

### 3. MAYORAL MINUTES

#### 3.1. MAYORAL MINUTE - REPEAL RESOLUTION 6.2 OF ORDINARY MEETING 30 NOVEMBER 2021

##### MAYORAL MINUTE

That Council:

1. Repeal Resolution 6.2 of its Ordinary Meeting on 30 November 2021, which resolved:

*That Council;*

- 1. Consults with the community for the location of the Port Douglas Splash Park and Water Precinct.*
  - 2. The final location of the precinct is decided by council resolution.*
  - 3. A business case and cost benefit analysis are conducted on the proposed 50m lap pool and an alternative lagoon style pool.*
  - 4. The business case and cost benefit analysis, for both options, are brought to a council meeting to be publicly discussed and noted.*
2. Consults the community with the completed concept design including location and facilities that would be provided;
  3. Brings back to council the consultation, full costings, and a cost analysis of the proposed staged Aquatic precinct; and
  4. The final approval will be decided by council resolution

##### BACKGROUND

The current motion in place directs staff:

*This proposed additional item includes concept designs, community consultation and detailed designs for a pool and splash park in Port Douglas.*

*Following approval of concept and detailed design, progress towards funding for an aquatic precinct, that includes a splash park. Ensure community engagement.*

*The splash park will be phase one. Completed designs, community engagement and identification of potential funding sources.*

*Importantly, while the design will encompass the longer-term version which includes a pool, the more immediate priority is the splash park. Therefore, designs should enable a phased approach to actual construction.*

The Douglas Shire has been debating over a free lagoon style pool it feels as long as I have lived in the shire, perhaps longer with the location of Rex Smeal Park even considered many years ago. Multiple design concepts have been put forward but each of them defeated at some point for various reasons, the main one being cost of construction and operating expenses.

The Port Douglas Waterfront plan 2009 first confirmed the idea of a Lagoon style swimming area. The plan concepted in 2009 recommended (2.2.4) the need for a year-round public bathing facility sympathetic to the tropical environment of Port Douglas and the heritage values of the waterfront.

From this recommendation the concept of a Lagoon was created, and the document offered two location that were believed to be suitable.

*Scenario 1: Adjacent Rex Smeal Park (preferred): The western coastline of Rex Smeal Park fronts the Dickson inlet and through topography and an existing line of rocks and juvenile mangroves creates an obvious envelope for a swimming lagoon that will not require major excavation or impact greatly on existing vegetation. This location is preferred at this stage as it is sheltered from prevailing South easterly winds, forms a destination or anchor to the end of Macrossan Street and the refurbished waterfront, and enjoys views toward the iconic Sugar Wharf. Facilities and infrastructure associated with a lagoon in this location could also service the operation of the weekly markets.*

*Scenario 2: Adjacent the Surf Life Saving Club: The second locational scenario for the swimming lagoon is adjacent to the existing Four Mile Beach Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC). Obvious synergies exist between the operation of the SLSC and a swimming lagoon and a well-shaded area of land of a suitable scale exists immediately behind the existing complex. This site remains feasible but is not preferred as it is likely to have impacts on adjacent residential uses and is less visually and physically accessible from the heart of the town which is along the inlet side of the peninsula.*

*Although not tested as part of this master planning process, a potential exists to incorporate a family water park facility in the waterfront parkland area. The location and extent of this facility requires further investigation.*

Scenario One: In August 2011 the Cairns Regional Council completed the Port Douglas Master Plan Implementation Consultation Report, The Cairns Regional Council also put forward a Feasibility Assessment for a Swimming Lagoon in Port Douglas. This was a very detailed report showing that cost of a lagoon in this area to build would be \$20 million, The waterpark suggested \$25 million and the relocation of the boat ramp \$4.5 million. Along with the required road alignments a total of \$56.5 million was required to complete this project. The lagoon would then have an operation running cost of \$3.8 million. (These figures are ten years old.) Multiple State Government approvals required.



Figure 1.

This project had a revised concept in 2011 which came in at a \$1.4m operation cost, that also did not see the light of day whilst with Cairns and obviously now with a small council such as Douglas, still with an operation deficit, these types of figures are only a dream. The Implementation report and the Consultation Report were also major parts of this process. Multiple State Government approvals required.



Figure 2.

And yet another design that was put forward in the attempt to get a lagoon. A second proposal was put forward this time only having the coastal lagoon costing approx. \$14m to build and \$1.2m annually to run plus depreciation. This also came with great environmental concerns being in such proximity to the shoreline. Multiple State Government approvals required.



Figure 3.

Both these projects came with negative views of ruining the natural amenity and vista of the area. Market stall holders were also concerned with the location as were their concerns around parking amenity which there is an extreme shortage that currently exists.

Scenario Two: At the end of 2019 with no consultation and no costings completed the new and improved lagoon version was released for public consultation. This time on the Four Mile Beach side of Port Douglas in the location that was the least favourable in all the 2009 - 2011 consultations that were completed.

The location and concept design were made by councillors and then put out to consultation. Another approx. \$50 million dollar build project that only presented for consultation once the design concept was completed. This also never got off the ground. Build costing were approximated by staff, but no formal analysis was completed. This land also came with Native Title issues and planning zone changes were required once the land was purchased from the state. A large amount of trees were also required to be removed.



