

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of seven minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on **11 August 2020**

Name	Subject/Comments
Public Forum – 9.30am	
Harry Watson-Smith	QON20/006 Future of the Batemans Bay Clyde Street Boat Ramp

My name is Harry Watson Smith from Malua Bay and I speak on behalf of the Batemans Bay Boaters Association Inc on the **Agenda item QON20/006 Future of the Batemans Bay Clyde Street Boat Ramp.**

Firstly I would like to thank Counsellor Anthony Mayne for raising these four important questions and secondly for taking the time to meet the boaters and fishers representatives on-site at the boatramp to assess the situation for himself and not be influenced by the type of response you see before you in Council's reply.

I want to ask three questions:

1. Can we trust anything that Council writes, reports or states?
2. What is the reality and facts regarding the foreshore?
3. What can you Councillors do about stopping the closure of the boat ramp?

In the Boaters submission to the Draft Plan which is available on the web and Facebook we questioned the process, the so-called survey, the justifications used and then highlighted six instances where Council has categorically, and clearly stated that the Clyde Street boat ramp will be retained and furthermore that Council would lobby to see this happens.

1. Can we trust anything that Council writes, reports or states?

The fishers and boaters sat on the Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee and acknowledged (along with the Mayor, Director Sharpe and the GM) the Transport for NSW plans that showed the retention and reconfiguration of the two boat ramps west of the new bridge. We were not happy because the proposal did not meet the boat ramp standards but we, like many others, took them at their word.

We wrote a comprehensive report "A Game Changer for the Bay CBD" highlighting how the waterfront could be activated through inter alia installing floating pontoons adjacent to the CBD. That has been widely distributed in Council and further afield.

We also took Council's submission as their position and their word as shown below being extracts from these reports:

Batemans Bay Bridge Replacement Review of Environmental Factors Submissions Report - Roads and Maritime Services | May 2018

Page 20 "The southern foreshore boat ramp would be retained. Other facilities such as picnic tables and fish cleaning tables would be retained or replaced.

Council's Draft Submission to Roads and Maritime Services Environmental Assessment Concept Design for the Proposed Batemans Bay Bridge December 2017

Page 22 "Council wishes to retain the local boat ramp on the southern side of the Clyde River as it provides an important access point to the Clyde River."

Batemans Bay project Urban Design and Landscape Plan 12 August 2019

Page 101 "Retain the existing boat ramp and the heritage punt"

Submission to Transport for NSW Proposed Foreshore Plans Batemans Bay Bridge Prepared in consultation with Council 12 July 2019

Council acknowledges the **inclusion** of the existing boat ramp facilities in Clyde Street west and Old Punt Road consistent with Council's previous submissions on the Batemans Bay bridge.

The ramp and all features should be restored to Council's satisfaction following the works.

Eurobodalla Shire own web site

While plans were being finalised for the new bridge we advocated to the NSW Government and they have agreed to:

- retain the ramp and boat parking on the southern side of the Clyde River
- provide a ramp with a modest increase in boat parking on the northern side of the Clyde River

Batemans Bay bridge and related works Letter from Warren Sharpe 20 July 2018

Council has advocated to the NSW Government and Roads & Maritime Services and achieved agreement to the following:

- a) Retention of the ramp and boat parking on the southern side of the Clyde River

So what has changed you may ask?

We now see that this project team has, over the last 12 or so months, consulted widely and decided that **pedestrian access** is more important than a boat ramp, and more importantly, they can change the stated position of Council.

So who can we trust - this project team and an out-of-town consultant, or Council's endorsed and published position.

This had become a matter of **truth and trust** not only in Council but in you the Counsellors.

2. So what is the reality and facts?

I will not attempt to show that the response data or process is incorrect or flawed but I will use Council's own data to highlight the importance of water based activities to visitors to the Bay. These come from Eurobodalla Shire Council Visitor Research 2018 Prepared by: Micromex Research Date: March 20, 2018

92% of visitors experienced water based activities with 32% going fishing invariably on a boat while an additional 38% to 18% went boating or kayaking and on-average 8% hired a vessel.

You can see I can also use data to highlight the importance of water-based activities and the important asset a boat ramp plays in bringing visitors and money into the bay.

But let take the statements in the response we have before us here today:

*The boat ramp was seen **by some** as creating a barrier to an otherwise strong, attractive, safe and activated waterfront. and*

*The Plan recommends the removal of the Clyde Street boat ramp and trailer parking to **prioritise pedestrians** by*

Providing a continuous, safe, attractive pedestrian access along the foreshore linking Smoke Point to Beach road..

So, we want to prioritise pedestrians walking along the foreshore from the oyster farmers wharf right down to Beach Road on some board walk. But what do we actually have - two dilapidated structures right in the way of this so called sweeping vista of the water land interface.

The first is the 50 years old timber structure called the Innes Boat Shed which a former minister for Crown Lands in 2009 let a contract to demolish and redevelop into a swish information centre. There is no mention of this recommendation in the Draft Plan.

And the second is the equally dilapidated concrete T-wharf which was written into the John Holland Bridge contract to be removed and redevelopment with floating pontoons. And this, as you all well remember, was supported and promoted by the current Minister for Transport Andrew Constance.

And here again the Plan and this response makes no mention of this statement of fact.

So who can we trust with the truth - the project teams Draft Plan and response or the actual facts, statements and reality we all know?

3. What can you Councillors do about stopping the closure of the boat ramp?

Firstly, you can, behind closed doors, insist that the Draft Plan be changed and revised to include the retaining of the Clyde Street Boat Ramp, plus expanding the fishing platform and the installation of floating pontoons along the shore of the CBD.

Secondly, have this amended plan put out for comment along with all the submissions made to the first draft.

Thirdly come out in support of retaining the boat ramp like four Councillor have done recently, including the Mayor Liz Innes and Jack Tait. We welcome these statements and commitments. I trust more Counsellors will do the same.

Thank you. I and the Fishers representatives are more than happy to meet any one of you at the boat ramp to discuss the details and to update you on the actual facts. And our vision of an activated Batemans Bay foreshore and waterfront.