

Minutes for this meeting will be confirmed at the Planning, Environment & Development Committee Meeting to be held in the Council Chambers, Council Administration Building, on 22 July 2004 commencing 4pm.



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

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CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

The following items either in whole or in part may be considered in Closed Meeting for the reasons stated:

A portion of these reports are confidential for the reason of Section 10A(2):

- (d) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed:
 - (i) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or
 - (ii) confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the council, or
 - (iii) reveal a trade secret.

and in accordance with Section 10A (1) the meeting may be closed to the public

CITY BUSINESS UNITS DEPARTMENT REPORT

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COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING
(CITY BUSINESS UNITS COMMITTEE)
1 July 2004

Mayor and Councillors

CITY BUSINESS UNITS DEPARTMENT REPORTS

B21 RECREATION PREFERENCE STUDY 2004

Purpose:

To report to Council the results of the community Recreation Preference survey undertaken by Parks Branch to determine future Open Space Recreation demand within the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area and to provide a basis for a review of Council's Open Space Strategy.

Description of Item:

In 1989, and again in 1996, Parks Branch conducted a Recreation Preference survey of both adult residents throughout the LGA, and students from selected High Schools. The purpose of the survey was to identify trends within the community of usage of current recreation facilities and opportunities, and to predict future recreation demand of new facilities. The survey results were then compiled in a Recreation Preference Study and incorporated into Councils 1998 Open Space Strategy, ensuring that what the community considered to be important in terms of recreation opportunity became a key driver in Councils Strategic Open Space and Recreation Planning.

In 2002, City Parks replicated the 1996 survey, using a similar survey design. This enabled direct comparison with the earlier results from 1989 and 1996, identifying changes in recreation trends over time.

Residents were surveyed on a number of topics to obtain a community profile of leisure patterns, attitudes, recreation preferences and needs. The survey results have been compiled into the 2004 Recreation Preference Study. This information will be used as part of the review of the current 1998 Open Space Strategy, to be undertaken by City Parks later this year.

cont'd

B21 Recreation Preference Study 2004 (cont'd)

Sustainability Assessment:

- **Environment**

This Study has no environmental impact.

- **Social**

Equity

Recreation preferences in any community change with time. This Study seeks to elicit what trends are occurring in the community and whether these will have any significant bearing on the provision of infrastructure across the City.

Community Well Being

By achieving broader and more equitable provision of recreation opportunities, general community well-being will be enhanced, leading to improved mental and physical health.

- **Economic**

Broader Economic Implications

Identification of community needs and trends will enable Council to optimise usage of Recreation facilities and Open Space, thus maximising the benefits from Council expenditure.

Management Plan Implications

There should be no Management Plan implications as Council is currently undertaking maintenance of, and facility development within, Community Open Space. The Recreation Preference Study will assist in prioritising allocation of existing Council resources and effort.

Consultation:

Comments were sought from the Strategic Planning and Design Branches as well as the Sports Unit both prior to and on the results of the Recreation Preference Study. These comments have been incorporated into the Study.

Advice was also sought from various comparable local councils throughout NSW in the preparation of the Study.

Related Policy and / or Precedents:

The Recreation Preference Study accords with current Council Policy.

Statutory Requirements:

There are no statutory requirements for this Study.

cont'd

B21 Recreation Preference Study 2004 (cont'd)

Issues:

Council commenced a process in 1989 to gather information on recreation patterns and preferences within the Coffs Harbour community. This process was repeated in 1995 to ascertain if changes had occurred in the community's recreation preferences over time. The process also aimed to compare Coffs Harbour to other comparable Local Government areas and to National findings, to ascertain if Coffs Harbour followed similar trends in recreation preferences.

Generally the findings reflected the results obtained from the earlier Recreation Preference Surveys. Golf and tennis continue to be the most popular sports activity, with walking and swimming ranking highly as preferred recreation activities.

In terms of recreation infrastructure provision, walkways between residential areas and cycleways continue to rate as a high priority for expenditure. Other high priority items were picnic and BBQ facilities, an Outdoor Entertainment Area and a Recreation Centre for the Aged.

Generally the desire was for more Open Space to be provided with more modest facilities rather than the alternative of less Open Space with more expansive facilities.

Beaches, Coastal Parks, and Creeks and Foreshores were still the most preferred Open Space destinations for the majority of people .

The study also identified that, whilst the quality of, and access to, facilities has improved since 1996, there is still a need for a better public transport system, with this being cited as a major reason for non-use of recreation venues.

Attached is a copy of the Executive Summary which provides more detail on the key results of the Study. Copies of the Study will be distributed to the Councillor's and a copy placed in the Councillor's Room.

Implementation Date / Priority:

Findings of this Study will be incorporated in the review of the Open Space Strategy.

Recommendation:

That Council:

- 1. Adopt the draft 2004 Recreation Preference Study, and endorse its use as a strategic planning tool for future Recreation provision and Open Space management within the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area.**

Pat Littler
Director City Business Units

Attachments:

Coffs Harbour City Recreation Preference Study 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Coffs Harbour City Council is currently reviewing its 1998 Open Space Strategy. To assist in determining future strategic directions for Open Space and recreation provision in Coffs Harbour, a Recreation Preference Survey was undertaken. In December 2002, Council distributed 1260 self-completion questionnaires to the general community, and 330 to specific High Schools throughout the LGA. 560 general surveys were returned and 139 from the selected High Schools. Corindi and Red Rock have not been included in this survey as they were not part of the Coffs Harbour LGA at the time of the survey.

