

March 2013

SUBMISSION TO
BAYSIDE CITY COUNCIL BY
BEAUMARIS CONSERVATION SOCIETY INC.
IN RESPONSE TO
RICKETTS POINT AND RICKETTS POINT LANDSIDE
DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
FEBRUARY 2013



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Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc. ([BCS Inc.](#)) has been an involved and long-term stakeholder in the Ricketts Point and Ricketts Point Landside environment and defender of it from as much development as possible. It has been encouraging to read that the majority of stakeholders are supportive in this regard. The opportunity to comment upon and make recommendations concerning the Community Consultation Document for the [Management Plan](#) is welcomed and appreciated.

BCS Inc. acknowledges competing pressures placed on Council from Melbourne's present population increase and pressure from some areas to expand operations, but sees the development of the Management Plan of utmost importance and worthwhile only if its implementation will prevent any further development and deterioration of the Coastal Reserve and in fact protect it for the benefit of current and future generations.

Following the format of the Management Plan, the following points are submitted for consideration and incorporation where indicated.

Section 2 – Context

It is pleasing that Parks Victoria's [Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary Management Plan 2005](#) is cited. BCS Inc. suggests that the citation be accompanied by the statement:

“Management of the land reserve should correspond with the high level conservation management that appears in that 2005 Management Plan of Parks Victoria, and its statutory basis”

The Management Plan states (Item 2.1) that Ricketts Point is unique for its preserved natural landscape within a wider urbanised setting. To encompass the wider natural setting of Port Phillip Bay that the Ricketts Point Coastal Reserve abuts, it is suggested that sentence be replaced by,

“It is unique for its largely preserved natural landscape right on the perimeter of a wider urbanised setting”.

[Ricketts Point Landside](#), although not cited as such in the Management Plan, is also unique due to its being an undeveloped area of coastal Crown land on the landward side of Beach Road.

A considerable improvement could be made to the Landside Reserve by the installation of a lockable vehicle barrier at the coastal end of Coral Avenue – similar to that present at the coastal end of Point Avenue. Residents of Coral Avenue have expressed support for such an arrangement, which would reduce vehicular traffic including 'hoon' drivers using the present through road to skid and slide on the gravel surface, damaging it and creating unnecessary noise and dust. Such a barrier would not prevent vehicle ingress or egress from Beach Road to the few

properties that abut the Reserve and require vehicular access or egress across it, and must improve the ambience of the Reserve itself.

Recommendation –

- **Provide a lockable vehicle barrier where the coastal end of Coral Avenue abuts the Landside Reserve.**

5. Principles

Principle One: Protect Environmental Values and Coastal Character

Objective 1, Impact of Stormwater is Minimised (Page 37) –

Apart from inconsistencies between the Management Matrix on Page 26 (BCC Manager of 4 stormwater outlets, MelbourneWater Manager of 1) and Figure 18 (BCC the Manager of 2 outlets and Melbourne Water none), most strategies appear sound apart from a proposed bio-retention system for which no clear detail is provided and the suggested “re-alignment” of the unpaved car park (Page 62) – where the meaning of that term is unclear. The construction of a boardwalk and any net increase to car parking space will be strongly opposed, as would the paving of the one remaining car park in the Reserve which will detract from the character of the area, potentially destroy aboriginal midden sites and impact on habitat values of the adjoining bushland.

Recommendations –

- **Ensure that any future refinement of existing facilities will not require further land to be used for car parking.**
- **Provide details of proposed car park re-alignment and bio-retention system for stakeholder assessment.**

Objective 2, Native Flora is Re-established and Protected (Pages 38-9) –

All strategies are supported however advising ratepayers of the outcomes of monitoring for pest plants and vandalism is considered an appropriate addition to Action 2C. Further, an Appendix to the Management Plan should provide declared lists of the known indigenous and exotic vegetation in the Coastal Reserve (refer www.bcs.asn.au/lisibay1.htm and www.bcs.asn.au/lisibay1.htm).

Recommendations –

- **Post monitoring data prominently on the Bayside City Council website.**
- **Provide, as an Appendix to the Management Plan, lists of known indigenous and exotic vegetation in the Coastal Reserve.**

Objective 3, Tree Vandalism is Prevented (Page 39) –

Stated strategies are sound however investigation and enforcement measures have proved of little value to date. Unless resources are available on an on-call basis and investigation outcomes are notified (see previous recommendation), there appears little hope of improvement.

