

Cook Park Reference Panel **Summary of Issues** as at November 2006

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Marina/Destinations Rockdale

'Destinations Rockdale' is a concept document released to the public in 2005 by Rockdale City Council so that it could put before its community a series of visionary options for future development within the Rockdale area. Although Cook Park falls within the scope of the document, the concepts associated with 'Destinations Rockdale' extend beyond the Park boundaries.

At a meeting with Council's consultants (20.10.06) Peter Houghton indicated that the Administrator did not have a view on the matter at this stage. In the event that the concept is supported by State and Local Government, and the community, the Department of Lands would support the planning process including planning that affects Cook Park.

Vistas – Cook Park tree management

Rockdale City Council commissioned an arboricultural assessment (report dated August 2005) to assess the health and condition of six pine trees located within Cook Park, opposite Princess Street, Brighton-Le-Sands. The four Cook Pines were assessed to be in fair to good health while the two Norfolk Island Pines were only assessed as fair. However the report indicated that removal of the trees is likely to be required within the next 10-15 years and that a monitoring and maintenance program should be prepared for these trees.

At a Council meeting in October 2006 "Council acknowledged the need for the development of a plan for the replacement of Pine Trees in Cook Park in anticipation of their natural decline, and that new, mature/advanced trees be planted/positioned appropriately to allow for a seamless transition". This is an appropriate action given Council's concerns for public safety. Council also resolved that representations be made to the Administrator for the preparation of a plan.

Consistent with Council's resolution, the Administrator also acknowledged the need for a pine tree replacement plan in anticipation of their natural decline, and advised Council (06.11.06) that as per current arrangements for on-going operations in the Park, Council is at liberty to fund the preparation of such a plan. The Administrator also advised that the matter would be referred to the Cook Park Reference Panel. Any views that this Panel may have will be referred back to Council for inclusion in the pine tree replacement plan.

Toilet blocks, rubbish removal and physical amenities

Formal inspections by the Administrator are undertaken at three monthly intervals and a report sent to Rockdale City Council. Action taken to mitigate hazards between 30 June and 30 September 2006 (date of last report) is shown at Attachment 1. Council has taken action to mitigate each hazard responding in a timely manner to each report and to other issues reported to them on an informal basis.

Toilet blocks

Toilet blocks have been found to be generally clean and in good condition. It is however noted that during periods of high usage such as week-ends during the summer period, problems may be experienced. It is understood that during these times extra cleaning is provided. It should also be noted that some toilet blocks are of an age where replacement warrants consideration. The toilet block near Barton Street, Monterey is one such block. Prior to replacement, the appropriateness of its location needs to be evaluated, then replace at selected location. Capital funds will be needed and at a meeting 25.10.06 Council confirmed no capital funding in 06/07 - unlikely to progress at least til next financial year.

On a related matter the Park's fresh water amenities (including taps and showers) are being retrofitted with water efficient fittings. These works are part of an overall city upgrade thus implementation will be gradual and in no particular order. It may be appropriate for Cook Park to be retrofitted as a priority due to the high usage of this location over the summer period.

Litter bins

During a site inspection 18.08.06 by Peter Houghton, litter bins were observed throughout the Park. Their location adjacent to car parking facilities and the toilet blocks was noted. Recently the appearance and location of litter bins has been questioned by some Park users. For example, some people have suggested covers be placed over groups of bins to facilitate a neater appearance and recycling as well as litter disposal. Placement of bins closer to high density usage areas such as the beach front at Ramsgate, may also be appropriate.

Disabled access

Rockdale City Council's disabled and pram access strategies within the *Cook Park Plan of Management* have been adhered to as facilities within the Park have been upgraded. These strategies include design of paths to permit access for disabled persons, appropriate disabled car parking spaces and disabled toilet facilities and picnic shelters at appropriate standards.

Pine Park is the only precinct within Cook Park that has not been upgraded within the last few years. It has no paved car parking areas although Council has recently commenced gutter improvement works along Sandringham Street. However, Council has long-term plans to upgrade the Pine Park precinct.

