

# COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS: KEY ISSUES & THEIR MANAGEMENT

A vital part in the coastal management planning process is community involvement and action. Hence, the coastal management planning process requires widespread community awareness, cooperation and action. This section provides a brief outline of community perceptions on key issues and their management identified through the consultation process undertaken in the development of the North Harbour Coastline Management Plan.

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

The support and knowledge of the local community is essential for the success of the North Harbour Coastline Management Plan. The Council dynamically involved community representatives in the preparation and review of the North Harbour Plan through the Manly Harbour Foreshores Management Committee and submissions from community consultation events and submissions at Council.

Structured survey forms were prepared and distributed to obtain community responses on importance, key issues and specific suggestions for inclusion in the Coastline Management Plan. Advertisement in the Manly Daily for community submissions on the 8 October 2005 and temporary display set up in the library foyer explaining the CMP process encouraged community feedback. An item was also included in the relevant Precinct newsletters

Three separate consultation meetings were held:

- North Harbour Reserve 9 am -12 noon; Sunday 19 February 2006.
- Fairlight Pool 8-10 am; Sunday 4 March 2007.
- North Harbour Reserve 10.15 am-12.30pm; Sunday 4 March 2007.

Fairlight, North Harbour and Balgowlah Heights Precincts were consulted through those representatives of the Manly Harbour Foreshores Management Committee, through written correspondence and calls for submissions in local media and the Manly Council Website.

A total of 167 survey forms were returned from the community and community consultation events. Among them, 152 were from Manly residents who visit the North Harbour area regularly. Only forms submitted by residents were subsequently analysed.

### Comments on Community Consultations

- *“ Good that this is being done to get our views”*
- *“More community consultation and feedback; great to see Council's efforts”*
- *“This survey should be in electronic form for submission to Council. It would significantly increase the response rate; why are we still using hard copy and snail mail”*
- *Consolidate feedback of result of this and similar consultation initiatives. Put on website with summary of most mentioned issues”*

## IMPORTANT ISSUES

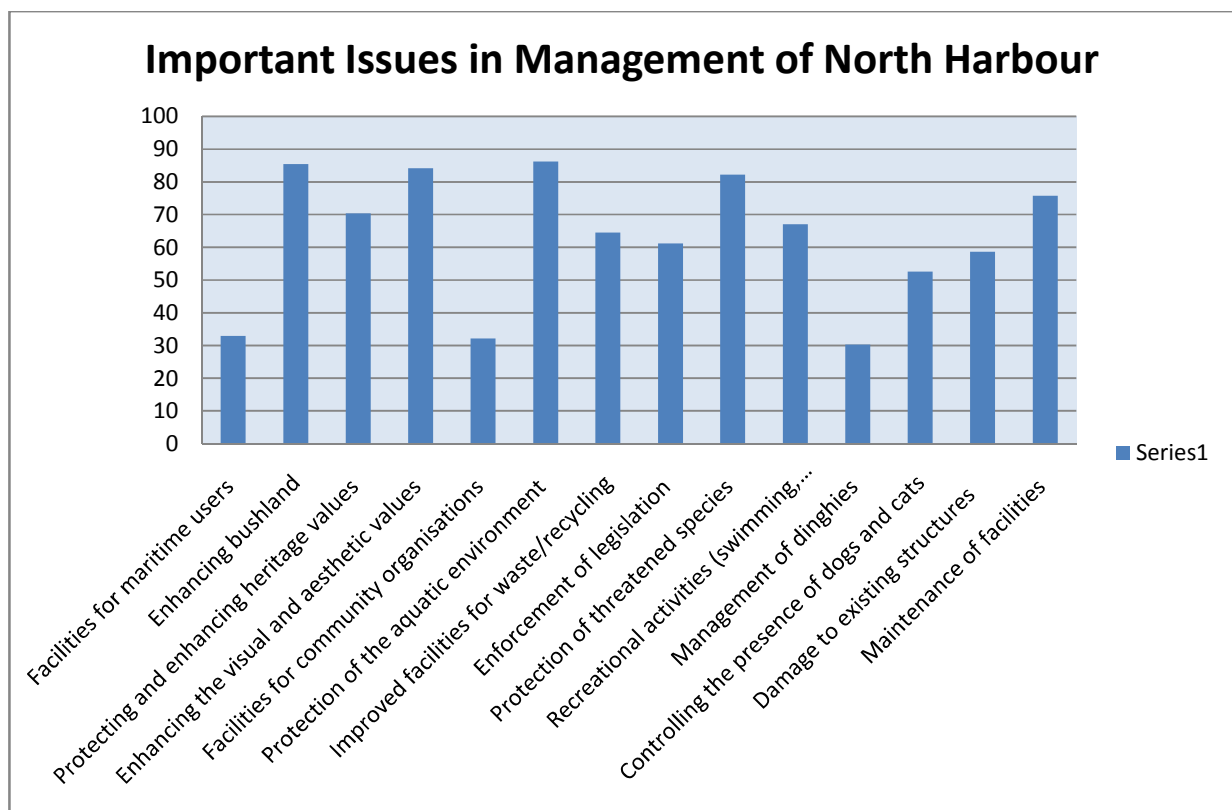
A total of 14 issues were indicated on the questionnaire. Respondents were requested to identify issues of importance within the study area from among these 14 identified issues. Respondents identified, on an average 8.8 issues as important. The five most frequent responses to issues included:

- Protection of aquatic environment (86.2%),
- Protection & enhancing bushland including wildlife corridors (85.5%),
- Protection & enhancing the visual & aesthetic values of the area (84.2%),
- Protection of threatened species (82.2%) and
- Maintenance of facilities (75.7%).

The high indication for the protection of the aquatic environment, protection of threatened species and protection and enhancement of bushland shows the community are aware and keen to preserve their surrounding environment.

The high visual aesthetics of the study area and the presence of the Manly Scenic Walkway had respondents show their preference for protecting and maintaining the current level of the landscape.

Maintaining existing areas for recreation is important to the community.



## KEY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

A long list of management issues was identified mainly from filled in survey forms. Further, specific local issues were derived during three community consultation field days. The issues are summarised under six key broad based management issues, as given below, and have been followed throughout this report.

- Aquatic/Inter-tidal Habitat Conservation & Management
- Bushland/Terrestrial Habitat Conservation & Management
- Upgrading & enhancement of public facilities
- North Harbour Reserve Development
- Hazards& climate change
- Heritage Conservation & Management

## MANAGING KEY ISSUES

Community's perceptions of managing key issues are presented below. These were discussed in detail at the 'Harbour Foreshores Management Committee' meetings. Possible solutions offered by community through survey forms are presented in boxes structured under key management issues. These will form the basis for management options/actions to be proposed in the Coastline Management Plan.

### Aquatic/Inter-tidal Habitat Conservation & Management

Protection of endangered species is an important issue for the community. Ensure that the area becomes controlled and managed as an environmental protection zone. There is a concern over spread of exotic invasive marine pest, *Caulerpa taxifolia* probably from irresponsible boating. People desire mangrove plants in the area.

People noted a new Penguin colony near Treharne moorings. A small colony of soldier crabs is located on the sand bank at the far south west end of North Harbour. This colony surfaces one or two days each year. However, pedestrians and dogs are threat to these soldier crabs.

Pumping for yabbies on the sandbank should not be allowed as the Pelicans look for food.

Improved water quality is essential for aquatic ecosystem health.

- Protect endangered species, such as seahorses and Little Penguins.
- Protect the community of soldier crabs at the far south west end of North Harbour,
- Re-establish mangrove plants
- Investigate a new Penguin colony near Treharne moorings and protect this habitat
- Introduce 'No Take' zone to protect aquatic species

### Bushland/Terrestrial Habitat Conservation & Management

There is wider support to maintain as much bush lands as possible in the study area. There is need for conservation of native vegetation and weed control through bush regeneration activities. Address the causes of weed infestations rather than spraying weeds with chemicals. Weed reduction works, so far, have been great but there is a need to continue good works. Do not plant anymore Coastal Rosemary. Concerns were expressed that bushlands has many exotic species. Dogs threaten protected species, lizards, wading birds.