This report summarises the results of these questionnaires.

The Research Methodology is detailed in Section 2 and the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1. A brief summary of the major findings are outlined below with more detailed results shown in Sections 3-8.

Population Overview

Coffs Harbour City Local Government Area had an estimated population of 61 635 persons on 7 August 2001 when the last census was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Incorporating the recent additions of Red Rock, Corindi Beach and the Corindi Plateau to the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area brings the estimated population to 62 902 persons on Census night.

Population projections indicate that Coffs Harbour's growth between 1996 and 2001 equated to the state average with continued population growth predicted well into the 21st Century. Coastal areas continue to be a popular retirement destination, with the coastal fringe of the Mid North Coast in particular continuing to attract ageing baby boomers from larger metropolitan areas and other rural areas of the state.

The population of the Mid North Coast, including Coffs Harbour, is ageing more rapidly than in the state as a whole, reflecting its popularity as a retirement destination. Over one quarter of the Coffs Harbour population is aged 55 or over. This compares to the State average of one fifth.

Population declines have occurred in certain age groups, notably the younger age groups of 0 to 9 and 20 to 39. This may reflect that people in the 20 to 39 age group are moving away to undertake tertiary study and to obtain employment.

Employment wise, nearly half the work force in Coffs Harbour is employed in the Service Industry with a further quarter engaged in wholesale or retail trade.

The unemployment rate in Coffs Harbour was estimated to be 13.2%, significantly higher than the 7.2% estimated for NSW as a whole.

Key Findings

In terms of recreation infrastructure provision, walkways between residential areas and cycleways continue to rate as a high priority for expenditure. Other high priority items were picnic and BBQ facilities, an Outdoor Entertainment Area and a Recreation Centre for the Aged.

Generally the desire was for more Open Space to be provided with more modest facilities rather the alternative of less Open Space with more expansive facilities.

Beaches, Coastal Parks, and Creeks and Foreshores were still the most preferred Open Space destinations for the majority of people .

The study also identified the need for a better public transport system, with this being cited as a major reason for non-use of recreation venues.

Further findings are detailed below:

Sporting Activities

Adults

The Top 3 Sports that were played in Coffs Harbour in 2002 were:

- Golf
- Tennis
- Rugby League

Golf and Tennis had high levels of player participation whilst Rugby League was predominantly a spectator sport.

Golf, Tennis, Soccer and Lawn Bowls have all maintained participation levels since 1995. All other sports have declined slightly. This may reflect that a wider choice of sporting opportunities is now available. These results should be further investigated with local sporting clubs.

High School Students

For High school students, the top 3 sports participated in were:

- Soccer
- Ten Pin Bowls
- Basketball

Soccer has shown the most dramatic increase since 1995 with Basketball showing a slight increase. Ten Pin Bowls was not an option in the 1995 survey. Generally, participation in most sports has stayed the same or increased slightly since 1995. Exceptions include Athletics, Cricket, Squash, and Competitive Swimming.

Recreational Activities

Adults

The 3 favourite Recreational Activities were:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Fishing

This correlates with both the 1989 and 1996 surveys.

The top 3 informal leisure activities were:

- Clubs/Restaurants
- Picnics and BBQ's in public places
- Walking for pleasure

High School Students

The 3 favourite Recreational Activities were:

- Surfing/Body Boarding
- Swimming
- Soccer

This compares with Surfing/Body Boarding, Swimming and Basketball in 1995.

The top informal leisure activities were:

- Visiting nightclubs/movies
- Beach swimming
- Clubs/Restaurants
- Picnics and BBQ's.

Children

The most popular children's activities were:

- Swimming
- Using parks and reserves for informal games
- Using playgrounds

With the exception of new categories added for the 2002 survey, this correlates with the 1995 survey.

Usage of Recreation Venues

The most used venues in the 12 months prior to the survey, consistent across all age categories, were:

Adults

Beaches
Coastal foreshores and creek side parks
Bushland
Walkways/cycleways

These results reflect the 1995 survey, however, usage has generally decreased slightly across all venues surveyed, possibly due to the addition of new venue categories to the question for the 2002 survey.

High School Students

Beaches
Outdoor Sports grounds
Bushland
Coastal foreshores and creek side parks

These results also mirror the 1996 survey.

There is a strong correlation between venues people used and the popularity of venues by actual usage, with the exception of walkways/cycleways and sportsgrounds, which ranked higher with actual use than with preference. The results also show a gradual decrease over time in the usage of indoor sporting facilities, the Botanic Gardens and the Library. In relation to Library usage, these results are at variance with statistics kept by the Library, which indicate that usage is generally increasing.

For High school students, Beaches and Outdoor facilities are the most used facilities, followed by bushland, walkways/cycleways and coastal foreshores and creekside parks. All other venues are used infrequently. Notably, usage of indoor sports facilities declined markedly since 1996.

Preferred Venues

For adults, the overall most preferred venues were Beaches, Coastal foreshores and Creek side parks, followed a distant 3rd by Libraries.

For High school students the overall most preferred venues were Beaches, Outdoor sportsground / facility followed by Coastal foreshores and Creek side Parks.

