

## Harbour Foreshore Community Reference Group

### Meeting MINUTES

<b>Date:</b> 10 December 2020	<b>Time:</b> 4.30pm to 6.30pm	<b>Venue:</b> Zoom online
<b>Meeting:</b> Newcastle Harbour Foreshore Masterplan – Concepts		

### PRESENT

#### Community Reference Group (CRG) members

Helen Cummings	Independent Resident
Laura Shane	Independent Resident
Tracey Stephens	Independent Resident
Rob Russell	Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council
Mark Metrikas	Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust
Joe Relic	Newcastle City Business Improvement Association
Doug Lithgow	Parks and Playgrounds Movement
Reena Bilen	Newy with Kids
Justin Nyker	Mothership Events

#### In Attendance

Nathan Burford	Access Advisory Committee
Luke Russell	Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee
Simon Grierson	Newcastle City Traffic Committee and Newcastle Cycling Working Party
Timothy Daley	City of Newcastle (CN), Senior Project Planner
Rachel McConkey	CN, Recreation Services Projects Coordinator
Lynn Duffy	CN, Manager Parks and Recreation
Natalie McCabe	CN, Senior Strategist Transport
Natalie D'Arcy	CN, Community Engagement Coordinator
Emily Dowswell	CN, Acting Media and Stakeholder Relations Manager
Larissa Adamczyk	CN, Communications Partner
Trish Hilkmann	CN, Project Manager – Major Events
Perry Lethlean	Consultant, Taylor Cullity Lethlean (TCL) Director
Alexa Ongoco	Consultant, TCL, Landscape Architect
Chris Johnstone	Consultant, Bosque Studio, Landscape Architect
Shellie Smith	Indigenous consultant working with consultants
Brenda Madden	The Creative Ingredient, Meeting Facilitator
Sandra McKenny	Project Support Officer – Infrastructure and Property

#### Apologies

Kim Becherand	Variety the Children's Charity, Inclusive Play Manager - Strategy
Lisa Whinnen	Variety the Children's Charity, Inclusive Play Manager - Projects
Garry Fielding	Independent Resident
Christine Everingham	Newcastle East Residents Group and Sandhills Community Garden
David Moir	Liveable Cities Advisory Committee
Cr Emma White	Infrastructure Advisory Committee
Cr Declan Clausen	Youth Council
Cr Peta Winney-Baartz	Newcastle City Traffic Committee
Bruce Cooper	Port Authority of NSW
Neil Slater	Local Business Owner
Jamie Graham	Independent Resident

**Meeting Commenced:** 4.32pm

## WELCOME

### WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Delivered by Luke Russell, Worimi man from the Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

### TERMS of REFERENCE

**1. Platform for this meeting:**

Zoom functionality: use of chat function and tiled view for Zoom screen.

**2. Meeting conduct:**

One person speaking at any one time; provide clear and concise responses; respectful language to be used at all times.

**3. Goals of the meeting:**

1. An opportunity for the Design Team to present outcomes of Phase 2 in the form of a detailed concept design for the site including the inclusive play space.
2. An opportunity for participants to provide feedback on the concept design for the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore prior to wider consultation commencing in Jan-Feb 2021.

## AGENDA

### INTRODUCTIONS

The names of the nine (9) present CRG members and the organisations/communities to which each are linked was read aloud and members acknowledged their presence by raising their hand on screen.

### PRE-PRESENTATION – DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Prior to presentations being delivered, participants are given questions asked to stimulate discussion during the feedback session. This is to allow members of the CRG to listen with intent. These being:

1. What feels right or resonates with you most? What design elements do you feel most excited about? (positives)
2. What doesn't feel right – are there any issues, constraints or concerns with what is being suggested? (negatives)

### PRESENTATIONS

***(Concept presentation to be posted as part of the community engagement on the concept plans).***

1. CRG Meeting 1: Key Outcomes RECAP delivered by Brenda Madden, The Creative Ingredient.
2. The City of Newcastle Cycling and Parking Strategy community engagement process and links to the Harbour Foreshore Masterplan delivered by Simon Grierson, Manager of Transport and Compliance with introduction by Tim Daley, Senior Project Planner.
3. Initial concept design for the Newcastle Harbour Foreshore delivered by Perry Lethlean representing TCL and Bosque Studio Landscape Architects.

