

World Heritage Shute Harbour

Marina Proposal Background

**THE SAVE OUR FORESHORE ORGANISATION IS TOTALLY OPPOSED
TO WHAT IT SEES AS NOTHING MORE THAN YET ANOTHER PUBLIC
WATERFRONT LAND GRAB FOR HIGH END RESIDENCES –
USING A MARINA AS ITS JUSTIFICATION.**

DESCRIPTION

4 x 5 Storey Buildings

115 x 3 storey, high density residential dwellings – on approx 380m2 allotments –

733 Marina Berths – one of the largest marinas in Australia

n.b.

(The developer has announced recently that this could be reduced to around 630)

The project is regularly changing but the differences are minor in the overall Plan!

Top end foreshore holiday accommodation
and high density foreshore residential development.

With possibly the largest marina in Queensland,
designed for big top end boats, tacked on.

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All information in this handout provided by
SHUTEHAVEN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

LOCATION

Shute Harbour is one of Australia's most beautiful and unspoiled natural environments. It is surrounded by Great Barrier Reef Islands and mainland National Park. If this development on our public foreshore is approved, many thousands of locals and visitors will lose an irreplaceable environmental and scenic treasure, primarily so a few hundred odd individuals can enjoy waterfront dwellings.

- 🌀 It is all on Public Land
- 🌀 It covers approx. 52ha (127 Acres) 2 and 1/3 times the size of Abel Pt Marina
- 🌀 It is World Heritage area
- 🌀 It is a Marine Protected Area
- 🌀 Within 500 metres of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- 🌀 It is likely to fall within the GBR Coastal Marine Park
- 🌀 It is on the National Heritage List
- 🌀 Surrounded by Conway National Park
- 🌀 Includes State Significant Biodiverse Land

IT IS LOCATED WITHIN WHAT IS OPENLY REGARDED AS AN ICONIC SITE

(even the developers-Port Binnli - have identified it as such in their marketing material).

THE WHITSUNDAYS – THE FACTS

Tourism is our main Industry.

Numerous studies over the years show repeatedly that all our five top strengths relate to:

- The environment
- The marine park
- The relaxed casual atmosphere
- The natural beauty

In the Regional update 28% of people surveyed felt the area was already too commercialized and overdeveloped.

The Whitsunday Destination Management Plan 2004 prepared by Tourism Queensland highlights

- “The chief competitive strengths of the Whitsundays in the domestic environment are identified as the pristine natural attractions of the reef and islands and the friendly accessible sailing/cruising waters.”

The Regional Plan also identified the key issue for the Whitsundays as

- “managing sustainable tourism and monitoring the social, economic and ecological impacts of localised growth in the region.”

So where do we end up with all this information and data –

- Our niche is - OUR ENVIRONMENT
- Our culture is - OUR ENVIRONMENT
- Our future in tourism and business relies on - OUR ENVIRONMENT

WARNING SIGNS

At the recent Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Forum from which the State of the Park Report will be issued to the Federal Government the single biggest Issue facing the long term health and viability of the park is COASTAL DEVELOPMENT!

There is already plenty of evidence we are exceeding our limit!

NEED FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT?

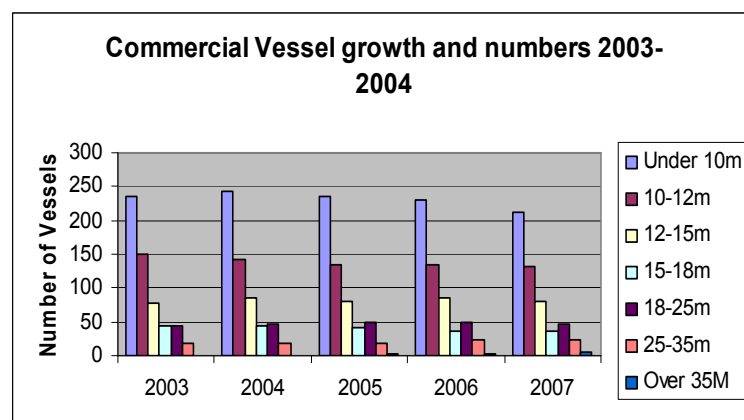
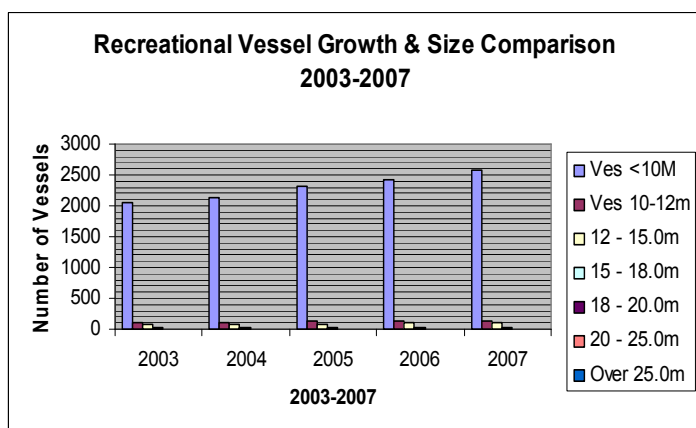
If the Proposed Shute Harbour high density resort, residential and marina development is to go ahead the developer must first prove NEED–

MARINA BERTHS -NO NEED

The argument that this development is needed is based on increasing Boat Registrations in this region. Some Government Agencies say it, the Developers have said it many times - it was stated as the main reason in the last EIS for the proposed development and the outcome of the Shute Harbour Study refers to it.

