

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 16 December 2004 commencing 5pm.



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

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COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING
(CITY BUSINESS UNITS COMMITTEE)
2 DECEMBER 2004

Mayor and Councillors

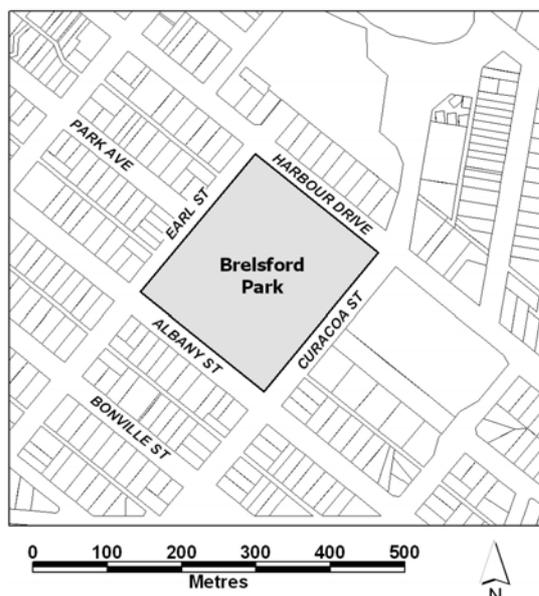
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

22 DRAFT CULTURAL PRECINCT CONCEPT PLAN

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present a Draft Concept Plan for a new Cultural Precinct on Brelsford Park. The report recommends the exhibition of the Draft Plan, together with an amended Plan of Management to enable the project to commence.

The provision of a cultural precinct within the City Centre will have a wide range of benefits for the community. One of the main benefits will be making the City Centre a more liveable centre; more than simply a place to work and shop. This will assist in making the City Centre a more desirable place to live (i.e. housing will be attracted to the City Centre) which in turn will deliver a range of benefits from increasing viability of public transport to improving the regional image of the city as a mature and contemporary metropolitan centre.



cont'd

22 Draft Cultural Precinct Concept Plan (cont'd)

Description of Item:

Background

On the 16 October 2003 Council considered a report on performance venues and resolved, inter alia, that:

"An overall concept plan be developed for the provision of cultural/civic facilities for the City, in particular, addressing the feasibility of locating an entertainment centre on Brelsford Park or other appropriate sites or venues ..."

As a result of this resolution, a multi-disciplinary working group was established to firstly consider the cultural/civic facility needs and secondly the locational issues for the accommodation of such facilities. The working group identified the following facilities as being of a high priority for development within a civic precinct:

- Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre
- Entertainment/Performance Centre
- New Art Gallery
- New Library
- New Administration Centre
- New Museum

Given the synergies between these uses, it was considered that a wider community benefit would be achieved by locating some or all of these facilities together into a cultural/civic precinct. This in turn limited the locational options to large tracts of land of sufficient size to accommodate these facilities. The candidate sites considered included Brelsford Park, City Hill (specifically the low "flat" area of City Hill), the Showground and Fitzroy Oval. Brelsford Park was identified as the preferred site because it is within the City Centre, has good exposure, is in keeping with the City Centre Strategic Plan and is generally unencumbered compared to the other sites. Brelsford Park also presents the opportunity to develop a Cultural Precinct within a new City Park and over time the City will expand to encompass the locality surrounding the Park.

Proposal

The Draft Concept Plan (as circulated separately) is for the establishment of a cultural precinct on the eastern side of Brelsford Park. The proposal includes a Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre, a combined Art Gallery and Library, a Performance Centre and the conversion of Brelsford Park to a City Park. The Plan is a staged plan that will involve the development of the Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre in 2005 and the remainder by 2010.

Relocated Facilities

The redevelopment will result in the conversion of Brelsford Park predominantly from a sporting facility (including the grandstand) to a City Park that is accessible to all in the community. The existing cycle track, cricket field and tennis courts will be removed. A new cycle track at the Hulberts Road playing fields site and upgraded cricket field at the Bray Street sporting complex will provide replacement facilities for cycling and cricket, respectively. Negotiations are advanced in establishing a Regional Tennis Complex at the Racecourse site adjacent the corner of Hogbin Drive and Howard Street.

