



# PALM BEACH PARKLANDS MASTER PLAN

GAMBLEMCKINNONGREEN  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN DESIGN MASTER PLANNING



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# PUBLIC CONSULTATION: PHASE ONE

## Disclaimer

Throughout the consultative process, issues surrounding the bowls club and associated events over the past five years or so proved very contentious. A small number of responses were focused on the demise of the Bowls Club, ongoing RSL involvement with the site, the lease agreement for the Bowls Club, and perception that not enough consideration was given to a range of future options for the site and expressed disappointment that Council could only become involved to redevelop the site as regional parkland.

It is important to note that whilst the master planning team acknowledges the depth of community feeling in this regard, these issues lie outside the scope of the masterplanning commission and remain the province of the lessee, the State Government and to a lesser extent the Gold Coast City Council.

## Consultation Aim and Approach

The aim of the public consultation for the Palm Beach Parklands Master Plan was to provide an accessible platform from which people may express their thoughts, ideas and concerns for the Parklands; with the information gathered used to inform the Master Plan.

An holistic Consultation Strategy was designed to ensure the maximum opportunity for the accumulation of information and provided ways in which the community could be involved in the master planning process before the design phase, during the design process and prior to finalisation of the Master Plan.

The basis for the strategy, was an understanding that public consultation would benefit the master plan through:

- Information and opinion gathering
- Tabling of community issues
- Vision setting
- Cultural mapping
- The generation of themes
- The generation of commercial, recreation and tourism opportunities, and
- The establishment of an ongoing consultation and community involvement strategy for further design and implementation.

## Public Consultation Strategy

The Public Consultation Strategy was broken down into two phases:

- Phase One - public consultation prior to the production of the Draft Master Plan
- Phase Two - four week public review period for comments on the Draft Master Plan.

At the time of writing this Report the first phase of the consultation has been completed, with phase two (public review) currently under way.

Phase One of the Consultation Strategy included a number of components and information gathering opportunities, including:

- A Community Survey (comprising a detailed questionnaire)
- A "Beach Marquee" public open day on site at the Palm Beach Parklands
- Focus groups of diverse communities and stakeholders
- Poster displays and questionnaires at Palm Beach and Elanora Libraries and at the Palm Beach Neighbourhood Centre
- Information stall and questionnaires at the Pines Shopping Centre
- Project information, updates and a questionnaire on the Council website; and
- Articles and advertising in the local media.

The target groups that were identified and included in phase one of the consultation process included the Palm Beach and Currumbin communities; stakeholders from community groups, environmental groups and previous and current groups using the site; and the wider Gold Coast regional community.

The range and type of information that needed to be gathered informed the format of meetings/ focus groups/ workshops and the development of a questionnaire. Information that was necessary to capture included what people perceived as the issues associated with the site; how people currently used the site; what activities did people want in the parklands in the future; what did people want the parklands to look like in the future; and what facilities would people like to see in the parklands in the future.

## Community Survey

A questionnaire was developed for the purpose of obtaining responses to a range of master planning issues including site usage, parkland facilities and features of the site. Surveys were conducted during November and December 2005 with questionnaires available at the Palm Beach and Elanora Libraries, the Palm Beach Neighbourhood centre, the Pines Shopping Centre stall, the Beach Marquee and the Gold Coast City Council website.

Approximately 600 questionnaires were distributed, however the number downloaded from the Council website is not known. A total of 244 completed surveys were returned through the survey boxes at the sites and to Council's reply paid post.

## Key Stakeholder, Diverse Communities & Focus Group Meetings

Three focus group & stakeholder meetings were held over the period from November 2005 to January 2006 at both the Pines Meeting Room in Elanora and St Pauls Anglican Church at Palm Beach. Participants invited to the consultation included representatives from a range of community groups, local residents and individuals who had indicated to Council that they would like to be included in the process. In attendance were members of various local groups including the Rotary Club of Palm Beach, Friends of Currumbin Association, Tarrabora Bush Care Group, GECKO, Palm Beach Boardriders, the Motley Crew, former members of the Palm Beach Currumbin Bowls Club, Expressive Grounds, Queensland Police, the Creek to Creek Chamber of Commerce, as well as interested local residents.

The first two meetings - the Key Stakeholder and the Diverse Communities meetings - provided an opportunity for stakeholders and residents to raise issues or concerns and to record aspirations for the future of the Palm Beach Parklands site. The purpose of the final focus group / workshop was to brief the participants on the concerns raised during the public consultation process to date and to gather any additional issues, concerns, future uses and features that had not already been collected. Participants were also asked to identify one issue or concern and one item or feature of the site that they considered was the priority for the future.