A site inspection was carried out on 18 August 2006 by Mr Peter Houghton to identify disabled facilities within Cook Park. The facilities, outlined in Attachment 2, were

noted to be in generally good condition in particular where kiosks and cafes were located. Beach access for disabled persons and paved parking spaces were only inadequate at Pine Park.

Bicycle/pedestrian pathway

A bicycle/pedestrian pathway in generally good condition runs the entire length of Cook Park. In some locations it splits with a lower path adjacent to the beach and an upper path at street level. Two sections of pathway have been raised by some Park users as problem areas:

- The missing section of boardwalk on the seaside of Le Sands Restaurant. Work has commenced on constructing this boardwalk. Completion is anticipated early in 2007.
- The section between Scarborough Street and Emmaline Street car parks. From the car park at Bath and Burlington Streets to the car park at Scarborough Street two pathway options are available, one adjacent to the beach and one at street level. Between Scarborough Street and Emmaline Street car parks there is no street level pathway, only a lower level pathway. The option of two pathways recommences at the car park at Emmaline Street, both extending to the car park at Florence Street. It is understood that Council proposes to construct a pathway at street level between Scarborough Street and Emmaline Street car parks to complete the dual pathway option between Monterey and Ramsgate Beach. However, capital funds will be needed and at a meeting 25.10.06 Council confirmed no capital funding in 06/07 - unlikely to progress at least til next financial year.

Environment

The general environment of Cook Park at street level appears to be maintained in generally good condition. A *Proposed Cook Park Sand Dune Annual Maintenance Program* has been prepared (Attachment 3). This has yet to be submitted to Council for consideration. The cost has, however, been included in the proposed budget given to Council by the Administrator.

Vehicle parking

All vehicle parking areas within Cook Park are locked at night. Analysis of the parking areas is provided at Attachment 4.

'History walk'

Several matters of interest are already displayed that could be incorporated in a 'history walk'.

Active recreational activities

Swimming, running and cycling are catered for within the Park boundaries. Land-based facilities are also in place for windsurfing and sea kayaking in Botany Bay.

Cook Park Plan of Management Review

The current Cook Park Plan of Management (PoM) was approved in 1998. Since that time, the significant improvements along the beach front have attracted increasing numbers of local, regional, State, National and International visitors to the area. However, the PoM has few specific, thought-through initiatives and it is almost impossible to measure progress in implementing the Plan in any meaningful way. Further improvements are required to enable improved social, environmental and economic outcomes for the Park.

Peter Houghton analysed the PoM and Rockdale City Council's Local Environmental Plan 2000 (LEP). The LEP is the dominant instrument. It zones Cook Park as 'existing open space' and new commercial activities such as restaurants and the like are prohibited. The PoM reinforces this focus. Current commercial premises operate under existing use rights and can be upgraded to improve the facilities. Landscaping and initiatives such as the boardwalk on the seaside of Le Sands Restaurant are permissible under the LEP and PoM.

It is understood that Council will soon be preparing a new City Plan in the form of the Department of Planning standard LEP template. Given the overarching controls by the LEP there appears to be little point in undertaking a full review of the PoM until the local planning controls are finalised. The Administrator has advised Council that he is willing to participate in the LEP review.

The Administrator has also met, and continues to meet with key stakeholders to obtain their views on the future of the Park. The Cook Park Reference Panel provides a further source for obtaining stakeholder views on the Park.