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22 Draft Cultural Precinct Concept Plan (cont'd)

New Facilities

It has been determined that the new facilities include: a City Park, a Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre, a combined Art Gallery and Library, an Entertainment/Performance Centre and associated parking. Some of the features of these new facilities are described below:

Facility	Features
City Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-air theatre • Village Green • Water features • Upgraded playground • Retention of significant trees • Walkways/cycleways • Lighting • Vista to Park Avenue • Formal landscaping • Parkland Area 51,700m² • Potential for kiosk • Picnic and barbeque areas
Senior Citizens/ Multi-purpose Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-storey building • Building space of 800-1,000m² • 620 m from City Square • Ground level parking • Set in landscaped surrounds • Space for senior citizens' needs • Space for general community needs
Art Gallery/Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single or two storey building • Anticipated space for Art Gallery 1,600m² • Anticipated space for library 2,000m² • Potential for some parking under building • Ground level parking • Set in landscaped surrounds • Café/restaurant
Entertainment/Performance Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building space of 2000m² • 800 seat capacity (tiered) • Loading and storage area • Potential for some parking under building • Café/restaurant

Other Facilities

Other facilities considered for the site included a new **Museum** and **Administration** Centre. Owing to the scale of displays that a new museum would require it was considered that the needs of the museum would be best served by redevelopment on the existing museum site and adjoining Cavanbah Hall site; the Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre will provide the services and facilities currently at Cavanbah Hall thereby allowing this redevelopment.

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22 Draft Cultural Precinct Concept Plan (cont'd)

The siting of a new Administration Centre on Brelsford Park was generally not supported through the stakeholder workshops and has not been shown on the Concept Plan; the Draft Concept Plan has sufficient flexibility to locate a new Administration Centre between the Art Gallery/Library and Entertainment/Performance Centre should the community desire this facility in the cultural precinct in the future. Alternatively, the area could be used for extension of the proposed facilities if the demand requires this.

Sustainability Assessment:

- **Environment**

It is intended to ensure all buildings are energy efficient and to incorporate water sensitive urban design measures into the redevelopment of Brelsford Park. Where possible native trees will be retained. A fauna corridor can be established through the Park and additional native trees and shrubs will be planted throughout the Park. Providing cultural facilities within walking distance of the City Centre and the nearby high density housing areas, will assist in reducing reliance on motor vehicles in the longer term, particularly as the City expands to meet the park.

- **Social**

The provision of cultural facilities within the City Centre will help make the centre more than just a workplace; the cultural facilities will add to the vibrancy of the City Centre.

The Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre will provide social support services for the elderly and wider community. The improved parkland will provide a place for relaxation and other passive activities for the Coffs Harbour community. Moreover, the Art Gallery and Performance Centre will provide venues for expression and entertainment that will add to cultural experiences for the community. The new library will provide services needed for the growing population.

- **Economic**

Broader Economic Implications

As stated previously, the cultural facilities will contribute to the vibrancy of the City Centre. The new cultural facilities will also attract audiences from within and beyond the region which will have direct benefits to the local economy and indirect multiplier benefits.

Also assist in keeping the 20-39 age group and attracting how targeted residents/ population growth in areas.

Management Plan Implications

Funds (\$2 million loan funded) have been allocated in the current management plan for the Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre. In 2005/06 an allocation for operational costs for Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre of \$70,000 will need to be provided. A detailed financial plan will be required prior to finalisation of the Concept Plan and this should include on-going operational costs and funding sources.

The current Management Plan provides for development of a concept plan for the Civic (Cultural) Precinct by the end of this year.

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22 Draft Cultural Precinct Concept Plan (cont'd)

Consultation:

There has been directed consultation with a number of groups in relation to the development of civic and cultural facilities on Brelsford Park and relocation of activities from Brelsford Park. Moreover, two stakeholder workshops have been held with a number of representative groups on a preliminary Draft Concept Plan. The main outcomes of these consultations were:

- Relocated sporting facilities should be replaced with equivalent or improved facilities agreed upon by the affected sporting groups.
- A new administration centre may not be in keeping with other activities in Brelsford Park.
- A new city park is supported.
- The co-location of the Art Gallery, Library, Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre and Entertainment/Performance Centre is generally supported.
- Sufficient parking is to be available for all the facilities.
- Consideration needs to be given to the relationship with the Bunker Cartoon Gallery and Bridge Club, the Conservatorium and the proposed facilities in Brelsford Park.
- The concept plan should allow for the facilities to expand in the future.
- High quality urban design should be used and a 'wall' of building is to be avoided.

These matters are addressed in the "issues" section of this report.

Related Policy and / or Precedents:

The proposals are in keeping with Council's adopted City Centre Strategic Plan.

Statutory Requirements:

The subject land is zoned 6A Open Space (Public Recreation) under Coffs Harbour City Local Environmental Plan 2000 (LEP 2000) and is subject to a Plan of Management (PoM) under the Local Government Act. As the sporting uses of cricket and tennis will continue for some time and the Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre is to be developed in the short term, it is appropriate that the PoM only be amended at this stage to allow the development of the Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre within the existing 'Park' category. A completely new Draft PoM will be required in the future if the Concept Plan is adopted and proceeds in its current form for the remainder of the facilities.

