

PORT OF AIRLIE MARINA DEVELOPMENT

20. Community Consultation

The development of Boathaven Bay has been the subject of proposals dating as far back as 1985. Since this time, the local community has been engaged in public consultation processes on these proposals on three separate occasions.

The results of these consultation processes were taken into account in the development of the current proposal and the proponent re-engaged the community to clarify the content of the current proposal.

20.1 Goals and Anticipated Outcomes

The overarching aims of the consultation program were:

- ❑ to ensure that stakeholders in the Port of Airlie Development were well-informed about the nature of the project, the Supplementary EIS process and the consultation process;
- ❑ to maximise input from stakeholders during the Supplementary EIS process and to empower stakeholders to have further input during the public review period; and
- ❑ to ensure stakeholders' comments, concerns and suggestions were taken into account during the Supplementary EIS process.

The goals of the community consultation program were:

- ❑ to provide stakeholders in the project with information about the project during the Supplementary EIS process;
- ❑ to explain the differences between the 1998 Port of Airlie Development and the current proposal;
- ❑ to provide stakeholders with detailed information about the Supplementary EIS process itself;
- ❑ to provide a variety of opportunities for stakeholders to express concerns, make suggestions and otherwise have input to the project during the Supplementary EIS process;
- ❑ to provide stakeholders with a clear understanding of how they could become involved in the process in a meaningful way and provide options to communicate with the project team in the mode with which stakeholders felt most comfortable (ie personal contact, written submission, telephone);
- ❑ to allow concerns raised by stakeholders to be addressed during the Supplementary EIS process, wherever possible; and
- ❑ to incorporate public input into the development of Supplementary EIS recommendations, wherever appropriate.

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20.2 Methodology and Strategies

The community consultation team employed a variety of communication strategies to help achieve the goals of the program. These were:

- ❑ **Identification of stakeholders** in the project and development of a stakeholders database;
- ❑ Distribution of a **Community Information Bulletin** to local residents, businesses, community organisations, environmental organisations and other groups believed to have an interest in the project;
- ❑ Circulation of a **media release** to local newspapers and radio stations;
- ❑ Conduct of a **Public Open Day** at the Whitsunday Sailing Club;
- ❑ **Meetings with Advisory Agencies** with a role in assessing the project;
- ❑ Operation of a freecall **Project Information Line** for the project; and
- ❑ Solicitation of **written submissions** on the project.

Other meetings were conducted as part of the Social Impact Assessment process for the project. Please refer to **Section 15** for more details.

20.2.1 Identification of Stakeholders

Stakeholders in the project were considered to be:

- ❑ Residents of Airlie Beach, Cannonvale and Shute Harbour;
- ❑ Businesses in Airlie Beach, Cannonvale, Shute Harbour and Proserpine;
- ❑ Government Agencies with a role in assessing the Supplementary EIS;
- ❑ Individuals or organisations who had participated in previous consultation processes related to the proposed development; and
- ❑ Environmental, Community or Business Groups in the wider region (in some cases extending to Mackay) with a potential interest in the project.

These groups were identified by searching white and yellow pages telephone directories (using a marketing-specific computer software program) for organisations located in a 100 km radius of the proposed project site (in the case of some organisation, 200km) ; web-based searches and anecdotal information. Organisations identified as having a potential interest in the project were those perceived to have:

- ❑ Maritime interests;
- ❑ Environmental or conservation interests;
- ❑ Indigenous interests;
- ❑ Business interests (such as chambers of commerce);
- ❑ Tourism and accommodation interests;
- ❑ Cultural and educational interests;
- ❑ Recreation and sporting interests; and
- ❑ Community service, family, youth and welfare interests.

20.2.2 Community Information Bulletin

2300 copies of the Community Information Bulletin were distributed by hand to residences and businesses in Airlie Beach and Cannonvale on 28 September, 2002. A further 189 copies of the Community Information Bulletin were posted to participants in previous consultation efforts related to the proposal and to local Community, Environment and Business Groups. Multiple copies of the bulletin were also distributed to local shops and neighbourhood centres in Cannonvale, Proserpine and

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Airlie Beach and were available at the Public Open Day. Before being distributed, a draft of the bulletin was discussed with the Department of State Development.