- Save the last Californian Bungalow on the walkway (heads down from Fairlight St to the Fairlight pool).
- Plant more judicious low growing plants for birds & small animal habitat.
- Enhance habitat for birdlife between Condamine St and Forty Baskets
- Maintain the open-space for passive recreation and the bush land setting

### Upgrading & enhancement of public facilities

This is a special area and one of the few passive recreational areas in Manly. Increasing popularity of the area is considered as a problem by residents. Hence, there is need for upgrading and maintenance of various types of public facilities to cater for all users.

**Landscape improvement & view maintenance:** Don't over develop the area. Reef and Shelly beaches have lost their charm with un-sympathetic development. There is no need for additional structures such as paths or concrete around waterfront. However, there is need to ensure proper maintenance of existing structures. Retain low key appearance of bridge between Clarence St and Goulray Ave.

All tall trees (not the NI Pines) and shrubs between Federation Point and Delwood beach are excessive and are blocking the view. It is difficult to view water, at some places, as one walks the path.

Consider allowing 2-storied, maximum 3-storied buildings on waterfront.

- Better manage erosion of the foreshore area
- Upgrade of existing stone seawall to improve stability and appearance
- Dredging needs in North harbour western sand areas/foreshore
- Footbridge from Clarence Street to Goulray Ave should be kept and maintained, not left to decay.
- Upgrade Esplanade Park to shared path status providing a safe link for cyclists to Manly Wharf.
- Remove or thin some tall trees & shrubs between Federation Point and Delwood beach

**Fishing:** It is heartening to see fish returning into our bay more plentifully since the netting of fish has stopped. Therefore, there is more food for penguins, pelicans and more big bream around the Marinas. However, there occurs illegal fishing practices, improper rubbish disposal, over harvesting of intertidal species for bait, undersized fish catching, removal of shellfish and other items from rocks.

- Educate recreational fishers
- More monitoring of catches by National Parks & Reserves
- Restrict fishing on rocks

**Boating:** There is overall community support for passive boating such as sailing, rowing or paddling. There is concern for overcrowding of boats and dinghies which cause pollution in waterways and noise during high use periods. The moorings are taking up too much of the harbour leaving less open harbour. Power boats go dangerously close to snorkelers off Fairlight.

Community feels that existing boating facilities are either adequate or in excess for the area. Two commercial boatshed businesses are located, one in a residential area the other on a pedestrian strip (end of Goulray Avenue). People are both supportive and opposed to the development of the Trehearne boatshed. People prefer improved public access to boating and kayak activities. Manly needs a public wharf (there are three in Mosman Bay) and North Harbour would be ideal.

- Construct a public wharf at North Harbour
- Create kayak facilities such as ramp
- Control mooring numbers

**Access for Walkers & Disabled:** Walking has been identified as an important activity in the study area. Many sections of these walkways lack signage, handrails, lighting. Better lighting is needed to

deter vandalism. Walking track along foreshore needs widening and some more shade trees. No provision for people with disabilities. Footpaths, curb ramps are not wheel chair or scooter friendly.

There is both support and opposition for board walkways along foreshores.

The steps down from The Crescent to Delwood beach are too steep and difficult for people with prams, toddlers and the elderly.

- Construct a footpath on both sides (exists on one side now) of Condamine Street
- Improve signage, lighting on walkways, place handrails on some sections.
- Find an innovative way to get wheelchair access.
- Encourage walkers to use the low tide sand route rather than clashing with local traffic when heading between Davis Marina and North Harbour Reserve.
- Provide a boardwalk beside/over the shoreline to keep walkers on the foreshores rather than on backstreets.
- Investigate possibility of water level board walks below King Avenue.
- Make steps from The crescent to Delwood beach user friendly to elderly, toddlers and people with prams.

**Waste Management:** Amount of rubbish and cigarette butts around within study area is depressing. Lots of rubbish (paper, plastic, timber) washed up from Fairlight to North Harbour. People should be fined for littering. Beaches are not cleaned daily. Tourists often leave rubbish in bushes and on walkways. Pollution from dog faeces is increasing.