Issues:

The main issues are:

- Urban Design
- Potential loss of parkland
- Parking and Traffic Management
- Noise
- Distance to facilities
- Implications for City Hill
- Funding the Project.

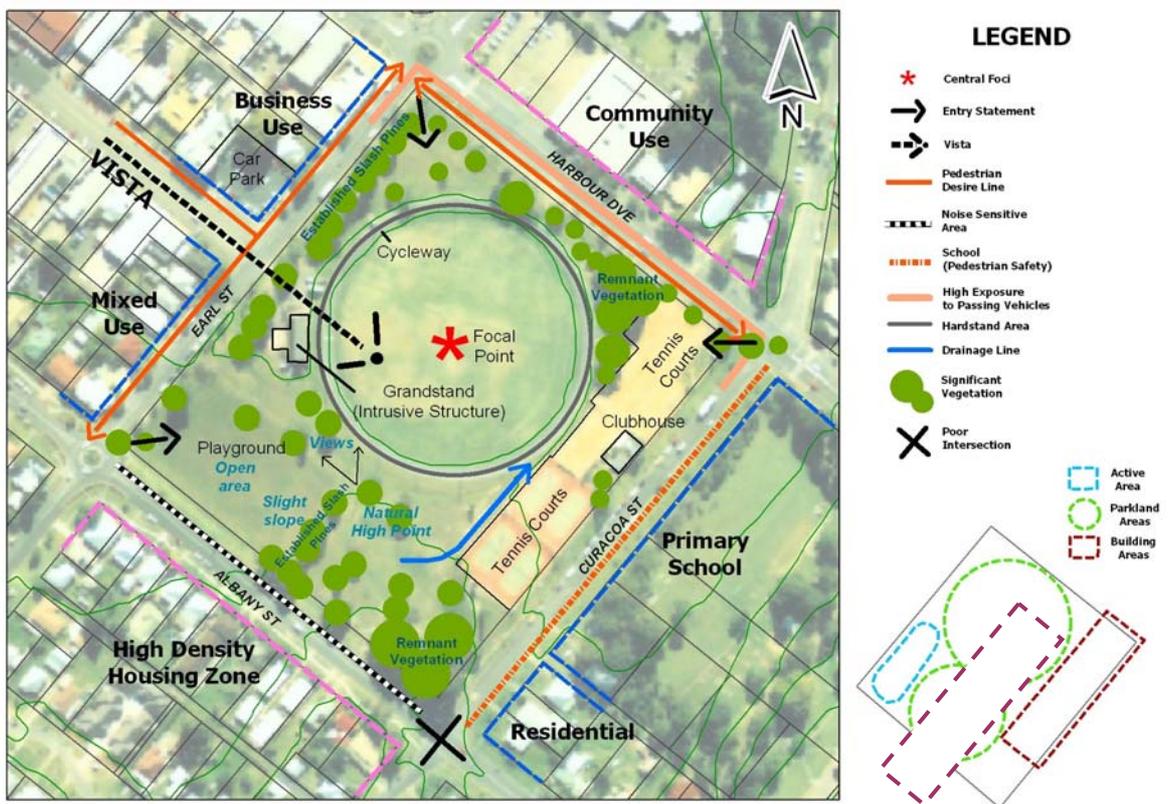
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Urban Design

A site constraints and opportunities plan was developed to determine the design parameters for the subject land, see below. This analysis revealed that the most suitable area for buildings is the eastern end of the site. Locating buildings at this end of the site reduces the impact upon future high-density housing and provides a backdrop to the parkland and an anchor to attract people through the park. This location also provides for a vista along Park Avenue, the opportunity for a central village green and the most direct access for vehicles off Curacoa Street; Curacoa Street is the most suitable street for parking and vehicular access.

The buildings will be of varying height from single storey to the equivalent of three storeys for the Entertainment/Performance Centre. Staggered setbacks, landscaping, varied building forms and varied building heights will avoid a dominating wall effect along Curacoa Street.

Site Analysis: Constraints/Opportunities



Potential Loss of Parkland

Parkland within and adjacent to city centres represent the lungs of the city. As the city grows these green spaces become increasingly important for the well-being of the community. Retention of the integrity of the square form of the park has an important design consideration in the development of the concept plan; it relates to the grid street pattern of Coffs Harbour and provides a traditional shape for the City's central park.

cont'd

22 Draft Cultural Precinct Concept Plan (cont'd)

At present Brelsford Park provides mainly for active organised recreation. The redevelopment of the park as shown in the concept plan will result in most of the park being converted to a passive City Park. A general principle of retaining 80% of green space for parkland and limiting buildings to 20% has been embodied in the plan; approximately 51,700m² is proposed to be retained as parkland with buildings limited to 12,100m².

