

Clump Point Marina

In my article last December I wrote that the lifetime of the existing jetty at Narragon Beach was nearly over, hence the need to look at replacements.

However it turns out that the State Government funding of \$840,000 was only approved in November 1994, and the project was completed in late 1995. This means the jetty is only 6½ years old. Moreover, local people involved in discussing the design with Department of Transport recall that the jetty's life was intended to be 20 years, not 10 years as claimed.

It is therefore essential that before we waste a lot of time and money on considering replacements for the jetty, the Marine Facilities Joint Board should call in independent qualified marine surveyors to assess the jetty's lifespan and predict maintenance costs.

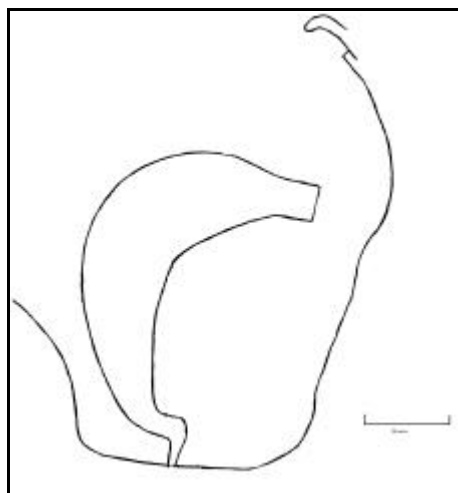
In talking about the Mission Beach Harbours Pty Ltd (MBH) proposal, I wrote that this proposal was costed at \$93 million back in 1994. This figure was not plucked out of the air, but came from a short discussion with MBH Director, Tony Lee, after the Public Meeting. Tony has since told me that this figure is not what he said, and that the cost is more like \$10 to 20 million. I am happy to go along with that figure.

I also wrote that the fee for commercial vessels using the jetty is \$4 per passenger. I should just like to clarify that this \$4 is for the use of both jetties, at Narragon and at Dunk Island spit.

I have gathered together various maps and photographs of the Clump Point area, and these are available on the internet at www.znet.net.au/~dkimble/clumppoint.pdf A hard copy is also available at the library at Wongaling.

The photographs include a panorama of Boat Bay on the lowest tide of 2001, which shows that the bay dries completely and is a mudflat surrounded by about 800 metres of mangroves. The sketch map shows the shape of the bay and the proposed island that will be formed from the excavated material.

The island will have an area of about 3.7 hectares and will be con-



nected to the mainland, close to Eco-Village, by a causeway that allows tidal flushing. My best estimate of the seabed that will be excavated is a further 10 hectares. This means that about 14 hectares of mudflats will be totally destroyed by the construction.

Carefully comparing the MBH site plan with the aerial photo and the computerised cadastral map shows that the coastlines don't quite correspond. This is partly due to the distortion found in all photographs as you move towards the edges, and I think maybe there might be some confusion over the "high tide" mark.

The cadastral map shows Highest Astronomical Tide, but the kinds of mangroves here (mostly *Rhizophora stylosa*) grow below HAT, thus blurring the distinction between land and sea on the aerial photo.

Anyway, it may be that not all the 'sea' in the sketch map will be excavated, and this could lower the 14 hectare figure slightly. However there is clearly going to have to be a compromise decision made between the area of the marina basin and how closely they can excavate to the mangroves without damaging their root systems. If the tide is to flush under the causeway and around the western side of the island then all of that part of the bay will have to be deeply excavated, as well as where the boats will be.

MBH say that they will do the project in as environmentally friendly a way as possible, and I accept that, but the basic premise is that we get a marina but we are going to have to say goodbye to the environment known as Boat Bay, and I wonder

whether the community feels that that is a good trade-off.

The combination of mangroves and mudflats always means an ecosystem rich in crabs and worms, and fishermen tell me that the bay is used by barramundi and mackerel (and humans) to catch shoals of baitfish on a rising tide.

Dugongs are seen in the bay occasionally, and with the implementation of the 'no-trawl zone' (see below) there is every hope of dugongs becoming much more frequent as seagrasses recover. Unfortunately, heavy boat traffic and dugongs don't mix.

There are aboriginal fish traps in the bay and cultural heritage sites nearby that are registered with EPA. North Queensland Land Council, acting for the Djiru People who are the traditional owners of Clump Point, has written to both Shire Councils denying claims that MBH has consulted with Djiru People, and denying the Djiru People favour the proposal.

Half a No Trawl Zone

The new Federal Environment Minister, David Kemp, has done a half-back-flip. After announcing he would accept the recommendation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to close an area off Mission Beach to trawling, he then buckled under pressure from the trawling lobby and reduced the area by half.

The revised area runs from 5 Km off Double Point, outside the Barnards, King Reef, and Dunk to a point 2.7 Km south-east of Hudson Island, the southernmost of the Family group, then west to Tully Heads.

The commercial trawlers have set up an organisation called, ironically, 'Ecofish' to promote their campaign to continue destroying seagrass beds between Tully Heads and Meunga Creek, off Edmund Kennedy NP.

Life is strange - once upon a time greenies were reviled and called 'eco-freaks', but now we have eco-villages, eco-marinas and even eco-trawling, all of which are damaging to the natural eco-system. And in a bizarre twist, some of the loudest voices against the eco-trawlers are the proponents of the eco-marina.

□ Dave Kimble