

QUARANTINE STATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (QS CCC)

MINUTES - FINAL

8:30am, Wednesday 18 November 2020

Q Station

Abbreviations

Adele Heasman	AH	Douglas Sewell	DS	Sandy Hoy	SH
Alison Langley	AL	Jennifer Wilson	JW	Stuart Schramm	SS1
Candy Bingham	CB	Jessica Dargan	JD	Suzanne Stanton	SS
Cathy Griffin	CG	Lee De Gail	LG	Virginia Macleod	VM
Chad Weston	CW	Max Player	MP		
Deon van Rensburg	DR	Ron Edgar	RE		

1	BUSINESS and GOVERNANCE	LEAD
1.1	Welcome	Sandy Hoy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SH welcomed all attendees to the 70th QSCCC meeting 	
1.2	Acknowledgement of Country	Chad Weston
	I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging	
1.3	Attendance and Apologies	Sandy Hoy
	Attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adele Heasman Candy Bingham Cathy Griffin Chad Weston Douglas Sewell 	Apologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virginia Macleod
1.4	Confirmation of agenda	Sandy Hoy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda was confirmed 	
1.5	Declarations of pecuniary or other interest	All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil 	
2	STANDING ITEMS	
2.1	Confirmation of Previous Minutes	Sandy Hoy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous meeting was held via Zoom on 18 August 2020 CG moved to approve the minutes. CB seconded 	
2.2	Review of Action Items from Previous Minutes	Sandy Hoy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Head IANP – covered in NPWS report Vegetation around water tanks and vegetation maintenance - NPWS to check whether the water tank is leaking. <p>Vegetation has grown back behind reception. JD stated that the Vegetation Modification REF and all site wide plans require updating. Q Station insurer is insisting on fire curtilages around buildings.</p>	

	<p>SH: Committee members support Mawland writing to NPWS about resourcing and priorities for vegetation management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring/audit – SS: A draft of this year’s IMAMS and annual reports are at hand but they haven’t been finalised. JD has written to DPIE and notified them that the reports are likely to be delayed. • Coral tree in Peace Park – CG: Noted that the QSCCC recommends a tree at the Peace Park be replaced. The Conservation Management Plan says the coral tree has to be replaced with a tree with red foliage. NPWS to provide options for replacing the coral tree. • P11 – MP: the stairs and posts at P11 should be removed and stored because they are not functional and are unsightly. JD will send new Section 57 exemption notifications to MP and SS. MP: stairs will be replaced when funds allow. • Q Station archiving - CG thanked VM on behalf of the committee for her work in collating and cataloguing the Q Station archive. • Northern Beaches ratepayers contribution to Long-nosed Bandicoot program – CB and JD have clarified with Northern Beaches Council but do not have details on hand. CB: We will take this on notice and provide an update next meeting. <p>Vacant QSCCC positions - JD has prepared an Expression of Interest (EOI) for new committee members. A stakeholder list has been identified for review and approval by QSCCC. JD: NPWS to aim to send the EOI out at the end of January.</p> <p>SH: Interested people are asked to fill out a form and some details. SH will assess them in terms of numerous criteria that are set out in the terms of reference for QSCCC members and put forward recommendations to DPIE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bandicoot survey – analysis by the consultant is ongoing, with a report expected by the end of the end of this year. 	
2.3	Correspondence In/Out	All
	Several QSCCC members requested to meet in person for the November meeting. SH requested DPIE public gathering/meeting guidelines, which permitted the QSCCC to meet in person.	
2.4	Other administrative matters	Sandy Hoy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil 	
2.5	Proposed events	Mawland / NPWS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Mawland report 	
3	REPORTS	
3.1	NPWS Report	NPWS
	<p>Bluefish Banksia Hazard Reduction (HR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CW: The Bluefish Banksia HR spotted over control lines on 17 October, driven by an earlier than predicted increase in wind speeds. NSW Police directed Q Station to evacuate at short notice, and I understand it was an opportunity to test Q Station’s Emergency Plan. The site was closed from approximately 2pm on Saturday and reopened between 10-11am on Sunday. • Q Station have advised that they suffered significant financial losses and are looking to NPWS for compensation. NPWS Property and Commercial Branch is looking into options for compensation, even though the lease has an indemnity clause in which Government is indemnified against any such occurrence. 	

