

# Gateway

Newsletter of the Brooklyn Community Association, Inc

January 2012

## Redevelopment of Peat Island and Surrounding Land: Community Meetings Planned Feb 4th & 25th



Map of Potential Land Uses from the State Property Authority's newsletter to the community, February 2011

Two meetings will be held to discuss this important topic. The Brooklyn Community Association meeting is **Saturday, February 4th, 10am to noon**, at the Brooklyn Meeting Room. All Brooklyn residents are invited. The purpose is to develop a Brooklyn perspective on the project for presentation at the next meeting.

The second meeting on **Saturday, February 25th, 10am to noon** is with Matt Kean, MP Hornsby, Barry Douse, General Manager and Simon Furness, Executive Director of the State Property Authority, to listen to our views on the Peat Island and Mooney Redevelopment and how this will affect facilities and infrastructure in Brooklyn. Please consider coming to both.

# Peat Island Redevelopment: Excerpts of a Letter Sent to Matt Kean, MP Hornsby, 10.07.2011, from the Brooklyn Community Association

"On a whole the community is excited by the prospect of a sensitively, well thought out redevelopment of the Peat Island site and the surrounding areas of Mooney Mooney (hereafter known as Peat island Redevelopment). The BCA welcomes more residents in our river community.

The NSW Liberal Government has been a long time espouser of new suburbs being created with access to adequate key infrastructure such as access to public transport and commuter parking.

Support for the Peat Island Redevelopment by the BCA is conditional upon the incorporation of integrated critical improvements to parking, station access and bus transport in Brooklyn for the use of residents of the wider river communities.

**There are two critical infrastructure projects** that the BCA would request are included as key development criteria for an integrated master plan for the redevelopment of Peat Island. In 2011 there is very limited infrastructure in Brooklyn to support the increase in population that a new nearby suburb would bring. This infrastructure struggles to meet the current needs of the river communities.

## **Parking - Critical Issue 1**

Very limited parking is available to support and service the local commercial businesses (shops, cafes, medical services etc.); all day commuter parking for rail passengers is non-existent; and limited long-term parking is available to service the tourist river residents.

## **Consideration**

State Rail has a significant amount of land that could be used to accommodate rail passengers directly adjacent to the station and the Peat Island Redevelopment has the potential to bring a proportionally large increase in rail commuters who will require parking adjacent or nearby the Hawkesbury River Station.

## **Hawkesbury River Station Access - Critical Issue 2**

Equitable access to the station remains an issue and would be achieved by the installation of lifts.

Brooklyn and surrounding river communities have a large proportion of aging and young families and are the gateway to two major sports and recreation site used by as many as one hundred thousand school students every year as well as recreational users.

These users are often unable to access the station and utilise train transport due to the large number and steepness of the railway steps.

## **Situation**

The station steps rebuilding in 2010 included the preparation work needed for future lifts and the BCA implore the NSW State Government to include the construction of the lifts and adequate parking as part of the infrastructure to support the redevelopment of Peat Island.

Other transport, besides rail, to shopping areas is limited to one bus out in the morning and one bus back in the afternoon.

As a tourist destination Brooklyn is a jewel for retirees but unless that are very fit their excursions have to depend on being bussed into town, as do most of the school groups, only exacerbating the traffic on our only arterial road.

## **BCA Feedback and Community Reflection**

There are a number of other issues that have been brought to the attention of the BCA which we strongly contend should be considered and incorporated into the overall strategic planning for the Peat Island Redevelopment.

Some relate to the Peat Island site and Mooney Mooney, others relate to the potential impacts such redevelopment will have on Brooklyn itself.

Consultation - To date the consultants (Key Insights) to the State Property Authority have not given consideration to the potential impact the Peat Island Redevelopment will have on Brooklyn village.

The BCA would like to see genuine community consultation with the Brooklyn community and also the inclusion of Hornsby Shire Council into this important planning process.

Land buffer - required around the oyster industry at the end of Kowan Rd in Mooney. These producers are part of the area's long history and work according to weather and tides (all hours of the day and night). The protection of this industry through a buffer would assist in noise attenuation for proposed residential development nearby.

The proposed highway service development - is inappropriate visually and in the scale that is suggested on the plan and its proximity to residential development. Such a development would be better placed in a less scenic location further up the F3.

The suggestion of a small retail area was well received and supported by the community. It would enhance the feeling of community and add much needed services to the area.

Marina development and commuter berthing is supported of a size to handle the existing and future needs of the area. At this time there is no commuter berthing on the Central Coast side of the river and there is great pressure on Brooklyn facilities to handle all of the berthing needs of river residents.

Public access to all of the foreshores is supported and the BCA suggests that consideration be given to dredging the channel behind Peat Island when the causeway is upgraded.

