MORETON ISLAND BEACH ROCK - OPTIONS PAPER - AUGUST 2000

1. Background

What is the issue? The beach rock on the southern ocean coast of Moreton Island is episodically exposed due to the natural erosion of beach sand during storm events. All through these periods and at all but the lowest tide, vehicle traffic is prevented from gaining access to the southern island and the township of Kooringal. In the past few years this situation has been particularly bad and was recently highlighted by the loss of the Brisbane City Councils' garbage truck as it tried to negotiate one section of the beach rock. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the exposure of beach is sporadic - in some years the beach rock is not exposed at all but in other years the exposure may occur several times. Also the depth of exposure varies from minimal exposure with no limitations to beach traffic to deep scouring of the beach sand which results in a continuous stretch of exposed beach rock from just north of section 1 to about 1km north of the southern end of the Rous Battery walking track north (see Map 1), but this situation may only occur once per five years. The normal time period which the eastern beach is inaccessible varies considerably depending on weather patterns but a common period, similar to the present situation, is in the order of a few days up to a month or more.

At present, August 2000, there are four major sections of beach rock exposed (see Map 1.) which to some extent hinder beach traffic and this is considered to be the average problem situation (ie greater exposure is not common). Section 3 is the major problem at present and the last section to be covered in sand during the beach accretion process - it is considered that if this section was made accessible then the times of inaccessibility would be significantly reduced.

Why is it an issue? The island Ambulance and Emergency Services vehicles, the Brisbane City Council garbage truck and the proprietor of the Kooringal store (who now has to truck his supplies via this route as the Moreton Venture no longer runs a regular barge service due hazardous navigation conditions in the area) must use this access route and are severely limited or prevented at most times. This is a real problem for emergency services.

Currently vehicles are being illegally driven around the problem areas through the beach fore dunes (see Photo 1 and 2). This activity is causing disturbance to Midden sites which are dotted along the fore dunes of the eastern beach (Photo 5) - it is imperative to the sensitive management of this National Park that all evidence of Aboriginal occupation and tradition is preserved as far as possible. It is also causing major environmental damage leading to severe erosion and a new potential weed site and is an issue of public safety.

The potential for acid sulfate release due to mechanical disturbance of the beach rock was discussed with the appropriate staff of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The following assessment with respect to the formation of beach rock and its' potential for acid sulfate release was provided by the Senior Dune Conservationist of the Beach Protection Authority (BPA).

'This type of beach rock would be described as a humus B (Bh) horizon in a hydromorphic humus podzol. It essentially forms deep in the soil profile at about the level of the water table by the coprecipitation in the B horizon between organic rich "black" surface water and aluminium from the deeper "white" groundwater. It is characterised by accumulated humus, low iron content, lateral uniformity in appearance and frequent hard cementation. Discrete forms of organic matter are not an integral component of this coffee rock due to its mode of formation, although root residue or remnant material from subsequent vegetation colonisation of wind eroded and deflated surfaces can be present. Generally the giant podzol profile (10m+) can be observed above the coffee rock and iron concretions and staining will be noted

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well above the coffee rock. Previous analyses of this type of coffee rock has shown only minute amounts of iron in the order of <0.005 to 0.08%. I would doubt that there is much risk of environmental problems caused by the release of sulfuric acid'.

In addition comments from the Principal Environmental Officer - Environmental Operations (EPA) suggests that small scale (less than a few cubic metres) disturbance of pyritic beach rock would not cause any significant environmental harm and that the tidal exchange would provide more than adequate dilution of the acid sulfate.

Legislation depending on the nature and scale of work required to provide access through or around the beach rock, certain legislation, permits and native title notification may be involved.

- *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- *Beach Protection Act 1968*
- *Recreation Areas Management Act 1988*
- *Marine Parks Act 1982*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *Native Title Act 1993*

Photo 1 damage to fore dune above beach rock

Photo 2 vehicle entry for illegal bypass track

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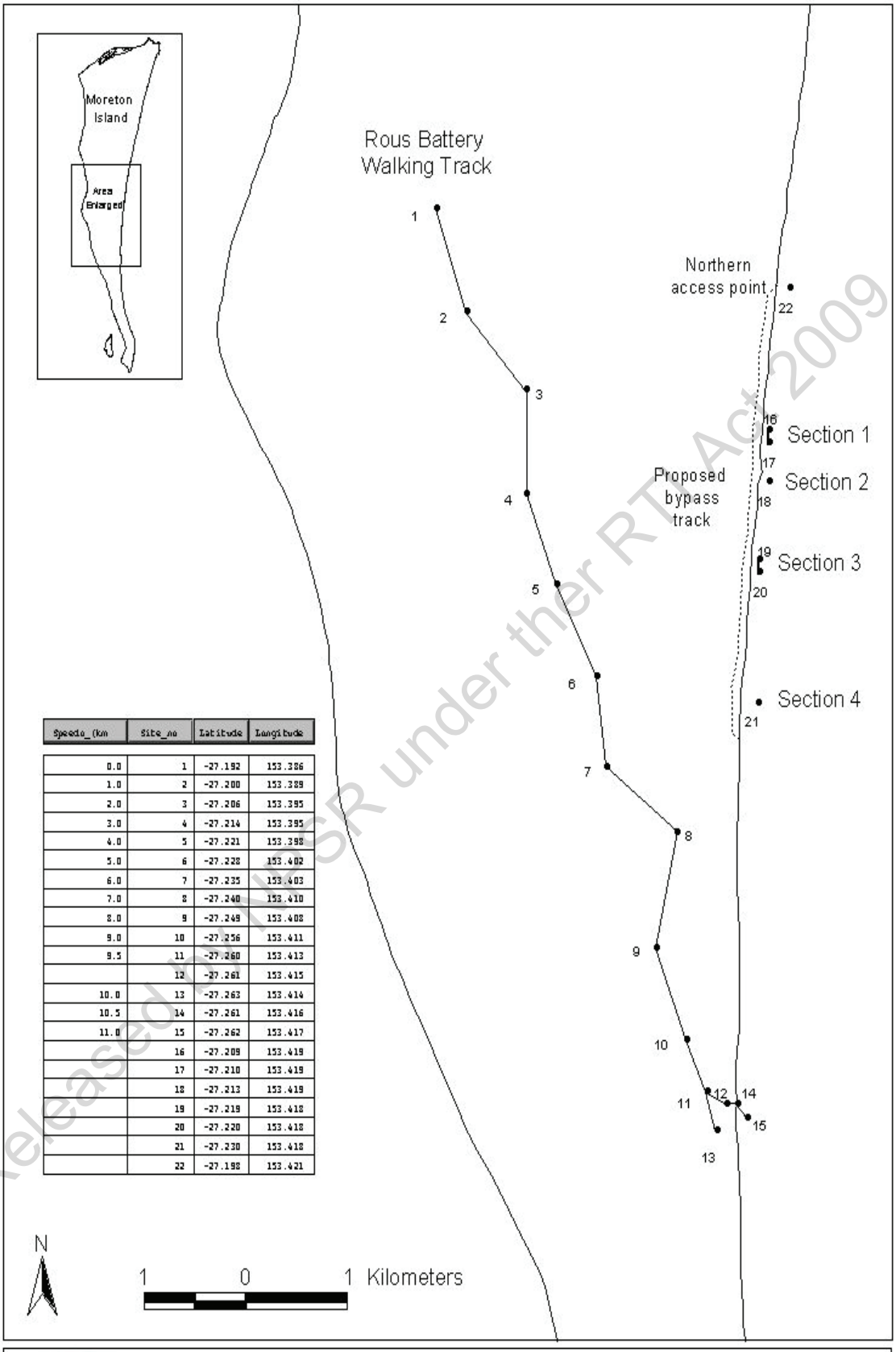
2. Options to resolve the issue

With all options it will be necessary to repair the damage in the foredunes caused by vehicles attempting to travel this section of the island and to implement measures to prevent this from reoccurring. Table 1 presents the estimated rates/costs for the various tasks involved in the facilitation of the options presented.

Table 1 Estimated costs of road and track construction on Moreton Island	
Cost of board and chain (materials and labour) per metre	$ 60
Cost of Holey belt (materials and labour) per metre	$ 80
QPWS loader operation per hour	$ 70
Bush clearing (machine and labour) per hour	$ 130
Planning (surveyor/consultant) per day	$ 250
Labour + generator/hand tool per hour	$ 30



Speedo_(km	Site_no	Latitude	Longitude
0.0	1	-27.192	153.386
1.0	2	-27.200	153.389
2.0	3	-27.206	153.395
3.0	4	-27.214	153.395
4.0	5	-27.221	153.398
5.0	6	-27.228	153.402
6.0	7	-27.235	153.403
7.0	8	-27.240	153.410
8.0	9	-27.249	153.408
9.0	10	-27.256	153.411
9.5	11	-27.260	153.413
	12	-27.261	153.415
10.0	13	-27.263	153.414
10.5	14	-27.261	153.416
11.0	15	-27.262	153.417
	16	-27.209	153.419
	17	-27.210	153.419
	18	-27.213	153.419
	19	-27.219	153.418
	20	-27.220	153.418
	21	-27.230	153.418
	22	-27.198	153.421

MAP 1. GPS Point Locations for Rous Battery Track and Sections of Exposed Beach Rock. Recorded 11 August 2000

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(a) do nothing With time the natural beach processes will eventually deposit sand over the exposed beach rock thus allowing access. As this is a temporary and episodic situation, the problem of inaccessibility or inconvenience after low tide to recreation users might be considered acceptable. In the advent of an emergency there is access to rescue helicopters and marine vessels.

