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**CORONET BAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

 **BEACH END OF NORSEMENS ROAD**

**SUBMISSION TO BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL**

**BY CORONET BAY COMBINED COMMUNITY GROUP**

**MARCH 2011**

**CORONET BAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

 **BEACH END OF NORSEMENS ROAD**

**Objectives**

**Short term :** Endorsement by Council of the beach end of Norsemens Road area as a low key passive recreation area.

**Longer term :** Endorsement by Councilof the beach end of Norsemens Road area as an activity precinct subject to the Open Spaces Strategy.

**Funding**

**Capital:** Federal, State, Community and philanthropic grants

**Operation and Maintenance:** Bass Coast Shire Council

**Introduction**

The challenge we have is to provide facilities within a peaceful, natural and beautiful haven without damaging its character. We must provide facilities in a sustainable manner; one that maintains the character of this area.

For some time now there have been community requests for improved facilities at the beach end of Norsemens Road in Coronet Bay. Consequently two community forums were held attended by fifty people to ascertain community needs for this area. These forums were followed by a survey of residents who ratified the results of the forum.

The forums were attended by and surveys completed by average people from the community and included only a few committee people.

The suggested improvements are in the character of the area in that they are rustic and blend in with the natural habitat. They are detailed in this plan and a map showing locations is attached.

**The Site**

Norsemens Road starts at Agar Road and finishes as a dead end close to the beach on the North side of Coronet Bay (see photographs 1 and 2 attached). A pathway to the beach intersects with the walking track that runs between Coronet Bay and Corinella (see photographs 3 and 4 attached). We are talking here of a place that is tranquil and natural, bounded by Banksias, reeds and wet land foliage (see photographs 5 and 6 attached). However this haven attracts a significant number of people, often families, to use the beach and to walk in peace with nature. Consequently the location we are discussing here, at the beach end of the road caters for a range of people:

1. those driving from Corinella, Tenby Point and Grantville to use this quiet beach
2. residents from the Northern and Eastern sectors of Coronet Bay who either walk or drive along Norsemens Road to the beach or to the walking track
3. numerous groups that use the walking track for recreation and health purposes. These include residents of Coronet Bay and Corinella plus walking groups from outside the area. There are also a significant number of young mothers who walk with prams along the walking track
4. horse trainers from various locations who drive to the beach in order to train race horses and ponies. There are also recreational horse riders that come to this location.

There have been numerous requests from these groups for toilets to be provided in the area, as well as improved access to the beach, barbecue facilities etc. Consequently the Coronet Bay Combined Community group (CBCCG) decided to prepare a plan for the area that incorporates community needs in an environmentally sustainable way and in concert with the strategies and policies of the Bass Coast Shire Council.

**Research Method**

Two methods were used to gather data from the community for improvements at the end of Norsemens Road:

1. Two sets of focus groups
2. Survey
3. **Focus Groups**

Focus groups were used to create an environment where people could discuss in depth and develop innovative ideas through personal interaction. Focus groups comprised approximately six people sitting around tables with each table having a chairperson. There was one open ended question asked of the groups – ‘What improvements would you like to see at the beach end of Norsemens Road.’

1. One set of focus groups was held in the form of a general Community Forum which had 41 people attending and was led by two coordinators. The attendees came from a wide range of backgrounds with the majority being average residents who are not members of community committees; they were simply local people who are interested in the welfare of the township. This was a particularly pleasing aspect.

Some of the attendees came from beyond Coronet Bay and are users of the beach and track.

There was a spread of age groups although the majority were aged fifty years and above. The gender split was approximately two thirds male and one third female.

After a designated time each focus group reported their suggestions which were then discussed in open forum. The results were recorded in writing by the coordinators on a large sheet of paper that was visible to all members of the forum.

1. The second focus group comprised young mothers who have a significant stake in this project as many use that area with their children and would benefit greatly from improved facilities.

The make up of this group addressed any imbalance between ages and gender that were experienced in the first forum.

The group comprised ten mothers who expressed their opinions in one group discussion that was led by a coordinator. This differed slightly from the earlier forum where there were approximately six people per group.

Suggested improvements from this forum were consistent with those from the general forum except that there was a stronger focus on facilities for children.

1. **Survey**

Further community input was achieved through an email survey to fifty members of the Coronet Bay Residents and Ratepayers Association (CBRRA). The survey sought community views on the results from the focus groups.

The survey sought opinions from the respondent of the list of suggestions from the forums, particularly any concerns they may have, and requested any further suggestions.

There were twelve responses to the survey which is an acceptable response rate of 24%. The responses unanimously endorsed the suggested improvements from the forums with only one concern relating to the construction of the toilets. There were no further suggestions to those developed in the forums.

**Suggested Improvements**

The forums and survey developed the following suggested improvements.

