



>> REPORT

>> RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

>> **ISSUES RAISED BY TOWNSVILLE MOTOR BOAT AND
YACHT CLUB**

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>> TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	ISSUES	4
1.2	RESPONSES	4
1.2.1	POTENTIAL FOR PERMANENT BRIDGE	4
1.2.2	100M EXCLUSION ZONE.....	4
1.2.3	SAFETY CONCERNS REGARDING OPERATIONS OF TEMPORARY BRIDGE.....	5
1.2.4	NOISE IMPACTS ON TMBYC.....	5
1.2.5	FINANCIAL IMPACTS ON TMBYC ARISING FROM TEMPORARY BRIDGE.....	5
1.3	CONCLUSIONS	7
2	REFERENCES	8



1 INTRODUCTION

This document provides preliminary responses to issues raised by the Townsville Motor Boat and Yacht Club (TMBYC).

1.1 ISSUES

Specific issues raised in were as follows:

1. The potential for the proposed temporary bridge across Ross Creek to become a permanent bridge;
2. The impact of the 100m exclusion zone around navy ships on recreational boat traffic and usage of Ross Creek and access of same;
3. A range of general safety concerns related to the operation of the proposed temporary bridge;
4. Noise impacts of haulage trucks on the TMBYC; and
5. Financial impacts on TMBYC including loss of trade and devaluation of marina berths.

1.2 RESPONSES

1.2.1 POTENTIAL FOR PERMANENT BRIDGE

The nature of any future linkage of the north and south banks of Ross Creek is a matter for Townsville City Council. The temporary bridge is proposed solely for the purposes of material haulage required for the proposed Townsville Ocean Terminal and Breakwater Cove project development. It is the intention of the project proponent to dismantle the bridge upon completion of the project.

A bridge across Ross Creek is presently the policy of the Townsville City Council. Such as linkage has been proposed by Council for some time, and is clearly visible in the Townsville Economic Gateway vision documentation (2007). We also note that Council has recently released for public consultation a revised policy in relation to the future funding of a crossing of the creek (March 2008), and has in fact been actively collecting funds on the basis of this policy.

Further, the traffic modeling undertaken by Veitch Lister and Holland Traffic Consulting indicates that the requirement for a cross-creek connection is driven by overall growth of Townsville and rapidly growing population in and around the CBD. The TOT project is not the cause or the 'trigger' for such a bridge (Holland Traffic Consulting 2008 and Veitch Lister Modelling 2008 at Appendix 21).

Finally, notwithstanding the above, should Council resolve that a connection between the north and south sides of Ross Creek is warranted, the TOT project has no preference in relation to the specific form such a connection may take in the future (e.g. bridge or tunnel).

1.2.2 100M EXCLUSION ZONE

TMBYC submissions raised concerns about the impact of the anticipated 100m exclusion zone that would be enforced by visiting naval vessels (particularly US Navy) on recreational vessels' access to Ross Creek.



The issue was investigated in two ways:

- Consultations with experts on likely US Navy security requirements and practices in relation to the exclusion zone policy, and particularly in relation to its application in the Townsville Port environment; and
- Consultations with the Acting Harbour Master at the Townsville Port on potential navigation issues.

The Report from Admiral Robert J. Natter (US Navy Retired) indicates that the 100m exclusion zone is an 'ideal' or preferred security perimeter, but would be applied with due consideration to the physical characteristics of individual port environments and broader security assessments pertinent at the time of a visit to Port (Appendix A23).

Discussions with the Acting Harbour Master also concluded that the application of an exclusion zone around naval vessels did not pose insurmountable or unmanageable barriers to civilian vessel access to Ross Creek.

Our conclusion, on the basis of these advices, is that the concerns raised about access to Ross Creek can be effectively managed so that passage for civilian and recreational vessels can be achieved without compromising the security needs of visiting naval vessels.

1.2.3 SAFETY CONCERNS REGARDING OPERATIONS OF TEMPORARY BRIDGE

A management plan will need to be developed to govern the operations of the temporary bridge. The management plan will necessarily incorporate all relevant safety considerations. The management plan will be developed in consultation with impacted users and relevant stakeholders (refer to Flanagan Consulting Group 2008a at Appendix A7).

1.2.4 NOISE IMPACTS ON TMBYC

There is no indication that noise arising from haulage trucks using a temporary bridge will give rise to unacceptable levels of noise, which would adversely impact on the amenity of the Yacht Club facilities. The Club facilities are about 400m from the proposed temporary bridge. However, Ron Rumble Pty Ltd has been requested to examine this issue more thoroughly and provide further technical consideration of the potential noise impacts of haulage trucks using the proposed temporary bridge (Rumble 2008 Appendix A6).