Advantages: no environmental disturbance, no permits or notification required, zero financial cost involved and it allows time to monitor the situation (ie in the future there may not be a problem or the problem itself may change - sand islands are extremely dynamic in terms of erosion/accretion processes).

Disadvantages: Council contractors, Emergency services and others must use this access route and are severely limited or prevented at most times. Vehicles will continue to create disturbance around the beach rock

(b) access track through fore dunes Construct a series of bypass tracks through the fore dunes, around problem sections of beach rock. To undergo this work QPWS will need to submit a Native Title Notification of Public Works under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 1988*

The estimated time frame from acceptance of option is ……. 8 weeks (subject to permits/agreements)

The estimated cost of developing a typical track is;

- Track clearing $ 260
- Planning $ 250
- 50m of board and chain/holey belt $ 3000/4000
- Drainage and erosion control $ 260 Total $ 4680

Advantages: will provide access at most tides depending on the number of tracks required

Disadvantages: high disturbance to fore dunes, beach rock and Midden sites and ongoing erosion problems. Expensive and unsightly infrastructure necessary to provide access to all vehicles. Will require Native Title Notification and may require an a formal Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) to proceed - this is primarily a disadvantage in terms of time lost in responding to the emergency situation

(c) access over beach rock This option involves minimal scaping, smoothing and filling of the beach rock, primarily in Section 3 where the current problem is greatest (Photo 3), to provide mid tide access to all vehicles. As part of this work the illegal access tracks around the beach rock will be cut off using sand stockpiles and timber bollards. The total amount of beach rock material disturbed will not exceed two cubic metres. It will not be necessary for the QPWS to submit a Native Title Notification due to the need for "emergency action" and will not require other permits due to the small scale nature of the works.

The estimated time frame from acceptance of option is ……. 1 week

The estimated cost of this action for each section of beach rock is;

- Track forming $ 180
- closure of illegal track $ 150 Total $ 330

Advantages: allows access of all vehicles from low to mid tide, provides access over the natural landscape without significant alteration to it, protection of foredunes and Middens, relatively inexpensive (work requires only hand tools and smoothing with tractor).

Disadvantages: small scale disturbance of beach rock, may not be a permanent solution ie. the beach rock is a moderately erodible material thus possibly making this approach an ongoing one, only provides access to the mid tide thus preventing total emergency access.

(d) access track behind the dunes This option involves construction of a new single inland track to bypass the area of beach rock (see Photo 8). A section of new track to bypass the

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major problem areas will be in the order of four to five kilometres. To undergo this work QPWS will need to submit a Native Title Notification of Public Works under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 1988*.
The estimated time frame from acceptance of option is …….10 weeks (subject to permits/agreements)
The estimated cost of developing this track is;

- Track clearing,/ passing bays $ 4095
- Planning $ 500
- 100m of board and chain/holey belt $ 6000/8000
- Drainage and erosion control $ 650 Total $ 12245

Advantages: no environmental disturbance to the beach rock, will give continual and relatively quicker access.
Disadvantages: some disturbance to the foredunes and possibly to Midden sites particularly around the access points, opens up native vegetation to new weed infestations. Expensive infrastructure necessary to provide access to larger trucks. Will require Native Title Notification and may require an ILUA to proceed and could open up the area for additional camping. Access will be continual but slower

(e) open the Rous Battery track This track joining the Tangalooma bypass track to the eastern beach meanders gently south southwest for some 11km down the spine of the island and gives access across the island and thereby provides an alternative route avoiding exposed beach rock (see Map 1). It was constructed by the army between the World Wars for access of their military installations but of recent times it has been a unique experience for bushwalkers to explore the natural features of the island. Significant infrastructure, earthmoving machine work and ongoing maintenance is required to reopen this track. To undergo this work QPWS will need to submit a Native Title Notification of Public Works under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 1988*.
The estimated time frame from acceptance of option is ……. 14 weeks
The estimated cost of reopening this track is;

- Track clearing,/widening/passing bays $ 2600
- Planning $ 500
- 250m of board and chain/Holey belt $ 15000/20000
- Drainage and erosion control $ 1300
- General labour $ 1890 Total $ 23790

Advantages: no environmental disturbance to the beach rock, provides an additional vehicle access option, provides some access for prescribed burns but is unsuitable for control of wildfire.
Disadvantages: loss of a very special and unique bushwalking track, very expensive option requiring extensive infrastructure and ongoing maintenance (Photo 6 & 7), a very slow alternative route to the beach particularly in emergency situations. Sections of the track will require Native Title Notification and may require an a formal Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) to proceed.

(f) beach rock bridge work This option is to construct bridge and fill work in areas of inaccessibility in the beach rock. This project would involve removal of sand down to the beach rock and forming concrete bridges between high points. To undergo this work QPWS will need to submit a Native Title Notification of Public Works under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 1988* and to apply for permits under the *Beach Protection Act 1968* and the *Marine Parks Act 1982*.

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Advantages: allows access of all vehicles from low to mid tide, provides quick access without leaving the beach for most levels of the tide, protection of foredunes and Middens.

Disadvantages: medium scale disturbance of beach rock, may not be a permanent solution ie. the beach rock is a moderately erodible material thus possibly making this approach an ongoing one, only provides access to the mid tide thus preventing total emergency access and is a high maintenance option in a high erosion environment.

Photo 3 Section 3 area to be smoothed

Photo 4 steep unstable access point to Rous

Photo 5 A fore dune Midden above section 4

Photo 6 thick vegetation along Rous track

Photo 7 trees across Rous track

Photo 8 vegetation behind fore dune

3. Conclusions

This report has presented a variety of options to reinstate access to the southern section of Moreton Island which has been episodically restricted due to the natural beach accretion processes which reveal the underlying rock. The major issue has been the restriction of access to emergency vehicles at mid to high tide as well as the difficulties and safety risks encountered by other service providers including the council garbage contractor and the proprietor of the Kooringal store.

Although the QPWS has no legal responsibility to maintain full beach access it is concerned with public safety issues of person and property and recognises the economic and recreational needs of island users. It must balance these issues with its' obligation to avoid environmental damage and to preserve the natural and cultural resources. The issues involved here include vegetation loss and foredone erosion, destruction of Middens and new weed establishment. The QPWS must also consider comments provided by the Senior Dune Conservationist of BPA before proceeding with any larger scale more permanent options. His comments relate to dominance of erosive coastal processes in this area over the past few years and a general belief that this beach may recover naturally over the next year or two resulting in the absence of the access problem in the near future. He added however, there is a major coastal realignment occurring at the southern end of the island and this may affect medium term sand supply to this beach and delay recovery.

Finally the QPWS must take into consideration the constraints of time for certain options to achieve a solution to the issues raised and the less importantly the availability of funds. With the major issues, obligations and constraints in mind the following recommendations are presented.

4. Recommendations

In the short term and due to the emergency situation presented by the exposure of the beach rock it is recommended that option (c) 'access over beach rock' be adopted. By scraping the high spots and filling some gaps on the problem area of section 3 access will be safe up to the mid tide for all beach traffic. If an emergency situation arises at other times then other emergency vehicles can be accessed. This option can be employed immediately which has an important safety advantage over the other options and allows the Moreton Island QPWS to immediately put a stop to the environmental and cultural damage currently occurring. It is also the most cost effective option and ultimately allows monitoring of the changing situation. In the meantime the QPWS will carry out testing of the acid sulfate potential of the beach rock.

If future erosion uncovers other problem sections then it is considered likely that similar small scale operations will be successful in maintaining an acceptable degree of access.

Other options: With the emergency needs identified it has been considered not appropriate to employ option (a) and do nothing. It is also highly unsatisfactory to adopt option (b) as an initial or long term option in terms of environmental damage, cultural loss, time constraints and costs. The construction of bridge work, option (f), has also not been recommended for similar reasons to option (b) and due to the likelihood of the erosive nature of the beach rock will not permanently match the qualities of concrete construction.

There has been much public interest in the reopening of the Rous Battery track which has not been used since the late 1980's. As an option to address the immediate situation it is not suitable. In the longer term this option is feasible but not recommended for the following reasons:

1. This is not practicable as an emergency or alternative route to the affected beach area as access times will be very slow and more dangerous. The full track (beach to beach) is some 15km and is one way only (the estimated cost of reopening does not include the much safer and efficient two track system as demonstrated by Middle road).
2. The access to the eastern beach is a very steep unstable and active sand blow area (Photo 4) requiring major unsightly infrastructure which will require continual maintenance.
3. The expense of this option is prohibitive particularly in view of the relative costs of the other options. It will also require a significant investment in funds and labour for the ongoing maintenance costs.

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4. At present this track provides a unique bushwalking opportunity for the recreation users of Moreton Island. It is the longest walking track on the island and one of only a few walking tracks available.

If the employment of option (c) proves to be unsuitable in the long term and an emergency situation still exists, it will be more feasible to consider option (d) 'access behind fore dunes' if no other new alternative options arise. There are many disadvantages as outlined in Section 2 of this report but there are some advantages over option (e) namely:

1. it is a more cost effective solution to an infrequent problem.
2. emergency access will be much quicker and continual.
3. the access points have been chosen in less steep and exposed environments.
4. it will provide formalised infrastructure for future camping opportunities.

