Environmental Approvals for Public Marine Infrastructure

Queensland Coastal Conference
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Tonia Richard and Trevor Carter
1. Burrum Heads boat ramp – A case study
2. A better approach to obtaining dredging approvals
Burrum Heads Boat Ramp
25 years in the making
Burrum Heads – study site
Background

• Burrum Heads was previously serviced by two operational recreational boat ramps

• Both ramps are subject to strong tidal currents, are tidally restricted and lack adjacent car-trailer parking.
25 years in the making

• Community campaigning for a new all-tide boat ramp commenced in the early 90’s.

• Between the 90’s and now, numerous options to upgrade the existing ramps or construct a new facility have been considered.
  - Six site options investigated in detail.
Lions Park

• After a considerable options analysis process, Lions Park was deemed the most appropriate location.

• Lions Park is a popular community asset
  - Council owned community use park
  - Swimming beach
  - Fishing

• Development aimed to minimise impact to Lions Park.
Development constraints

• Great Sandy Marine Park
  ▪ Prohibited development (Marine Parks Act)

• Declared Burrum Fish Habitat Area (FHA)
  ▪ Prohibited development (Fisheries Act)

• Land tenure issues
  ▪ Permitted with relevant boundary amendments and tenure change (Land Act)

• Tidal works, reclamation of land under tidal waters, removal of marine plants
  ▪ Permitted with relevant permits (Sustainable Planning Act, Fisheries Act)

• High risk flora survey trigger area
  ▪ Permitted with relevant permits (Nature Conservation Act).
Approval process - revocation

Application to revoke an area of Marine Park and FHA

- Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR) prepared Terms of Reference (ToR)
- TMR responded to ToR with a Revocation Support Study (RSS)
- NPSR Minister assessed RSS
- NPSR Minister prepared a notice of motion to the Legislative Assembly requesting support for the revocation
- Notice of motion sat with Legislative Assembly for 28 days then was debated in Parliament
- NPSR Minister approved legislative amendment
- Executive Council (Cabinet Ministers) and Governor in Council approved amendment to the Regulations and Zoning Plan.
Specialist studies

Marine Ecological Assessment

- NPSR required detailed marine habitat mapping
- Demonstrate that revocation would not cause impact:
  - Marine flora and fauna
  - Recreational and commercial fisheries
  - Economic values
  - Social and cultural values.
Revocation area
Approval process – *Land Act 1994*

Land tenure
Approval process – *Sustainable Planning Act 2009, Fisheries Act 1994*

Development Approval (DA) was required

- Tidal works
- Reclamation of land under tidal water
- Removal of marine plants
Approval process – *Nature Conservation Act 1992*

- Site is located within a ‘blue circle’ high risk area for protected plants.

- Flora survey was completed between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2014, therefore transitional provisions applied.

- Although flora survey didn’t strictly meet guideline, it was deemed to be valid and compliant with the purposes of the protected plants legislative framework.
Compensation/offsets

• A condition of the revocation of 2.2ha of Marine Park and FHA was that a ‘compensation’ payment of $103,020 be paid for the loss of area
  ▪ TMR sought to ensure that funds would be used for local conservation purposes

• The removal of 1,783m$^2$ of marine plants required a Financial Settlement offset of $26,745
25 years in the making

- The longest approval process and overall construction cost ($5 million total) of any project funded through the state government Marine Infrastructure Fund (MIF)
- Provided the local community with an all-tide and all-weather boat ramp, with adjacent car-trailer park
- Restored adjacent swimming/recreational beaches
- Resolved issue with polluted stormwater
- Refurbishment and relocation of the outrigger canoe compound
- Widely accepted and popular boating facility opened to the community of Burrum Heads on 14 October 2016.
First boat launched
New outrigger compound
A better approach to obtaining dredging approvals
Navigation needs for recreational boating

- Typical channel depths are 2 to 3 metres below Low Water
- Quantities relatively small (5,000 to 50,000 cubic metres)
- Despite small projects, approval issues can be just as complex as for larger projects.

But it needn’t be this way
Partial channel approval
Complete channel approval
Flexibility in channel locations

- Channels naturally meander
- Approved channel locations may not represent the best water for navigation
- Can result in need for extra dredging or for amended approvals
- Solution is to seek a wider footprint for varying channel locations to ensure channel is in deepest water
- Dimensions of channel are fixed, but plan location is variable.
Variable channel location

Furthermost extent of 20m wide channel. Future channel alignment to be within these limits.
Separate dredging and disposal approvals

Dredge site approval

- Provides flexibility in deposition sites and sand sources for ongoing dredging and beach nourishment approvals.
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