- More rubbish bins to help litter problem. Recycling bins needed at Delwood & Fairlight Beaches.
- Daily cleaning of harbour beaches should be done so that rubbish does not get carried out to sea. Extra provisions in summer months.
- Provision of rubbish barge to clean up plastic from water during summer months (when north eastern blows).
- Provision for more dog waste bags

**Stormwater Pollution:** Pollution has been identified as a key issue. The amount of pollution that enters the harbour after heavy rain needs to be addressed, particularly from the storm water outlet under the footbridge to Gourlay Ave. The stormwater drain that flows into North Harbour needs to be cleaned up regularly to preserve water quality in the area. This is more important near swimming areas.

- Prioritise storm water recycling rather than discharge
- Screens on stormwater pipes to prevent rubbish deposit on sand and harbour
- Provision of treatment devices on each stormwater pipe that discharges into North Harbour

**Manly Scenic Walkway:** It is a world class walkway. The walkway needs improvement at some sections (from Esplanade to North Harbour Reserve), especially trimming of grass on pathways, removal of dead branches of trees and palms. There is difference of opinion on the need of cycleway on the walkway.

- Place signage depicting key points of environmental interest (i.e. Fairy penguin colony, etc).
- Detailed map/leaflet with clearer walkway direction.
- Provide a variety of items for users to look at along the walkway e.g. sculpture
- Provide additional shade along Manly Scenic Walkway

**Fairlight pool & beach:** One respondent has criticised that no consultations were done before installation of fence at the pool.

- Maintain water quality of Fairlight pool.
- Continuous pumping of water into/out of pool is needed.
- Existing shower to have automatic cut off
- Better access for wheelchairs & prams
- Bike rack at Fairlight beach (near access lane)
- No dogs on beaches
- Plant fast growing trees to afford shelter from sun at the pool. Plant palms (like that at Shelly beach).
- New turf needed above Fairlight Pool (prepare ground well first)

**Traffic Management:** Parking is a huge issue to residents. Traffic needs to be slowed down on Condamine Street for safety of kids. Traffic restrictions on Condamine Street adjacent to NH Reserve are not effective at present. 2-hr parking permits are not monitored routinely.

- Control the spread of cars in shared streets and car parks around reserve areas
- Provision of better parking for North Harbour Reserve
- Enforcement of 2hr. parking in residential area
- Lower speed limits on Condamine street for safety of kids
- Arrange speed humps in Fairlight Crescent to avoid fatal accidents from speeding vehicles.
- One way flow of traffic through Lower Beach Street and North harbour Street

## North Harbour Reserve Development

The beauty and environmental aspects of the North Harbour Reserve (NHR) should be preserved. The Reserve being the central recreation area, there is need and room for its overall further development. NHR development has been identified as one of the main issues for consideration in North Harbour CMP.

Steps to NHR are uneven and quite dangerous. The original Bicentenary Walkway plan included a ramp pathway for wheelchair or stroller access to NHR. This has not been installed. The footpaths along the water in NH Reserve is absurdly narrow leading to major erosion – needs widening to at least 2.5m

Rocks supporting the North Harbour seawall pose risk to some. One elderly lady stumbled and fell onto rocks. At least two children chasing balls have gone over the edge onto the rocks.

The toilets at NHR are very dark and dingy, need upgrade. Present toilet facilities –really disgraceful, very old & inadequate systems (cisterns).

No dinghy storage should be constructed within NHR.

There is a need for fencing around the play area because of the issue dogs and interaction with children, however some suggested fencing all around the park. Others consider fencing the area would be a drastic action spoiling the look of the reserve.

Historical information in the south-eastern corner of the reserve has been vandalized and needs replacing.

There is doubt about the possible health risk from sand/soil near the North Harbour waterfall and the North Harbour in general. Sand near the water fall or the cut through, is black/blue –it smells.

Make the park out of bounds at night.