This report recommends the immediate employment of Option (c) with ongoing monitoring of its' effectiveness and consideration/consultation of Option (d) if required.

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From: Melissa Cardillo [melissa.cardillo@cua.com.au]
Sent: Thursday, 6 June 2013 11:14 AM
To: Matthews Galen
CC: Sue Chandler
Subject: RE: Eastern Beach Access Southern Moreton
Attachments: Cardillo_Melissa.vcf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Galen,

We have a Kooringal Land-holder's meeting this Saturday and I am attempting to be on the front foot with issues I know that will be raised. The previous President spent a lot of time looking at getting an alternative track open to provide access to Kooringal when the coffee rocks are exposed or the Western Beach is blocked off. Having exhausted all avenues we have accepted that this is an issue we need to put to rest and focus on the reason we bought at Kooringal in the first place, its seclusion and still water boating access.

Although we accept that not a lot can be done regarding damage and erosion from large weather events causing the coffee rocks to be exposed, the She Oaks on the Eastern beach continue to present a problem with access along the beach. I understand that there is a machine on the island this week clearing middle road and making a fire break. We have notified our members of this and I know they will ask why equipment can be dedicated to this and not clearing up the beach at our end. I completely understand the need to do middle road but wondered if we could discuss a management plan for our end of the island.

I appreciate your time and wonder if you can call me at your convenience.

Regards

Melissa Cardillo
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From: "Allan Rob" <Rob.Allan@nprsr.qld.gov.au>
To: "Melissa Cardillo" <melissa.cardillo@cua.com.au>,
Cc: "Matthews Galen" <Galen.Matthews@nprsr.qld.gov.au>
Date: 06/06/2013 09:54 AM
Subject: RE: Eastern Beach Access Southern Moreton

Hi Melissa

Congratulations on becoming President of the KLA. The best person to contact about Moreton Island National Park and RAM Area is the Senior Ranger, Southern Bay Islands – Galen Matthews. Hi e-mail address is as per the cc above and his phone number is 3131 2888.

I'll pop in to your office to say hello when I'm next down your way.

Cheers, Rob

Rob Allan
A/Regional Director
South East Region
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
The Gap, Brisbane
Telephone: (07) 3512 2320

From: Melissa Cardillo [mailto:melissa.cardillo@cua.com.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 5 June 2013 11:58 AM
To: Allan Rob
Cc: Sue Chandler
Subject: Eastern Beach Access Southern Moreton

Good morning Rob,

I have taken over as President of the Kooringal Landholders Association and we have a meeting this Saturday. I know one of the questions that will be raised at the meeting is the Eastern Beach Access and are the Ranger's planning to do anything about the She Oaks blocking the beach. I understand this is probably not your area of responsibility but I am yet to form a contact list for these types of issues. Would you mind forwarding the person who would help us with this request?

Many thanks

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QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT
Hon Steve Dickson MP
Member for Buderim

Queensland Government
Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

Our Ref: CTS 06788/13

19 APR 2013

Mr Garth Barrett
President
Kooringal Landholders Association
PO Box 7095
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Mr Barrett

Thank you for your letter of 26 March 2013 concerning access to Kooringal, Moreton Island.

I recently visited Moreton Island to look at areas of concern raised by a number of stakeholders, including the Kooringal Landholders Association.

During my visit to the island, I travelled along the Western Beach to Kooringal and observed the work that has been undertaken by the rangers to ensure access to Kooringal is maintained. Given the current condition of the Eastern Beach, rangers have been paying extra attention to the Western Beach in an effort to ensure access to Kooringal is maintained along this route throughout as much of the tidal variation as possible.

It is obvious that the natural process of sand erosion and accretion along the eastern beach affects vehicular access along this beach. It was clear that recent severe weather events have removed a considerable quantity of sand which has exposed large sections of coffee rock. I am aware that at the moment, access along the Eastern Beach south of Middle Road is not possible due to the coffee rock remaining impassable.

By seeing both the western and eastern beaches myself, I can better appreciate that all tide/all weather access along the beaches is not possible. I do consider, however, that adequate tide-dependent vehicle access is available to Kooringal and that the rangers on Moreton Island have undertaken as much work as possible to keep access open and will continue to do so. I understand that vehicle access around sand islands such as Moreton Island is mainly by beaches, which are tide dependent, due to the nature of the island.

While driving south of the Sand Hills on the western side of the island, I encountered the waste truck returning from Kooringal on its rubbish run. I am advised that in recent discussions held between Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and the waste removal contractor, access conditions to Kooringal are currently not a concern and the rubbish service is not being disrupted.

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I also inspected the Rous Battery walking track during my visit. Upgrading this track for vehicle use would not provide enhanced access for Kooringal residents as a section of the Eastern beach would still be required to be traversed.

I am advised that QPWS has had previous discussions with The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee and the Queensland Ambulance Service regarding emergency access to Kooringal and that existing arrangements will continue.

In relation to the frequency of Moreton Island barge services, I can confirm that three approvals have been issued by QPWS to commercial operators for the provision of passenger and vehicle services to the island. The 'Amity Trader' barge holds one of these approvals to run a commercial service to Kooringal.

Finally, I should like to assure you and members of the Kooringal Landholders Association that the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing is mindful of access to Kooringal and other locations on the island and will continue to maintain reasonable access to the these areas within their capacity to do so and to the extent that variable natural conditions allow.

I hope this information has been of assistance to you. Should you have any further enquiries, please contact Ms Johanna de Winter, Chief of Staff in my office, on telephone (07) 3224 7477.

Yours sincerely

Steve Dickson MP
Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

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File note of meeting/discussion

☐ Meeting ☐ Telephone
Date: 3/6/2009 Time: 7.15am – 5.15pm
Between Miles Yeates & Andrew Hoffman of DERM
And Peter Chatman and Damian Brackman of QAS
Subject: Contingency access to Southern end of Moreton island

MY, AH, PC and DB visited Moreton island on 3 June 2009 to inspect various proposed access routes to the southern end of Moreton island, and the proposed site of the new ambulance station at the rear of the Tangalooma resort. Various vehicle access routes had been proposed by QAS as contingency access to Kooringal and the southern end of the island in the event that helicopters were unable to access the scene of an accident.

QAS is seeking contingency access primarily to get a paramedic and basic equipment to patients who have experienced an illness or injury that is not life-threatening and which occur when tidal conditions are not suitable for access along the beach, and illnesses or injuries that are life threatening but occur when tidal conditions are not suitable for beach access and when a helicopter can not attend due to weather conditions or unavailability. There was also some discussion on the day to the effect that access might also be required for an emergency services vehicle capable of transporting a patient (vehicles like rhino's were mentioned), so that some patients could be transported to Kooringal for treatment. This requires further clarification and may impact on the suitability of particular options

The party travelled to the proposed site of the new ambulance station first via the Tangalooma bypass road and a rear access track through the resort. The site is just over the ridge of the highest dune above the resort, and only about 50m from the alignment of the Tangalooma bypass road. It was generally agreed that it should be relatively simple to achieve an alignment from the bypass road to the site with a suitable gradient and which avoids the larger trees. Chris Hanlon or nominee would oversight works.

The party also inspected the western beach from Tangalooma to Toulkerrie. QAS had proposed that Rangers could clear fallen timber along this section of beach to provide emergency access to Kooringal on higher tides (say up to 1.8) than at present. Substantial quantities of fallen vegetation were encountered along this section of beach as a result of recent inclement conditions and high tides.

Peter Chatman (QAS Area Director, Northern Area) indicated that he was surprised at the amount of material, and agreed that given the quantity of material it would not be reasonable to expect ranger staff to remove it. There was also some discussion suggesting that the benefit of removing the material would only be marginal in terms of the very limited additional access that would be provided. It was also noted that keeping the beach clear would be a substantial ongoing task for whoever took it on (this would presumably be based on the general principle that the ongoing presence of one government agency shouldn't impose significant additional costs on another) and may not be desirable as the fallen timber which currently accumulates at the base of the foredune provides a measure of protection against further erosion.

The party also inspected an old vehicle track that begins from a camping area north of the Sandhills and runs in a generally easterly direction to link with the Rous Battery

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track. Use of this track was proposed by QAS as part of a contingency route for QAS to access Kooringal in an emergency.

The initial section of this track traverses through a camping area which is fully occupied by campers in peak times, and includes several steep sections which are subject to erosion with use and / or heavy rains. Discussions on the day identified that QAS use would likely promote illegal use by others which would cause some environmental impacts. Such use would also be difficult to police, and QAS vehicles would still need to traverse about 5klms of the western beach to reach the inland track at Toulkerrie. Access along this relatively thin section of beach is subject to fallen vegetation and is again impossible when tides exceed around 1.8m?.

The party also inspected small sections of the existing track profile and surface at both ends of the Rous Battery track. QAS had also proposed upgrading of the Rous Battery track through to the eastern beach at the Rous Battery (beyond the coffee rock to the north) to provide QAS 4WD ambulance access at higher tide states.

In the sections that were inspected the track generally remains wide enough to accommodate a vehicle such as a quad bike without modification of the surface (some clearing and brushing of vegetation would be required). However earthworks would be required in places to widen and stabilise the track to cater for the wider wheelbase and extra weight of the QAS troop carrier, and significantly more vegetation would also need to be cleared (see the section of track just beyond the trailhead from the eastern beach for an example). The cost of such works has not been calculated at this time. Discussions also identified the difficulty of preventing illegal use in the event that the track were upgraded to accommodate the QAS ambulance, and the concerns that may arise in government and some sections of the community if this were to occur in the context of the position expressed in the approved park management plan (see page 29).