The proposed Concept Plan will provide for a wider range of recreational opportunities.

Parking and Traffic Management

The proposed facilities are expected to generate a demand for approximately 400 car parking spaces. The supply of these parking spaces will be met by parking under and adjacent to the buildings and through the provision of nose to kerb parking in Earl Street, Curacoa Street and Harbour Drive.

A bus parking area is proposed to be provided in Harbour Drive to provide public transport access. Disabled parking facilities, taxi stands and cycleways/walkways are also to be provided.

Access to the facilities will be via Curacoa Street which has 500 vehicle trips per day and is capable of accommodating this traffic provided the intersection of Albany Street and Curacoa Street is upgraded. The traffic lights at the intersection of Harbour Drive and Curacoa Street provide for safe ingress and egress at this intersection and there will be a requirement to install traffic control signals at the Curacoa/Albany Streets intersection.

Noise

The most significant noise generator is the Entertainment/Performance Centre and the area that is the most sensitive to noise intrusion is the residential area (zoned for High Density Housing) generally to the south. To the north, east and west are mixed business uses and community uses (i.e. school, churches, scout/guide hall, childcare centre).

Locating the Entertainment/Performance Centre to the northern end of the site and positioning buildings (i.e. Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre and Library/Art Gallery) between this noise source and the residential area will buffer noise impacts. A noise impact assessment will be required as part of the process for the development of the Entertainment/Performance Centre.

Distance to Facilities

The distance to facilities, in particular the Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre, was raised at the stakeholder workshops. The Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre is 620m from City Square which represents a reasonable walking distance from the City Centre. It should be noted that the adjacent high-density housing area and the City Centre itself is expected to accommodate a high proportion of senior citizens in the long term and that over time the City will expand to encompass the Brelsford Park precinct.

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22 Draft Cultural Precinct Concept Plan (cont'd)

A survey of senior citizens' activities in 2001 revealed the following modes of travel to the activities:

- Car (as driver) 79.4%
- Bus 6.5%
- Car (as passenger) 7.0%
- Walk 6.5%
- Bicycle 0.3%
- Taxi 0.3%

Given the above figures, it is expected that the majority of people (over 85%) will travel by car to the Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre with a smaller proportion traveling by bus. Therefore, the provision of adequate parking, bus bays and drop off/pick up areas will be important design considerations. To encourage walking, pathways that follow pedestrian desire lines and security lighting along walkways will also be important design considerations.

Implications for City Hill

The City Hill area was formerly used by the Department of Defence for defence purposes. During World War II City Hill was a major command post for part of the east coast coordinating army, navy and air force activities.

The site became redundant to Department of Defence requirements and the land was sold to Coffs Harbour City Council in 1988. Remnants of the command post were converted into the Bunker Cartoon Gallery in 1996 and in 1997 the Coffs Harbour Bridge Club was built. The remainder of the site has been used for gravel crushing, storage and other minor uses. Council's earlier vision for the site was to accommodate the administration building, library, town hall and other functions of Council. The site is zoned Special Uses 5A Community Purposes (Local Government) and the Bunker is listed as a heritage item under LEP 2000.

In 2000 Council adopted the City Centre Strategic Plan which recommended the retention of civic and cultural facilities within the City Centre. Council also resolved in March 2004 to preserve in perpetuity the hill section of the site for the benefit of the community. The hill section contains significant tracts of bushland which is important koala habitat and has limited building potential because of bushfire risks.

The lower section of the site has an area of 6.7 hectares and is generally flat and suitable for a relatively wide range of developments. It is appropriate that Council consider the future uses of this land in conjunction with the development of cultural facilities on Brelsford Park. A wide range of land uses that are compatible and contributory to the Bunker Cartoon Gallery and Bridge Club should be identified.

Funding the Project

The overall project is expected to cost in the vicinity of \$33M. A range of funding options would be utilised but predominantly funds would be drawn from developer fees and loan borrowings. Whilst the former might provide something like a third of the cost in the long term, only some would have been collected in the five to seven years it is envisaged the project may take. This will necessitate a higher level of borrowing of approximately \$26M.

cont'd

22 Draft Cultural Precinct Concept Plan (cont'd)

The 2004/2005 Management Plan contains funding to launch the project with the building of the Senior Citizens/Multi Purpose Centre. It also allows for the creation of a velodrome at Hulberts Road. The plan for the Cultural Precinct provides that in succeeding stages a Regional Tennis Complex is built and for the relocation of cricket to Bray Street. This will then allow for the creation of a City Park and the erection of an Art Gallery/ Library and a Performance Centre. Completion of the project is planned to have occurred by 2011.