Attachment 1

Action taken to mitigate hazards between 30 June and 30 September 2006

Risk – Description (Impact and Cause)	Comment
<p>Play equipment – all areas of Park.</p> <p>Public liability risk – potential injuries to users, especially children.</p>	<p>Satisfactory and meets current safety standards.</p> <p>Council to check and redistribute/replenish softfall under play equipment as necessary.</p>
<p>Seaweed collection compounds - all areas of Park.</p> <p>Public liability risk – potential injuries to general park users and fossickers.</p>	<p>Satisfactory – in neat and tidy condition.</p> <p>Council to monitor and remove seaweed/rubbish as required.</p>
<p>Toilets – all areas of Park.</p> <p>Sharps boxes not available in all toilet blocks.</p> <p>Public liability risk – potential injuries from sharps and health risk to users.</p>	<p>Satisfactory - generally clean and in good condition.</p> <p>Council to monitor and maintain cleanliness of facilities and where required replace sharp boxes (vandals sometimes remove these)</p>
<p>Signage – all areas of Park.</p> <p>Public liability risk – potential misuse of facilities.</p>	<p>Satisfactory – in keeping with Council's sign policy. Council to continue to monitor.</p>
<p>Groin rock areas – all areas of Park.</p> <p>Public liability risk – potential injuries.</p>	<p>In satisfactory condition. Council to continue to monitor.</p>
<p>Covered wooden table and chairs between Monterey and Ramsgate Beach.</p> <p>Public liability risk – potential injuries.</p>	<p>Slats replaced and facilities in good condition. Council to continue to monitor.</p>
<p>Peter Depena Reserve, Dolls Point – seaward of Le Beach Hut - seats and table sets.</p> <p>Public liability risk – potential injuries.</p>	<p>Repaired and in good condition (one still needing repair is parawebbed and not able to be used). Council to continue to monitor.</p>
<p>Fence footings at Bado Berong Creek, Riverside Drive, Sandringham.</p> <p>Public liability risk – potential injuries.</p>	<p>Footings replaced and in good condition</p>

Attachment 2

Location and assessment of facilities for disabled persons at Cook Park

As at 18 August 2006

Location	Disabled toilets	Paved disabled parking	No. of spaces	Ramp to beach	Food and drink outlets	General condition of facilities
Kyeemagh Cyprus Hellene Club	Yes	Yes	2	Yes + baths access	Yes	Good
Brighton-le-Sands	Yes	Yes	2	Yes + baths access	Yes	Good
Monterey	Yes	Yes	5	No	Private shop near Barton St	Adequate
Ramsgate Beach (north)	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	No	Adequate
Ramsgate Beach (south)	Yes	Yes	1	Yes + baths access	Yes	Good
Sans Souci Pine Park	Yes	No	N/A	No	Private shop near Alice St	Good
Dolls Point Le Beach Hut	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	Good
Dolls Point Sailing Club	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Club facilities	Good
Sandringham Bay	No	Yes	2	Yes + baths access	No	Good

Attachment 3

Proposed Cook Park Sand Dune Annual Maintenance Program

Aim: Maintenance and enhancement of the sand dunes, including the native vegetation thereon, along the foreshores of Cook Park.

Objectives: To assist the function of the dunes in retaining sand within the beach system, to maintain amenity of beach areas for public use and to facilitate the long term stability of the dune area .

Scope: Contract provision of labour, supervision, materials and expertise required to:

- Maintain, enhance and protect vegetation on the dunes.
- Control erosion and stabilise the dunal system.
- Construct and maintain protective fences and formal access ways.
- Treat weeds utilising a variety of methods.
- Increase vegetative cover and species diversity.

A range of work activities are used to pursue the above objectives, including:

- Use of native vegetation for brush matting or as mulch
Native plant material is sourced from the dune area or other donor sites. Coarse brush material is laid in sand blow outs or used to close unwanted access through sensitive areas. The brush acts to trap wind blown sand and promote accretion. Native vegetation can also be mulched and used to protect around planted material or used on access ways to prevent wind scour and loss of sand.
- Fencing activities
Dune fencing is used to protect sensitive areas of vegetation from public access which in turn promotes the formation of dunes. Dune forming fences also aid in the capture of sand and accretion within the frontal dune area. The program includes construction of the fences, their repair and replacement of damaged or vandalised fences. Fences are lifted as sand accumulates or dismantled when they are no longer required.
- Weed control activities
Traditional bush regeneration methods such as weed pulling and 'cut and painting' are used to control weed species in sensitive areas. More aggressive control activities, such as for the control of bitou bush, involves herbicide spraying utilising back-packs and coordinated works teams.
- Plant propagation and planting
Skills and facilities for the propagation of seed and plant material are maintained at the Department of Lands depot at Kurnell. Local seed from Cook Park can be collected and stored so that it can be available for propagation when required. Propagated material is planted and used to establish new vegetated areas, repair storm damage and to increase species diversity within the dunes. Fertiliser is applied as required to aid in the rapid establishment of healthy vegetation.
- Tractor work
A 4 wheel drive tractor is used for moving and shaping sand to re-form and maintain access ways and to repair blow outs prior to stabilisation, as well as lifting/pulling of fence posts.