A further option involving limited upgrading of the Rous Battery Track through to the eastern beach to provide safe access for a paramedic operating a quad bike was also raised and discussed. This option would generally necessitate only limited clearing along the Rous Battery track and would not significantly alter the character of the existing walking track. This track could be gated if necessary and would provide the required contingency access route for a paramedic to reach an injured or ill patient on the southern end of the island at high tide and in the event that a helicopter is unavailable or unable to attend the scene. QPW representatives explained that as with all tracks QPW cannot guarantee that the track would always be trafficable due to the potential for falling trees and limbs at any time.

There was a fair bit of consensus that this was probably the best option particularly as the eastern beach generally provides a much broader expanse of sand that is able to be traversed by vehicles at much higher tides than the western beach.

While the party were visiting Kooringal township the option of servicing the south of Moreton island via vessel based emergency response from North Stradbroke island was also discussed. The distance from Amity to Kooringal is relatively short (5-6klm), although it was noted that the stretch of water that would need to be traversed is often quite rough, and access to the township itself is very limited at low tides. QAS staff indicated that they had a presence on NSI and were aware of the option, but hadn't used it previously.

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On the day of the inspection QAS were called on to attend to a Kooringal resident who was suffering heart problems. The inspection party were close to Kooringal (travelling past Mirapool) at the time and decided to return to provide assistance if required. The EMQ helicopter was already onsite at the Kooringal helipad and powered down by the time the party arrived (response time 18 minutes from the initial call) and no assistance was required, however QPW staff were able to chat with the chief pilot and paramedics about the provision of emergency response to Kooringal.

The chief pilot indicated that the helipad, located on USL at the back of Kooringal, was generally fairly simple to access during the day. He mentioned that the helicopter is able to operate even in very inclement weather conditions and are really only constrained when the cloud ceiling is very low and will compromise landing safety. The only significant issue he raised about the pad is associated with the concrete apron that is in place for landing the helicopter and wheeling patients to it on stretchers, etc. This is currently located well towards the northern end of the cleared area so that when the larger helicopters land into SE winds the tail rotor extends outside the pad over a row of bollards alongside the access track. The chief pilot felt the best response to this would be to extend the concrete pad to the south however QPW staff indicated that we would be happy to assist by removing the bollards and trimming some trees to the north of the pad.

The only other issue he mentioned was that the pad is hard to locate at night due to the absence of lighting to illuminate the landing areas.

While the party were inspecting the Rous battery track trailhead on the eastern beach there was some discussion about the coffee rock outcrop that currently prevents access along the beach from middle road to the north. It was noted that access around the rock was currently only possible on the bottom of very low tides due to erosion from a series of storm and king tide events in late 2008 and the first half of 2009, but that if good weather returned the beach should rebuild and the current situation should improve significantly.

Andrew Hoffman

11/6/2009

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From: Miles Yeates
Sent: Tuesday, 2 March 2010 8:43 AM
To: Leeanne Ferguson
Subject: FW: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due
And this one

Miles Yeates

Regional Manager | Moreton Bay Region
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Department of Environment and Resource Management

T (07) 3131 2853 **| F** (07) 3131 2889
Miles.Yeates@derm.qld.gov.au **| W** www.derm.qld.gov.au

34 Trafalgar Street, Manly 4179
PO Box 5178 Manly QLD 4179

From: Miles Yeates
Sent: Tuesday, 2 March 2010 8:42 AM
To: Dirt Water
Subject: RE: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due

Hi Trin,

See below

The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee is a whole of government forum comprised of State and Local Government representatives involved in the management of Moreton Island. The Committee's membership includes representatives of the Queensland Police (chair), Queensland Ambulance Service, Boating and Fisheries Patrol, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Emergency Management Queensland, Brisbane City Council, Rural Fire Service and Queensland Transport. The Committee meets on a needs basis to ensure a consistent and coordinated, whole of Government approach to the management of Moreton Island.

In September 2009, the Moreton Island Essential Services Committee met and discussed the effects of erosion on the transport of vehicles along Moreton Island's beaches. The committee agreed that:

- the erosion was a natural process, and that residents and visitors to the island needed to plan their trips, taking into account local conditions.
- it was not possible to guarantee access along Moreton Island's beaches, as weather events such as erosion, tides and wave action are variable and at times restrict access in several areas.
- The Rous Battery Track should not be upgraded to provide an alternative route around the white rock area,

General discussions were held about the effects of coffee rock exposure on vehicle access along the eastern beach. It was suggested by one representative that the coffee rock may be able to be scraped down to sand level by machinery to avoid blocking vehicle access. However, QPWS has investigated this option and concluded that the scale of the coffee rock is too expansive for such an activity to be effective. At times, exposed coffee rock can extend several kilometres along the beach and be up to 60 cm higher than the beach level. The scale of the problem was considered too large to address in this way.

While the coffee rock exposure does restrict vehicle access at certain times, the coastal processes that cause the erosion are part of the natural environment of Moreton Island. Other access points to the island, such as The Wrecks, are available as alternative routes.

Miles

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Miles Yeates

Regional Manager | Moreton Bay Region
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Department of Environment and Resource Management

T (07) 3131 2853 **| F** (07) 3131 2889
Miles.Yeates@derm.qld.gov.au **| W** www.derm.qld.gov.au

34 Trafalgar Street, Manly 4179
PO Box 5178 Manly QLD 4179

From: Dirt Water
Sent: Monday, 1 March 2010 3:59 PM
To: Miles Yeates
Subject: FW: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due

Hi Miles
Just checking you are are all over this request??
Cheers
Trin

Trinity Lowe
Executive Assistant to:
Annie Moody - Director Terrestrial & Terry Harper - Director Marine
Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service
Telephone: 07 3330 5177 **Mobile:** s(4)p4(6) Personal information
www.derm.qld.gov.au
Department of Environment and Resource Management Level 4 400 George St Q 4000
PO Box 15155, City East Q 4002

From: parks directorate
Sent: Monday, 1 March 2010 12:49 PM
To: Dirt Water
Subject: FW: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due

FYI. This is due from Miles by COB tomorrow.

Ian

Ian Rudd
Senior Project Officer
Business and Asset Services
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Ph: (07) 3330 5307 Internal: 25307
Email: ian.rudd@derm.qld.gov.au

From: DLO
Sent: Monday, 1 March 2010 11:45 AM
To: parks directorate
Subject: FW: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due

Hi Ian

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FYI -This request has already been sent to Miles (but not dirtwater).

Regards,
Jandy McCandless | Departmental Liaison Officer |

Office of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability |
Department of Environment and Resource Management
|T (07) 3330 5252| F (07) 3227 6485
|Email dlo@derm.qld.gov.au Jandy.Mccandless@derm.qld.gov.au
|Website www.derm.qld.gov.au

From: Simon Munro [mailto:Simon.Munro@ministerial.qld.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 1 March 2010 11:42 AM
To: DLO
Cc: Miles Yeates
Subject: RE: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due

Hi Jandy,

Further to this earlier request, I'm seeking some more detail about the issue of exposed coffee rock on the eastern side of the island.

At the last meeting of the Essential Services Committee (late 09) the issue was raised, with some stakeholders suggesting that the coffee rock should be maintained to make the area more accessible. Please see attached, which also refers to an engineers report.

I understand that QPWS has undertaken some investigations of this issue since the meeting of the Committee.

Can I please get some dot points on any investigations QPWS has undertaken on the issue. By COB Wednesday 3 March. Cheers

Simon Munro
Assistant Policy Advisor
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability
Ph: 323 90808
Fx: 3227 6309

+----------+
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From: DLO [mailto:dlo@epa.qld.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 8 February 2010 2:29 PM
To: Simon Munro
Cc: dlo
Subject: FW: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due

Hi Simon

Please find response regarding White Rock, Moreton Island, below.

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- The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has constructed a cultural centre (shed with accommodation facilities) at Eagers Creek on Moreton Island to facilitate use of this important cultural site by traditional owners for ceremonial and cultural purposes.
- As most traditional owner groups using the facility travel to Moreton Island from North Stradbroke Island on the Kooringal Trader Barge, the eastern beach of Moreton Island provides the best access route to the site,
- At times over the past several years, erosion at White Rock has exposed coffee rock on the eastern beach, making it impassable on certain tides,
- This is a natural process that is impossible to rectify, and affects all users of the National Park.
- Alternative routes of access are in place, but are longer and are also tidal dependent
- Access to the site from the barge landing area at the Wrecks is not affected by this erosion
- The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee (comprising all government stakeholders of Moreton Island) has considered a proposal to upgrade a 10km walking track called the Rous Battery Track to take vehicles as an alternative route for emergency vehicles on the island.
- However this option has been ruled out by the Committee (a briefing note prepared late in 2009 on the issue is attached with further detail).
- The suggested option of upgrading the track has therefore been ruled out for many reasons of logistics, cost and lack of public benefit.
- QPWS has a long standing relationship with Quandamooka and is always willing to provide reasonable assistance in supporting Quandamooka's use of their traditional estate.
- The accessibility of the eastern beach at White Rock varies with local conditions and updates can be provided by QPWS to assist with the planning of future trips.