The creation of facilities such as a City Park or a Performance Centre bring with them substantial costs for their maintenance and operation. In the consideration of any financial plan these costs must be incorporated to ensure that what the City proudly creates it is also able to maintain with pride.

Implementation Date / Priority:

The first facility to be developed is the Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre. Stage 1 of the Concept Plan will allow development of this centre to begin in 2005 when the Plan of Management for Brelsford Park is amended to allow this use. The remainder of the cultural facilities can be developed over the next six years with the allocation of funding.

Conclusion:

Development of a cultural precinct in Brelsford Park will have significant benefits by adding to the vibrancy of the City Centre and contributing to the well-being of the wider community. The Brelsford Park Plan of Management should be amended to allow the Senior Citizens Centre. It is appropriate that Council develop a land use strategy for the development of the flat section of City Hill in conjunction with the Concept Plan for Brelsford Park.

Recommendation:

- 1. That Council exhibit the Draft Cultural Precinct Concept Plan for a period of two months for community feedback.**
- 2. That the Brelsford Park Plan of Management be amended to permit the development of a Senior Citizens/Multi-purpose Centre on the Park.**
- 3. That a report be brought back to Council on a revised Plan of Management for Brelsford Park.**
- 4. That a land use strategy for the lower section of City Hill be developed.**

P C Littler
Acting General Manager

CITY BUSINESS UNITS DEPARTMENT REPORTS

B37 FLOODLIGHTING AT WOOLGOOLGA COMMUNITY SPORTS COMPLEX

Purpose:

To advise Council of a request from Woolgoolga United Soccer Club Inc for Council to assist in making up the shortfall in funding to supply and install lighting at Woolgoolga Community Sports Complex. The report will recommend the offer of a loan of \$6,000 for two years at an interest rate of 6.75%.

Description of Item:

Woolgoolga United Soccer Club was successful in obtaining a Capital Assistance Grant for the provision of floodlighting at the Woolgoolga Community Sports Complex at the beginning of this year.

This facility has two soccer fields positioned next to each other in a north-south orientation. Both the eastern and western fields are currently floodlit with lights suitable for training. The proposed lighting project involves the installation of two new poles and lighting to increase the lux rating to playing standard on both fields.

This will allow the Club to adhere to new recommendations from Northern NSW Soccer and will improve safety standards at the facility.

The Club initially sought to obtain a grant for 50% of the total project cost of \$20,000, with the Club financing the remainder. Whilst the Club was successful in obtaining a grant, it was for \$6,000, which was \$6,000 less than anticipated. This has required the Club to extend its project timeframe so that it can raise the additional money to make up the shortfall. In extending the timeframe, the Club risk losing the \$6,000 grant as the works are meant to be completed within 12 months of receiving the grant. The completion date noted on the grant documentation is 1 January 2005.

The Club hires the facility from the lessee, the Woolgoolga Sports Council. In recent years Council has made a contribution to the Sports Council to assist with ongoing maintenance costs of the High Street sports Complex and other Woolgoolga based sports grounds under their management.

Sustainability Assessment:

- **Environment**

A Part V Environmental Assessment has been successfully completed.

The installation of lighting at the High Street Sports Complex will have nil impact on matters relating to heritage, habitat disturbance, biodiversity, water efficiency, waste management and transport.

The lighting will slightly increase the amount of energy consumed.

cont'd

B37 Floodlighting at Woolgoolga Community Sports Complex (cont'd)

Lighting will be directed onto the field with minimal spill over lighting into surrounding areas.

The High Street Complex is predominantly bordered by non-residential property, with the one exception of the Woolgoolga and District Retirement Village on a small part of the western border adjacent to the soccer fields.

The impact of brighter floodlighting on the field on the Retirement Village would be lessened as the village site is elevated, and looks down over the field.

- **Social**

The Club is one of the largest clubs in the Holiday Coast Soccer Association competition and strives to improve training and playing conditions for its senior and junior members that number approximately 400.

This project will impact positively on the Club's activities by providing a safer training environment and by extending the range of training opportunities for the Club members.

In turn this will be a positive influence on the physical and mental health and well-being of the community.

- **Economic**

This project will assist the viability of the Club by helping to retain existing members and to attract new ones.

Comment by City Treasurer:

1. A review of the trial balance of the Club reveals that it is a substantial organisation with a turnover of \$90000 for the year to 30 September 2004.
2. It is considered that the Club will be able to meet the loan repayment over two years for a \$6000 loan.
3. The Club has the funds in hand to meet the \$8000 initial contribution it is making to the project.