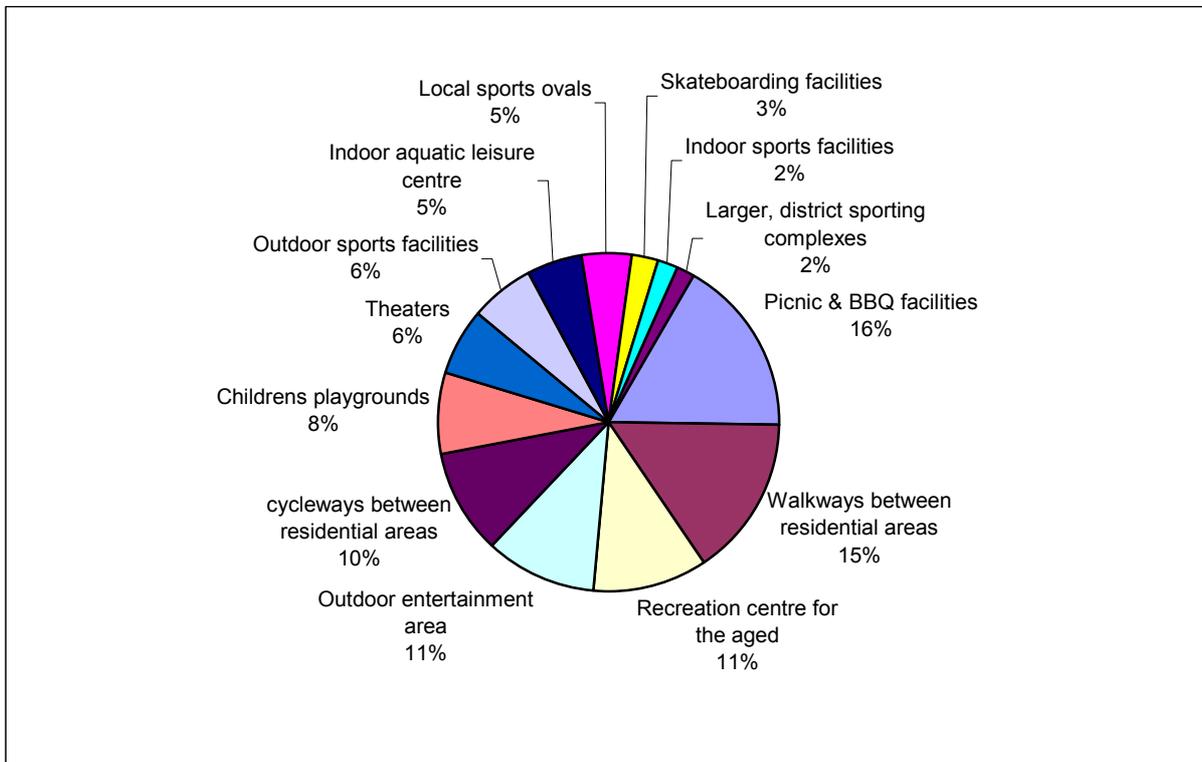
The main reasons cited for being unable to use their favourite venue were, for adults, being too busy, poor health/injury and family responsibilities. These ranked much higher than in 1996. Conversely poor facilities and transport problems showed marked improvements, ranking much lower in 2002 than 1996.

For High school students the major reasons for non-use were transport problems, the weather and poor facilities.