Kerri Brannon | Departmental Liaison Officer |

Office of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability |
Department of Environment and Resource Management
|T (07) 3239 0831| F (07) 3227 6485
|Email dlo@derm.qld.gov.au or Kerri.brannon@derm.qld.gov.au
|Website www.derm.qld.gov.au

From: parks directorate
Sent: Monday, 8 February 2010 11:00 AM
To: DLO
Cc: John Bradley; Terry Wall; Andrea Leverington
Subject: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due

Hi Kerri

Please find response regarding White Rock, Moreton Island, below.

- The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has constructed a cultural centre (shed with accommodation facilities) at Eagers Creek on Moreton Island to facilitate use of this important cultural site by traditional owners for ceremonial and cultural purposes.
- As most traditional owner groups using the facility travel to Moreton Island from North Stradbroke Island on the Kooringal Trader Barge, the eastern beach of Moreton Island provides the best access route to the site,
- At times over the past several years, erosion at White Rock has exposed coffee rock on the eastern beach, making it impassable on certain tides,
- This is a natural process that is impossible to rectify, and affects all users of the National Park.
- Alternative routes of access are in place, but are longer and are also tidal dependent
- Access to the site from the barge landing area at the Wrecks is not affected by this erosion
- The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee (comprising all government stakeholders of Moreton Island) has considered a proposal to upgrade a 10km walking track called the Rous Battery Track to take vehicles as an alternative route for emergency vehicles on the island.

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- However this option has been ruled out by the Committee (a briefing note prepared late in 2009 on the issue is attached with further detail).
- The suggested option of upgrading the track has therefore been ruled out for many reasons of logistics, cost and lack of public benefit.
- QPWS has a long standing relationship with Quandamooka and is always willing to provide reasonable assistance in supporting Quandamooka's use of their traditional estate.
- The accessibility of the eastern beach at White Rock varies with local conditions and updates can be provided by QPWS to assist with the planning of future trips.

Regards
Jandy

From: DLO
Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2010 4:41 PM
To: parks directorate
Cc: DLO
Subject: Ministerial request -Information request White Rock, Moreton Is - due

Hi

The Redcliffe electorate office is seeking an update on the issue of access to White Rock on Moreton Island.

Can the appropriate departmental officer pls prepare some dot points on this issue for the Ministers office - by COB Wednesday 10 Feb.
Thanks so much
K

Kerri Brannon | Departmental Liaison Officer |

Office of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability |
Department of Environment and Resource Management
|T (07) 3239 0831| F (07) 3227 6485
|Email dlo@derm.qld.gov.au or Kerri.brannon@derm.qld.gov.au
|Website www.derm.qld.gov.au

+----------+

From: Redcliffe Electorate Office [mailto:Redcliffe@parliament.qld.gov.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2010 3:35 PM
To: Simon Munro
Subject: FW: Ivan Nott - Moreton Is.

Hi Simon

I spoke to someone about this last year. Any further info or advice you could provide would be greatly appreciated.

Regards

Nathan Seng

Office of **Lillian van Litsenburg MP**
P: 3284 2667

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F: 3283 1073
E: redcliffe@parliament.qld.gov.au
www.lillianforredcliffe.com

From: Redcliffe Electorate Office
Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2010 3:20 PM
To: 'Deagon Ward'
Subject: RE: Ivan Nott

Hi Alison

Thanks for your email.

Lillian wrote to Mr Nott in October 2009. QLD Park and Wildlife advised at the time that they 'are aware of the issue and are looking into ways to improve off-beach access to White Rock.'

I will follow this up.

Kind regards

Nathan Seng

Office of **Lillian van Litsenburg MP**
P: 3284 2667
F: 3283 1073
E: redcliffe@parliament.qld.gov.au
www.lillianforredcliffe.com

From: Deagon Ward [mailto:deagon.ward@ecn.net.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2010 2:45 PM
To: Redcliffe Electorate Office
Subject:

Hello

Councillor Victoria Newton has asked me to write this afternoon in relation to the attached correspondence that she forwarded to the State Member in September 2009.

Uncle Bob Anderson has contacted the Deagon Ward Office this afternoon seeking an update in relation to this issue and Councillor Newton has enquired if there has been any advice concerning her enquiry.

As always, thanks in advance for your assistance.

Kind regards

Alison Hutton
Deagon Ward office
3667 6011

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As of 26 March 2009 the Department of Natural Resources and Water/Environmental Protection Agency integrated to form the Department of Environment and Resource Management

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CTS:

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION, SPORT & RACING

RESPONSE TO Deputy Director-General OFFICE QUERY/WORK REQUEST

REQUEST DATE: **2 December 2013**

ISSUE: **Kooringal access – Moreton Island**

QUESTIONS:

- Translink Division of the Department of Transport and Main Roads has requested information regarding the closure of Middle Road on Moreton Island to respond to a query from sch4p4(6) Personal information sch4p4(6) Personal information who have a house in the township of Kooringal on Moreton Island.

RESPONSE:

- QPWS maintain a number of inland sand tracks in the Moreton Island Recreation Area (MIRA). These tracks primarily provide access for visitors to the MIRA across the island in limited locations and around the back of townships and resorts where there may be beach closures.
- Some of these tracks double as fire control lines and are maintained as such.
- Vehicle traffic around the island is primary along the beaches, depending on tides and beach conditions.
- Middle Road is the main east – west access track across the middle of the island and is not closed.
- In rare circumstances this track can have temporary closures to allow for fire management or maintenance. However these closures are of short duration, with traffic control in place to manage safe access across the island during these times.
- The letter from sch4p4(6) Personal information refers to Middle Track, but it is likely that they are referring to the Rous Battery Walking Track.
- QPWS does not currently have the intention or the capital and recurring maintenance funding to turn the Rous Battery Walking Track into a vehicle access track.
- Moreover, QPWS cannot see any benefit in providing vehicular access on this route as it would not provide improved access to Kooringal Township, as sections of the eastern beach would still have to be traversed.
- QPWS has had previous discussions with The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee and the Queensland Ambulance Service regarding emergency access to Kooringal and all parties concur that existing arrangements are adequate.
- Moreton Island is a remote location with limited access to services readily available in larger urban areas.

BACKGROUND:

- The Rous Battery walking track was originally developed as a road during World War II to provide access to the Rous Battery gun emplacement on the Eastern Beach of Moreton Island.
- The road was closed to vehicles and designated a walking track after the declaration of the Moreton Island National Park in 1986.

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Prepared by: Galen Matthews Title: Senior Ranger Bus Area: Moreton Bay Telephone: 3131 3852 Date Prepared: 5/12/3013	Endorsed by: Neil Cambourn Title: Executive Director - East Bus Area: QPWS Telephone: 3330 5268 Date:	Recommended by: John Glaister Title: Director General, NPRSR Telephone: 3338 9307 Date Approved:
Date Received in MO:	MO Clearance by:	Date Cleared:

- The issue regularly raised by some Kooringal residents of constructing a road along the Rous Battery Walking Track was discussed earlier this year with the Minster on site. The Minister agreed that there appeared to be no useful purpose in doing so and that the costs would be prohibitive.

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Prepared by: Galen Matthews Title: Senior Ranger Bus Area: Moreton Bay Telephone: 3131 3852 Date Prepared: 5/12/3013	Endorsed by: Neil Cambourn Title: Executive Director - East Bus Area: QPWS Telephone: 3330 5268 Date:	Recommended by: John Glaister Title: Director General, NPRSR Telephone: 3338 9307 Date Approved:
Date Received in MO:	MO Clearance by:	Date Cleared:

From: Harrison Daniella **On Behalf Of** Corro NPRSR QPWS DDG
Sent: Monday, 9 December 2013 4:24 PM
To: grant.jalland@translink.com.au
Cc: DLO NPRSR; Corro NPRSR QPWS DDG
Subject: QPWS Response - INPUT REQUEST - MC73191 DocTrak: - About Barge/Ferry service to Kooringal - Moreton Island
Importance: High

Good afternoon,

Further to your request, please find below our DDG approved dot points in relation to this matter.

- QPWS maintain a number of inland sand tracks in the Moreton Island Recreation Area (MIRA). These tracks primarily provide access for visitors to the MIRA across the island in limited locations and around the back of townships and resorts where there may be beach closures.
- Some of these tracks double as fire control lines and are maintained as such.
- Vehicle traffic around the island is primarily along the beaches, depending on tides and beach conditions.
- Middle Road is the main east – west access track across the middle of the island and is not closed.
- In rare circumstances this track can have temporary closures to allow for fire management or maintenance. However these closures are of short duration, with traffic control in place to manage safe access across the island during these times.
- The letter from [redacted] refers to Middle Track, but it is likely that they are referring to the Rous Battery Walking Track.
- QPWS does not currently have the intention or the capital and recurring maintenance funding to turn the Rous Battery Walking Track into a vehicle access track.
- Moreover, QPWS cannot see any benefit in providing vehicular access on this route as it would not provide improved access to Kooringal Township, as sections of the eastern beach would still have to be traversed.
- QPWS has had previous discussions with The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee and the Queensland Ambulance Service regarding emergency access to Kooringal and all parties concur that existing arrangements are adequate.
- Moreton Island is a remote location with limited access to services readily available in larger urban areas.