1. **Health and Hygiene**

Toilets

Shower and tap water

Improved rubbish removal

1. **Community Spirit and Emotional Health**

Barbecue, Shelter and additional Picnic Tables

Bird Hide and Interpretive Signage, (wildlife explanation)

Landscaping, revegetation, weed and rabbit eradication

Improved beach access – wider path with board walk

Children’s Play Area and Bicycle Rack

1. **Infrastructure**

Pathway around existing retarding basin with board walks linking tracks and islands

Provide bollards to block the road at the pumping station

Appropriate Fencing

Re zone the area from the pumping station to the beach entrance from a public road to a Council Reserve

Appropriate lighting

D**iscussion**

1. **Health and Hygiene**

**Toilets and showers/taps**

The focus here is on the Municipal Public Health Plan 2005-2008 (commonly referred to as Health and Wellbeing) (H&W), where it is cited that *‘health is physical, emotional and mental well being, in addition to living in a healthy environment.’*

Here the community plan aims to solve a health issue through the provision of toilets with disability access. Toilets are also in keeping with the Open Space Strategy.

There have been complaints received regarding the use of the natural habitat by people for toileting. Toilet paper and faeces are found amongst the Banksia trees creating an obvious health hazard.

Sometimes it is children who are in need of a toilet and are subject to stress through using the natural woodland. Further to this it sends wrong signals to the children on use of public land for toileting and does not prepare them well for their future adulthood.

In keeping with this is the need for washing after using toilets or prior to eating.

1. **Community Spirit and Emotional Health**

In keeping with Health and Well Being this section is concerned with emotional and mental well being but also with the need to maintain and safeguard the natural environment. Here the plan is consistent with the Open Space Strategy. The philosophy underpinning this development will be in keeping with a nature reserve possibly adopting a name that reflects such a notion.

Barbecue, Rotunda and Picnic Tables that are rustic and natural that blend in with the environment will provide a setting for the community to come together in a convivial way.

A bird hide will also provide a means for either groups or individuals to peacefully undertake an activity in keeping with nature. Interpretive signs will add to the enjoyment of this activity.

Landscaping, revegetation, weed and rabbit eradication is focused on maintaining and improving the natural environment. This is not aimed at formal landscaping but improving the natural flora and hence, fauna.

Improved beach access, in accord with the Open Space Strategy, will provide parents with prams and the disabled in wheelchairs with access to the beach which at this stage is denied to them.

A children’s play area will enable parents to come together with their children in a quieter, more peaceful setting as distinct to those in locations with higher activity.

1. **Infrastructure**

A walking track with boardwalks linking tracks and islands, in accord with the Open Space Strategy will provide a peaceful and tranquil pathway for walkers, parents with prams and disabled access. Gates will limit access by cyclists and motorised vehicles, limiting disruption to the native birdlife.

Lighting is required for the general safety of the community and are consistent with the need for risk management as outlined in the Recreational Plan.

**Location of Improvements**

Attached is a map of the suggested locations and central to this layout is that the end of Norsemens Road be designated as a Council Reserve.

Cost is one of the underlying reasons for this location. Siting the Barbecue and Shelter close to power facilities will obviously reduce cost and by positioning toilets close to the pumping station there will be a reduction in plumbing cost.

**Installation Schedule**

The situation at the moment is that the end of Norsemens Road is a road reserve and as such is not appropriate for recreational activities. To provide such things as Barbecues there would need to be a rezoning of the land to a Recreational Reserve.

Consequently installation of the plan must be done in stages starting with those things we can do prior to rezoning the land.

The following page outlines the suggested installation stages.

**INSTALLATION SCHEDULE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1) SHORT TERM PLAN**  | **DESCRIPTION** | **PROPOSED FUNDING SOURCES** |
|  | Toilets, shower and tap water | Bass Coast Shire Council, Grant(s) e.g DSE, Caring for Country, elsewhere |
|  | Improved access to beach – timber edged compacted gravel path .Seat bench | Grants in conjunction with Corinella Foreshore Committee |
|  | Walking track around retarding basin with board walk linking tracks and islands, gates and fencing | Bass Coast Shire CouncilBCSC slashing/mowing 3 – 4 times annually |
|  | Bird hide and interpretive signage near/around lake | Melbourne Water |
|  | Revegetation, weed and rabbit eradication | Grant funding |
|  |  |  |
| **2. LONG TERM PLAN** |  |  |
|  | Rezoning to a Council Reserve | Bass Coast Shire Council |
|  | BBQ, rustic rotunda and rustic picnic tables. Appropriate lighting | Grant funding plus community contribution |
|  | Improved rubbish collection | Bass Coast Shire Council |
|  | Children’s play area  | Grant funding plus community contribution |

**Recommendation:**

**That Council endorses the Coronet Bay Community short and longer terms plans for the area at the beach end of Norsemens Road, Coronet Bay.**