of seven cabins with ten high quality eco cabins as part of the Destination Queenscliff project;*
- iii. upgrade power and other services;*
- iv. provide a new amenities block;*
- v. Hesse Street entrance arrangements to be redesigned as part of the 'Destination Queenscliff' detailed design process, incorporating boom gates that do not restrict access to the Monahan Centre;*

- vi. Incorporation of the proposed office, storage/maintenance facility, and staff amenities within the main park entry precinct, to be designed as part of the 'Destination Queenscliff' detailed design process;*
- vii. Provision of a cassette dump point as part of the new amenities block;*
- viii. Provision of an additional dump point elsewhere in the Borough for the emerging RV market.*

**b) Golightly Park:**

*At this stage do not proceed with either draft Master Plan option, but proceed with relocation of five existing cabins from Queenscliff Recreation Reserve to Crown Land at Golightly Park. Council to undertake further community consultation and conduct further investigation to explore long term options.*

**c) Royal Park:**

- i. Minimal changes to layout, configuration and vegetation, with reconstruction of existing unsealed roads and improvement to utilities and flood mitigation;*
- ii. Locate two new entry points as detailed in the proposed plan, and retain the existing entrance, with boom gates to all entrances;*
- iii. Improvement of site office facilities;*
- iv. Upgrade of amenities including new changeroom;*
- v. Inclusion of a camp kitchen in the northern part of the caravan park to replace the existing BBQ shelter;*
- vi. Installation of an electric BBQ in the southern part of the caravan park;*
- vii. Provision of a cassette dump point as part of the new amenities block.*

*2. That officers explore and assess future options for the management and operation of Council's caravan parks, having regard to the capacity of Council resources, financial return and local economic benefits and provide a report to Council within twelve months.*

PLCA would like to make the following comments about future options for the management and operation of Council's dual-use caravan parks.

**1. Need to Complete Queenscliff's Coastal and Marine Management Plan**

Queenscliffe Council is the Committee of Management over some 100 hectares of coastal reserves and parklands including Victoria Park, Recreation Reserve and Royal Park. Golightly Caravan Park is partly freehold Council land, strangely with a NRZ residential zoning, and partly State Government coastal land. Surely before any decisions are made about future operations of these reserves the long-awaited Council Coastal and Marine Management Plan should be completed. Extensive community consultation took place about the future of our coastal reserves and a comprehensive public engagement survey was completed to form the basis of this work. The community needs to see this plan completed.

**2. Improve the Operation by Improving the Services**

Given Council has been delegated with authority to administer these reserves in the community interest we therefore would not like to see the contracting out of the caravanning and camping operations or increasing the times for those seasonal parks (Victoria Park and Royal Park) which we believe will only intensify usage and close out these high quality parklands to the public. If Council wants to improve the operation of their parks they should improve the quality of basic facilities on offer i.e. toilet and ablution blocks in the Point Lonsdale parks – most of the Queenscliff facilities have already been rebuilt or are currently being rebuilt. Fees have also been a long running issue particularly for the users of Golightly Caravan Park. Cabins, which we are told provide a better financial return than traditional camping sites, might also be considered in the mix for upgrading Golightly Caravan Park, subject to agreement with the Golightly Caravan Park user group. Funding for the provision of utility services, cabins and new ablutions block could in part come from the Borough's land sales at Murray Road.

Following the failure of the Destination Queenscliff plans to develop our coastal reserves PLCA is aware of calls from within the community to hand over our coastal reserves to larger neighbouring coastal managers, however, we believe Council is the appropriate manager to continue to administer our coastal land in line with community expectations. Clearly Council plans to introduce high-end accommodation into our parks has not succeeded and has little community support – PLCA believe that the focus should continue to be family oriented holiday sites.

### **3. Need to Recognise Dual–Use Public Parklands**

The recent Bellarine DAL SPP process has highlighted how blessed Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale are in terms of foreshores, parklands and public reserves. None of the other coastal towns on Bellarine have the extensive green parklands we have. Queenscliff in particular is indebted to our forefathers for layout of the township and for all the open spaces we enjoy. The problem with the 2018 Hansen Caravan Parks Masterplan consultancy is that it's primarily about increasing the yield from camping, caravanning and foreshore land sales, which PLCA roundly rejected, not about maintaining and sharing our parklands for public use. PLCA wish to emphasise the dual-use function of Victoria Park and Royal Park where camping and caravanning were traditionally only seasonal during the holiday periods and the parks were allowed to recover for 7-8 months of the year thereby allowing them to be used by locals and visitors for passive recreation. As the climate changes (refer recent UN Red Code alert) increasingly our parks and reserves will be needed for recreational use and our coastal regions will become even more precious.

### **4. Victoria Park and Royal Park**

Victoria Park is our gazetted Botanic Park nestling in the Botanic Gardens Precinct on the approach to Queenscliff village. The 1.5 hectare treed site, which is bounded by many restored historic properties along King and Mercer Streets, has a history extending back the 1850's. This much loved parkland has prolific birdlife, ancient moonah clusters and many new plantings and is an effective green buffer for neighbouring properties to the increasingly hard surfaces and communications tower (another to come), sporting and car parking facilities and the Monahan Centre in the Recreation Reserve – it would be a great shame destroy this ambience with high density year round caravanning, new roads and ugly boom gates that close out the public. There is an opportunity to recapture our Botanic Park and still provide seasonal operations in a much sought after botanic setting.

PLCA has similar concerns with Royal Park which is zoned PCRZ in respect of plans to introduce new elements not sympathetic with this zoning. The current planning application for a large housing project adjacent to the public entrance to Royal Park, if approved, will require in depth consideration of the public's ability to access the Royal Park site, both for year-round recreation, and for emergency access in the case of medical or rescue emergency. To continue to close off the current camper's entrance to Royal Park, with a boom-gate, restricts the use of Royal Park and it's facilities for local recreation, leaving it unused for the majority of the year. Replacing the current BBQ shelter, which is utilised often by local families throughout the year for children's sporting events or family get togethers, with a camp kitchen, further restricts local families for use of the facilities and the amenities within the park precinct.

### **Participation in the Process and Briefing On Latest Masterplans.**

Like some of the new Councillors PLCA would greatly appreciate a briefing on the current status of the Caravan Park Master-plans given the Destination Queenscliff component is no longer part of the plan and additional new facilities are being planning for our parks. We would also appreciate meeting with the Borough's consultants to better understand their role in the process.

We look forward to participating in the next phase in the process

Yours Sincerely,

David Kenwood – President PLCA.      Ref:12082021TPREVIEW

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