Broader Economic Implications

Ongoing maintenance of the facility is the responsibility of the Woolgoolga Sports Council, however it should be noted that in recent years Council has made a financial contribution to the Sports Council to assist with ongoing maintenance costs of the Woolgoolga based sports grounds under their management.

Management Plan Implications

The initial impact of the loan will be a deficit on Council's budget, which will be offset as principal repayments are received.

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B37 Floodlighting at Woolgoolga Community Sports Complex (cont'd)

Consultation:

Mr Clive Joass, in the capacity of President of the Woolgoolga Sports Council, spoke at a meeting with the residents of the Retirement Village prior to the application for funding to the Department of Sport and Recreation was submitted. Mr Joass has advised there were no objections raised by residents.

There has been no consultation between Council staff and the Retirement Village residents and administration.

The Woolgoolga Sports Council and Woolgoolga Soccer Club have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Related Policy and / or Precedents:

Council has previously provided loans of this type to local sporting groups.

Statutory Requirements:

Nil

Issues:

Originally the request from the Woolgoolga United Soccer Club was for a donation of \$6,000. Council has a process whereby community groups make representation to Council during the preparation of its Management Plan. This year several groups made representations. Some were successful, others were not. Council has also previously assisted other groups with the provision of loans. To divert from these processes would create a precedent which would be unfair to other groups who have unsuccessfully applied for donations and who are currently paying off loans.

The Woolgoolga United Soccer Club Inc are to be commended for the incentive of raising funds and successfully applying for a grant to purchase and erect the lights. Council can assist by providing a loan for the \$6,000 shortfall.

Implementation Date / Priority:

The loan be made available on approval by Council and acceptance of the offered terms and conditions by the Club.

Recommendation:

That Council offer the Woolgoolga United Soccer Club Inc a loan of \$6000 on the following terms and conditions:

- 1. The principal be repaid over the two years at an interest rate of 6.75%, by quarterly repayments of principal and interest combined of \$808.06.**
- 2. Repayments be made by direct transfer to Council's Bank Account.**
- 3. The loan commences from the date the funds are forwarded to the Club.**
- 4. That the loan be finalised by an exchange of letters with the Club.**

B38 STATUS OF CAMPHOR LAUREL PROBLEM IN COFFS HARBOUR CITY

Purpose:

To discuss the status of Camphor Laurel within the Coffs Harbour City Local Government area. To explain the implications of listing Camphor Laurel on Council's Noxious Weed List. To present various methods of reducing the impact of this environmental weed on the natural environment.

Description of Item:

Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*) is indigenous to China, Taiwan, Japan, parts of Vietnam and one Korean Island. The earliest official date of introduction was 1854 and was first reported as a weed by 1900. It was actively planted as a shade tree in northern NSW after initial land clearing in the late 1880's to the early 1900's.

Camphor Laurel is now widely spread throughout the north coast, favouring areas receiving over 1400mm annual rainfall with fertile soil, particularly on flood plains.

In Coffs Harbour it is now widely distributed throughout the Orara catchment, and it particularly favours stream banks along Coffs Creek and the Bonville/Crossmaglen area. Isolated trees and light infestations are found elsewhere west of Red Hill, particularly along fence-lines where birds have deposited the seeds.

Previous Councils have recognised the weed potential and invasiveness of Camphor Laurel and have provided funding through its Environmental Levy to aid in removal.

Sustainability Assessment:

• Environment

Camphor Laurel has very successfully invaded many natural habitats on the North Coast of NSW, particularly along riparian zones where the soil is deep and fertile. They are also found where land has been cleared for cultivation.

They have many features of very successful weeds including

- A large number of seeds produced, typically over 110,000 seeds/tree/year, with the seeding period occurring over a long time period.
- Seeds are attractive to many native bird species and the Black Flying Fox allowing seed to be dispersed over long distances.
- Seeds are also readily transported by water and may remain viable after forty days under water.
- Seeds have an in-built dormancy period from 4-20 weeks. This allows them to remain in the soil and germinate when conditions are ideal for seedling survival and become established before the next dry season.
- Seeds are poisonous to fish fingerlings
- Root systems form dense mats close to the soil surface, thus reducing the growth of native tree seedlings.

cont'd

B38 Status of Camphor Laurel problem in Coffs Harbour (cont'd)

- The dense shade produced by Camphor Laurel allows them to out-compete native species growing near by.
- There are very few natural predators, however, research conducted in 2000 found that most Camphor Laurel seeds do not survive over two years of age.
- Stream banks infested with Camphor Laurel are more prone to undercutting and destabilization due to the shallow nature of the root system.
- Recent scientific research conducted in Coffs Harbour has shown that decomposing Camphor Laurel leaves in streams had major negative impacts on microbial aquatic decomposer organisms.