Recommendation –

- **In addition to education measures outlined, provide a Ranger dedicated to the Reserve with a strong visible presence.**

Objective 4, Native Fauna is Protected and Encouraged (Page 40) –

Agree with stated strategies. Recommendation for Objective 2 is equally applicable here.

Objective 5, Significant Geological and Geomorphic Features are Protected (Page 41) – Agree with stated strategies.

Objective 6, Dog Access is Managed to Protect Environmental Values and Coastal Character (Page 43) – Agree with stated strategies.

Objective 7, Planning Scheme Controls (Page 47) - The Plan suggests amendment to the Bayside Planning Scheme to protect Ricketts Point Landside and the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary by applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zoning (PCRZ). However the Ricketts Point Coastal Reserve is proposed to be Zoned Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ). As sections of the Reserve contain significant remnant vegetation (i.e. north of the Yacht Club including at rear of the boatsheds, between the Bay Trail and Beach Road from opposite Coral Avenue to the northern car park entrance and from just west of Reserve Road to Dalgetty Road between the Bay Trail and the southern car park excluding the Lifesaving Club and bathing boxes), those areas should be zoned PCRZ.

Recommendation –

- **Apply to have the Bayside Planning Scheme amended to Zone the Ricketts Point Coastal Reserve as Public Conservation and Resource Zone with, if necessary, overlays to protect indigenous vegetation, and to formally recognize the environmental features of the Reserve.**

Objective 8, Breaches of Legislation are Effectively Enforced (Page 47) –

In addition to communicating relevant legislation by the means stated, results of action taken to apprehend offenders should be notified (see Recommendation for Objective 2).

Objective 9, Ricketts Point is Appropriately Maintained to Protect Environmental Values and Coastal Character (Page 48) – Agree with stated strategies.

5.2 Principle Two: Manage the Impacts of Climate Change

Objective 10, Environmental, Social and Economic Impacts Associated with Climate Change are Minimised (Page 50) – Agree with stated strategies.

5.3 Principle Three: Protect and Celebrate Cultural Heritage Values

Objective 11, Indigenous Cultural Heritage Sites and Values are Identified, Appropriately Acknowledged, Protected and Preserved (Page 50) – Agree with stated strategies.

5.4 Principle Four: Manage the Built Environment

Objective 12, Use and Development is Appropriate to the Coastal Environment (Page 51) - The term 'development' is value laden and, in the context of the Plan, appears to refer to foreshore buildings and facilities. Given the unique nature of the Reserve, any further development that extends the footprint or overhang area of existing buildings, or proposes new buildings, is entirely inappropriate. Existing [bathing boxes](#) and [boat sheds](#) within the Reserve receive no recommendation for action in the Management Plan, although their existence at Ricketts Point is anachronistic. Whilst hesitating to recommend their removal or setting a time frame for such, BCS Inc. considers that a long term approach should be adopted to see them gone at some future point, and the public space they now occupy returned to the public.

Recommendations –

- **Permit no further intrusion into public space by extension of existing buildings or construction of new buildings.**

- **Reword the Bayside Council Bathing Box Policy (C/Pol/COR/002) item 6.4.4 to indicate that **bathing boxes** and **boat sheds** located within the Ricketts Point Coastal Reserve will not be allowed to be replaced should they be damaged beyond repair or destroyed by fire, vandalism, lack of maintenance or other such act to render them a public danger or otherwise unfit for use.**
- **Take appropriate measures (including screening of facilities, repainting of buildings in neutral colours) to ensure that existing and future developments blend with the natural environment.**

Objective 13, Buildings and Infrastructure are Appropriate and in Good Condition (Page 52) – Agree with stated strategies.

Objective 14, Ricketts Point Tea House is Appropriately Redeveloped (Page 52) – Being only 28 years old (not 35 as stated) and having been **heavily extended** during that time, at each extension removing more public space, indigenous flora and habitat, it seems wrong to suggest that this building is reaching the end of its useful life. One conjectures whether the implication here is to gain an increased building footprint for commercial reasons. The education function of Marine Care Ricketts Point Inc. could not be incorporated without building redesign and/or extension and is therefore not worthy of investigation. The policy of no net increase to existing built facilities should take precedence in any and all redevelopment proposals.

Recommendation –

- **Permit no further extensions or additions to the **Ricketts Point Tea House**.**

Objective 15, Facilities and Infrastructure are adequate, accessible and well located (Page 53) - Agree with stated strategies.

5.5 Principle Five: Appropriate Access, Movement and Connectivity

Objective 16, Ricketts Point is an Access for All Abilities Destination of Choice (Page 54) – Agree with stated strategies.