### BREAK (10 mins)

### FEEDBACK

## **Newcastle Harbour Foreshore Masterplan - Community Reference Group**

**10 December 2020**

### **Meeting 2: Key Findings Summary**

#### **Finding 1: Participants support the addition of greenery and shade.**

A majority of participants gave praise to the addition of plantings and landscaping features. Participants would like to see shaded seating in and around the play space and use of locally native trees/plants bordering the two event spaces. Participants also suggested a shady park would have higher visitation rates (outside of events) than a park with limited tree cover. To honour recent park history, the Hawke/Cummings a failed tree and plaque was requested to be re-instated.

#### **Finding 2: Participants support play space design.**

There was much support from the group for an all ages, all abilities, fully fenced, inclusive play space. Participants supported the ideas of water play, Awabakal themes, industrial themes and representation of the original natural waterline of the Harbour Foreshore. The potential addition of a skate park to the play space was discouraged sighting other nearby skateparks. There was suggestion to add change rooms to the amenities for families wishing to interact with water play features. A café adjacent to the play space was also encouraged.

#### **Finding 3: Participants support ideas that encourage flow of movement through the site.**

Participants supported well considered pedestrian and cycleway flow throughs on site where smart design will reduce conflicts between these two user groups. Participants would like to see in-park facilities where bicycles can be locked/stored.

#### **Finding 4: Participants support alternative transport options to the site.**

Participants support alternative transport but consider a cultural shift will be required to reduce the use of cars (and hence the need for on-site parking) and increase the take up of active transport options such as cycling, walking, skating or use of public transport (bus, tram or ferry). It was suggested that consideration also be given to adaptive transport options, cycle shares and use of the harbour front for casual mooring of recreational vessels.

#### **Finding 5: Frog Pond.**

The future of the Frog Pond was discussed. For the two events spaces to be operational it would require removal. This idea was supported by event operators. A member would like to see the Frog Pond re-filled for water play activities such as model boat races.

#### **Finding 6: Participants were mixed over the layout of the two separate event spaces.**

Event operators requested deeper consultation in regard to functional event space design. They saw the two separate event spaces limited by the trees planted between them thus restricting use of a larger combined mega event space. A balance between shaded day-use and event functionality was requested. Other participants raised the issue of noise restrictions as the site is bordered by residential; this perhaps prohibitive to hosting large scale music events at Newcastle Harbour Foreshore Park.

## RECORD of ZOOM CHAT FEED

**Comments/Questions** uploaded by CRG members via the Zoom chat feature during the meeting appear in *blue italics*. Questions arising in the Zoom chat were answered by City of Newcastle staff shown in *green text*.

16:38:35 From Nathan Burford:

*Do you want folks to use the 'raise hand' function via Participants tab?*

16:39:09 From Tim Daley:

*Hi Nathan, that would be great.*

16:42:39 From Helen Cummings iPhone:

*Please forgive me I am on a film set. My part was supposed to be filmed at 1.30 pm and they are just starting it now. I will leave this on. I so wanted to participate but this will be hard.*

16:55:33 From Tim Daley:

*Thanks Helen.*

17:00:05 From Laura Shane:

*Could someone please post the link to the Cycling Strategy discussed? Quick googling and I seem to be finding old articles now closed for feedback.*

17:00:30 From Tim Daley:

*Cycling Plan: <https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/projects/draft-cycling-plan-on-our-bikes>*

17:00:39 From Laura Shane:

*Thanks :-)*

17:01:46 From Tim Daley:

*Parking Plan: <https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say/projects/draft-parking-plan-on-the-street>*

17:07:12 From Justin Nyker:

*Shortland Lawn - has noise restrictions that do not comply with residents so close. Unless legislation is in place to circumnavigate, it will be difficult for concerts and any major events with noise etc. For notes, this is the reason we have used Camp Shortland historically since 2003.*

17:08:21 From Tim Daley:

*Thanks Justin, I will pass that feedback onto senior management for consideration.*

17:35:31 From Justin Nyker:

*Needs dedicated consultation with event specialists from industry for wider scope of knowledge and capabilities.*

17:42:09 From Tracey Stephens:

*Plenty of spaces to lock bikes is crucial. Lots of electric bikes around now that are very expensive. People will want to lock them in a secure stand/space.*

17:43:06 From Reena Bilen:

*Great design for playground and water play area and pleased to see that the playground will be fully fenced and incorporates shade. Will there be space for change rooms as part of the toilet block? With the water play area, it would be useful to have facilities where families have sufficient space to change (not just in a toilet cubicle).*

17:44:22 From Natalie D'Arcy - CN Community Engagement:

Great suggestion, Reena.

17:44:31 From Tracey Stephens:

Great point Reena.

17:48:34 From Laura Shane:

Yes, agree with Reena. Also wonder if there needs to be a gate on the one other side. If it's a long way to walk around you'll most certainly get older kids just jumping the fence.

17:49:07 From Laura Shane:

Overall a great space though, great spaces, shade, water and creativity. Lots of hard work, thank you.

17:49:26 From Tracey Stephens:

Really sorry I have to leave. Cleaners need me to leave - thanks again for a wonderful plan. Love the community input and views from all the different stakeholders.

17:51:09 From Tim Daley:

We will be reviewing the role and need for the amenities to best suit the needs of the park.

17:52:48 From Joe Relic:

Love the idea of a cafe next to the play space!

17:53:00 From Joe Relic:

Looking forward to hearing Luke's and Rob's contributions!

17:56:59 From Joe Relic:

Thanks everyone, my apologies as I have to go. Looking forward to reading the minutes to hear others input that I will miss. Congrats to all involved!

18:15:02 From Reena Bilen:

I would love to see some AR features incorporated into the park as well where people can learn about the history of the park as well on their smartphones.

18:17:42 From Luke Russell:

Reena, I am currently working on a few Aboriginal AR projects, hoping to expand on the dual name AR project. Bringing that technology into this space would be great.

18:17:51 From Justin Nyker:

Thanks for having me along, these are great sessions with great ideas and energy going into the progress of the city...very excited about seeing - hearing more on detail. Merry Xmas and NY everyone!!

**Meeting closed: 6.16pm**

17 December 2020

Meeting facilitated and minutes prepared by:



**Addendum 1:****Written Submission**

Dr Christine Everingham –  
Sandhills Community Garden and Newcastle East Residents Group

**Addendum 2:****Written Submission**

Mark Metrikas –  
Hunter Regional Committee of National Trust

## Addendum 1

**NERG response to Foreshore Park proposed landscaping plan, with particular focus on the community garden.**

### **The Carriage Shed area and Community Garden area**

- **The view that the community garden is “confined to the back corner” is mistaken.**

As described in the 2015 PoM, the community has worked tirelessly and very successfully over the last 13 years to establish this part of the Foreshore Park as a sheltered haven.

*The community garden located behind the carriage shed is both well maintained and used by the local community to grow fresh produce and connect with other members of the community. The garden incorporates seating **to enable a quieter and more isolated refuge in the park.***

It has taken years to establish the trees that shelter the garden from the strong westerly winds and allow the produce to grow. It cannot be moved. The garden is not fenced, but partially hidden behind carefully managed screening plants. It is not only frequented by locals but visited by people from all over Newcastle and beyond.



The garden has developed its own eco-system, with an abundance of bird life, fruit and nut trees and a variety of native and non-native vegetation. Community volunteers have established paths, raised beds and terraces for visitors (and especially children) to explore.



There is a wide variety of bird life in and around the community garden. Currently, Tawny Frogmouths and Banded Rails are nesting in the garden.



There is a 'secret garden' quality to the area, which is reinforced when visitors walk through the arched entrance adjacent to the Carriage Shed, to discover the expanse of garden that magically opens out beyond the arch.





Playgroups visit the garden and children learn from an early age about plants and growing vegetables.



The garden is frequented by disability groups and their carers. The seating in the centre of the garden was funded by a grant from Leapfrog disability group. The seating at either end of the garden was constructed by a volunteer on a disability pension.