Work distribution and delivery: Each year the program is structured on a financial year basis to facilitate priority activities. A detailed forward plan of activities is generally not prepared as many of the activities are in response to maintenance requirements following storm events, sand movement or vandalism. A typical annual program may involve:

- 30 days weed control
- 30 days planting and brush matting to build dunes
- 20 days fencing and access repair/maintenance and lifting.
- 20 days dealing with storm/vandalism damage.

As the dunes become stabilised, more time is spent on dealing with access and fencing, and biodiversity plantings. However weed control will always require continuous monitoring and control. Each year an annual report would be produced detailing the activities.

Annual cost: \$70,000 ex GST. This includes an estimated:

- \$3000 in material expenditure (posts, wire, herbicide and equipment etc).
- 8 days labour spread over the year for program management.
- 100 days labour on ground including vehicles and equipment support.

Contract field staff and the works they perform are resourced with plant, including 4WD vehicles, 4WD tractor, trailers, and spray and mulching units. Hand tools and other equipment are also provided and maintained.

Attachment 4

COOK PARK VEHICLE PARKING ANALYSIS (as at 28 June 2006)

Location	Parking spaces located in the vicinity of	Marked spaces	Marked disabled	Unmarked spaces	Total spaces
Kyeemagh	Endeavour Bridge	0	0	25	25
Kyeemagh	Hashams Restaurant lockable	164	0	0	164
Kyeemagh	Hashams Restaurant unlockable	44	2	0	46
Kyeemagh	Bestic Street	36	0	0	36
Kyeemagh	The (Little) Grand Parade	13	0	0	13
Monterey	Solander Street	59	2	0	61
Monterey	Robinson Street	62	2	0	64
Monterey	Burlington Street	61	0	0	61
Monterey	Barton Street	27	1	0	28
Monterey	Scarborough Street	22	0	0	22
Ramsgate Beach	Emmaline Street	164	2	3	169
Ramsgate Beach	Florence Street	36	0	0	36
Ramsgate Beach	Omeros Restaurant (has a locked bus parking bay)	12	1	0	13
Ramsgate Beach	100 meters south of Omeros Restaurant	40	0	0	40
Ramsgate Beach	The Grand Parade north of Alice Street	0	0	66	66
Ramsgate Beach	Alice Street	0	0	40	40
Ramsgate Beach	The Grand Parade south of Alice Street	0	0	43	43
Dolls Point	Sandringham Street	0	0	27	27
Dolls Point	Skinners Avenue	34	0	0	34
Dolls Point	Le Beach Hut (Carruthers Dr)	55	2	0	57
Dolls Point	Sanoni Avenue (Georges River Sailing Club)	59	2	0	61
Sandringham	Ida Street	4	0	0	4
Sandringham	Vanston Parade	32	2	0	34
Sandringham	Riverside Drive (indent curb)	0	0	38	38
Sans Souci	St George Sailing Club	176	0	0	176
Sans Souci	Captain Cook Bridge	0	0	17	17
	Available parking spaces Cook Park	1100	16	259	1375
Dolls Point	Le Beach Hut (Russell Avenue) Peter Depena Reserve Council Community Land	37	1	0	38
Dolls Point	Georges River Sailing Club (adjacent to club house)	95	2	0	97
Ramsgate Beach	Carruthers Drive (north) currently blocked off - presumably being upgraded	0	0	183	183
	Potentially available spaces	1232	19	442	1693