- A wide path from King Ave end of North Harbour reserve to enable better access for prams and walkers, especially during wet periods. The footpaths along the water need widening to at least 2.5m.
- There should be a graded path (not steps) from NH Reserve to King Ave. for parents with strollers, the disabled and cyclists
- Provision of better parking for North Harbour Reserve.
- Upgrade toilets with solar powered lights and light coloured paint to interior
- Additional seating/tables under trees for picnickers. Place rubber matting/improve bases of picnic tables and seats.
- Install at least two more stainless steel BBQs.
- More dog poo bags across the park
- More bins in picnic areas
- A small shelter at NHR
- A second basketball hoop at a lower height for younger children
- Fencing the whole NHR or at least children's play area.
- Establish a small garden for wedding parties and photography, emphasise planting of native trees.
- Bike/scooter track around the perimeter of the park
- More dog poo bag dispensers across the park.
- Box of dog toys to use (near the equipment)
- Carry out an investigation of soil/core samples of NHR fill and sand near the North Harbour waterfall
- Rubbish trap on drain at north/east of NHR
- A system of recycling water from the creek flowing into the North Harbour from Clarence Street (near wooden bridge) can be examined to irrigate the NHR

## Hazards & climate change

Seawall maintenance is critical as it protects properties. Climate Change has been identified as one of the main issues for consideration in North Harbour CMP. Unless we address the root causes of global warming, such as excessive car use, efforts to mitigate the results will be wasted.

- Repair seawalls, replace large rocks
- Provide real active transport infrastructure that will encourage people to walk & cycle more

## Conservation of Heritage

Knowledge on indigenous or post-European heritage is very valuable and gives a better appreciation of the area as a whole. Conservation & protection are a must.

- Protect the heritage areas particularly the Aboriginal sites
- Continue efforts to protect older (pre 1960's) buildings/structures along the Scenic Walkway
- Preserve maritime heritage in North Harbour (Boatshed)
- Save the last Californian Bangalow on the walkway. Give it a heritage order.
- Preservation of coastline natural features (geoheritage)

## CONFLICTING ISSUES

From community consultations, it appeared that there exist certain conflicts between different usage and user groups. In this section, only the conflicts are highlighted. It is important to balance between the interests of residents, visitors, commercial activities (i.e. boatyards) with respect to the fragile environment. Possible compromises, where possible, have also been discussed. One respondent suggested effective communication between different user groups considering all issues overlap.

**Dog walking:** North Harbour Reserve is a dog off-leash area while West Esplanade Park is a dog on-leash area. Population of dogs (more 2-dog owners) exercised in the area is increasing. There is

conflicting concern regarding dog walking facilities available in the study area. While one group sees dogs not being a problem, others believe that dogs should be banned from all parks. Then there is concern over dogs swimming and running around on tidal flats at North Harbour. Dog owners complain that they are never consulted in decisions. They like to ensure that off-leash access for dogs to North Harbour reserve is continued undisturbed. Dog walkers form a core group who use the area at least once or twice a day. Plenty of dog exercise area is needed. There is even request for a designated doggy beach at North Harbour. Off-leash dogs in NH Reserve are danger to toddlers and elderly. Some dog owners do not pick up dog poo. Some owners ignore on-leash signage (notably on Manly Scenic Walkway at Commonwealth Parade). Enforcement by Rangers is needed to oversee responsible dog management. No dogs should be allowed on or near Fairlight & Delwood beaches. In addition, Provision of more dog waste containers needed in the park

**Dinghy/Kayak Storage:** One group sees that current haphazard storage of dinghies adds charm and character to the natural environment of shoreline. It helps in maintaining the natural appeal of the area. Others believe that dinghies on shores are dangerous and unsightly. Dinghies destroy trees. The group supports storage stacks for dinghies and kayaks on shoreline between Delwood & North harbour. There is strong objection of constructing dinghy storage within North Harbour Reserve. All agree that there are old, broken and abandoned boats and suggest removal preferably by joint action with community stakeholders.

**Cycleway on the MSW:** There are groups strongly for and against keeping bikes on the Manly Scenic Walkway. It would be disastrous to allow bikes on the same path as walkers, joggers with or without dogs. Compromised suggestions include a cycleway adjacent to the walkway or the path being made accessible to bike riders early in the morning and after 8pm or no cycling on Sundays. Further, there is suggestion to stop proposed cycleway along Lauderdale Avenue on grounds of safety problems.

Other conflicts are related to suggested board walkways along foreshores and development of the Trehearne Boatshed.