Many picnickers using the Carriage Sheds “discover” the garden. Children’s parties frequently move between the Carriage Sheds and the garden, as do visitors attending events being conducted in the Sheds and the adjacent open space. The garden is perfectly positioned next to the barbecue areas allowing visitors to have picnics or barbecues and spend time in the sheltered garden.



The area is highly activated. Picnickers and groups of families transition easily between the sheds, the garden and the grassed area between the barbeques and the Cohen Bond Store which provides a perfect place for children to play ball games.





- **The ready accessibility of the current amenities block to the Carriage Shed barbeque area and Community Garden is vital to the current activation of this area.**

Toilets near picnic facilities are particularly important for family and disability groups. Food fairs, markets and fitness groups regularly use the Carriage sheds as an all-weather venue. The amenities block is essential during these activities. The existing amenities block was designed to be low-rise and complement the Carriage sheds. It would be possible to significantly reduce the size of the amenities block and possibly create sightlines to the harbour, by moving the current staff office.



Possible alternative locations (for the staff office) include the adjacent storage and compound area and the surf boat storage sheds between Nobby's and Horseshoe Beaches. The advantage of the boat storage sheds would be the ability to drive machines and equipment in one end and out of the other, without the need for turning. The existing car park area for Foreshore Park council staff is overly large for the number of vehicles that are housed there on weekdays. There may be an opportunity to reduce the car park footprint in order to include the staff office and staff amenities, thereby consolidating staff facilities in one, separate and compact location.



- The area designated as “Disconnected and isolated area” adjacent to Carriage Shed and in front of Bond Store is not isolated and is unsuitable for a “Productive and Community Garden”.

This area provides the opportunity for users of the barbeques to spill out into a green space. Families use this area for ball games, children play chasing games and toddlers like to run up and over the mounds.

The photo included in the draft design depicts the area as degraded. This is because during the Supercars event, this whole area is “deactivated” for public use. Heavy trucks, machinery and sheds cover the entire landscape which is cut off from the rest of the park and hidden behind black plastic for 9 weeks of Supercars ‘occupation’. This results in a bare and barren area that takes park staff many months to regenerate.



After the event, the ground never fully recovers until the next year’s event is underway.





Without the event this year and the welcome rainfall, the area has recovered and is once again being fully used by the public.



The idea of attempting to transform this area into a more activated space begs the question of whether the current design must take the extensive requirements of the Supercars event into account.

### The planned kiosk and amenities block

- This plan involves removing more trees.

The single most important issue identified in CN's surveys and the 2015 PoM was the requirement for **more shade**. An independent audit examined the tree cover since the Supercars event, and estimated that **4,200 sq m of tree canopy was lost** (trees and shrubs), while the trees currently planted were estimated to be **650 sq m**. The projected canopy of this tree cover was estimated to be **2,400 sq m** in 20 years time. The net loss of projected tree cover in 20 years will only grow to be 50% of what existed before Supercars. This is despite the 2015 PoM stating (p32): *Ensure landscaping within the park as a **minimum** maintains the tree canopy through appropriate tree removal, and replacement with intergenerational and suitable species selection.*

Many of the bench seats in the park have NO shade. On hot days, visitors to the park huddle under the reduced shade canopy or stay inside the Carriage Sheds.

So far, the CRG has received no indication of what trees will be planted and where. Will this decision have to take into account the requirements of Supercars' footprint? Will council respond to the issue of lack of shade, as identified in the public surveys and as defined in the PoM?

### Access from the Telford St entrance for people in wheelchairs, the elderly using mobility frames and parents with prams, has not been considered.

While we welcome the plans to create a Gateway from the Lumber Yard, it is unclear how long these improvements will take, nor how they will improve the situation for local residents with mobility problems who access the garden and picnic areas from the Telford Street entrance. This entrance is currently the most popular way for those coming by tram to access the park. This access issue could be quickly rectified with a lift, placed adjacent to the Jean Perrett stairway – a solution which has been used to great effect in Shortland Esplanade - opposite Newcastle Beach and adjacent to Liquid Gold Cafe.