The Community Information Bulletin contained the following information:

- ❑ Key details of the project – including its location, general features, numbers of marina berths and hotel rooms. A land use masterplan was included to give recipients an understanding of the proposed layout of the facility and its main features
- ❑ A description of the EIS process for the project;
- ❑ A description of the contents of the Supplementary EIS;
- ❑ Instructions for having input to the Supplementary EIS process (1800 number, postal address, public information day, written submission to the Department of State Development);

- ❑ A brief project timetable;
- ❑ A coupon which stakeholders could cut out and return to the project team, indicating their interest in receiving further information on the project.

A copy of the Community Information Bulletin has been provided in **Appendix O**.

20.2.3 Media Releases

In response to media releases distributed by the proponent, newspaper articles appeared in the Proserpine Guardian on 25 September 2002 and in the Whitsunday Times on 26 September 2002. These articles detailed the general nature of the proposed development, and alerted readers to the Public Open Day and the imminent distribution of the Community Information Bulletin.

A transcript of the article appearing in the Whitsunday Times has been provided in **Appendix P**.

20.2.4 Public Open Day

A public open day was held on Saturday 5 October 2002 at the Whitsunday Sailing Club, Airlie Beach between 10:30 am and 2:30 pm. Representatives of the proponent and senior members of the Supplementary EIS project team were in attendance to discuss the project with attendees. Feedback forms were made available to attendees to capture written comments.

Full – colour display panels were erected. These comprised:

- ❑ Land Use Plan;
- ❑ Dredging Plan;
- ❑ Satellite Photo of the Region;
- ❑ Comparison of the development proposed in 1998 and the current proposal;
- ❑ Oblique Aerial Photo of Airlie Beach with an overlay of the proposed development;
- ❑ History of the Project;
- ❑ Description of the Supplementary EIS process; and
- ❑ Instructions on how to have input to the Supplementary EIS process.

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20.2.5 Meetings with Advisory Agencies

Representatives of the proponent and the Supplementary EIS project team conducted meetings with Government Advisory Agencies to clarify the details of the project and the progress of the Supplementary EIS studies, including the progress of the Community Consultation Program.

Meetings were held between 1 October 2002 and 11 October 2002 with:

- Environmental Protection Agency (Brisbane)
- Tourism Queensland (Brisbane)
- Department of Tourism Racing and Fair Trading (Brisbane)
- Queensland Transport (Brisbane)
- Department of Employment and Training (Brisbane)
- Department of Housing (Brisbane)
- Department of Local Government and Planning (Mackay)
- Department of Natural Resources and Mines (Mackay)
- Department of Main Roads (Mackay)
- Department of Families (Mackay)
- Department of Primary Industries (Brisbane)
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

Additional meetings were held in the context of the Social Impact Assessment process. These meetings are detailed in **Section 15** of this document.

20.2.6 Free Call Project Information Line

A Free Call Project Information Line was advertised through the Community Information Bulletin and the Public Open Day. This line was answered by members of the Supplementary EIS project team during business hours and a voicemail answering service was employed to capture after hours or otherwise unanswered calls.

20.2.7 Solicitation of Written Submissions

Written submissions were solicited through the Community Information Bulletin and the Public Open Day. The content of all written submissions was recorded in the stakeholder database and forwarded to the proponent for consideration during the Supplementary EIS process.

20.2.8 Other Stakeholder Meetings

A range of other stakeholder meetings were undertaken as part of the Social Impact Assessment. These are described in more detail in **Section 15** of this Supplementary EIS and are included in the list of people and organisations consulted in **Appendix Q**.

20.3 Responses

20.3.1 1800 Number

A total of eight calls were received through the 1800 number during the consultation period. Of these, five calls regarded requests for additional copies of the Community Information Bulletin. One caller was interested in establishing premises in the new development.

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Three callers expressed concerns as follows:

- ❑ adequacy of sewerage infrastructure for the new development;
- ❑ height buildings;
- ❑ impact of marine maintenance facilities; and
- ❑ timing of the open day.

A call was also received from a teacher at Cannonvale Primary School regarding the possibility of project personnel making a presentation to Grade 6 students regarding the project, as part of a learning module being undertaken.