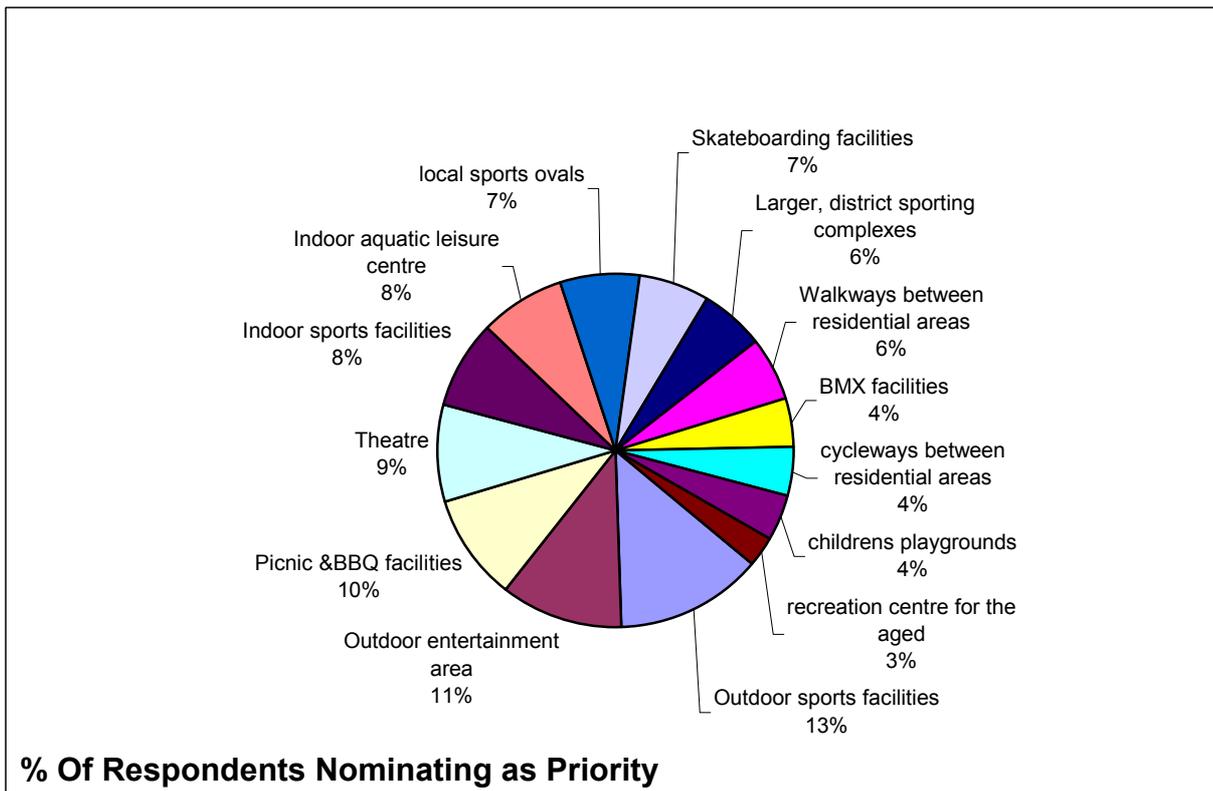
Future Recreation Spending Preferences

Participants were asked to list their priorities for spending on recreation facilities. Rankings are detailed in the following charts.

Adult Respondents

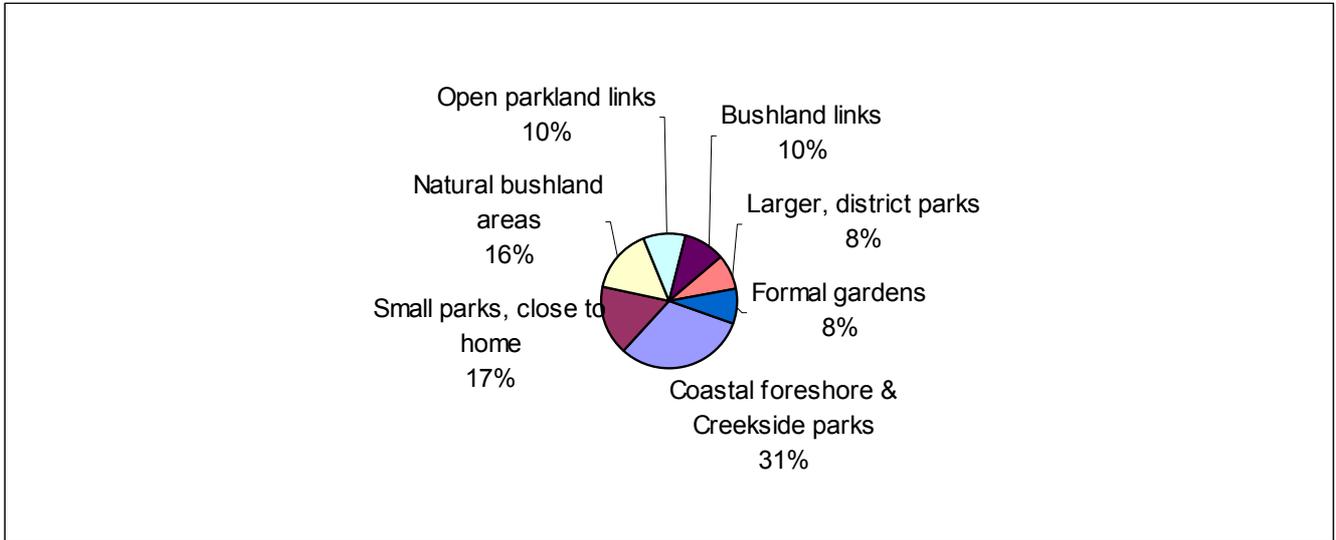


High School Respondents



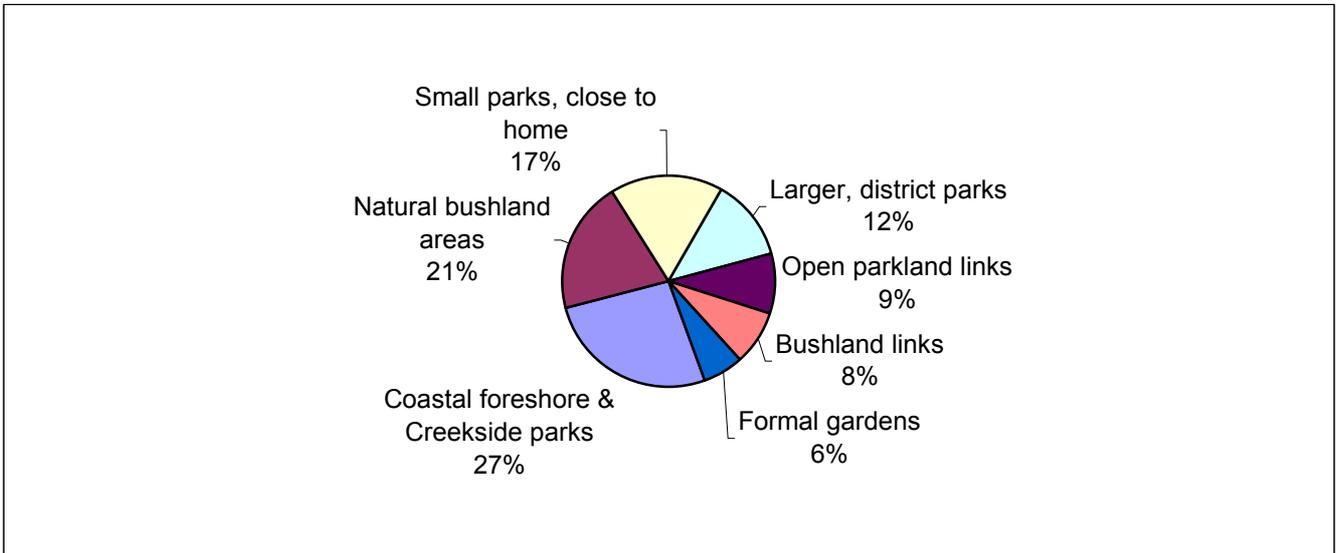
Participants were also asked to list their top priorities for spending on Open Space. Rankings are detailed in the following charts.