This solution would also link the Foreshore Park with the many local restaurants, cafes and kiosks without constructing a new kiosk that would compete with existing local businesses.

### **The Resilience Statue and the future of the Frog Pond.**

- No thought has been given to the purpose and location of this statue.

The statue was unveiled in September 2015 as a reminder of the impact of mental health on the Hunter community. It is a place visited by groups and individuals to remember the loss of loved ones. It was placed by the Frog Pond, with adjacent trees (since removed for Supercars) providing some shade. It was designed as a place for reflection – and was funded in part by community contributions.



In an unintended consequence, the Supercars event “deactivated” this location for public use, removing and not replacing the adjacent trees. The statue is barricaded behind fencing for 9 weeks each year. The sculpture needs to be taken into consideration when considering whether to remove and/or empty the Frog Pond and future tree planting. This question, too, depends on whether the design must take the extensive supercars footprint into account.





### **Softening the car park.**

The presentation given by the landscape architects during the first Zoom meeting showed how car parks can be softened with vegetation and trees. The current car park is far wider than necessary for the number of car places allocated, because of the need for Supercars to construct their temporary pit facilities.





Given the most important issue identified in the survey was increasing the shade canopy, what is planned for this area? Will the pit area be reduced in size? Does the design have to be overlaid on Supercars footprint? Does the Supercar-driven alienation and closure of Wharf Road and the Foreshore Park for 9 weeks each year represent the best public use of a regional recreational park precinct?

**Increased usage of the Foreshore Park by events that are not in keeping with the 2015 Plan of Management.**

NERG welcomes the continued use of the Foreshore Park for smaller scale events that are in keeping with the PoM (2015), which clearly identified maintaining public access to the Foreshore Park area as far as possible by restricting the number of events and their impact on the surrounding community:

**“Role and use (p30)**

- Use as a special events venue. Should have more restriction on quantity of events per year and impact on surrounding areas.”

**“Key Management Principles (p57):** To manage the Foreshore as a city park and an accessible community asset.

- Reduce impact of special event use on the Park. Manage special events to ensure amenity and access and financial sustainability is maintained at conclusion of events.”

Examples of events which work well are the night food market, all fun runs and walk-a-thons, display events like boats or vintage cars, harbour displays with tugs and yachts, NAIDOC activities, markets and displays in the Carriage Shed area. **All of these community-driven events are consistent with the tree planting program originally proposed by CN.**

The Supercars event, which is proposed by CN as their “flagship” event, **is not in keeping with the 2015 PoM.** It closes off public access to huge areas of the park and surrounding areas for 9 weeks every year, has a very high impact on the local residents and many local businesses, and leaves the park in a dilapidated state.

It appears from the proposed design that **more invasive events** are being considered that would prevent further tree planting **throughout the park** and restrict the passive use of the park by the general public.

Larger scale events should be conducted in the Camp Shortland area to minimise noise impact on residents and to allow for the uninterrupted and widespread use of the Foreshore Park area for varied passive recreation. activities

It is NERG’s belief that council representatives have not properly consulted with all stakeholders to determine what public facilities and park activities should be included in the landscape plan. NERG believes that the PoM should be used as the starting point for stakeholder discussion to determine what works effectively and what needs to be improved. NERG is concerned that there is an over representation from event/tourism stakeholders given that events make up a relatively small proportion

of park users. NERG is concerned that event representatives may put pressure on council to limit tree planting and may unduly influence the design of the parklands.

NERG urges council to reconsider the designs already commissioned, to ensure a broader stakeholder input. NERG requests that council consults with the Foreshore Park community representatives and conducts a series of on-site meetings to develop a deeper understanding of way in which the park is used and its future requirements.

Hunter Regional Committee  
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28 January 2021

3/21

City of Newcastle

Attention: Tim Daley, Senior Project Planner

## **HARBOUR FORESHORE COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP MEETING #2 - FEEDBACK**

The *Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust* endorses the 12 planning principles and 19 *opportunities* that underpin and inspire the Foreshore Park landscape masterplan concept. In some instances, these have not been articulated to CRG stakeholders or reflected in the concept renders. In broad terms, the landscape masterplan concept (east of Queens Wharf) builds upon the features of the extant parklands designed in 1988, and governed by the *Foreshore Plan of Management 2015*. The key considerations of flexible spaces, coherent precincts and activity areas, legible connections, and places for informal passive and active recreation, are evident in the draft initial concept.