Objective 17, Access to Ricketts Point is Appropriate and Safe (Page 55) – Agree with stated strategies.

Objective 18, Movement Around Ricketts Point is Appropriate and Safe (Page 55) –

Two aspects are of concern in relation to this objective. Firstly, current public lighting facilities are adequate, and secondly, bicycle racks installed into existing vegetation space will be of detriment to the natural environment of the Reserve.

Recommendations –

- **Oppose any additional public lighting within the Coastal Reserve.**
- **If additional bicycle racks are found to be necessary, they should be installed within current parking facilities, and not within vegetated areas.**

5.6 Principle Six: Facilitate Education, Partnerships and Community Involvement

Objective 19, Shared Vision of the Environmental and Cultural Heritage Values of Ricketts Point (Page 56) –

The installation of public art (Strategy 19.3) would add further clutter to the environment and be of negligible value. The natural qualities of the Coastal Reserve should not be unnecessarily compromised by artificial intrusions.

Recommendations –

- **Do not add further clutter to Ricketts Point in the form of public art.**
- **Adopt the use of [quick response tags](#) as a form of information technology, which allows for smaller on-site signage with the advantages of being readily updateable and varied; able to be saved on a visitor's mobile phone, and able to offer audio (*invaluable for a blind member of a visiting group*), and foreign language and video versions.**

Objective 20, Signage and Way Finding Tools are Adequate, Educational and well located (Page 57) – Every additional external sign increases man-made clutter into the unique, 'natural' Ricketts Point environment. One finds it hard to understand what further signage is really 'necessary' given the relatively small area (way finding is surely not a problem) and the 'sense of arrival' is already abundantly heralded by the oversized Ricketts Point Tea House. A survey by BCS Inc. in 2008 revealed the presence of 193 signs (refer www.bcs.asn.au/i_bpsign.htm). Some appear decrepit and fairly pointless when referring to the obvious such as “Coast Path” and “Bicycle Path”.

Recommendations –

- **Resist the attempt to increase man-made clutter in the form of additional external signage.**
- **Evaluate current signage for actual usefulness and current condition with a view to removal to the greatest extent possible.**

Objective 21, Interpretive and Educational Facilities

Marine Education Centre – Any substantial facilities should be sited away from the Coastal Reserve where there is adequate room for structures, traffic movement and parking involved. BCS Inc. is very wary of a toehold being gained leading to an eventual plan like the “[Oceanarium](#)” that public opinion wisely rejected in 1964.

Recommendation –

- **Any proposed “expansion over time” or housing of a Marine Education Centre is opposed unless the facility is housed within the footprint and elevation of an existing building.**

Objective 22, Community Groups are Empowered and Resourced to Care For Ricketts Point (Page 58)

Recommendation –

- **Extend Objective 22 to include *Ricketts Point Landside*.**

5.7 Principle Seven: Support Environmentally Sustainable Economic Development

Objective 23, Economic Development Activities Protect the Environmental and Coastal Values of Ricketts Point (Page 58)

One would argue that rather than *protect* Ricketts Point values, such activities *affect* them as seen by the incursion into, and the impact upon, public foreshore by the Tea House over time. BCS Inc, agrees that activities that threaten environmental processes including commercial dog walking

should be excluded from the Coastal Reserve.

6.Strategic Projects

6.1 Ricketts Point Tea House – Issues and Options

Some statements require clarification to more provide a more accurate record. For example, [BCS Inc. records](#) indicate that the current Tea House structure was built in 1985 and is thus some 28 years old rather than 35. Under normal circumstances that is not an age where a well constructed building would be considered worn out to an extent to be declared 'nearly at the end of its useful life' and 'will require replacement in the medium term (5-10 years)'. The historical reality is that the previous Tea House on the site - destroyed by fire - was rudimentary and spartan, with opening largely confined to weekends over summer.

A perceived risk is that the writer is preparing for future change or extension to the building by further suggesting combining it with Marine Care Ricketts Point Inc. activities. That is not a sound proposal if additional alienation of public land or current scenic views is envisaged or necessary to achieve it.

Recommendations –

- **Permit no increase in the building footprint, overhang area, or elevation of the Ricketts Point Tea House.**
- **Give sound justification for the ominous statements given concerning the claimed need for building replacement in 5-10 years time.**

6.2 Ricketts Point Bio-retention System and Car Park Realignment Project

The replacement of the existing drain is supported, as is the full integration of a bio-retention system into existing landscape. A boardwalk however is considered unnecessary and a further intrusion of man-made structure into the Coastal Reserve.