1.2.5 FINANCIAL IMPACTS ON TMBYC ARISING FROM TEMPORARY BRIDGE

A management plan to govern the operations of the temporary bridge will be developed to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all impacted stakeholders. The critical issue raised in consultations with TMBYC related to the open/closing regime for the bridge, which could potentially curtail the present near unfettered access of the channel by TMBYC members.¹

The TMBYC Board indicated a strong preference for an 'on demand' opening regimen, as the proposed 15 minute window each hour was viewed to be inadequately flexible and would adversely affect the use rights of the channel by TMBYC members. The project proponents indicated a willingness to work with the TMBYC and its consultants (Maunsells) who had been commissioned to prepare an analysis of traffic movements and requirements on Ross Creek to better inform the preparation of the bridge management plan.

¹ It can be noted that access is not solely unfettered as already turning ferries have right of passage and smaller recreational craft are required to wait until ferries have completed their maneuvers.



The project proponents have indicated a clear intention to ensuring that a workable management regimen is developed so that recreational boating access is more-or-less unfettered by the presence of the temporary bridge. In effect, it is recognized that priority is to be given to navigable traffic i.e., water craft on Ross Creek (refer to Flanagan Consulting Group (2008b) report on *Impact on Maritime Traffic* at Appendix A7).

A revised temporary bridge design and operational regime (draft) has been developed to give effect to this set of intentions, namely to enable priority to be given to maritime traffic and to achieve an efficient turnaround in usage by enabling the opening and closing of the bridge to take place in a relatively short space of time (see Appendix A7). On this basis, it is unlikely that the proposed temporary bridge represents a significant or likely risk to TMBYC trading activity.

Similarly, the consultants do not believe that the temporary bridge will have any long-lasting adverse impacts on the value of marina berths at the TMBYC. The value of marina berths is driven largely by market forces, and as reported in the *Economic Impact Assessment Report*, there is an under-supply of at least 2,000 berths in Queensland (pp. 44-46). In these conditions of insufficient supply (or surplus demand), it is likely that berth values in Queensland generally will be maintained well into the future.

We would expect that these broader market conditions would underpin the relative value of berths in Townsville, including those at the TMBYC. In this regard, it can be noted that market feedback indicates that the present cost of berthing facilities in Townsville is ~\$8,000 per linear metre, and that TMYBC members are charged ~\$4,000 per linear metre for berthage facilities at the Club (i.e., more or less at cost). On this basis, Club members with berths are receiving a significant discount on the commercial cost of berthing infrastructure, and therefore are unlikely to experience dramatic net negative impacts in relation to actual outlays on their values as a result of a temporary bridge crossing.

This dynamic notwithstanding, we note that Taylor Byrne Valuers (TBV), in its correspondence supporting the TMBYC submission, advised that “preliminary indications are that this loss [of full use rights and therefore asset values] will sit between \$6,000,000 and \$8,000,000.” Unfortunately, apart from the observations of market values/costs noted above, it is not possible to respond in any greater detail let alone definitively to the TBV advice without further details and particulars as to how their estimations have been arrived at.

This notwithstanding, as part of the post EIS public consultation phase (February to present) the project proponents and consulting team have undertaken further evaluations of the material haulage options. On the basis of a multi-criteria assessment undertaken by Flanagan Consulting Group (2008a, Appendix A8), apart from the temporary bridge option, another new option has been tabled for consideration. This new option involves the barging of loaded and empty tracks across Ross Creek direct to the project site, obviating any need for a permanent bridge structure. This new option is known as Option 1A.

From a social impact point of view, particularly with respect to upstream users and nearby residents, this latter option would be highly desirable. Any impacts on Ross Creek navigation as a result of additional on-creek usage by a barge would require further assessment; however, this option would mean that the concerns raised by TMBYC and members about the impacts of a temporary bridge on access would have been fully avoided.



1.3 CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the above, the conclusions are as follows:

- Advice from the US Navy and the Acting Harbour Master indicates that the proposed 100m exclusion zone does not pose insurmountable or unmitigatable barriers to civilian vessel access to Ross Creek. It is a preferred guideline only;
- The proposed temporary bridge – on the basis of the operational regime that priorities maritime traffic – is unlikely to have any significant long-lasting adverse impacts upon the value of TMBYC berths and facilities. It should be noted that the temporary bridge will be dismantled after completion of project construction, estimated at 3 years;
- An alternative barge-to-site option to carry trucks across Ross Creek is now being actively considered by the project proponents, which would effectively avoid any concerns about the impact of such a structure on creek access; and
- Townsville City Council's present policy is for the construction of a permanent bridge across Ross Creek, in response to emerging traffic congestion issues at critical intersections such as that at the corner of Flinders Street East and Denham Street. Whether such a crossing proceeds is a matter for Council. The proposed development is not the trigger for such a crossing.



2 REFERENCES

Flanagan Consulting Group (2008a) *Review of Construction Issues*

Flanagan Consulting Group (2008b) *Impact on Maritime Traffic*

Holland Traffic Consulting (2008) *Traffic Report*

Natter, R.J., (US Navy Admiral, retired) (2008) *Report*

Ron Rumble Pty Ltd (2008) *Review of Submissions (May 2008)*

Townsville City Council (2007) *Townsville Gateway*

Transpac Consulting (2007) *Economic Impact Assessment: Townsville Ocean Terminal Project*

Veitch Lister Modelling (2008) *Additional Traffic Modelling*