**Cultural Heritage Walk.** Our Committee is delighted with the concept of a *cultural heritage walk* following close to the course of the original shoreline. Our Committee recommends the development of an interpretation strategy covering the entire Harbour Foreshore precinct, from Merewether Street to the start of *Bather's Way*. Several interpretation schemes are evident across the *City Centre* (including the Promenade and Foreshore Park), with some themes re-told at multiple sites. A focus on heritage themes specific to the reclaimed foreshore parklands is preferred. We consider that interpretation of the industrialisation of the Foreshore land is under-represented, including the progressive harbour reclamation. The contrast between the smoke-belching Zaara Street power station and rail marshalling yards, and today's green parkland could not be greater – yet is today, mostly forgotten.

Forgotten stories specific to the Foreshore Park include:

- John Shortland's 1797 landing and campsite near the *Shortland Lawn* amphitheatre. Shortland observed coal seams, sketched the harbour outline - noting the presence of indigenous people - and marked the location of three springs near *Tahlbihn* (Signal Hill). The lives of indigenous people along the *Coquun* were altered dramatically, soon after this event. The story behind the naming of *Shortland Lawn* deserves telling as it forms the beginning of our shared history. *Shortland Lawn* falls within the State-significant *Coal River Precinct* (SHR 01674).
- The short-lived exploration camp and first penal settlement 1801-2, also near the amphitheatre (within the *Coal River Precinct*). *Frog Pond* commemorates the original freshwater spring which accounts for the earliest European name of the locality – *Freshwater Bay*. Sydney traders tied up their vessels along this shoreline to collect coal and cedar from 1798. By 1801, three wells had been sunk in the foreshore. These wells continued to provide a water supply for the convict

settlement, free settlers, and the shipping industry.



- Convict sawpits, north of the Lumberyard. Valuable cedar logs were floated downriver to this point and sawn into lengths suitable for shipment.
- Harbour reclamation from the 1840s, including E.O. Moriarty's significant harbour works of the 1860-70s. The area immediately north of the Customs House and Lumberyard was the site of an 1840s boat harbour and ballast wharf.
- The harbour - between *Tahlbihn* and the Ballast Wharf - was used for bathing by convicts and residents until the 1880s. The foreshore had been reserved for public recreation in the 1840s. A ladies' bathing house operated from c1853 (ocean bathing became popular in the 1880s).
- Industrialisation of the reclaimed land: boat harbours & wharfs, rail yards, power generation and warehousing/bond stores.
- Formation of the *Foreshore Park* as a Bicentennial project, opened 1988.

The incorporation of heritage cues in the design of play space equipment (sea ferns, canoes, tugs, etc) is to be commended.

**Concept planning shortfalls.** The concept plan presented at CRG#2, is heavily focused on the inclusive play space. While fine details are revealed in the play space renders, there is some confusion about the rationale behind the layout of the remainder of the *Foreshore Park* and harbour promenade east of Queens Wharf. For example, some plans depict the current layout of park infrastructure, the *Sandhills Community Garden* and the *Frog Pond*, while the '*Foreshore Park Initial Concept*' deletes *Frog Pond* and adjacent toilets, integrates *Tug Berth lane* with a shared pathway, and relocates the community garden. The graphic concept should be supported by narrative or footnotes that articulate proposed changes to the Park's layout and extant key components.

**Evidence of design principles.** Some of the 12 design principles are not fully reflected in the concept:

- Principle 4. 'Carparking'. The concept plan appears to be inconsistent with CN's draft parking strategy ('*On the Street*'), which values human-friendly streetscapes with active frontages, unblocked by a continuous string of static vehicles. Parked cars along the edges of the foreshore reduce pedestrian connectivity, and degrade sightlines to the harbour. Parked cars consume 25m<sup>2</sup> of space and need to sit within, rather than dominate the harbour



landscape. The TCL image *'Foreshore Park Existing Conditions'* confirms this view with the notation *'carpark situated in front of prime viewing to harbour'* (Opportunity: *Integrate car parking in the landscape*). The carpark footprint and parking capacity was enlarged significantly for *Supercars*, and should be returned to its prior state.