Camphor Laurel also has some positive effects on the environment including:

- The provision of shade in parks, playgrounds, churches etc where many had been deliberately planted for such purposes.
 - Although not as diverse as a native forest, Camphor Laurel still provides important habitats for some native plants and animal species including shade, shelter, roosting and nesting sites.
 - An important food source for many native birds including some endangered frugivorous pigeons and also the Black Flying Fox.
- **Social**
 - Camphor Laurel has not been recorded to have any negative effects on human health.
 - Because of their attractive shape and foliage many people find them attractive and may be reluctant to have them removed from either domestic or rural situations.
 - Several old schools have very large Camphor Laurel providing shade for students. Some may also have heritage value because of their age.
 - In Council's experience it seems that the timber resource from Camphor Laurel has limited value and no additional employment is likely to result from the felling of larger numbers of such trees.

- **Economic**

Broader Economic Implications

At present the economic constraints imposed by Camphor Laurel on the community is minimal. However, for those who choose to carry out some form of control, the cost can be expensive, depending on the method chosen. Foliar spraying and frill treatment is relatively inexpensive. Relevant chemicals are also subsidised through Council's Environmental Levy. However, removal of larger trees can cost approximately \$1,000 each using accredited contractors and be prohibitive to most landowners.

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B38 Status of Camphor Laurel problem in Coffs Harbour (cont'd)

The economic cost to remove Camphor Laurel on Council road verges and reserves will be very substantial as complete removal will be the only option possible to avoid OH&S issues arising from falling limbs. At present Council does not have the staff nor the plant and equipment necessary to carry out this work. At present the weed is not declared a Noxious Weed. The cost implications to Council and the Community would be significant if Camphor laurel was declared Noxious, as we would be required to remove the weed. The cost of enforcing control on private land combined with Council land would be several million dollars. In the current economic climate very few, if any, ratepayers could afford the additional cost of Camphor Laurel removal.

Management Plan Implications

The Draft Natural Area Plan of Management for Council managed reserves includes the removal of Camphor Laurel and revegetation. Considerable progress has been made on Camphor Laurel removal in the Coffs Creek catchment. NSW Agriculture and North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee have endorsed Regional Control Plan for Camphor Laurel that our control is following. The City Parks Branch is in the process of preparing a Weed Management Strategic Plan that targets major environmental and noxious weed control and rehabilitation where practical.

Appendix (1) shows the Camphor Laurel Program for City Parks managed reserves in the Coffs Creek catchment. The works have included works by Community landcare groups, facilitated by Council. The work is on going.

Camphor Laurel Expenditure By Council From Environmental Levy Funding

YEAR	ROADSIDE CONTROL	* BUSHLAND WEED ERADICATION
1999-2000	\$14,036	\$38,657
2000-2001	-	\$42,815
2001-2002	\$7,018	\$42,230
2002-2003	\$1,160	\$40,580
2003-2004	\$ 3,564	\$94,880
2004-2005	\$14,275	\$56,242

* A significant part of this funding is used for Camphor Laurel control

Consultation:

The following people were consulted during the preparation of this report:

- Tim Scanlon – Consultant to North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee
- Reece Luxton – Chief Weeds Officer, Clarence Valley Council
- Des Boorman – Chief Weeds Officer, Far North Coast Weeds County Council
- Judy Davis – PHD Student, University of New England, Armidale
- Rod Ensbey – Regional Weed Coordinator NSW, DPI Grafton

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B38 Status of Camphor Laurel problem in Coffs Harbour (cont'd)

Related Policy and / or Precedents:

Council has no formal policy with regard to Camphor Laurel. It has however, committed substantial funding towards their control since 1997-1998.

The North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee has Camphor Laurel listed at No. 6 on their list of 100 significant environmental weeds. It also ranks No. 1 on a list of 50 species not to be sold by Bushland Friendly Nurseries.

Statutory Requirements:

Nil

Issues:

The environmental damage caused by the presence of Camphor Laurel is significant and on-going as new research reveals further harmful affects of this plant in the north coast environment.

Camphor Laurel is declared W4(d) noxious weeds in the local government areas of Nambucca, Bellingen, Clarence Valley, Richmond Valley, Kyogle, Lismore City and part of Ballina. It should be noted that Camphor Laurel is more widespread in these municipalities than within our area.

The wording of this declaration is:

“The weed must not be sold, propagated or knowingly distributed and the weed must be fully and continuously destroyed if it is 3 metres in height or less or within half a kilometre of remnant urban bushland, as defined by SEPP 19 and is not deemed by a local control authority as having historical or heritage significance, or over 3 metres in height and not included in a Management Plan approved by the local control authority”.

