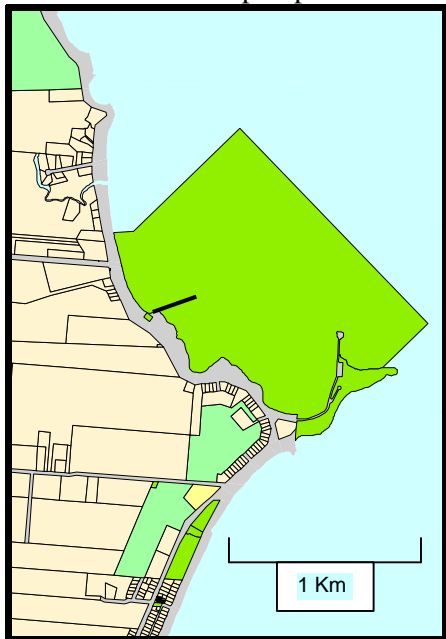


Marina planning process

It is interesting to note that this month the Cairns Post carried an advert by Mission Beach Marine Facilities Joint Board, calling for tenders for "Protective Coating rehabilitation on the public jetty at Clump Point, Mission Beach."

What we really need is a structural survey that will tell us the effective life of the jetty, and the maintenance costs that can be anticipated. Without this the community cannot compare the various proposals including a marina in Boat Bay.

Questions have been raised about the tenure of the area to the north of Clump Point. The area above the high tide mark is Road Reserve. Below high water mark and extending for 500 metres offshore is Queensland Marine Park. And below low water mark is Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. This means the two Marine Parks overlap in places.



Overlaying all this, an area of 144 hectares below the high water mark is Reserve 550 NR7351. It includes the boat ramp and the jetty, and is a Reserve for Local Government Purposes (Boat Harbour). Johnstone Shire Council is the Trustee for the Reserve, while the ownership of the reserve is vested in Department of Natural Resources and Mines (DNR&M).

No development application has been lodged for this reserve yet, but a properly made application would need to have the co-signature of the owner

of the Reserve, DNR&M in this case. DNR&M would check that the development fits the intent for the reserve (boat harbour in this case) and then sign the application. This does not prevent them from taking part in assessing the development and perhaps imposing conditions on it.

The application is then assessed under the Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS), with Johnstone Shire Council as the Assessment Manager.

The Assessment Manager coordinates the referral of the application to all the interested government agencies, and also assesses the application according to the Planning Scheme.

Part E3 of the plan, Section 2.4.4.2.2 relates specifically to the Reserve, and says that any development, other than the replacement of the existing jetty, should be subject to an Environmental Impact Statement. It goes on to list 13 issues that should be addressed by the EIS, including ecological and social and economic issues.

Government agencies involved would include DNR&M, Department of Transport (Harbours), Environmental Protection Agency (Marine Parks), EPA (Beach Protection Authority), Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries) and Environment Australia (EPBC referrals), and possibly others.

Additionally the development would be publicly notifiable, with public submissions received on the EIS. Johnstone Shire could also ask for public submissions on the Terms of Reference for the EIS, so that everyone is happy that all the issues will be addressed.

People can put what they like in their submissions, but the only comments that are relevant relate to issues mentioned in the Planning Scheme and other State and Federal Government legislation and policy documents.

What worries me is that if a marina developer commissions some environmental consultants to write a super glossy EIS addressing all the issues, then the agencies and the Council may well say "OK, go ahead", and the

community's objections on the grounds of natural ecology, lifestyle and visual amenity will be swept aside. This is what happened at Port Hinchinbrook.

The wider issues stemming from Port Hinchinbrook, like the impacts of increased boating on coastal areas, were left to be covered by the Cardwell/Hinchinbrook Regional Coastal Management Plan. This plan was due to be completed by May 1998, but following two abortive attempts, is still yet to be released in draft form for public comment.

Peter Heywood is on the Community Reference Group that is developing the plan, representing Mission Beach Marine Advisory Committee.

There will be a Safe Mooring Meeting at the C4 Theatre on Monday, 8th April at 7.30pm. to discuss the issues. All welcome, or ring C4 (40687197) or Brenda (40687245) or Dave (40688694) to register your interest.

Sewerage Committee meets

Mission Beach Environmental Management Group (MBEMG) has written to both Councils asking that the Sewerage Community Advisory Committee be reconvened, so that the public can be kept informed of developments.

Johnstone Shire Council replied that the matter would be discussed at the JACSJFAC meeting on 20th February, where it decided it would not reconvene the Committee, but it would keep the public informed by regular media releases. MBEMG has not received a reply from JACSJFAC or Cardwell Shire Council.

Since there has been no media release since December, Concerned Citizens decided it was time to reconvene the Committee, and it had its first meeting on 25th March. It was agreed that there was a need for community consultation on such a major issue, and that the intention was not to obstruct, but to offer advice to assist the Councils.

The Committee resolved to write to both Councils asking them to send representatives to future meetings.

□ Dave Kimble