- 5. 'Inclusive access'. Light rail patrons at the 'Newcastle Beach' terminus can access the park via Telford Street, the Convict Lumberyard or Watt Street. An elevator or inclined stair lift is required at the *Jean Perrett* stairs entry point. The two lifts linking King Street to Shortland Esplanade are examples of a possible solution. A gravel surface and two sets of steps constrain 'desire line' access via the Lumberyard. In any case, the northern edge of the Lumberyard does not connect well with *Railway Walk*. A lift would also facilitate park entry by families with prams, bicycles and picnic gear. Pedestrian links direct from *The Station* to the *Customs House* forecourt – the Park's western gateway – need to be improved. Ideally, *Railway Walk* should form the principal means of access by active transport.
- 10. 'Environment (landscape)', is linked to the *Opportunities*: 'showcase a water-sensitive city'; 'Provide climate resilient shady parks'; & 'Enrich the park with a botanical and ecological overlay'. The long-established *Sandhills Community Gardens* provide shade, and a botanical and ecological overlay that would be difficult to replicate in the space between the *David Cohen Bond Store* apartments and the Carriage Sheds. The community gardens are well situated in a secluded nook with shade and wind protection, and are screened by vegetated slopes. Several bird and lizard species are well-established. The *Community Gardens* could be enhanced to showcase a water-sensitive city. *Frog Pond*, an ornamental saltwater feature, is an excellent response to freshwater conservation!
- 11. 'Environment (water story)'. Apart from commemorating the city's first water supply, *Frog Pond* could be remodelled with softened edges and plantings of endemic coastal plantings. Some reduction in size could be accommodated. Options to fill the Pond with stormwater capture should be examined, creating a freshwater habitat.

**Event spaces.** The concept plan envisages the creation of two new event spaces: a grassed 'Commons' on the site of the current playground and lawns west of Frog Pond, and a shaded 'Grove' on the footprint of the Pond. Few respondents recommended new event spaces in the Park. While some (9%) respondents supported the drainage of Frog Pond for scootering and skating, this does not justify conversion of the site into a shaded event space with no skating hardstand. The large *Shortland Lawn* and amphitheatre adequately fulfills the role of a public commons.

The 2013 community engagement program which informed the 2015 Foreshore Plan of Management, identified the following key community concern:

*"Use as a special events venue: Should have more restriction on quantity of events per year and impact on surrounding areas."*

Given the impact of *Supercars*, it is likely this concern has been amplified. Newcastle is well-served by event spaces, many with better parking, amenities and public transport options. 'Camp Shortland', a component of Foreshore Park (excluded from the masterplan) provides a large flexible event space of lawn and hardstand with carparking and a harbour setting. The need for further event spaces has not been justified to CRG stakeholders. A business case is required to justify the re-design of the Park (and expenditure of public funds) for a handful of ephemeral events, including those held for profit.

**Play space.** The proposed play space concept provides an exciting and engaging array of apparatus and landscaping, worthy of a regional park. There are some issues which should be considered and discussed:

- Alternate location: The north-western quadrant (earmarked as *'Railshed Picnic & BBQ Lawn'*) is considerably larger (6,445m<sup>2</sup> vs 4,150m<sup>2</sup>) and offers better passive surveillance, activated edges, a harbour outlook, and access to parking. This quadrant is shaded and the mounds

are ideal for informal play and family picnics. The best playgrounds are surrounded by contiguous spaces that allow seamless interaction between play equipment and family picnic 'bases' (lawns, tables, seating). The reasoning behind the location of the play space, shoe-horned into the back paddock with limited access, has not been explained. In effect, 'Railway Walk' severs the play space from the planned 'Railshed Picnic and BBQ area' (a misnomer, as it is some distance from the carriage sheds).