Adult Respondents



The High school students top 3 priorities mirrored the Adults surveyed in terms of ranking.

High School Student Respondents



Quality and Quantity Preference

Respondents generally had a desire for more open space with more modest facilities rather than less open space with more extensive facilities.

Provision of Commercial Type Facilities in Parks

Generally people were in favour of allowing Kiosks in Parks. A major departure from previous surveys was on the issue of restaurant in Parks, previously, people surveyed were strongly against. This survey, 54% of people were in favour.

People are also now slightly in favour of letting private leases on public land. In past years it has been a strong number.

The majority of people supported allowing hire equipment on Beaches and in Parks.

Recreation Experience Types

Respondents were grouped into 6 different Experience Types, based on what they considered to be important desired outcomes from their recreation experiences. People with similar desired outcomes were considered to represent a distinct Experience Type.

The 6 Experience Types generally reflected the entire sample surveyed in terms of their preferences for types of open space, venues and desired recreational expenditure.

PLANNING ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORTS

PED19 DRAFT SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE COFFS CREEK FLYING-FOX CAMP

Purpose:

This report provides a brief description of the Draft Site Management Plan for the Coffs Creek Flying-fox Camp (Draft Plan supplied separately to Councillors).

The report recommends that community consultation be sought in regard to the actions proposed in the plan by placing the document on public exhibition and informing relevant stakeholders of the process.

Description of Item:

The Management Plan was prepared in response to a critical situation where, due to drought conditions across much of NSW, a large congregation of flying-foxes occurred at the Coffs Creek site. This situation was exacerbated by the removal of Camphor Laurel to the north of the camp's core area causing the animals to become concentrated closer to residents. The subsequent listing of the Grey-headed flying-fox as vulnerable on the NSW Threatened Species Act meant that there was now a legal requirement for the owner of the land to protect the habitat of this species.

Raymac Pty Ltd owns the majority of the land on which the camp is situated with the remainder Crown land. This land will be transferred to Council when the final linen plan for the adjacent development DA 466/92 is released. The responsibility for the management of the site will then be transferred to Council.

The plan seeks to achieve a balance between protecting the interests and amenity of residents and protecting the high conservation values of the Flying-fox camp, Koala Habitat and the Endangered Ecological Community "Lowland Rainforest on Floodplain in the NSW North Coast Bioregion."

A major focus of the actions proposed in the plan is to provide a buffer between the camp and the residents immediately adjoining the camp. This will be completed in three major stages. Gundagai Street, where residents are most affected by the camp was designated Stage 1. A licence authorising the work was obtained from Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) to lop non-native vegetation along the edge of the camp where it overhangs residential living areas. Residents were contacted by mail and invited to complete a short survey to ascertain their attitudes to living adjacent to the camp. A follow up site meeting was then conducted if requested by the resident to discuss their concerns. Seven residents requested that overhanging branches of non-native vegetation be lopped on their properties.

This work was carried out in April when breeding activity in the camp would be least affected. The residents involved have expressed appreciation for the works completed as they now have a buffer between the camp and their backyards. Further consultation with residents will take place when a large influx of flying-foxes next occurs.

The plan also proposes actions, which will lessen the density of animals roosting in the "core" area and alleviate the effects from odour, noise and droppings from the camp on adjacent residents by providing alternative roosting habitat away from residential living areas.

cont'd

Ped19 Draft Site Management Plan For The Coffs Creek Flying-Fox Camp (cont'd)

These actions will most benefit residents immediately adjoining the camp. An education campaign will be undertaken to provide other concerned residents with measures to alleviate any unwanted effects they may have experienced.

The education campaign will also provide information to the wider community in regard to the importance of flying-foxes to the ecology of native forests and how creation of additional food resources and habitat across the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area (LGA) through Council's habitat creation and regeneration activities will provide relief for members of the community affected by roosting or feeding flying-foxes.

Sustainability Assessment:

- **Environment**

The actions proposed in the plan will protect and enhance the flying-fox camp, Koala Habitat and the Endangered Ecological Community "Lowland Rainforest on Floodplain in the NSW North Coast Bioregion." No further Camphor Laurel or exotic canopy tree species removal will take place at the site until plantings of native tree species reach a height and density where they can be utilized by roosting flying-foxes.

This will delay the removal of Camphor Laurel in the area of the camp, which will have implications for weed removal programmes in the area. Seed dispersal by birds means that Camphor Laurel seedlings will continue to become established down and upstream of the camp. These seedlings will need to be removed from Council maintained areas.