Old Mans Hat track

- CG: Mawland wants to seek a licence to take people to Old Mans Hat, but other people don't need a licence to go there. CW: The Plan of Management is clear that we can put reasonable and suitable conditions on a consent for a tour which we can't really apply to people. Access following the fires is difficult for NPWS.

App directions

- Apps are directing people to inaccessible places at QS. CW: NPWS has had issues with apps and Google Maps giving people wrong directions, so NPWS has dedicated people working with Google to remove incorrect information from Google websites.

QS Central Hazard Reduction

- CW: QS Central HR was conducted on Friday 4 September. Mawland kindly offered the use of a chipper for trees that were removed from NPWS estate following the HR. Mawland has notified NPWS that the verges are unsightly following the HR. NPWS has offered to schedule a time to inspect verges with MP, and has offered to provide the Greater Sydney Branch bushfire management team to assist with trimming back vegetation at the entrance in line with the Vegetation Modification Plan. The vegetation will either be trittered or chipped.

Bus stop

- CW: NPWS received the draft report about the bus stop a few days ago and are still considering it. The assessment considered these safety concerns raised by NPWS: pedestrian and driver sight lines; pedestrian routes, vehicle (and bus) travel paths and potential conflicts; pedestrian access; bus and vehicle access and general traffic. The AustRoads standard risk assessment was used to identify safety issues. The report identifies short- and long-term recommendations in response to the risks identified. NPWS has installed bollards at the fence, and rigid cable can be added to further demarcate the edge until we consider and implement recommendations of the report. A report will be provided for the next meeting.

Little Penguin deaths

- CW: Fox predation was the cause of death for at least three of the penguins. Two additional carcasses were also discovered; one young penguin found in water at Quarantine Station Beach (likely drowned) and the other discovered at Manly Cove Beach with a wound indicative of boat strike.
- CW: NPWS undertook a four-night shooting operation, a significant trapping program and installed additional fox monitoring cameras in response to the predation event. This was in addition to the ongoing fox control of cyclic 1080 baiting, scent detection dogs, fox lights and volunteer penguin wardens. NPWS volunteer warden patrols support NPWS to monitor penguin nesting sites and fox activity on beaches at dawn and dusk. Thank you to Mawland for providing vehicle access for Penguin Wardens during this period. NPWS trapped and dispatched a fox on 9 September. Taronga carried out a necropsy but could not confirm that the fox was connected to penguin predation. No additional deaths have occurred due to fox predation.

Pest management

- Rabbit shoots will be undertaken on a three-weekly basis for the next 6 months. NPWS will liaise with QS to schedule shoots during low occupancy periods.
- Ongoing 6 weekly ongoing baiting program with 1080 ground baits at North Head.

Improving Access to National Parks Program – North Head Scenic Area

- CW: Consultation over the past 18 months with stakeholders, including SHFT, identified several improvements to the visitor experience at North Head. Such improvements include: better visitor access and connectivity between the Lady Fairfax Lookouts, North

	<p>Head Scenic Area and the School of Artillery site; improved passive recreational space and connecting pathways at the North Head Scenic Area; and improved interpretation and signage. A landscape architect has been engaged to undertake site investigation and analysis, and develop detailed design. The designs will be available for viewing on the Department's website once they are finalised. Construction will take place from mid-2021 for approximately 2 years.</p> <p>Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIL for this report <p>Notes on additional agenda items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CG: What is the status of tracks, formal and informal, now with increased access to Old Man's Hat and the rock carvings? CW: The status of the tracks has not changed. NPWS has not yet received an application from Mawland regarding their proposal for tours to Old Mans Hat. CG: The fire has presented an opportunity to put in a hard track from Second Cemetery up to the Third Cemetery. MP: we have found more headstones in Second Cemetery since the HR. CW: NPWS puts in bids for grants for new tracks. JD: the track to Old Mans Hat is not in the Plan of Management, so it would need an amendment. CW: Other tracks in the POM would be prioritised first. SS: Helen Drew, our visitor services person, is writing what our tour to Old Mans Hat would look like, so we know that the information is correct when we put in an application. • NPWS is assisting Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) with running their small mammal survey from 23-26 November. The AWC small mammal surveys in North Head provide data on the presence, abundance, population size, activity and occupancy of the reintroduced species across the range of vegetation communities that occur within North Head. JD will share a link for AWC donations with QSCCC members. 	
3.2	Mawland Report	Mawland
	<p>COVID impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS: COVID continues to impact on operations but we are coming through it. Weekend occupancy is up, helped by people looking for something to do and government policy about "staycations". The weather has been shocking but we are getting good occupancy on Saturdays. Weddings, conferences and events are starting to come back. Meetings are smaller with shorter lead times, and people are cancelling at short notice if there is a COVID scare. It seems weddings are coming back for next year. Our staff are to be congratulated on how they will have dealt with COVID. We are still enforcing masks for at least catering staff to keep everyone safe. <p>North Head fire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS: We have told NPWS that we lost a substantial amount of money on the day of the fire. It was the first weekend we had everything full, we had a wedding, the sculptures, coffee shop full, two sittings for lunch and dinner at the Boilerhouse, as well as lost breakfasts for the next day. It was a huge impact to us. • SS: We proved that we could get 600 people off the site in 30 minutes. No one was left behind, and there was no injury. The staff were cool and collected, and no one panicked. It was a very good proof to our management team that they have done the right thing in their training. We did not have any complaints from our guests. <p>Sculptures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS: The sculptures have been a huge success so far, running from mid October to mid November. It started off with our own permanent artists, and then we got connected with people who had been rejected from Sculpture by the Sea. They didn't operate this year and so we became the premier sculpture event in Sydney. David Hanley, who runs Sculpture by the Sea, was astounded by the site. 	