- **Fenced enclosure.** The design of the play space includes a fenced enclosure which physically confines and separates the area from the *Carriage Sheds* and nearby picnic & passive recreation areas. Confined to a 4,150 m<sup>2</sup> space, the play space appears crowded and linear in progression. While the enclosure seeks to cater for children of various abilities, this should be to the benefit of all users. Typically, children (and parents) frequently move between family nodes and play equipment. The siting of the playground hard-up to the *Earp Gillam Bond Street carpark* is not ideal.

**Kiosk.** The proposed kiosk is not supported by the National Trust. Sight lines along the landscape axis from the *Jean Perrett* stairs to the harbour will be impeded. The commercial lease of this kiosk constitutes alienation of public space for private profit. The viability of a kiosk at this site is questionable given limited patronage on week days and during winter. Mobile coffee and food vendors parked in the Wharf Road carpark might offer a more viable proposition. It is recommended that CN liaise with the operators of *Paymasters*.

**Carriage Sheds/parks compound.** The *Carriage Sheds* provide a versatile all-weather family and community hub with BBQs and picnic tables adjacent a playground, *Frog Pond*, informal open space and toilets. This area is ideal for free events and community gatherings. Apart from essential maintenance, there is considerable scope to improve the amenity of this space. The operational footprint of CN's parks depot is excessive and should be confined and concealed behind the fenced enclosure. The installation of a *cable-gate* at the entrance to the Earp Gillam carpark would prevent unauthorised vehicle access to the *Carriage Sheds*.

**Supercars footprint.** The CRG has not been informed whether the ephemeral *Supercars* event has influenced the concept design. Apart from some tree plantings on the narrow strip between the carpark and Wharf Road, the 'pit lane' hardstand/car park has not been returned to its pre-*Supercars* footprint. Parked cars in this very open carpark now dominate the outlook from the parkland, blocking views to the harbour. Parking demand and controls across the entire Foreshore precinct should be assessed according to the draft parking strategy '*On the Street*'. It is noted that while the Foreshore carpark is \$8 for 2-hours, the nearby Horseshoe Beach and Pasha Way carparks at the eastern edge of the parklands are free.

**Customs House threshold - arrival and orientation.** The Customs House forecourt, bicentennial fountain and *Railway Walk* should serve as the primary gateway and orientation point for access to the park. This space has a *European*-quality, but serves mostly as a place to quickly traverse rather than linger. Positioned central to the walk *desire line*, the fountain is quickly bypassed. Seating, directional signage, heritage interpretation and paving treatments might present this gateway as a place to linger, rather than serve as a passageway. Public art along 'Railway Walk' would improve activation. As noted, access to this threshold from *The Station/Market Street Lawn* is poor. Typically, pedestrians and cyclists dash across Watt Street.

**Shading.** While the 'initial design concept' is only indicative, the issue of shading is uppermost on the list of community concerns. Greater fidelity is required based on fine-grain understanding, including shadow diagrams, topography and tree-science. The creation of the 'Commons' event space reduces opportunities for shading and enhancement of Newcastle's urban forest. The positioning of trees or shrubs at the narrow steep eastern edge above the amphitheatre demonstrates little understanding of the site. This 'summit' location offers excellent views of the harbour and foreshore, and is regularly used for informal recreation. Shading, seating and tables around the edges of *Frog Pond* would improve its activation. There is potential for shading amongst the grassed mounds south of the *Carriage Sheds*, without compromising informal play.

**Tug Berth Lane.** While little attention has been directed, within the CRG forum, to the foreshore promenade and western foreshore precinct, our committee strongly endorses the concept of re-purposing *Tug Berth lane* as a family-friendly linear park along the harbour edge. We prefer the concept image '*Tug Berth lane, proposed condition, section B-B*', with grassed lawns to the harbour edge, and a promenade set along the raised spine. This approach is consistent with HCCDCs *Worth Place Park* now under construction and maximises use of the harbour edge as a place to linger rather than transit. Our preference is for a separated cycleway along the southern edge of *Tug Boat lane* to avoid pedestrian-cyclist conflicts.

Yours sincerely,

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