Retention and upgrading of the existing chapel, recreation halls and sporting facilities are supported. BCA believes that there may be structures that can be retained for new uses without jeopardising the best planning outcomes. The Peat Island chapel is the only such facility in our area and we wish it to be preserved and made available for wider public use.

The environmental land designated on the plan managed for public use.

Support the refurbishment or creation of public recreation facilities, including multi-purpose facilities to support ball, racket and water sports, including such things as a public pool and rowing to complement the facilities already available in Brooklyn.

Concern has been raised regarding noise attenuation that may be caused by the proposed sound barriers that may be constructed to deflect the noise from the F3 away from the redevelopment of Peat Island. Noise studies would need to be undertaken to ensure that the F3 related traffic noise is not bounced across open water to Brooklyn and other river communities. Great care needs to be used if such barriers are being considered so as not to increase noise in Brooklyn's Sandbrook Inlet area.

As we expect that this development will draw families as well as retirees, the need for preserving the existing Mooney school should be considered. Additional school children cannot be accommodated in the Brooklyn school without significant upgrade to those facilities.

Funding made available for a shared path extended from the redevelopment of Peat Island area to the heart of Brooklyn. Hornsby Council has developed a plan and costing's for part of this but to do it most successfully it needs to be seen as an artery to be used for accessing the facilities that Brooklyn offers. This should entail better management of traffic on Brooklyn Road (possibly the upgrading of parts of Brooklyn Road) to handle the increased car and trailer traffic and consideration should be given to making Brooklyn Road a State road.

A commitment from the NSW State Government as to how the police will service the population and how police presence in the area might be improved to reduce the increasing law and order incidences being experienced. Since the sale of the police stations in Brooklyn and Berowra crime has increased in the river area, on both sides of the bridge. We would like to clarification as to the process that continues forward."

# Why is the Peat Island and Mooney Mooney Redevelopment Important to Brooklyn

Many residents would be aware that the only input Brooklyn residents were invited to give regarding the Peat Island and Mooney redevelopment was at the Open Day held 2 April, 2011. Although submissions were made on behalf of Brooklyn there was no further contact with us by either the consultants or the State Government. Following the elections, the new State government was asked to sign off on the plans within the first few days of taking office. We are grateful that the new Minister, Greg Pearce, was cautious enough to wait until he had a better understanding of the project and all it entailed.

Some may wonder why Brooklyn would be so interested in what will happen across the river. The reason is that whatever happens across the river will have a great impact on the infrastructure and services available in Brooklyn, particularly roads, parking around town, rail commuter parking, the increased traffic on the roads and trains and the increased need for lifts at Hawkesbury River Station, just to name a few.

The fact is, no matter how small Brooklyn really is, an influx of visitors and residents across the river will use Brooklyn as the local hub. Unless the Mooney public school is retained there could be a sizeable demand on the Brooklyn school facilities if young families move into the area. Recreational boating traffic will increase as more residents take advantage of what we recognize as nature's playground. The planned shared path will, we hope, see more foot and bike movement between the redevelopment area and downtown Brooklyn. There will be increased demand on the Health Centre, the shops, our local tradespeople, etc.

Likewise, new facilities in the Peat Island redevelopment site may offer Brooklyn residents the possibility of new sports and recreational facility, perhaps shopping and restaurants, new bushland areas to explore, tourist accommodation - the possibilities are limited only by the imagination and will of all those involved. There has been a suggestion to locate emergency service facilities such as SES and Marine Rescue within the site.

None of the above should be seen as a judgement of what should or shouldn't be included within the redevelopment. It is intended to get us thinking. If there was no proposed plans in existence what would Brooklyn like to see happen to this plot of land? Are there buildings and facilities that we would like kept for community use such as has been suggested for the Peat Island chapel and the swimming pool? Are there facilities that we do or don't want, such as the previously proposed service station or lifts for the railway station? Do we want residential and tourist development and to what scale? Do we want to encourage the development of sporting facilities to compliment those already in Brooklyn, such as those for basketball, net ball, volley ball, golf, racket sports, swimming? Do we want to just leave the land as bushland and allow little or no development? Should the site be sold to developers and restrictions placed on what they are allowed and required to build?

Your opinions are valuable and careful thought is needed. The information contained in this newsletter is intended to expose you to what has gone before in the hopes that it will help you consider the issues raised and what we want for our river community into the future.