- We had people constantly walking through the site. Visitor groups included families, walking groups, and retirement village buses. We worked tirelessly on COVID plans so people didn't cross over while they were walking. The Police came through several times and were happy with our plans.
- The winning piece number 8 will stay here, and number 1 has been gifted and will go up outside Views restaurant. Some sculptures will stay for a few more weeks, but the event finishes on 19 November.
- We have pencilled in dates for sculptures for next year. We have developed a relationship with Sculpture by the Sea, and next year's applications will notify artists that rejected pieces will go to QS. Next year sculptors will be able to say where they want their piece installed.
- The people working with us as curators have asked us for permission to host a local Northern Beaches sculptures show next year.

Bookings

- SS: There has been good takeup with bookings. We think a lot of people are exploring the site and will come back.

Artists in residence

- SS: Anthony Battaglia becomes an artist in residence for the next three months.
- SS: Jo Neville and two artist colleagues have a show "Responses to Quarantine" starting at Manly Art Gallery starting on 5 December. The art pieces will return to Q Station.

Movable heritage items

- SS: A provision in our lease is that we will get 10 hours per week from a historical curator. Elizabeth Broomhead has now said she can give us some significant time on site and with the moveable heritage. We've agreed that NPWS can help us source volunteers to help with cleaning and polishing, and to get everything onto the e-hive register of moveable heritage.

Beach vegetation

- SS: The vegetation between the Boilerhouse outdoor area and the beach is growing so much that it blocks the view of the beach. CW: We engage with aboriginal community and our own staff often on cultural burning. MP: A previous agreement said that it could be trimmed. JD: It is penguin habitat protected by legislation. Mawland can apply for a licence to trim or remove this protected vegetation. CW: NPWS are happy to look at your application.

School excursions

- SS: School excursions are trickling back in, with three schools so far and more coming. Helen is rewriting tour programs so there are new experiences for schools. Probus groups have come back in. In first term next year there will be a lot of school excursions. We are getting good feedback from teachers about our risk assessments.

Public holidays

- SS: Christmas is booked out and will be COVID safe, with only half the number of people we normally put into dining areas. We have a waiting list if restrictions change.
- CW: NYE fireworks will be at 12 midnight with a limited footprint. North Head will be closed. SS: We will probably just have a function.
- SS: On Boxing Day and Australia Day we will have normal functions at Isolation and the Hospital, but will not be open for free access. Our functions can be booked online but we can't have people wandering around the site. CW: The Sydney-Hobart yacht

race will now start in the harbour, not outside the Heads as was proposed earlier in the year. Numbers will be capped at all of our sites, so we will be handling expectations and managing displacement of visitors. NPWS will work with MQS on that.

- SS: The ferry carries only 50 people. Even if all ferry passengers come here we can cope with those numbers which is part of our plan.

New chef

- SS: We have a new chef, Sean Davis, who is local and comes from Manly Skiff Club.