But just what are the facts:-

The following is a chart taken from the figures supplied by the Department of Transport Statistics area. It demonstrates the makeup and growth in Vessel Registrations for the Whitsundays.



It is clear the dominant numbers and growth are in the under 10metre recreational range.

The facts –

- 90% of vessels registered are under 10 metres (i.e. they're not marina boats)
 - 89% of vessels are trailerable
 - The proposed marina predominantly targeting only 8.5% of vessels registered
- And they are already catered for in existing infrastructure

The 2001 Whitsunday Marina Demand Analysis has always been quoted as the groundwork for establishing need.

This study sets out projected need through to 2015 at a figure of 1300 vessels (not necessarily housed in marinas).

As at 2007 we have the capacity now for 1457 marina berths just in the Whitsundays. This is without including moorings - there are over 400 in Shute Harbour alone not to mention those at Airlie, Abel Point or Mandalay.

Not everyone wants or can afford to have their vessel in a marina – there is clearly a place for moorings.

We are well catered for in terms of Marina Berth through to 2015 and beyond.

Marina berths and moorings currently:

Between Mackay and Bowen approved or in place

- 2771 Marina Berths
- The addition of Shute Harbour would take this to 3504
- 406 moorings in Shute Harbour
- Approx another 800 throughout just the Whitsunday area

Bowen has just had a 600 berth marina approved and this has spread the supply from the top to the bottom of the Whitsundays.

Maintaining a balance of options for boat storage;

ie. retaining moorings will ensure access to the Marine Park for all users and not just those who can afford to be in a Marina.

The Mackay Whitsunday Regional Tourism Investment and Infrastructure Plan has examined visitor demand projections for the year 2016 and considered them against the number of rooms projected to be available in that year.

This Plan states the total rooms available by 2016 will amount to 7,480.

Therefore based on TQ/TW data,

- by 2016 the annual room-nights available in the Whitsundays will be 2,730,200
- projected annual room nights will ONLY BE 1,911,255.

Therefore if all development approved and planned as at 2005 goes ahead

- there will be an oversupply of accommodation to the tune of a whopping 818,945 room-nights!

The Plan goes on to say

- a further 74,300 visitors would be required, beyond those forecast, in 2016 to achieve a 70% average annual occupancy levels in all commercial accommodation.

These figures are based on development approvals as at 2005.

While it is unlikely that the forecasts re room nights *required* will have increased, given no appreciable movement upward in the market, it is, however, quite likely that since 2005 significantly more planned accommodation (and hence room nights) has been added to those included in the figures above.

This would suggest the likelihood of an even greater oversupply of room-nights by 2016 than the 818,945 estimated.

OVER DEVELOPMENT – NO NEED

It is clear, based on the estimated forecast demand of the experts that we are at a real risk of

- over development in visitor accommodation
- over supply of visitor accommodation
- falling profits to invested capital ratio
- falling occupancy rates

Therefore, even in the context of accommodation, there is simply no need for this multi-storey development and resort hotel at Shute Harbour.

EMPLOYMENT – NO NEED

🌀 Jobs

- Construction phase – builders just aren't sitting around waiting for work
- Add ons – accommodation. The growing trend is for this to be supplied in house – that is large development groups are securing their own properties and providing accommodation

🌀 Post construction –

- 🌀 Resort and Marina facility staff - insignificant in number and housing affordability is affecting staff availability anyhow
- 🌀 Super Yacht facilities– there are numerous Super Yacht facilities from Cairns to Brisbane and there is no need to duplicate facilities already existing in Airlie Beach at Meridian and furthermore there are major issues for super yachts accessing this marina in terms of both draft and conflict with other users. The real value in this market is the refit market and remote locations are not generally chosen for this purpose. A bit of provisioning and short term visitation or even long term storage could not justify the provision of the major infrastructure needed.

The community benefit identified is the promise of a \$2-\$2.5M contribution to boat launching and trailer parking facilities.

There's no arguing the single most essential need identified as part of the Shute Harbour Study has been Boat Launching and Trailer parking facilities.

However recently State Government announced the handing out of \$15M to the Central Queensland region for recreational boating infrastructure and upgrades yet none of this has been earmarked for Shute Harbour or any part of the Whitsundays.

Why –

The handing over of 51 ha of WHA public foreshore land would seem to be a high price for any community to pay in return for a \$2m contribution to recreational facilities just to save Government sharing this allocation.