Mathilde Kearny-Kibble, President, BCA

## The Consultant's Report to the State Property Authority

The Consultation Report prepared by Key Insights Pty Ltd for the State Property Authority, published August 2011, can be viewed in full at the following website: [http://www.lpma.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/161170/LARGE\\_Key\\_Insights\\_Consultation\\_Report\\_August\\_2011.pdf](http://www.lpma.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/161170/LARGE_Key_Insights_Consultation_Report_August_2011.pdf). This report distils the comments received at the Open Day and submissions made to the consultants and demonstrates the divergence of views within the river community and the issues that have been raised. The following is an extract from the report:

*"Despite the diversity of input, it has been possible to identify some common threads under the themes used for the Community Open Day presentation stations:*

### **1. The Rezoning Process and Opportunities for Community Input**

*The main issue identified under this theme was the need to disseminate information to a broader audience, including the range of smaller local communities in the*

*area, water-access-only residents and residents across Gosford and Hornsby LGAs (local government areas).*

### **2. Proposed Land Use Zonings**

*The community identified a wide range of issues and provided a similarly wide range of suggestions for land use. Some common themes emerged in relation to each of the 9 land use areas identified in the Map of Potential Land Uses as follows:*



#### *Area 1 Peat Island*

- o Support for rezoning to allow the development of tourism with a wide range of suggestions from a top quality hotel/marina complex to restaurants and small shops.*
- o Maintenance as a heritage site with significant public access.*
- o Caution about over-development of Peat Island.*

#### *Area 2 Residential*

- o Protection of the foreshore vital.*
- o Support for public use.*
- o Risk identified for residential development due to concerns about flooding, environmental impact and visual impact from the river.*

#### *Area 3 Residential, Tourist and Minor Retail*

- o Overall support for mixed use residential, tourism, minor retail and community use.*
- o Some concern about overdevelopment/overcrowding, depending on the scale of development.*

#### *Area 4 Environmental*

- o Strong support.*
- o Could be added to the Popran or Brisbane Water National Parks.*

#### *Area 5 Highway Service Centre*

- o Strong opposition to a highway service centre and large fast food chains.*
- o Some support for a small service station, either on this site or on the old service station site.*

#### *Area 6 Residential*

- o Support for mixed use – residential, community facilities and shops.*

#### *Area 7 Residential*

- o Some support for low density residential.*
- o Concerns expressed for the tenancy of long term residents*
- o Support for retention of school site for community use, if not used as a school, to serve increased population.*

#### *Areas 8/9 Community*

- o Strong support.*

### **3. Land Ownership Plan**

*The key point made under this theme is the importance of preserving the Department of Education and Communities "land for community use. This point sits within the broader context expressed by the community of the importance of preserving land for community purposes, the potential need for a school if there is residential development and upgrade of existing community facilities such as the rural fire service and library building.*

### **4. Public Access Plan**

*The importance of public access was a common theme throughout all consultation processes and in particular:*

- o The need to enhance public access and increase public/community spaces and buildings across all areas.*

*o Public access linkages between areas. Strong support for walkways and cycleways.*

*o Need to ensure public access to foreshore whilst also protecting the mangroves e.g. setbacks and boardwalks.*

### **5. Ecological and Scenic Qualities**

- o Important to preserve the environmental amenity and pristine river environment.*
- o Concern about the oyster and fishing industries being damaged by development.*
- o The importance of buffer zones between any development and the oyster/fishing industries and foreshore/mangroves.*

### **6. Heritage**

- o Strong support for preservation of buildings as heritage, Aboriginal heritage and history of the site.*
- o Community access to heritage buildings*
- o Support for Heritage tourism.*

### **7. Noise and Traffic**

- o Noise from compression braking was identified as a huge problem not only for new but for existing communities as well.*
- o The need for noise barriers that are unobtrusive and that don't reflect the noise to other residential areas.*
- o Problems with the existing interchange to the F3 southbound.*
- o Need to upgrade public transport throughout the locality and especially to the railway station.*
- o Inadequate parking in Brooklyn and at the railway station.*

### **8. Social Impact**

- o Lack of community berthing space and car parking for water-access-only residents.*
- o More open space and public recreation areas needed.*
- o Retain existing community assets e.g. chapel, fire shed and library.*
- o Provide a mix of housing to avoid becoming an "elitist enclave" (an exclusive area with no affordable housing).*
- o Important to maintain the village atmosphere of the area,*
- o Need for a small supermarket/corner store.*
- o Overdevelopment will lead to stress and disharmony within the local community.*

### **9. Employment and Tourism**

- o Do not want a massive service station or large fast food giants.*
- o Support for small scale, employment providing tourism and small commercial.*

### **10. Services and Utilities and Other Studies**

*There was concern relating to a number of utilities and services including power supply, sewerage facilities telecommunications and general infrastructure needs. Key service needs were identified here including health services, police, day care and aged care.*

*In summary, the input to date from the local community has been diverse; however, there are some strong common themes on which the local community agrees. The key findings on which there is agreement are:*