Thanks,
Daniella

Daniella Harrison
A/Team Leader
Office of the Deputy Director-General
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Department of **National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing**
Level 4, 400 George Street, Brisbane
P: 3330 5064
E: daniella.harrison@ehp.qld.gov.au
www.nprsr.qld.gov.au

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s.44(1)p4(6) Personal information

From: Jalland, Grant [mailto:grant.jalland@translink.com.au]
Sent: Monday, 2 December 2013 12:10 PM
To: Corro NPRSR QPWS DDG
Cc: Cannon, Toni; TLCMU-DB; Motta, Marco
Subject: INPUT REQUEST - FW: MC73191 DocTrak: - About Barge/Ferry service to Kooringal - Moreton Island
Importance: High

Good morning,

I have been advised that matters relating to the closure of Middle Road , Moreton Island, fall under the responsibility of NPRSR. As such, TransLink Division requests any relevant input that would assist with our response.

Could you please forward your input by 9 December.

Many thanks

Regards

Grant Jalland
Correspondence Team Leader | Office of the Deputy Director-General
TransLink Division | Department of Transport and Main Roads

61 Mary Street Brisbane Qld 4000 | GPO Box 50 Brisbane Qld 4001
t 07 3338 4056 | f 07 3338 4600
e grant.jalland@translink.com.au
w www.translink.com.au w www.tmr.qld.gov.au

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Brittingham Geoff

From: Alan.Don@env.qld.gov.au
Sent: Friday, 4 August 2000 17:30
To: Geoff.Brittingham@dnr.qld.gov.au
Cc: Cathy Skippington; Chris Artiemiew
Subject: Re: Coffee Rock - Ocean Beach, Moreton Island
Importance: High

Geoff

I agree with your proposed actions. The scraping of an interim access at mid-tide level is an urgent action, as we are already under pressure from s6 Personal information Kooringal Store, as well as the concerns re the BCC garbage contractors and the emergency services access. Please also ensure John Esdaile keeps in close liaison with Sel Saltman from Coastal Protection, so that Sel is aware of progress and possible ramifications. John/yourself should check with Sel as a priority to ensure that any necessary approvals are obtained before we scrape the coffeerock. I'm unsure if that area of the beach is an erosion prone area or not. Maybe S47 of the Beach Protection Act applies.

Alan

Cathy

The beach rock on the southern ocean coast of Moreton Island is exposed episodically by beach movement. It prevents movement of vehicles down the beach to Kooringal other than at low tide. The situation is exascerbated this time as the barge service to the southern end of the island cannot operate (it now runs about once per month, compared with the usual twice a week) due to hazardous navigation from sand bar movement in the area. In addition, erosion of the south western beach north of Kooringal has rendered vehicle access along there virtually impossible other than at low water.

The proprietor of the Kooringal Store, s6 Personal information has been pushing for us to provide alternate access while the beach roick is exposed. He has to bring his supplies by truck down the eastern beach due to the barge not operating, and has real problems (and concerns) waiting for and navigating round the exposed coffee rock. Similarly the Brisbane City Council garbage contractor servicing Kooringal has real problems for similar reasons. The island ambulance also cannot service emergencies at all tides.

Pressure has been put on us to reopen the old Rous Battery Track, which used to give access from the Desert area south east of Tangalooma to the southern ocean beach south of the rocks. This track was constructed in WW2, and was last used for vehicle traffic in the late 1980's. It has been maintained as a walking trail so as to give visitors to MI some area of track free from vehicle traffic. I am loathe to open it up and destroy that limited opportunity. Also, the entry onto the ocean beach is in an unstable sand area, actively blowing, and would require extensive (and possibly unsuccessful) stabilising to be able to handle traffic, even if only during rock exposure (which can last 3 months plus).

Geoff and Chris have spent time this week scouting potential alternative access tracks behind the rocks. Short bypasses are not feasiblee, due to extensive middens and steep dune faces. Location of possible tracks needs detailed work, which John Esdaile will undertake.

In the immediate term, we propose to shave the edges of the coffeerock to allow careful transit by 4WD vehicle at at least half tide level. Sel Saltmann has been consulted about this in broad terms, and similar work has been done by Fraser island staff on occasions. This will at least allow greater ease and safety of passage while better alternatives are found (if available).

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I consider that we should pursue this course of action as, although we are not legally obliged to provide access, we do have a desire to be good neighbours wherever possible, and we also recognise the safety, environmental and economic issues involved in the current situation.

For your information.

Alan

Geoff.Brittingham@dnr.qld.gov.au wrote:

> Alan
>
> I refer to the coffee rock currently exposed on the eastern beach, Moreton Island.
>
> Chris and myself inspected the site on Wednesday and Thursday, Sel Sultman also attended on Thursday. We are of the view that several alternatives in relation to improving access along the beach are feasible. However, as discussed with yourself I propose that we first prepare an options report in relation to finding a solution to the problem.
>
> I have spoken to John in relation to him being responsible for preparing the report. He is happy to do so and is of the belief that his back should be OK for the Job.
>
> One of John first tasks will be to inspect and record the current exposed rocks (photos, mapping etc). Given the possibility of the sand returning I consider this to be a priority task. It is my view that John will prepare the brief for the report. I suggest that the report will include:
>
> * assessment of the situation/problem,
> * consideration of alternative access options (including the "do nothing" option),
> * cost and timing estimate for each option,
> * consideration of cultural issues, and
> * recommendation on options.
>
> In the interim I propose that we scrap/carve an access through/over the coffee rock at the main problem site (where garbage truck fell down). This will provide an alternative 'mid-tide' and below access. Chris is of the option that he will be able to use existing equipment to perform this task. This will hopefully stop vehicles being driven over the dunes (and through middens) to get around the rocks.
>
> Your endorsement of this approach is requested.
>
> Chris
>
> I have spoken to Alan and he is happy for us to sculpt the coffee rock as discussed to provide an interim access point through the problem area. It may be best to wait until John is over so he can observe the work as he may need to include this method into the report.
>
> John
>
> Pls liaise direct with Chris re: timing of your initial visit, accommodation, transport etc. Pls liaise with myself as required.

7/08/00

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Cheers

Geoff Brittingham
Senior Ranger (Moreton Bay Islands)
Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service
PO Box 1080
Caboolture Q 4510
Ph (07) 5490 0021 Fax (07) 5490 0020
Mobile 0408 732 721 Pager (07) 3836 3586
email:geoff.brittingham@env.qld.gov.au

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Alan Don
District Manager
Greater Moreton District

Ph: 07 3202 0237 Fax: 07 3202 6858
Mob s6 p4(6) Personal information Pager: 07 3836 3586
alan.don@env.qld.gov.au

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Review of future use for the Rous Battery Track, Moreton Island
Report to the Moreton Island Essential Services Committee
September 2009

Background

Residents and landholders of Kooringal at the southern end of Moreton Island have made longstanding requests to Government Agencies to consider opening the Rous Battery Track on Moreton Island to vehicles to facilitate enhanced emergency vehicle access to Kooringal.

The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee (comprising representatives of the Queensland Police, Ambulance Service, Parks and Wildlife Service, Rural Fire Service, Queensland Transport and Council) has discussed such requests in the past, and concluded that reopening the track is not necessary. However, at its 2008 meeting, the Committee agreed that the matter should be examined in greater detail by staff from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), with a view to reporting back to the committee on their key findings at the following meeting in 2009.

Moreton Island is located within the local government boundaries of Brisbane City, and has three small townships of Bulwer, Cowan Cowan and Kooringal. Additionally, the Tangalooma Resort is located on the central western coast of the island, and accommodates many hundreds of staff and guests at any one time. Approximately 98% of Moreton Island is National Park, with over 350 camp sites available in a variety of locations across the island. In this regard, the number of people on Moreton Island at any one time is extremely variable with tourism seasons, and ranges from a few hundred to several thousand.

Moreton Island is a relatively remote location, despite being located in South East Queensland, with barge and ferry services generally only operating a couple of times per day. Access is also available by private vessel or aircraft if weather conditions are favourable. The QAS recently (13 July 2009) established a permanent presence of paramedic staff on Moreton Island to meet the medical emergency needs of the island's residents and visitors. Prior to this, the island was generally staffed during the peak visitation times of long weekends and school holidays.

The scattered nature of Moreton Island's townships and campsites can make paramedic access to patients in need of emergency medical attention difficult at times. Many of the island's beaches become temporarily impassable on high spring tides, and natural coastal processes such as erosion and fallen trees can obstruct the passage of vehicles along beaches for parts of the tidal cycle. While most parts of Moreton Island are relatively isolated, the township of Kooringal at the southern end of the island is particularly so, with the temporary exposure of coffee rock on the eastern beach a regular occurrence limiting vehicle access to the township, even on low tides at times. It is this isolation that has led residents of Kooringal to request consideration be given to opening the Rous Battery Track to vehicles in an effort to provide an alternative route to the township.