An example of funding within our region;
\$2m is what has been allocated to Sarina alone.

SHUTE HARBOUR PLANNING STUDY

The clear outcome from this was -

- Leave Shute Harbour Alone
- No Need for a Marina
- The environment was the most important attribute and should be preserved

WHAT THE COMMUNITY WILL LOSE

Amenity

- 51 ha of Public Land and waterway
- World Heritage Area
- View Corridors to Palm Bay
- Appeal of Shute Harbour as a low key transit area surrounded by outstanding environmental attributes
- Moorings
- Conflict with existing users and potential loss of essential services
- Access to natural foreshore
- Traffic issues
- Possible enforced use of harbour's southern entrance for recreational vessels or some other variation on access to make way for a private development

- Mangroves & fish habitat and reef systems are fragile
- Coastal development is affecting the environment
- GBRMPA say the marine park upon which we are dependent cannot sustain an increase in numbers
- OUCH says the park cannot sustain additional numbers
- Global warming will impact on our coastlines, marinas and low lying dwellings will be vulnerable
- 650 extra big boats will negatively affect the whole park
- Potential affect of Acid Sulphate contaminated soils
- Single biggest issue being identified by GBRMP in its 5 year State of the Park report to Federal Government
- GBRMPA are open about their inability to manage the park with the level of use already occurring
- Threatened Species and Communities
- Listed Migratory Species

Economic

- Ongoing Dredging precedent – There is increasing evidence of communities and councils having to bear the cost associated with this. In Cairns a waterfront community is endeavouring to have Council pay to maintain their waterfront ie. ongoing dredging. This argument is being made on the basis that the waterfront location and development was approved by Council and hence if it could not be maintained as such naturally Council had a duty of care to either not approve the development or maintain the waterfront.
- Raby Bay marina, we believe, is having similar issues in maintaining access because of silting and there are issues surrounding who is responsible for the ongoing cost of same.

Following is an excerpt from Bay Journal Sat Feb 17 2007. Alongside this was a photograph of the plume.

“The mud plume from the dredged waste of the Raby Bay development dumped only a nautical mile off Cleveland Point during construction caused damage to the seagrass beds of the southern Bay. Canal estate owners have been contributing to a fund that offsets the cost of dredging out the canals when they get too shallow. However, the cost has increased sharply for the owners because the EPA has ruled that material has to be shipped to Mud Island to prevent a recurrence of the damage.”

It is these types of issues that are becoming more common which should alert us to problems for the future. A couple of startling differences though which make it more alarming is Shute Harbour is more vulnerable to these problems for a number of reasons:

It is more shallow

It is more open to the prevailing winds

It has a greater fetch

It has a more sensitive environment adjacent to the GBRMP

Tourism

- Gateway no matter how you arrive or pass through the mainland the introduction will be passing a construction site
- Increasing rents
- Loss of appeal due to over development (already evidenced)
- Loss of ability to compete
- Backpacker price rates are already dropping – there has been a decrease in available beds by 35% due to economic forces yet occupancy rates for remaining business are not increasing

We as a community are also facing pressures socially
Police are stretched to the limit and the community are openly concerned
with the increasingly violent atmosphere of the Town
Roads and traffic problems and at an all time high
Our medical system is stretched to breaking

HISTORY

How did we end up with this Massive Public land handout ? –

What are the facts -

- No Most Appropriate use Study ever carried out
- No public competition
- Areas of roadway and reserve included without the required gazettal
- Size has grown from 24.3 ha to 33.4 ha and has the potential to go to 51ha
- Term has been backdated – to commence from an earlier expired lease

**In summary what we have is a lease that was created over our public land/waterway
without any consideration to what the most appropriate use would be;**

- with meager investment by the Lessee
- A project site which has grown in size by 38% and incorporated more public land
- handed over without any of the normal protections of public interest as to most appropriate use and potential competition
- Backdated: – some suggest this is possibly to avoid Native Title implications.
- Without consideration we believe to World Heritage Values.

This project has been declared a State Significant Project requiring an EIS.

State Significant legislation was introduced to facilitate State infrastructure projects. It is now being used for private tourism and residential developments.

The potential outcome of the legislation is that it can ultimately put all the decision making into the hands of the State Government/Coordinator General..

Compliance agencies like EPA and GBRMPA etc become merely advice agencies and even the Federal Government has a bilateral agreement with the state that allows the Coordinator General to make the decision on their behalf.

It is really nothing more than a means of opening the flood gates for public land to be handed over for major private developments under the guise of infrastructure and in this instance includes World Heritage Areas!.

Very soon – in fact right now -

we are all going to have to decide what we want our future to be.

Do we all sacrifice long term quality of life for the short term commercial gains of a few out of town developers?

How do we want this place to be in ten years time.

GREEN COAST or GOLD COAST?

THE WORLD HERITAGE TAG WE SO PROUDLY PROMOTE COMES AT A COST. IT IS PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL TREATY TO PRESERVE THE ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

IT'S OUR CHOICE AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY