



30 August 2019

Submission for the Draft Plan of Management for Halifax and Shoal Bay Holiday Parks

Halifax Holiday Park Plan of Management

Introduction

Members of TRRA attended the first of the public consultation sessions and were very impressed with the format of the session with a moderator, notes taken of issues raised and all those attending having an opportunity to comment and raise questions. This type of community consultation is much superior to some “drop-in sessions” which have been run by Council in the past, where discussions are only one on one and notes do not appear to be taken. It also allows other members of the community to hear other people’s thoughts and provide comment.

Overall TRRA has found the Draft Plan of Management (PoM) to be well written and we support the recommendations.

Comments on some key issues.

Precinct 7 (Also known as Lot 424)

This is clearly the most controversial section of the Draft.
The community would like to see the Lot424 removed from the Holiday Park.
On Page 31 it states

As the land is owned by the NSW Government, Council does not have the authority to re-gazette the allotment for Public Recreation.

This may be true but Council could strongly make a recommendation to State Government that a mistake has been made and the community demand that it be returned to Public Recreation, similar to the “return” recently of the land sold within the Mambo wetlands, which showed if the Council, State Government and the community work together a positive result can be achieved.

Within the scope of this PoM, the draft recommendation for Precinct 7 the “*Key Management Priorities Maintain area as open space.*” is supported.

As very strong community opposition to any reduction to public access to this area has been voiced over many years, this needs to be noted within the plan so that in five years’ time when the Plan is reviewed that the community feelings are not ignored. It should also be noted that it is a koala habitat.

The community would welcome improved public facilities within Precinct 7 such as tables and seating and perhaps a playground but not a fence.

Vision Statement

To conserve and maintain the natural environment of the Holiday Park while providing a range of recreation and accommodation opportunities for visitors and optimise a return to the community.

TRRA supports the statement but would like to emphasise that the conservation of the natural environment must always come before the opportunity to make more profits.

Improved Revenue Opportunities (Objective 2)

Operate with the objective to self-fund the ongoing management of the Holiday Park and make a substantial contribution to the management of the reserved lands.

The ideal of being self-funding is commendable but as the park is competing with privately owned caravan parks and other forms of accommodation within the area, Port Stephens Council has an obligation to ensure that operations are on an equal footing and private operators are not disadvantaged. As mentioned above, “substantial contribution” cannot be at the expense of the natural environment.

Return to the community

There is fine balance between profits generated by the park to be reinvested back into upgrading facilities within the park (this would ensure visitors continue to return to the park and therefore maintain a viable operation helping the local economy) and spending the profits on upgrading much needed facilities along the foreshore Crown Land for the benefit of the whole community.

A simple example would be instead of having spent \$2m on upgrading the amenities building, perhaps only \$1.5m could have been spent with the other \$0.5m being spent to replace or upgrade the public toilet facilities outside the park which are used by all visitors and local residents.

TRRA would like to see a PoM or at least a list of projects which will be funded from the excess profits of the Holiday Parks which is regularly reviewed and placed on public exhibition for community comment.

Mix of accommodation types

One of the key management activities addressed in this Plan included *Providing a mix of accommodation types that respond to current and changing demand.*

This mix is likely to change over time but it is important that the types of accommodation such as cabins which provide the highest return do not eliminate totally the lower cost options such as tent and caravan sites which offer accommodation at a more affordable rate. These are after all primarily caravan parks and should not be competing against the same market that hundreds of empty nearby units could provide.

The introduction of ensuite sites would be welcome by some sectors of the caravan community which can provide a higher return and perhaps also drive through sites could be explored rather than just providing standard sites.

Diagram

On page 9, the Map of Crown Land reserves doesn't have Insert A.

Shoal Bay Holiday Park Plan of Management

All the points mentioned above for the Halifax PoM apply for the Shoal Bay PoM apart from those directly relating to Precinct 7.

Additional Comments

Precinct 1

This Precinct is at the eastern most end of the park closest to the intersection of Shoal Bay and Government Roads and therefore is highly visible to the general community.

The removal of existing holiday sites is supported which will improve the overall vista.

The introduction of raised cabins with parking underneath may have some merit to allow water views but TRRA submits that these types of cabins should be set well back from the fence line, with at least a row of ground level cabins along the fence line. Careful planning is essential to ensure that the general amenity of the area is not reduced by intrusive development as viewed from outside and within the Park. It should be noted that the raised cabins/units at Halifax Park are at the rear of the Park and not visible from the road.

Rear Road Exit

The proposed exit in the rear corner onto Government Road is briefly mentioned on Page 19, this should be clearly labelled on the diagrams.

Swimming Pool

Some members of the community have questioned the replacement of the tennis court with a swimming pool. With the Bay across the road and the option for guests to stay at Fingal Holiday Park if they desire a swimming pool we question if the money could perhaps be better spent on upgrading facilities along the Foreshore which can be used by the entire community.

Future Road Reserve

There was some discussion that a future road reserve exists along the inside of the fence along Shoal Bay Road. If this is still the case, the reserve should be marked on the diagrams and listed as a constraint so that no permanent structures are built over it.

John James
TRRA Vice President
vicepresident@trra.com.au
0447 158 810