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## Beach Marquee Public Open Day

A Beach Marquee Public Open Day was conducted on Sunday 4 December 2005 from 9.30 am to 2 pm at the Parklands site with a view to gathering the public's thoughts, ideas, concerns and aspirations for the Parklands site. Visitation to the Beach Marquee was high, assisted by fine weather and a free sausage sizzle kindly organised by the Rotary Club of Palm Beach. Community members were encouraged to fill in a questionnaire, or take a questionnaire away and return to Council using the freepost mail options, or make free comments on butcher's paper boards set up under the marquee. Further discussions with the community were facilitated by members of the master planning team, Council staff and Councillor Daphne McDonald who were in attendance.

## Survey Responses

Responses to questions about age group, gender and if people visit the site revealed that there were more response from females (137) than males (98); most responses from 26-55 year olds (154) and those 55+ years (102); and 232 people (from 244 surveys) said they visited the site.

In answer to the questions regarding how people get to the site, timing and length of visitation, and who they visit the site with; most visitors drive (156), walk (140) or cycle (48) to the site; the majority of respondents use the site in the morning or the late afternoon / early evening with most people staying less than 2 hrs. (104) or between 2-4 hrs. (105); and people visited the area with family (153), friends (100) or by themselves (92).

In response to questions about what people like about the parklands, respondents wrote that they liked the natural aspect, good walkways, beauty, lack of development and the open space. There were positive comments about the safety of the lagoon for swimming, the family-friendly, peaceful character of the park and no crowds. Many respondents stated they liked being able to swim and run with their dogs in the dog exercise area and there were positive comments to families being able to visit with their dogs.

Facilities respondents wanted to see in the Parklands in the future included BBQs, more shade, toilets in dog exercise area, a kiosk/ cafe, more seating, disability access to the Lagoon, drinking water fountains, rubbish bins, picnic tables & chairs and showers (inside and outside) and toilets. Responses to parking were divided between people who considered there to be sufficient parking and people wanting more parking.

In answer to questions asking what activities respondents would like to see accommodated in the Parklands in the future, people wanted to:

- read relax and sunbathe (200), enjoy the natural beauty (182) and have BBQs and picnics (167)
- swim (205), walk or run (180), walk/ swim their dog (109), have fun on the beach (106), ride their bikes (101), enjoy non-motorised water sports (76).

When asked what activities they did not want in the Parklands in the future most comments were related to motorised water vessels in the Lagoon; there were also respondents who stated they did not want the dog exercise area to remain.

The majority of respondents liked the Reserves and revegetation areas (Tarrabara Reserve and Currumbin Spit), with comments such as "keep it natural". Some respondents suggested the removal of the stormwater drain; some wanted more open space; and some commented the area should be "left as it is".

Public Art themes suggested in the questionnaire included themes about the natural environment, the sea and fauna and flora (75); natural usable art (e.g., seating); and art that reflects the site's/area's indigenous history (26).

## Public Stakeholder / Focus Group Meeting Outcomes

The main comments arising from the focus groups/ workshops are outlined in this section.

Landscape Character - relaxed ambience; nature and wildlife; landscape treatment should be natural rather than constructed; area should be treated in an holistic manner; opportunity for educational elements about the environment; "the landscape is attractive on a regional scale, but should be preserved on a local scale as a quiet, secluded area".

Environmental Issues - concerns with changing habitat, dune stability and water quality in lagoon; preservation and revegetation of Reserves; stormwater outfall to be addressed; shade trees should be provided to car parking.

Site Use - family place; a place for locals; site supports a range of activities in and out of the water; potential for low key community events; keep motorised water craft outside area; provide disabled access to water and parkland; provide activities for all ages; restrict dogs to designated areas (clear signage) and provide adequate waste management measures in dog exercise areas.

Facilities - natural shade trees for shade; adequate facilities (water bubblers, bins, seats & tables); opposition to the kiosk/cafe being a licensed premises or restaurant; site cannot be left derelict.

Site Connections & Access - paths are popular/well used; conflicts with existing shared pathways (pedestrians & cyclists); pathways too narrow for bike riders; restrict car parking; limit vehicular access to the park to maintenance and emergency vehicles.

Public art is seen as a positive - local stories; local and youth involvement; educational element; functional artworks supported (signage, seating, pavements); area under bridge can be public art area for young people.

## Summary Of Findings

The collation of comments received from the public via the questionnaires, beach marquee and various discussion forums has produced key findings, as follows:

- Most site users visit the parklands in the morning, with a later fluctuation in visitation occurring in the late afternoon;
- The community values the parklands' informal character, natural ambience and the significance of the Reserves and other areas as a wildlife refuge;
- Respondents indicated a desire for the parklands to be family friendly, provide facilities for all ages and accommodate activities such as walking, swimming, relaxing and dog exercise;
- The dog-friendly character of the parklands is both strongly supported (majority) and opposed;
- The community favours the provision of more public amenities, including the kiosk/cafe facility, playgrounds, more shade, and barbeque facilities;
- The community encourage the provision of community group facilities;
- The inclusion of locally-relevant public art within the parklands is supported by the community;
- Upgrading of pathways was suggested to ensure safe and equitable access for wheelchairs and prams.



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