Community Open Days

- SS wrote to DPIE about a proposed solution for Community Open Days this year to replace them by running a free public tour of the sculptures for 15 people at 2pm every day on the weekends. Planning approved this solution.

G&T House

- SS: The G&T House is our new activity. It is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday during summer in our old staff cottage, serving high tea during the day, and cocktails from 5 to 7pm. Beautifully done by artist in residence.

Wildlife

- SS: It is amazing how quickly the site rewilded during COVID. Some animals such as brush turkeys and kookaburras are becoming aggressive and swooping, and magpies are being cheeky. CW: There are clear processes for dealing with wildlife. Licences to harm are an option but deterrents need to be considered first. Public behaviour can be changed. At other sites we encourage patrons to use super soakers etc.

Site rent

- SS: There is a perception that we pay a peppercorn rent, but we believe we are paying a commercial rent. On top of that we have obligations in terms of vegetation, structures, day-to-day maintenance, moveable heritage collection, and any improvements that we do to the site ourselves such as the outdoor dining area at the Boilerhouse. NPWS and Mawland do improvements together, for example buildings 21 and 23 to which NPWS made a significant contribution.

Land tax

- SS: MQS is liaising with Office of State Revenue (OSR) about reviewing payment of land tax. We have operated on the expectation that we haven't had to pay land tax over the past 10 years, and have reinvested that money on improvements to the site. No one knows what this site is worth and they haven't given us an invoice yet. We have written to OSR and NPWS are looking at it. We have written to James Griffin, the Premier, and other relevant ministers.

Site reversibility

- SS: The concept of reversibility has become relevant. People know that the lease term is coming up, and are asking what happens in 7 years if the lease isn't renewed? MP: It won't be reversed back to the original condition.

Lease renewal

- SS: The first lease expires in 2027. Even though we have a long lease option, it is conditional on compliance, environmental audits, community support and making sure the community isn't opposed, that all the plans are approved, and the conditions are approved. We've asked NPWS to start moving on this option as early as possible. The lease term would not change but it would be determined now instead of in 7 years' time. This would give us financial certainty from the banks and certainty for our staff. The lease says we only have to do it in the last 6 months of the lease.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SH will draft a letter to NPWS about starting the process for the lease renewal on behalf of QSCCC members, and circulate to QSCCC members for comment. MP offered to meet with Friends of Quarantine Station to address any concerns about the lease renewal. 	
3.3	Chairpersons Report	Sandy Hoy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pleased to be a guest of Q Station at the opening of the Les Sculptures Refusees exhibition in October. It was very well done with community representatives and sculptors here. Despite many people attending it was COVID safe. Congratulations and well done to everyone involved in the event. 	
4	PRESENTATIONS	
4.1	Nil	
5	ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS	
5.1	Transport options to North Head	
	<p>135 Bus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus route 135, which connects Warringah Mall, Manly, Manly Wharf, Q Station and North Head, will be replaced in December 2020 by route 161. JW: The 161 will go from Manly Wharf to North Head, but the bus timetable won't be known until December. Changes to the bus route will impact on staff and visitors to Q Station. <p>Pedestrians and cyclists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 has resulted in the number of people walking and cycling at Q Station significantly increased, which has been great for visitation to the sculptures. 	
5.2	Signage	
	<p>Variable message sign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CG: the message on the flashing sign on Darley Road at the North Head entry states that Fairfax Drive and bush tracks are closed when they are open, which deters visitors. SS would like that sign to say Q Station is open. Guests know we are open but walkers, taxis, and Uber drivers are confused by the sign. CW: NPWS will review the wording of the sign, and thinks the sign could be removed. NPWS is getting some bespoke signage prepared and the variable message sign was only an interim measure. <p>Signs at track heads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CW: Bespoke signs at track heads and edges of the burnt area inform people of closures and to educate them to stay on paths to help the bush regenerate. 	
6	GENERAL BUSINESS	
6.1	Open days in 2021	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SS: Open days will be back to normal in May and September if restrictions allow. Next year we will take it as it comes unless anything changes. 	
6.2	Meeting dates in 2021	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SH proposed meeting dates for 2021 for QSCCC members to put in their calendars: Wednesdays 10 February, 12 May, 11 August, 10 November 2021 	
7	MEETING CLOSE	
7.1	Confirm action items	Sandy Hoy
7.2	Next Meeting/Site Visit: Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 8:30am	Sandy Hoy