The Rous Battery Track runs from the Desert track, behind the Tangalooma Resort, in a south easterly direction, roughly parallel with the eastern beach. It then diverges to

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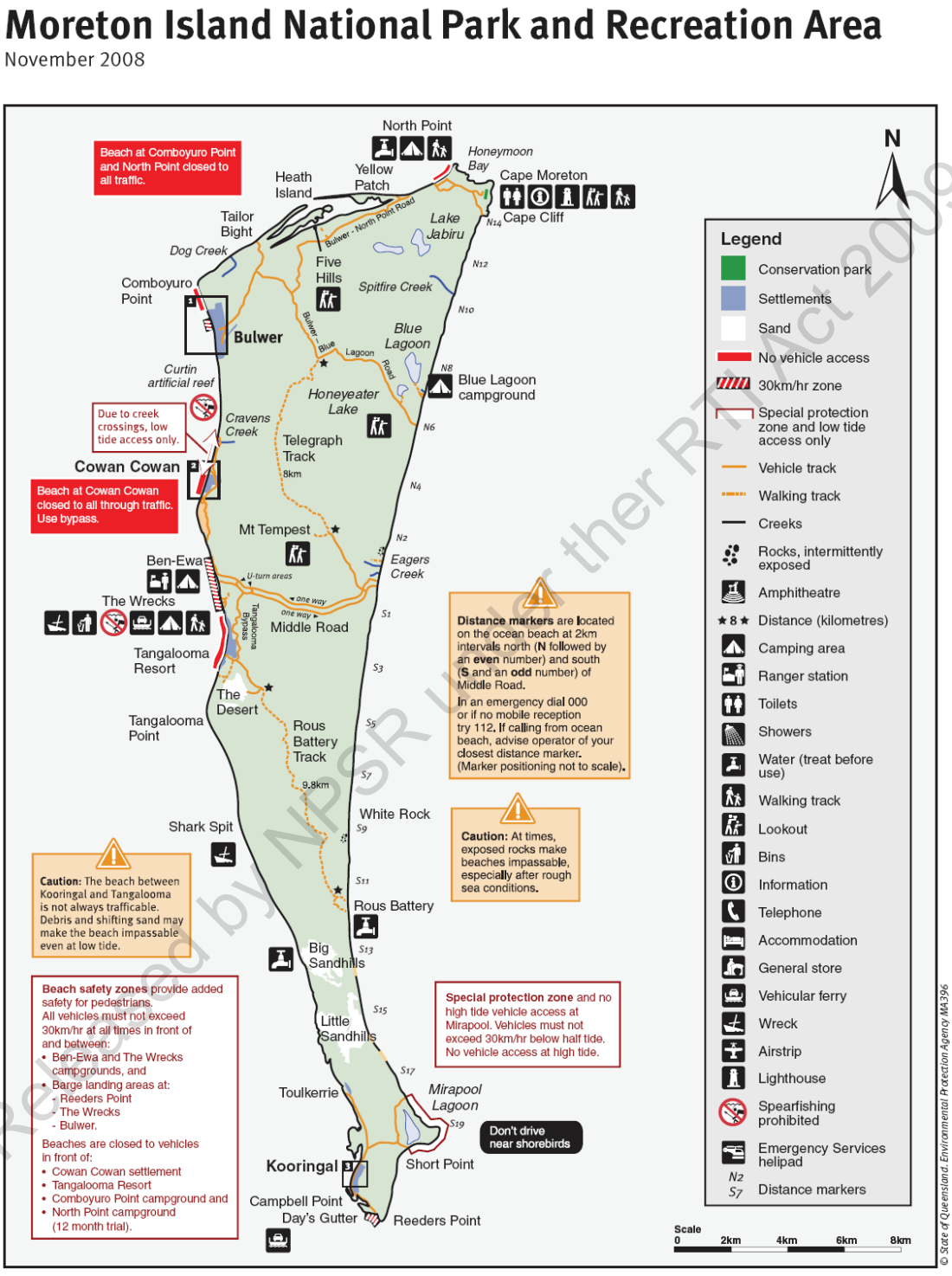
enter either the eastern or western beach, approximately 10 km north of Kooringal (see map). The Rous Battery track was originally formed during World War II as a transport link between the military installation at the Eastern Beach and the military bases at Cowan Cowan and Tangalooma on the western beach of Moreton Island.



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The site of the track and most of the island was declared National Park at various stages during the 1980's and is managed by the QPWS. The track was closed in the early 1990's due to its limited use (Middle Road is the most direct and strategically placed access connecting east and west), and high maintenance costs. In addition the Rous Battery Track was assessed as not suitable for a fire break. Instead the track has

been used as a remote walking track for the past 15 years, and was designated as such through the planning process of the Moreton Island Management plan, released in 2007.

Key Findings

The following options are currently available for paramedic access to the township of Kooringal from the Tangalooma section of the island (which is the current and likely future QAS base):

Option	Travel time	Limitations	Comments
Drive an ambulance vehicle via Middle Road and the eastern beach	35 – 50 minutes	Exposed coffee rock may prevent passage along eastern beach. Beach may not be passable on very high tides or during rough sea conditions	A good option if coffee rock not exposed
Drive an ambulance vehicle via the western beach	25 – 40 minutes	Fallen timber from natural erosion generally limits access on tides higher than 1.6 metres	Excellent option for low – mid tides. Removing fallen timber not an option, too large a scale.
Arrange emergency paramedic access by Emergency Management Queensland helicopter from Archerfield	5 – 15 minutes	Helicopter can't land if low cloud or fog is obscuring helipad.	The preferred option for emergencies. Better lighting at the helipad would improve responses in bad weather and at night.
Arrange vessel access from Amity on North Stradbroke Island	30 – 60 minutes	Unreliable option and subject to sea conditions.	Last resort if other options not feasible.
Arrange vessel access from the mainland	60 – 120 minutes	Subject to sea conditions	Slow response time makes this option undesirable

To summarise, the best method of providing fast, paramedic attendance for serious emergencies at Kooringal is use of helicopter. This has by far the fastest response time. QAS and QPWS spoke to the chief Emergency Management Queensland helicopter pilot as part of this analysis who made some suggestions to improve the helipad at Kooringal. These included trimming vegetation (already completed by

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QPWS), moving bollards (already completed by QPWS), extending the concrete apron to the south and installing lighting. The pilot advised that generally, the only weather conditions that will absolutely prevent landing at the pad are low cloud obscuring visibility of the pad from the air, particularly at night.

The next best methods of providing paramedic access to Kooringal were access via the western and eastern beach. The western beach becomes impassable on tides higher than approximately 1.6 metres, with the eastern beach more variable depending upon the exposure of coffee rock. Access by vessel is considered a last resort, due to the significant time delays and dependence on good sea conditions.

Rous Battery Track

QPWS and QAS staff undertook an evaluation of whether reopening the Rous Battery Track to vehicles would significantly improve or enhance the range of options outlined above, and if so, whether the cost and impacts upon the National Park and visitor use of the area made this a feasible option. A site inspection was carried out in two phases, with QPWS Rangers driving the entire route by quad and taking photos (see appendix) and Senior QPWS and QAS staff subsequently inspecting the track in a number of locations.

The following general conclusions were made on the likely improvements of upgrading the track to paramedic access to Kooringal:

- An upgraded track would bypass possible exposed coffee rock on the eastern beach, but still be tidal dependent once it rejoined the eastern beach, with access not possible on very high spring tides (above approximately 2.2 metres) or during especially rough sea conditions,
- An upgraded track would bypass considerable stretches of fallen timber on the western beach, but once it joined the western beach, access south to Kooringal would not be possible on tides higher than 1.6 metres due to fallen timber south of the beach entry.
- Enhanced access to Kooringal would generally only be provided when tides were between 1.6 metres and 2.2 metres (assuming sea conditions were not extreme). If tides were below 1.6 metres, the western beach would still be a faster response route than the Rous Battery Track.

The following general conclusions were made on the scale of works likely to be required to upgrade the track to accommodate an ambulance vehicle safely:

- Currently the Rous Battery Track is used as a remote walking track, and significant works would be required to bring it to a standard to safely be used by vehicles,
- The track is currently overgrown by significant stands of vegetation, and has several steep sections that are potentially unstable (see photos in Appendix).
- The track would need to be widened significantly, and hundreds of trees and their associated roots would need to be removed.
- In some areas, steep terrain would require benching of the track to prevent the possibility of partial road collapse and ambulance roll over,
- The entry of the Rous Battery Track onto the Eastern Beach is extremely steep and long, and would require hardening or substantial works to render it safe for use by vehicles. The advice of an engineer would need to be sought to ensure the road was built to a safe standard.

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- The cost of upgrading the track is likely to extend beyond $300,000, and include engineering advice for the steep eastern beach entrance and cultural heritage assessments which would be required to be carried out under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act.

The following general conclusions were made about the impact of any upgrade to the Rous Battery Track on the National Park and its consistency with relevant park management legislation and management plans.

- The Rous Battery Track is designated as a remote walking track in the Cabinet-approved Moreton Island Management Plan, which also states that *Opening the Rous Battery Track is not a consideration as it was the most expensive option with access being much slower and unstable. It would also result in the loss of a unique bushwalking experience*.
- Widening of the Rous Battery track would require the clearing of hundreds of trees, and disturbance to a footprint approximately 8 km long and 4 metres wide.
- Significant earthworks would be required in some locations to bench the track to a safe standard, requiring assessment of potential impacts upon cultural heritage.

Other Considerations

Officers of QAS and QPWS concluded that the Rous Battery Track route did offer a small improvement in access arrangements to Kooringal, and agreed to investigate options of QAS staff having access to a small all-terrain vehicle that could transport a paramedic and their equipment to Kooringal via the Rous Battery Track in the event of an emergency when more desirable options were not available. The track would require only minor works and trimming of vegetation to accommodate a vehicle of this nature, and this option would allow a paramedic to access Kooringal to stabilise a patient in the event that a helicopter or vessel couldn't be used immediately and that tides were unsuitable for the western or eastern beach.