- **Social**

The actions proposed in the plan will alleviate conflicts between the community and the camp by modifying the edge of the camp where adverse effects from noise, droppings and odour directly impact on residents and by creating alternative roosting habitat away from residential living areas.

The plan proposes an education programme to address community concerns regarding the potential health risk from living adjacent to a flying-fox camp. This campaign will highlight the fact that the health risk posed by the camp to the community is minimal.

- **Economic**

The plan provides opportunities for employment in environmental management and education, bush regeneration and the ecotourism industry.

Currently there is no available funding except through the Environmental Levy fund. The plan identifies other potential funding sources such as State and Federal government threatened species recovery action programmes.

Consultation:

It is proposed to now publicly exhibit the plan. During exhibition, it is proposed to hold a community information session to explain the implications of the plan and the process for lodging submissions.

cont'd

Ped19 Draft Site Management Plan For The Coffs Creek Flying-Fox Camp (cont'd)

Statutory Requirements:

The plan provides a framework for co-ordinating Council's responsibilities under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act, 1999*, *Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995*, *NPW Act, 1974*, *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* and the *Rural Fires Act, 1997*.

The DEC recommends that an environmental impact assessment process be undertaken for any proposal to clear or modify camp vegetation or to disturb a camp and that the proponent contact DEC to discuss the proposal and any licensing required. The DEC does not generally support proposals to disturb flying-fox camps as:

- permanent relocation is likely to depend on a continuing program of disturbance;
- threatened species may be harmed and/or their habitat damaged;
- flying-foxes may relocate to less desirable locations, for example, scattering throughout town, or roosting adjacent to more intensively developed sites; and
- such exercises are costly in terms of personnel and financial resources with uncertain outcomes.

Any other significant disturbance to roost sites, whether intentional or as a consequence of other action, should also be assessed for its potential to cause a significant impact on the population, prior to the activity taking place.

The DEC, as consent authority for the *Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995*, under which many of the actions proposed in the plan are covered, has been consulted during the preparation of this plan and have given approval to the actions proposed in the plan.

Comments from City Parks

City Parks Branch has been working closely with the developer Raymac Pty Ltd in the implementation of the consent conditions of DA 466/92. This involved the regeneration of the lowland rainforest along Coffs Creek. There is still significant work to be undertaken. This plan will cause modifications to the works program. The changes will be easily accommodated. The planting to be undertaken on the reserve land to be acquired and will mitigate the major problem for adjoining property owners once it is established. This could take from 10 – 15 years for the trees to establish sufficient canopy to provide habitat for the flying-foxes.

Issues:

- **Creation of a Buffer around the Camp**

A buffer between the camp and adjacent residents is to be created and maintained in three stages and is illustrated in figure 1.

- **Regeneration of Habitat away from Residential Areas**

It is proposed to plant out the eastern edge of area A which will still leave area for the provision of a playground and open floodway area.

cont'd

Ped19 Draft Site Management Plan For The Coffs Creek Flying-Fox Camp (cont'd)



Figure 1: Coffs Creek Flying-fox Camp

- **Removal of Non-native Vegetation**

Condition 12 of DA 466/92 requires the implementation of actions detailed in a Habitat Improvement Program, namely the poisoning of non-native vegetation along Coffs Creek and regenerating the area with appropriate native vegetation. The poisoning of an area of Camphor Laurels which formed part of the area utilized by flying-foxes as a roosting site resulted in flying-foxes roosting further downstream and over residential living areas in Gundagai Street bringing them into conflict with residents.

It is proposed that only non-canopy weeds are to be removed until trees in the regeneration areas form a closed canopy, which can be utilized by flying-foxes.

cont'd

Ped19 Draft Site Management Plan For The Coffs Creek Flying-Fox Camp (cont'd)

A requirement of the Habitat Improvement Program is that "those trees which may cause significant blockage of the creek flow will be removed".

Implementation Date / Priority:

It is proposed to exhibit the Draft Site Management Plan for the Coffs Creek Flying-fox Camp for 28 days with a further 14 days to receive submissions. A report on submissions is anticipated to be presented to Council in August 2004.

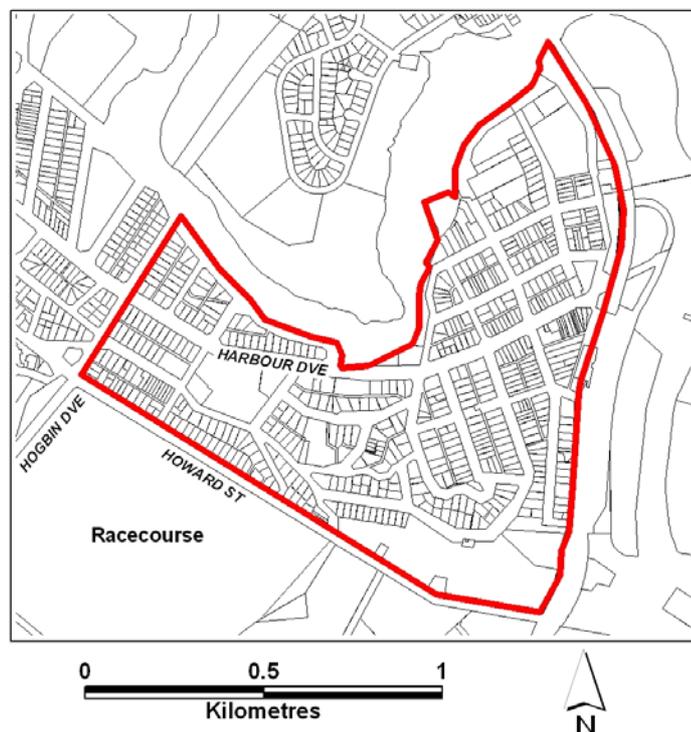
Recommendation:

- 1. That the Draft Site Management Plan for the Coffs Creek Flying-fox Camp be publicly exhibited.**
- 2. That all landholders and residents immediately adjoining the camp be informed of the exhibition of the plan by mail.**
- 3. That a community information session be held during the exhibition to assist understanding of the plan.**

PED20 COFFS HARBOUR JETTY MASTERPLAN: PRECINCTS WEST OF THE HARBOUR

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the status of the Jetty Masterplan, which Council engaged the Urban Design Advisory Service (UDAS) to produce; UDAS is an advisory arm of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources. UDAS have advised Council that as a result of a restructure they are unable to carry out the project. The report recommends that Council annul the contract with UDAS and invite expressions of interest from suitably qualified professional bodies to undertake the project. A map of the extent of the Jetty Area Masterplan is shown below.



Description of Item:

A comprehensive Masterplan for the Jetty precincts west of the railway line will provide a framework for the future development and growth of the Coffs Harbour Jetty area, designed to meet the needs of users of the Jetty area; being residents, developers, visitors and the greater community.

On 20 November 2003, Council endorsed the commencement of the Jetty Masterplan project by UDAS, following a successful application for funds available from DIPNR's Design Quality Program, which is a \$1.5 million package to improve the design quality of residential flat developments in New South Wales. On 25 May 2004 Council was informed of an organisational restructure by DIPNR. The result was a significant reduction in funding and staff for UDAS, consequently UDAS is unable to complete the project. UDAS has requested an annulment of the project contract as signed by Council on 3 November 2003.

cont'd

Ped20 Coffs Harbour Jetty Masterplan: Precincts West Of The Harbour (cont'd)

Sustainability Assessment:

- **Environment**

The issues discussed in this report have no environmental impact.

- **Social**

The issues discussed in this report have no social impact.

- **Economic**

Broader Economic Implications

Council has committed \$40,000 to the Jetty Masterplan project. Council was granted an additional \$40,000 by UDAS from the Design Quality Program by matching the Council commitment, making a total of \$80,000 available for the project. There are no implications to Council's Management Plan.

Issues:

Requirement for a New Design Consultant

As UDAS are now unable to undertake the project, a new design consultant needs to be engaged to undertake the project. Expressions of interest will be sought from appropriately qualified consultants.

Review of the Design Brief

Preparation of a revised design brief to advertise to prospective consultants is required, as the initial brief to UDAS was in the form of application for Design Quality Program funding. An amended design brief (suitable to needs) has been produced (supplied separately to Councillors).

Conclusion:

The Jetty Masterplan is an important project which will be of great benefit to the Coffs Harbour community. Such benefits include a comprehensive vision for the future neighbourhood character of the area with appropriate design guidelines; a vibrant business area at the Jetty strip which will provide employment opportunities; and improvements to pedestrian travel and other public spaces. Council has \$80,000 in committed funding to produce a quality masterplan which will provide design direction and a strategy for Jetty precincts west of the railway line.

Recommendation:

- 1. That Council formally annul the contract pertaining to the Jetty Masterplan, co-signed by Council's General Manager and the Director of Urban Design Advisory Service on 3 November 2003.**
- 2. That Council endorse the "Masterplan and Development Control Plan for the Coffs Harbour Jetty Area" design brief for provision to prospective consultants.**

Gina Vereker
Director Planning Environment and Development Committee

CITY BUSINESS UNITS DEPARTMENT REPORT

B22 PROPOSED PURCHASE AND CONVERSION OF THE OLD CINEMA CENTRE IN VERNON STREET, COFFS HARBOUR CONFIDENTIAL

Purpose:

To obtain Council approval to purchase the old Cinema Centre property in Vernon Street, Coffs Harbour for conversion into a centre for musical and performing arts.

Description of Item:

Last year the local Conservatorium of Music approached Council with the idea of acquiring the old Cinema Centre Complex and converting the disused cinemas into an auditoria and recital centre. Staff have been investigating the feasibility of this proposal and have held negotiations with the current owner in relation to purchasing the property. This has been undertaken in conjunction with Mr John Mostyn of the Conservatorium.

The property consists of an arcade of shops running between Harbour Drive and Vernon Street with the three disused cinemas above. The purchase of this of property should be considered from a community, social and commercial point of view. The proposal allows for the provision of facilities currently unavailable in the City and creates further activity in the City Centre.

Major issues and actions taken to date are as follows:

1. *Disabled Access*

This building has a history in relation to the provision of disabled access to the cinema complex. If Council were to use it as intended, disabled access would be required to be provided to all levels. Local Architect, Ross Colquhoun was engaged to determine if this was achievable. The answer is yes, but it would involve installation of a small lift and chair lifters to certain stairways.

2. *Suitability for Intended Use*

Council engaged an expert (Tony Youlden) to prepare an Acoustic Report on the premises. The report was favourable and included a list of works required for acoustics and lighting.