Figure 4.

As such during my election campaign I committed to the people of Douglas that I would attempt to sort this by offering a more realistic offer that can occur in a reasonable time frame. Council needed to take the lead on this issue and create a proposition that we could afford, and we had to be practical and not revisit dreams that were never going to see fruition. Running currently at a deficit puts us in no place to even consider a free entry smaller lagoon with a \$1.2 million operating cost.

Once elected the process started by first looking at the QT pool which at the time could have been considered as an option and quick fix. There was already safe swimming being a pool with land available to add a water play area, playground, BBQ's etc. Staff were directed in the operational plan to investigate and develop a proposal for council to consider a swimming pool and a zero depth water park in Port Douglas, finalise and develop a business case and detailed design.

**Table 1. From Operational Plan 2020-2021**

Goal 2: We will deliver programs and services that protect and enhance the liveability of our beautiful Shire							
1.2.1	Mossman Pool	Undertake a feasibility study and detailed design to redevelop the Mossman Pool and Caravan Park. Get "shovel ready" to be a contemporary pool and leisure park so that funding opportunities can be sought.	✓	Community Services	July 2020	June 2021	Shovel Ready
1.2.2	Port Douglas Pool	Investigate and develop proposal for Council to consider a swimming pool in Port Douglas. Finalise development of a business case and detailed design.	✓	Community Services	July 2020	June 2021	Business Case
1.2.3	Port Douglas Zero Depth Water Park	Investigate and develop proposal for Council to consider a zero depth water park in Port Douglas. Finalise development of a business case and detailed design.	✓	Community Services	July 2020	June 2021	Business Care & Design

During that financial year there were workshop discussions on this topic. This was first brought to a workshop on the 18 August 2020, the purchase of the previous option at the old QT resort wasn't going to go through due to road access issues by Transport and Main Roads not allowing another entrance to the property. As such staff had looked at other possible sights and suggested we look at the Reynolds Park option because of all the favourable assets, already zoned appropriately, room for parking, close to town, etc.

**Figure 5.**

On the 6 October 2020 it again came to a council workshop. At this workshop staff again recommended this land piece as the preferred site. A community survey was initialised to confirm if the want for a pool and splash park in Port Douglas was still warranted.

Councillors were advised of the survey results at the workshop on the 15 December 2020 in which staff also brought forward design ideas that had been given forward as part of the business case which were shown to Councillors.

Because of this it was then included into the Operational Plan 2021/2022. As there was discontent on this item by councillors this operational plan direction was separated so to allow the majority of agreed upon items to be voted together and this separately. It was successfully added to the operational plan at this time by a majority of Councillors.

Whilst some Councillors may have objected to this project, they were aware of the location and the idea behind the concept designs that were created as it had been shown to them at the previous workshops. As it was successfully added to the Operational Plan staff have moved forward to have a basic concept which was created to allow for a full concept design to be made as per the operational plan, this design was put out to tender and closed last week.

Councillors were made aware about the upcoming consultation, as it was discussed in workshops as per slide 18 of the workshop on the 15 December 2020 and was also in the motion that added this item into the Operational Plan. The public consultation was to occur once the detailed concept design was completed so that there was a detailed project brief which can be shown to the public to be consulted on.

The last Lagoon Concept had no community consultation completed by the previous Council about the location or anything else until the detailed concept design was completed. In the 2011 community consultation this site was listed as the least favourable location.

Other projects that have also been put out to the community for consultation with the detailed concept design and or location decided by council include- Port Douglas off leash dog park, Green Ant playground, Rex Smeal Park car park design, Teamsters Park Design, Mossman Pool Master Plan, Macrossan Street Lighting Project, Warner Street design, the Port Douglas Waterfront South Project Master Plan, Macrossan Street design, Newell Beach Foreshore concept plan, there are many more and let's not forget that plan to purchase Carbon Credits that had no community consultation.

It is very normal for councils to build a concept based on councillor visions during an election or after and then put a detailed design out to consultation, this practice occurs all the time.

It is clearly stated into the direction that it would be Councillors that have the final say on whether it goes ahead after the concept, detailed design which would include costings and community consultations are brought back to councillors for approval. ***Following approval of concept and detailed design, progress towards funding for an aquatic precinct, that includes a splash park. Ensure community engagement***

Claims that the pool will cost council a lot of money have not been verified, no costings have been completed yet and that is part of this process. The operation of a pool in Port Douglas with a much larger potential custom base would be completely different to that in Mossman. People in Port Douglas do not generally go to Mossman for the pool.

We do however already know how much a lagoon will cost us, the cost analysis, and the financial benefits of a lagoon concept. This work has previously been completed. Duplicating this work again will cost rate payers further, is not budgeted for and time consuming for staff.

It will still bring the same answer, we can't afford it and we again will end up with nothing.

The project being considered is a staged approach that will reactivate that space with a water play area, adventure playground, BBQ facilities, landscaping etc and eventually a safe swimming area. Without a master plan it could well end up a mismatched mess. This could be a great complement to the current application for a Surf Park and Crystal Lagoon if that project is to be passed by Council once staff have completed assessing the application.

Example of possible concept – Aquativity, South Bank, Brisbane.



Figure 6 - Aquativity, South Bank, Brisbane.

## ATTACHMENTS

Nil