

Hello Coronet Bay community,

The Coronet Bay Ratepayers and Residents Association (CBRRA), is conducting a community-wide survey on the proposed Coronet Bay Wetlands Project at the beach end of Norsemens Road.

According to the attached proposal, in 2011 this project was supported by the CBRRA following a community forum attended by 41 people, a focus group of 10 young mothers and a survey to 50 members which returned 12 responses.

After recent consultation with the Council, the Project is on-hold awaiting a more up-to-date response from the community through this survey.

I request that you please participate in this survey as we need a well-informed, broad consensus of opinion to formulate a response to the Bass Coast Shire Council.

Survey ends midnight, Monday 15th June, 2020.

SURVEY: <https://forms.gle/enAQ8cwPTWjPfGGJ8>

Attached is a copy of the 2011 proposal to Bass Coast Shire Council, who supported the proposal in 2015 and confirmed with a budget allocation of \$50,000 this financial year for design and associated investigations only, of Phase 1 of the project.

The current scope of the Phase 1 proposal, provides for:

1. A shared pathway around the existing retarding basin (pond), with three seats
2. Appropriate fencing
3. A bird-hide with interpretive signage (wildlife explanation)
4. Landscaping, revegetation, weed and rabbit eradication.

All other infrastructure and rezoning mentioned in the proposal, are not considered in this stage of the development.

1. Works undertaken to date

- Identified preferred path alignment with Coronet Bay Ratepayers and Resident Association (previous committee)
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan (consultant)
- Feature Level Survey (internal council staff)
- Detailed design drawings (internal council staff).

The total cost of above works was \$22,463 (Project Budget \$50,000)

2. Further works required

- Detail Design Drafting based on the current draft design
- Licensed Survey Plan as Melbourne Water Permit requirement
- Environmental Report as Melbourne Water Permit requirement
- Flora and Fauna Report as Melbourne Water Permit requirement
- Planning Permit (Exemption may apply?).

The forecast further additional budget required to complete the further works is estimated to be \$27,600.

These costs are for preliminary planning and permits only. No money has been allocated for commencing this project or any future construction.

Given the time that has passed since the original proposal in 2011 and support from Council in 2015, plus the growing membership to the CBRRA, it is timely to revisit this proposal with our members and the wider Coronet Bay community.

I would like to put forward an alternative point-of-view for consideration.

With shifting public attitude towards environmental conservation, could the proposed Wetlands Project cause more environmental damage than providing personal or community benefit?

After the loss of wildlife and habitat during the widespread bushfires earlier this year, along with the loss of habitat in Coronet Bay and Corinella due to housing development, public opinion may be shifting from this type of environmental interference in favour of environmental protection.

Is it necessary to add a walking track, with seating and fencing, along the eastern and northern boundaries of the pond?

Along the western side of the pond, leading all the way to Corinella, is a compacted gravel walking/cycling track, meandering through a beautiful natural habitat of flora and fauna, with views of Western Port Bay. When this proposal was first put to Council, this current track was an unsealed more rudimentary dirt track, not as accessible as it is today. Do we need additional walking track around the pond?

Will additional access and visitation to the pond be more of a disturbance and interference to the birds and other wildlife, including a good number of wombats? Do we really need to have human access into this wildlife habitat?

One suggestion is to amend the Phase 1 proposal of the Wetlands Project to retain the bird-hide, interpretive signage and revegetation, but forgo the walking track with seating and fencing. This would be less invasive and disruptive to the wildlife and habitat.

Alternatively, could we just leave well enough alone. Questions have been raised as to the real benefits of a bird-hide? The majority of birdlife at the pond are not present during the day. Those that remain, take flight at the slightest sight/noise of humans. Will a bird-hide be novel at first and then become rarely used and possibly fall prey to vandalism and damage? Who will be responsible for the maintenance? How many people will really use it and how often?

According to the proposal, money to complete the construction will be sought from Federal, State, Local Council, Community and Philanthropic grants. With the economic hit the country is taking due to COVID-19, what are the realistic chances of receiving any such funding?

We ask you to please weigh-up the perceived benefits of the Project against the real environmental interference.

I provide this information as an update, in order that the Coronet Bay Ratepayers and Residents members and wider Coronet Bay community can provide the Bass Coast Shire Council with our decision on whether to:

1. Continue the project as is
2. Amend the scope of the project, or
3. Cease the project altogether.

The final decision remains with you and your preference. Please read the Proposal document attached to familiarise yourself and then please kindly answer this quick survey. <https://forms.gle/enAQ8cwPTWjPfGGJ8>

You can only answer one survey per email address. If you require a separate survey for additional Ratepayers or Residents, please email me (president@coronetbayrra.org.au) with the relevant email address and I will email a separate survey invitation.

Surveys will also be made available via a letterbox drop to all Coronet Bay community ratepayers and residents who are not on our CBRRA email list.

We require your email and Coronet Bay address details to qualify you for this survey. Email and address details are private and confidential and will not be included in the survey results. Email and address details will not be shared in any way with anyone.

The results of the survey will be presented to you and to the Bass Coast Shire Council.

The committee of the Coronet Bay Ratepayers and Residents Association look forward to your valued participation.

Survey ends midnight, Monday 15th June, 2020.

Regards
Chris Petrie
President – CBRRA