- 1. Peat Island and Mooney Mooney lands represent a unique and beautiful area that is valued for its natural assets and unique village style communities.*
- 2. Protection of the local environment is vital and the retention of bushland is strongly supported. Protection of mangroves and other natural features is highly desirable.*
- 3. This is a gateway site and the visual impact is important.*
- 4. There are identifiable existing community needs which include small scale commercial/retail facilities, passive recreation and sporting facilities, community meeting places and local services.*
- 5. The local community highly values the heritage associated with the site.*
- 6. The river is important and needs to be protected. Public access to the waterfront for passive recreation is essential.*
- 7. Tourism is generally a desirable use, particularly if it is in keeping with the unique environment and contributes to the recognition of local heritage. A marina that accommodates local river users is generally supported.*
- 8. There may be potential capacity issues with local infrastructure including access to the train station, power, sewerage and telecommunications. Noise from the F3 is also an existing issue.*

*9. Both Gosford and Hornsby Councils should be involved in the proposed rezoning.*

*Key findings which show strong divergent opinions within the community are:*

- 1. Rezoning and redevelopment of the site appears to be a desirable outcome for the majority of people who have been consulted to date. There are some concerns about the land going into private ownership. There are a small number of people who want to see the site left as it is, or improved as a passive recreation area.*
- 2. Some people are strongly in favour of residential development, but support will depend on the scale of the proposal. There is also some support for no residential development.*
- 3. There are divergent views about the scale and type of tourism use that would be suitable with support for caravan parks and camping through to hotel and conference facilities.*
- 4. The highway service centre concept attracted the strongest negative response. However, there is support for a small scale service station and the site of the former petrol station was often recommended.*

*Ongoing community consultation is recommended to deliver a Masterplan for this site that provides balance between the government's need for a return on the land and the local community's aspirations for the site. "*

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## **Dedication of War Memorial in April**

The Brooklyn RSL Sub-Branch are planning to unveil and dedicate the newly restored War Memorial down in the park next April around ANZAC Day. As the War memorial forms an important part of the local community, dedicated as it is to all those men and women from the Brooklyn District who served in the armed forces, it is hope that everybody will embrace the Dedication Service will a big roll up on the day. At this stage it is set down for Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2012 starting around 11am. More details as they come to hand. If you want to know more give RSL President Ken Shadie a call on 9985 7579..

## **Dangar Island League's Views**

A presentation was made to a meeting of the Dangar Island League dated 27 August 2011 regarding the Peat Island development. This can be viewed at the following web address: <http://web.me.com/payniac/DILeague/resources/Peat-Island.pdf>.

In a nut shell, the proposal recommends that the land west of the F3 converted to a community park for accessing the river, short term camping and caravanning, retaining some of the existing buildings as a conference facilities, a marina development for boat, houseboat and kayak hire, tourism and NPWS offices, retaining the existing swimming pool for community use, restaurant and café development and a ferry terminal connected to Brooklyn. It recommends that the land to the east of the F3 be sold off for residential development.

# Mooney Cheero Progress Association Survey Results

In March 2011, Jim Lloyd organised a Mooney Mooney and Cheero Point community survey about the Peat Island and Mooney Redevelopment. The results of the survey are listed here. Approximately 50 people responded. Like the rest of this newsletter, this information may help you decide your own position. Again, the responses relate to the plan of the land as it appears on page one of this newsletter.

## Parcel One- The Island

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
• To be left as it is now	2	38	8
• Build a marina and boat service facilities	29	9	9
• Ensure important historical buildings are kept	24	9	13
• Maintain public access to the island	50	0	0
• Upgrade the connecting causeway and bridge	44	0	5
• Give it to local community groups to use	21	17	10
• Use for aged care or other medical or care facility	9	31	9

## Parcel Two - Main Precinct -This is the large area west of the F3 with lots of open space and a small number of buildings.

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Ensure mangroves are retained	34	6	7
Build a boardwalk along the foreshore	43	2	4
Ensure large open space area remains	36	5	8
Ensure that public access to the island is not impeded	48	1	1
Access to pedestrian tunnel under F3 maintained	46	0	2
Maintain existing natural bushland at the northern end	40	0	9
Allow residential homes or townhouses to be built			

## Parcel Three - Chapel Precinct

This is the area of land surrounding the old canteen and the chapel on the western side of the old Pacific Hwy.

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Ensure the Chapel remains available to the community	43	2	5
Build a village type shopping area with general store	43	3	4
Rebuild the service station	33	6	8
Allow the building of individual residential homes	35	10	5
Allow the building of high density housing (units) in this area	6	41	3
Build a community centre and meeting rooms in this area	36	6	8

## Parcel Four – Cottage Precinct This area includes the hospital houses near the Worker's Club and the Mooney School

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Leave school and grounds as they are now	9	32	8
Allow the school grounds to be sold for housing	21	19	9
Keep the school for community use	24	13	10
Leave the cottages as they are now	9	35	4
Demolish all the cottages and build retirement village	21	21	7
Allow extra land for new Rural Fire Shed	42	1	6
Build a new community hall and meeting rooms	34	9	6