Should declaration be considered, evidence of community support must be given to the NSW Department of Primary Industry. In addition, it must be shown that Council has adequate resources to carry out the necessary control work.

However, grant funding to support Camphor Laurel control work on Council land may not be provided. For several years Privet, Crofton Weed and Fireweed (all declared weeds) have not received grant funding. Likewise, Giant Parramatta Grass (W3 declared weed) received only \$6,000 in 2003-04 after receiving no grant for the previous two years.

There is no consistent funding available from the Noxious Plants Advisory Committee. Funding priorities are lowest for weeds such as Camphor Laurel that are widespread throughout their potential range. There would be considerable financial burden to Council to implement Camphor Laurel as a noxious weed at this stage.

Methods of Control

There are a number of proven techniques available that successfully control Camphor Laurel both chemically and non-chemically based.

Herbicide techniques are now widely accepted, cost effective and used extensively. Such techniques are efficient both in terms of amount of chemical used and time taken to treat each tree.

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B38 Status of Camphor Laurel problem in Coffs Harbour (cont'd)

The main techniques are:

- Stem injection or frilling
- Basal bark treatment
- Cut stump
- Foliar spray

Stem injection or frilling involves injecting 1-2ml of herbicide into freshly made cuts around the trunk. Tree injector kits that comprise a backpack herbicide reservoir and a syringe to deliver a measured dose of herbicide to each cut. As an incentive to farmers, tree injection kits could be loaned to enable the landowners to undertake this work.

Basal bark treatment is a quick and easy method of treating saplings and small regrowth. Herbicides used are diluted with diesel and sprayed onto all stems and a ring of soil at the stem bases.

The *cut stump* approach has also achieved good results if correctly done. The trunk is cut as close to the ground as possible and herbicide is applied immediately to the stump.

Foliar Spray

This technique is best used on seedlings and small trees up to 3m high using low pressure power sprays. Grazon DS is registered for this use at a rate of 350 ml/100 lt of water for trees up to 2m tall and 500ml / 100 greater than 2m.

Technique	Chemical	Cost / Tree (\$)
Frill (over 25cm dia)	Glyphosate	0.10
Basal bark	Access	\$1.54
Foliar spray (2m tall)	Grazon DS	0.60

Non-chemical control techniques are available for those who prefer not to use herbicides. Such approaches as these are more labour intensive and include the following:

- Hand pulling of seedlings
- Ring barking using a hammer
- Felling trees without herbicide application
- Conventional ring barking
- Use of goats, sheep and cattle
- Mechanical removal by tractor / bulldozer. This can be very expensive and also result in massive soil disturbance, certainly not to be used in riparian zones or steep hillsides

Biological Control

Being an introduced species there are no natural predators of Camphor Laurel. A number of agents cause substantial damage in indigenous populations in Asia. Preliminary investigations in Australia have found that several native laurel species were taxonomically similar to Camphor Laurel and would also be susceptible to attack by these introduced agents.

Any Camphor Laurel removal is further complicated by the fact that several native fugivorous pigeons, including three which are threatened species and the Black Flying Fox all rely on these trees as a periodic source of food, particularly in spring when there are few native food sources. As a result Camphor Laurel will have to be selectively removed over a long period of time in conjunction with the plantings of desirable native species so as not to endanger a food source for native fauna.

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B38 Status of Camphor Laurel problem in Coffs Harbour (cont'd)

A complete Action Plan for revegetation considering the impact to existing fauna needs to be prepared prior to Camphor Laurel removal commences and such species need to become well established before all Camphor Laurel are removed. Where native species are present, natural regeneration can occur providing adequate weed control is undertaken and the area fenced off from livestock.

The choice of species should aim to establish a range of trees, shrubs and groundcovers in an attempt to recreate previously existing vegetative communities and should also include native replacement food species for fauna currently utilising Camphor Laurel.

The planting of native species will also overcome the undercutting of stream banks as they have deeper root systems than Camphor Laurel.

Recommendation:

- 1. That Council recognises the negative impacts of Camphor Laurel.**
- 2. That Council not declare Camphor Laurel as a Noxious Weed and support continued voluntary removal by the provision of funding to:**
 - a) Allow for continued removal on Council Reserves and road verges**
 - b) Support the on-going subsidising of Camphor Laurel control chemicals**
 - c) Purchase tree injector kits for loan to landowners, encouraging further control.**
 - d) Council endorse City Park's continued development of the Weed Management Strategic Plan.**

P C Littler
Director of City Business Units