The region surrounding Car Park B18 at the southern end of Ricketts Point is strongly reflective of the natural character of the area, and constitutes an accessible natural precinct. The unsealed nature of the B18 Car Park provides a key role in manifesting an intrinsic natural ambience in this space. Consequently, leaving the B18 Car Park unsealed is critical to the retention of the existing environmental qualities in this precinct.

It is not considered appropriate to house a bus drop-off or pick-up facility in this location for obvious reasons of deleterious environmental effects. Wherever located, bus or coach access and waiting periods should be strictly limited.

Recommendations –

- **Provide details of proposed bio-retention system for public comment and approval. As a general principle ensure minimum impact on indigenous flora and fauna and identify and plan for any risks and operational or maintenance issues. (e.g. mosquito breeding, debris and litter accumulation, sediment accumulation in ponds, seepage onto the beach).**
- **Leave unsealed, but regularly grade, Car Park B18 to retain a remnant of local character of the foreshore area, which blends with the surrounding landscape and creates a sense of removal from the urban environment.**
- **Limit bus or coach access to one vehicle in the Coastal Reserve at any one time for the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers only.**

Recommendation Summary

Section Two – 'Context'

- **Provide a lockable vehicle barrier where the coastal end of Coral Avenue abuts the Landside Reserve.**

Principles 1- 7

Objective 1

- **Ensure that any future refinement of existing facilities will not require further land to be used for car parking.**
- **Provide details of proposed car park re-alignment and bio-retention system for stakeholder assessment.**

Objective 2

- **Post monitoring data prominently on the Bayside City Council Website.**
- **Provide, as an Appendix to the Management Plan, lists of known indigenous and exotic vegetation in the Coastal Reserve.**

Objective 3

- **In addition to education measures outlined, provide a Ranger dedicated to the Reserve with a strong visible presence.**

Objective 7

- **Apply to have the Bayside Planning Scheme Amended to Zone the Ricketts Point Coastal Reserve as Public Conservation and Resource, with, if necessary overlays to protect indigenous vegetation and formally recognize the environmental features of the Reserve.**

Objective 12

- **Permit no further intrusion into public space by extension of existing buildings or construction of new buildings.**
- **Reword the Bayside Council Bathing Box Policy (C/Pol/COR/002) item 6.4.4 to indicate that bathing boxes and boat sheds located within the Ricketts Point Coastal Reserve will not be allowed to be replaced should they be damaged beyond repair or destroyed by fire, vandalism, lack of maintenance or other such act to render them a public danger or otherwise unfit for use.**
- **Take appropriate measures (including screening of facilities, repainting of buildings in neutral colours) to ensure that existing and future developments blend with the natural environment.**

Objective 14

- **Permit no further extensions or additions to the Ricketts Point Tea House.**

Objective 18

- **Oppose any additional public lighting within the Coastal Reserve.**
- **If additional bicycle racks are found to be necessary, they should be installed within car parking facilities, and not within vegetated areas.**

Objective 19

- Do not add further clutter to Ricketts Point in the form of public art.
- Adopt the use of **quick response tags** as a form of information technology that allows for smaller on-site signage with the advantage of being readily updateable and varied; able to be saved on a visitor's mobile phone, and able to offer audio (*invaluable for a blind member of a visiting group*), and foreign language and video versions.

Objective 20

- Resist the attempt to increase man made clutter in the form of additional external signage.
- Evaluate current signage for actual usefulness and current condition with a view to removal to the greatest extent possible.

Objective 21

- Any proposed “expansion over time” or housing of a Marine Education Centre is opposed unless the facility is housed within the footprint and elevation of an existing building.

Objective 22

- Extend Objective 22 to include *Ricketts Point Landside*.

Strategic Projects

6.1 (Tea House)

- Permit no increase in the building footprint or elevation of the [Ricketts Point Tea House](#).
- Give sound justification for the ominous statements given concerning the claimed need for building replacement in 5-10 years time.

6.2 (Bio-Retention System)

- Provide details of proposed Bio-retention System for public comment and approval. As a general principle, ensure minimum impact on indigenous flora and fauna, and identify and plan for any risks and operational or maintenance issues (e.g. mosquito breeding, debris and litter accumulation, sediment accumulation in ponds, seepage onto the beach).
- Leave unsealed, but regularly grade, Car Park B18 to retain a remnant of local character of the foreshore area, which blends with the surrounding landscape and creates a sense of removal from the urban environment.
- Limit bus or coach access to one vehicle in the Coastal Reserve at any one time for the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers only.

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