20.3.2 Written Submissions

Recipients of the Community Information Bulletin and attendees at the Public Open Day were encouraged to provide written submissions on the proposal to a local Post Office Box. During the Supplementary EIS process, a total of twenty-five written submissions and feedback forms were received. Nine of the twenty-five submissions were requests to be included on the mailing list for future Community Information Bulletins.

Of the remaining sixteen:

- ❑ six expressed concerns about the height of the proposed tower, indicating that this had a high visual impact, was out of character for Airlie Beach and not in keeping with council building height restrictions for foreshore developments (four storeys);
- ❑ six expressed interest in commercial facilities and marina berths;
- ❑ three were generally supportive of the project;
- ❑ two expressed concerns about the impact of south-easterly winds;
- ❑ two requested additional project documents;
- ❑ one suggested design changes to the breakwater;
- ❑ one suggested that the proposed parkland should be moved to the beachfront area;
- ❑ one expressed concerns about pedestrian safety;
- ❑ one indicated that information bulletins had not received at his business premises, that the height of several proposed buildings would impact on his business and that the location of marine maintenance facilities was unacceptable and would have environmental consequences; and
- ❑ one suggested that the planned facilities were insufficient for present and future needs.

20.3.3 Public Open Day

Sixty four people signed the attendance register for the open day, however it is estimated that the number of attendees exceeded eighty. A total of twelve feedback forms were received.

The response of attendees to the proposal was generally very positive. The consultation team received many inquiries about marina berths, residential blocks and business opportunities within the development and were asked many questions about how soon the development would start and when berths, residential blocks and other facilities would be available.

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There was a general sense among the consultation team that the local community had been waiting for this development for a long time, that it would be of benefit to Airlie Beach and would raise the standard of commercial activity in the area.

The most common negative response to the proposal was the height of the Apartment Hotel tower. Several stakeholders expressed that a ten storey tower was out of context in Airlie Beach, and that it would interrupt the views currently enjoyed by residents and set a precedent for further high rise development. Some stakeholders also expressed concerns about the height of the Harbourfront Serviced Apartments, and some of the Harbourfront Retail and Residential facilities.

Concerns were also expressed on:

- ❑ the impacts of the proposal on seagrasses and mangroves;
- ❑ pedestrian safety near the facility;
- ❑ the potential presence and management of acid sulphate soils;
- ❑ the capacity of local sewerage infrastructure;
- ❑ noise impacts caused by the operations of the marina maintenance area;
- ❑ the visual appearance of buildings in the marina maintenance area;
- ❑ the exposure of the marina to southeasterly winds and the difficulties that such winds would cause in manoeuvring boats into and out of the marina berths; and
- ❑ the amount of reclaimed land needed by the project.

20.4 Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Consultation Activities

20.4.1 Conclusions

The reaction of the community to the Port of Airlie Development was overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority of queries received by the project team were with regard to the availability of marina berths and business opportunities within the development. Most participants in the consultation process were eager for the project to progress.

There was a general sense that the local community had been waiting for this development for a long time, that it would be of benefit to Airlie Beach and would raise the standard of commercial activity in the area.

The most common negative response to the proposal was the height of some of the proposed facilities, the hotel tower in particular. Several stakeholders expressed that a ten storey tower was out of context in Airlie Beach, and that it would interrupt the views currently enjoyed by residents. Concerns about various environmental impacts were also raised.

20.4.2 Community Information Bulletins

There was a particularly strong response to the offer of ongoing Community Information Bulletins. A mailing list of more than 70 interested recipients has been established and it is recommended that future Community Information Bulletins be circulated to this list. Future issues could contain information about the progress of the approvals process, a more detailed construction timetable and opportunities to express interest in marina facilities or commercial activities.

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20.4.3 Ongoing operation of 1800 number

Due to the very low response to the 1800 number, it is recommended that this service be discontinued at the end of the public comment period for the Supplementary EIS.

20.4.4 Maintenance of Stakeholders Database

The stakeholders database should be maintained to keep records of those with an interest in the project. In particular, records should be kept of those with an interest in marina berths, commercial opportunities and employment with the project.

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