3. *Proposed Works and Cost of Conversion*

The proposed works include a new entry foyer incorporating the shop on the corner of the arcade, the construction of two stages, artists' change room and amenities and provision of disabled access and disabled toilet. Proposed Auditorium 1 will have 130 seats and Auditorium 2, 170 seats. The third theatre of 99 seats will continue to be used for the showing of non commercial film and used for educational purposes.

In relation to this conversion the venue will certainly accommodate a range of musical opportunities. This is an area of cultural endeavour which is not adequately serviced by facilities in the City. In terms of dramatic and other performing arts, having stage access from only one side in both auditoriums 1 and 2 may prove limiting as will lack of back stage area.

cont'd

B22 Proposed Purchase And Conversion Of The Old Cinema Centre In Vernon Street, Coffs Harbour Confidential (cont'd)

The actual seats themselves were removed from the theatres when they closed down. They have recently been returned to the premises, but not reinstalled. Some are damaged and all need a clean, some will need to be replaced.

Using the plans prepared by Ross Colquhoun (note, not working drawings), Page Kirkland, Quantity Surveyors were engaged to prepare a cost estimate of alterations required. Tony Youlden was asked to estimate the costs of his recommended acoustic and lighting treatments. Total cost of alterations and fit out is estimated at \$900,000.

4. Business Plan

Refer to Confidential attachment.

Sustainability Assessment:

- **Environment**

There will be no significant environmental impacts from the acquisition and conversion of the property, as it will continue to be used in much the same way as it was previously.

- **Social**

The social impacts will be positive and will provide an excellent music facility across a broad range of genre that otherwise may not have come to the city. It will expose the community, particularly the younger members of the population, to musical experiences that are not presently available.

The proposal would also generate employment and improve the social fabric of the community.

- **Economic**

Broader Economic Implications

Council's staff have been negotiating with the owner in relation to the purchase price of the property. This and other economic issues are discussed under the confidential issues section of the report.

Management Plan Implications

It is proposed to fund the purchase and renovation of the property from the Sewerage Fund. Rental income would be returned to the fund. If the matter proceeds, the purchase and conversion of the building will take a period of time and therefore there will be little, if any, impact on the 2004/2005 budget in relation to subsidising the operation of the facility. A full year subsidy in the initial years of operation of this facility in conjunction with the Jetty Theatre could be in the order of \$120,000. It is noted that \$57,000 is included in next year's Draft Management Plan to subsidise the operations of the Jetty Theatre. There will be no borrowing costs as the Sewerage Fund capital expenditure will be from Reserve Funds.

cont'd

B22 Proposed Purchase And Conversion Of The Old Cinema Centre In Vernon Street, Coffs Harbour Confidential (cont'd)

Council was successful in obtaining a Commonwealth Grant of \$350,000 towards the proposed entertainment facility at the Showground that did not proceed. Discussions with the Commonwealth as to whether this money could be transferred to this project have been positive.

Issues:

Refer to the confidential attachment.

Consultation:

Most of the consultation with the local Conservatorium of Music has been through Mr John Mostyn, who is a Director, and former Councillor Bill Wood.

A number of processes of community consultation have been held regarding the needs in terms of performance space. These consultations have resulted in a view that a performance venue which will meet a range of needs is required. These needs include a raked seat performance facility capable of:

- Hosting local performing arts activities
- Hosting touring productions
- Hosting conference presentations
- Mounting functions in high quality surroundings
- Offering community based cultural groups a meeting facility
- Offering educational institutions a state of the art performance space

This Vernon Street venue will meet these needs in a limited capacity.

Council's Department of Planning Environment and Development advise as follows:

The existing use of the building is defined under the Coffs Harbour City Council LEP 2000 as an "entertainment facility". This use will not change with the conversion from a cinema to a live performance venue. The use is permissible with development consent in the Business 3A City Centre Zone. The conversion of the building from a cinema to a performance venue includes building alterations and therefore requires development consent.

The development proposes a reduction in seating. No additional carparking provision is required as a result of the proposed development.

The building conversion and new use as a performance venue needs to satisfy the relevant provisions of the Building Code of Australia. Subject to the provision of working drawings the plans appear to comply with disabled access requirements.

Corporate Services comment:

"Funding is currently provided in 2004/05 Management Plan for the acquisition and improvement of the facility from cash reserves in the Sewer Fund. Council's risk exposure is minimised on this basis compared to that of debt funding.

The viability of the centre is difficult to estimate given uncertainty with patronage and quality of performances. Overall the proposal is a reasonable investment based on net commercial return."

cont'd

B22 Proposed Purchase And Conversion Of The Old Cinema Centre In Vernon Street, Coffs Harbour Confidential (cont'd)

Implementation Date / Priority:

If approved, pre purchase investigations will commence immediately with a view to exchanging contracts as soon as possible.

Recommendation:

1. That Council acquire the property known as Lot 33 DP 801765 Vernon Street Coffs Harbour for the price indicated in the confidential section of the report.
2. That the land be classified as operational land under the Local Government Act 1993 (as amended).
3. That funding for the purchase and renovation of the premises be from the Sewerage Fund.
4. That Council officially request that the \$350,000 Commonwealth Grant for the former proposed Entertainment Centre be transferred to this project.
5. That all necessary documents be executed under the common seal of Council.

**Pat Littler
Director City Business Units**