



**COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING
(CITY BUSINESS UNITS COMMITTEE)
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
COFF AND CASTLE STREETS, COFFS HARBOUR
5 FEBRUARY 2004
Commencing at 5.00pm**

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COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING
(CITY BUSINESS UNITS COMMITTEE)
5 FEBRUARY 2004

Mayor and Councillors

CITY BUSINESS UNITS DEPARTMENT REPORTS

B4 CURRENT STATUS OF THE REGIONAL SKATEPARK PROJECT

Purpose:

To report on the current status of the Regional Skatepark Project.

Description of Item:

Council in 2002 agreed to provide initial funding for the development of a Regional Skatepark. The site originally planned for was on the northern end of the Jetty Foreshores Park. With the advent of the Jetty Foreshores Working Party it was felt by that Working Party that a skatepark there was inappropriate and the site was relocated to Jetty Oval reserve adjacent to the Pet Porpoise Pool. Community consultation was carried out at that time and the owners of the Pet Porpoise Pool and the Skateboarders agreed to this location.

An application for grant funds from the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation's Regional Assistance Grants was submitted in 2002/03 financial year and the application was unsuccessful. The funding was revoked by Council to the 2003/04 financial year and a further application has been submitted to the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation for funding assistance with this project.

The total cost of developing a Regional Skatepark is expected to be in the vicinity of \$400,000 based on similar developments in other regions.

Sustainability Assessment:

• **Environment**

The site selected for the placement of the facility is a cleared site. There are no environmental impacts with respect to flora or fauna. The construction of a skatepark will have impacts on the neighbourhood with respect to noise. This is the noise of youth at play and is comparable to any playground where large numbers of youth congregate to play.

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B4 Current Status of the Regional Skatepark Project (cont'd)

- **Social**

Skateboarding is a popular pastime for a section of youth. It is practiced by a small but dedicated percentage of youth who range in age from about 8-25 years. It is also a sport which tends to wax and wane in popularity and numbers decrease with age. The greatest numbers of participants would be in the early teen years 11-15 years. Once young people reach 17 and obtain a drivers license the numbers participating in skateboarding reduces dramatically and only the dedicated enthusiast continues in the sport.

Skateboarding in the absence of suitable facilities creates social problems around town centre areas and carparks where there are suitable concrete footpaths and bitumen surfaces. Since the construction of district skateparks in Coffs Harbour, Toormina and Woolgoolga this problem has diminished but has not totally eradicated the problem. It is doubtful that further skatepark developments will reduce this problem further. The main problem is one of access. Young people need to be taken to specially constructed facilities but footpaths, roadway and carparks are available close to dwellings and are easily accessible. Shopping centres and town centers will also be used.

- **Economic**

Broader Economic Implications

Regional skateboard facilities are being developed in many centres across Australia. There is a small but growing group of professional skaters who travel from centre to centre to skate in regional competitions. These competitions encourage local youth to improve their skating abilities and some progress to State and National competitions. The numbers of people attracted to the venue tends to be relatively small however it is a developing spectator sport and where regional skateparks have been established skate carnivals are well patronised by spectators.

Management Plan Implications

Council has already included \$100,000 in the 2003/04 Management Plan for the construction of a Regional Skatepark. This was included on the basis that an application would be made to the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation for a Regional Facilities Grant of \$100,000. This application was made in 2002/03 financial year and was unsuccessful and has been made again this year. The result of this application is not yet known. The \$200,000 would enable Stage I of a 3 stage design and construct programme to be undertaken. Should Council wish to commence construction of Stage 1 in the 2004/05 financial year and is not successful in obtaining a grant, then Council will need to vote a further \$100,000 to commence this project. Additional funds of \$100,000 per Stage will be required to complete Stages 2 and 3.

Investigations have commenced to ascertain the possibility of getting private sector funding to assist in the construction of both the Skatepark and the Youth Park. This may reduce Council's cash liability.

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B4 Current Status of the Regional Skatepark Project (cont'd)

Consultation:

Local skate group, CHAOS, was consulted with respect to the location of the park as were neighbours, the Pet Porpoise Pool owners. Positive reactions were obtained from both groups. The location was also discussed with Coffsac who advised that they didn't have any objections to the site provided it didn't affect the use of Jetty Oval at this stage. The location of the skateboard park will not affect the use of Jetty Oval for sport.

Related Policy and / or Precedents:

Council has already constructed district level skateparks at Toormina, Bray Street and Woolgoolga. The remaining level of facility to be constructed is a regional facility.

Issues:

The design and construction of skatepark is a complex and specialized process. It has been reported that some Councils have spent up to \$300,000 on design alone. Because of this there has been a number of Companies start up who specialise in design and construction of skateparks. Design and construct quotations were used for the development of both the Toormina and Woolgoolga parks.

It is proposed that a similar process would be used for the Regional Skatepark at Jetty Oval reserve. This design and construct process utilises the specialised skills of the Company in the consultation and design phase and also uses the specialist skills of Company personnel in the construction phase. This is particularly important because of the complex curves, edges and run on and off areas required for skateboarding.

Because of funding the park will need to be constructed in stages as funds can be made available. It is proposed that should Council be successful in obtaining a grant from the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation then a tender would be called for a design and construct contract which would require the contractor to carry out a full design of a complete skatepark and specify the extent of construction proposed for the available funds.

Second and third stage construction would be carried out as funds are made available.

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that skateboarding is in a wane phase at present. This can be seen by the number of youth using the current district facilities and from observations by Rangers and City Parks staff. Numbers using facilities would suggest that skateboarding has declined to the hardcore enthusiasts who are always looking for more challenging skate areas to improve and increase their skill levels. A Regional Skatepark is specifically designed to meet this increased challenge and skill development particularly for the hard core enthusiast.

Because of the nature and scope of a Regional Skatepark there would be a minimum size construction requirement. Because of funding constraints construction of half the park as a first stage is considered to be the minimum size to construct to make the park usable. This will, however, depend on design. Every effort will be made to ensure that Stage I will be fully functional as a Regional facility with further stages enhancing its usability and complexity.

Announcement of successful Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation Regional Grants are not expected before late March but there has been no official notification of timings to Department Officers at this time.

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B4 Current Status of the Regional Skatepark Project (cont'd)

This skatepark is seen as a first stage of the development of a youth park which would be established on Jetty Oval. Construction of the ovals at Marshalls Sporting Fields and Polwarth Drive combined with the upgrading of fields at McLean Street, Bray Street and York Street have seen a decline in the use of Jetty Oval as a sporting field. This trend is expected to continue, particularly as Clubs seek grounds which have a minimum of two ovals at the one site to facilitate Club fixtures. Jetty Oval is only a single field and is losing favour as a venue as a consequence.

The development of facilities such as a specialised BMX track, outdoor basketball, netball, half court tennis and a teen style playground on Jetty Oval would provide much needed facilities for unstructured recreation for the youth of the City. Planning has already commenced for this project and will be reported to Council when draft plans are completed.

Implementation Date / Priority:

Working on an announcement by early April should Council be successful in obtaining a grant then it could be expected that a design and construct tender would be called in May with a tender let in June. Construction should then be carried out in the first half of 2004/05 financial year. It should be noted however that this process will be dependent on successfully obtaining a grant to augment the funds Council has already allocated to this project.

Recommendation:

That Council note the current situation with respect to the development of a Regional Skatepark and a further report be brought back to Council when the results of the application for Capital Assistance funding is known.

P C Littler
Director of City Business Units