QAS and QPWS have agreed to further investigate this option. In this circumstance, the track would require regular checking for fallen trees, and the establishment of remote camp sites off the track to avoid blocking all terrain vehicle access in the event of an emergency. This routine checking could be done by both QPWS and QAS staff.

General Conclusions

Upgrading of the Rous Battery track would come at significant cost, and have a considerable scale of environmental impact to the National Park. While such costs and impacts may be acceptable in the event that dramatic enhancements would be made to public safety, this not considered to be the case for the Rous Battery Track, as several better options of access are available. If the track was upgraded, the use of emergency helicopter would remain the best option for paramedic access to Kooringal. Further the western beach would also remain a faster option for paramedics on tides lower than 1.6 metres. The Rous Battery Track would only improve response times between tides of 1.6 m and 2.2 m, and only if the lower sections of the eastern beach are passable (which is not guaranteed). Upgrading the track would also be inconsistent with the Cabinet-approved, Moreton Island Management Plan. By further investigating use of an all-terrain vehicle for paramedic use on the Rous Battery Track, QAS would obtain the benefit of having the track as a

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response option, without the significant capital and maintenance costs associated with the track's upgrade. Importantly, this option also supports the track being used as remote walking track, as outlined in the Moreton Island Management Plan.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for consideration by the Moreton Island Essential Services Committee to enhance emergency access for the township of Kooringal:

- The Committee endorse the position that upgrading of the Rous Battery Track for vehicles is not necessary (committee members).
- Lighting be installed on the helipad, and the apron extended to the south to assist landing of emergency helicopters (Department of Emergency Services)
- QAS consider the addition of an all terrain vehicle to their ambulance fleet which could transport a paramedic and associated equipment to Kooringal via the Rous Battery Track (QAS)
- QPWS make some minor improvements to the track to support safe use by an all terrain vehicle and identify some remote campsites along its route (QPWS)
- A regular routine of inspection of the Rous Battery Track be established should QAS obtain an all terrain vehicle (QPWS and QAS)

Appendix – Photographs of Rous Battery Track – February 2009

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Appendix 2: LCS Scoring Sheet

Date: 14/9/09

Recorder: John/Chloe/Marion

Site type & name: Rows Battery day use area

Site location: at water point / beach entrance

Overall Landscape class (Category with average closest to 9)	4

Category	
Physical criteria	**Score**
Prevalence and permanence of visitor impacts	3
Viewscape (360°)	3
General landscape appearance	4
Prevalence and durability of impacts from non-recreation land uses or marine uses	N/A
Naturalness of over-storey	3
Naturalness of understorey (including aquatic vegetation)	5
Naturalness of terrestrial, freshwater and marine fauna.	5
Water quality	N/A
Total (Sum of scores)	23
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria) scored)*	3.8

Category	
Social criteria	**Score**
Evidence of other people (e.g. Sights, sounds and smells)	3
Sense of isolation	4
Interparty encounters while travelling	3
Interparty encounters on-site	4
Dependence upon outdoor skills	5
Total (Sum of scores)	19
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria scored)*	3.8

Category	
Managerial criteria	**Score**
Access	4
Evidence of management personnel	4
Presence and extent of signage	3
Rules, regulations and law enforcement	3
Presence of management and visitor infrastructure	4
Total (Sum of scores)	18
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria scored)*	3.6

The score for each criterion is the landscape class that best describes the site being assessed.

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Release

Rous Battery walking track options paper

Background

The Rous Battery walking track was originally formed during World War II as a 8 km transport link between the military installation at Toompani Beach on the eastern beach and the defense bases at Cowan Cowan and Tangalooma on the western beach of Moreton Island.

The site of the track and most of the island was declared National Park at various stages during the 1980's and is managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). QPWS closed the track in the early 1990's due to it's limited use (Middle road is the most direct and strategically placed access connecting east and west), and high maintenance costs. In addition it was assessed as not suitable for a fire break. Instead the track was designated a remote walking track through the planning process of the Moreton Island Management plan released in 2007.

The township of Kooringal is located at the southern end of the island and has no permanent ambulance facilities. There have been several requests from residents over the years to reopen the track to emergency services when weather conditions or availability prevent the immediate arrival of an ambulance helicopter.

Regular meetings of the island Essential Services group(including police, fire, ambulance, SES, QPWS, DPI and QT) has reached general agreement that opening the track would not guarantee access but that a variety of strategies were needed to suit the remoteness of Kooringal residents to emergency services.

The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) is currently setting up a permanent base on the western side of the Tangalooma resort lease adjacent to the Tangalooma by pass road. By opening the Rous track they would have fairly direct access to an inland track which would put them on the beach south of a problematic area of underlying beach coffee rock which becomes exposed during severe storm events. Despite the proximity of this track it is still faster to drive along the western beach and associated track available in most conditions.

In June 2009 QPWS managers met with QAS officers on Moreton Island to investigate contingency access to the southern end of Moreton Island.

This paper will summarise the issues involved, investigate all options and provide recommendations to improve emergency access to Kooringal

Provide map with ambo location, tracks, existing routes, towns, gates, new access to bypass road

Also photos of track, atv's

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Key Issues

- During the highest tides and severe surf conditions causing temporary coastal erosion, the township of Kooringal is temporarily cut off from the single ambulance service on Moreton Island based at Tangalooma. Of particular concern is that coffee rock north of the Rous Battery is exposed after particularly severe surf conditions and can take some weeks to be covered again.
- The ambulance helicopter has good access to kooringal and is only limited by very low cloud ceiling further exacerbated by lack of illumination at the helipad. Issues of the suitability of the concrete pad in terms of location and patient access were also raised.
- The cost of reopening and maintaining the track for the Ambulance 4wd has previously been estimated at $100,000 with a further $10,000 per year in maintenance.

- The cost of reopening and providing limited additional maintenance the track for medium All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) access (I.e standard Quad motorcycle up to a 'Rhino' or equivalent) is considerably less.
- The track was not designed as a fire break and is not topographically or directionally suited to one. It has been assessed as having significant escape issues for fire services and general users during a wildfire. For this reason the track is closed when the QPWS 'Fire Preparedness Level' reaches a D rating (ie high to extreme). There is also some risk in extreme conditions of hot exhausts etc potentially igniting the inherently high fuel loads in that fire conservation zone. For these reasons QPWS deems it appropriate to generally include emergency access during a fire closure
- The Moreton Island Recreation Area Management Plan 2007 (MIRA plan) states *"Opening the Rous Battery Track is not a consideration as it was the most expensive option with access being much slower and unstable. It would also result in the loss of a unique bushwalking experience"*. Making significant changes to this plan requires.....
- The eastern beach end of the track is still some 9km north of the inland track to Kooringal. This section of beach, whilst south of the main sections of coffee rock, can still be impassable in certain conditions thus not guaranteeing access from the track through to Kooringal.
- Opening of this or other tracks for 4wd use will likely promote illegal use leading to various environmental impacts.
- Whilst camping is not currently permitted on the Rous walking track it has been known to occur creating a safety issue not currently present.
- The time taken to access Kooringal from Tangalooma by any of the western beach, eastern beach or the Rous track routes is approximately 1 to 2 hours (in order of routes) and therefore problematic in emergency – the helicopter flight in favorable conditions is around 20 minutes.
- Access from the new ambulance station in the resort to the bypass road is time consuming.*(ie we provide direct access track to the back of the resort)*
- A variety of other access options have been investigated by QAS and QPWS including:
  1. upgrading an old track from Big Sandhills campsite to connect with the Rous track
  2. continual clearing of fallen trees along the western beach
  3. other bypass tracks formed around the coffee rocks and midden sites

  There was general consensus disregarding these options as all had significant issues inherent.

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Since QPWS closed the Rouse track some 15 years ago to general vehicle traffic there have been multiple requests from various parties to reopen it. There is considerable especially the and has restricted access to emergency services located at Tangalooma

Options

1. Not withstanding the strong reservations QPWS has in reopening the Rous track, QPWS does acknowledge that as part of a multifaceted approach in improving emergency services access to the community of Kooringal, there is some value in limited access to the track for emergency personnel.

It is envisaged that a Paramedic with basic medical equipment would take an ATV to the site of the emergency to stabilise a patient until evacuation assistance is available. Under this scenario the track maintains its primary bush walking function, the cost of preparation and maintenance is significant but manageable and non compliance is limited to similar sized vehicles (of which there are a set number registered to residents on the island). The conditions and requirements of this limited access are as follows:

Conditions:

- Track is only to be used by Ambulance officers in medical emergencies.
- Track access is for ATV's only.
- Track will be closed during very high to extreme fire danger ratings. This advice will be posted on the DERM website under Moreton Island Park Alerts https://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/parks/moreton_island_national_park.html and via temporary signage.
- QPWS shall review the suitability and effectiveness of this arrangement as required.

Requirements:

- Install padlocked sliding rail gate and additional track entry barriers at the junction of the 'Desert' road and the walking track start (-27° 11’ 32”; 153° 23’ 11”) and above the Rous Battery installations (-27° 16’ 5”; 153° 24’ 54”).
- Install signage at track entrances outlining its use for bush walking and QAS emergency use only.
- Track will be maintained three times per year by QPWS staff or contractors for ATV access and will involve trimming overhanging vegetation, removing fallen debris and repairing erosion where appropriate. As the clearance of the track can not be guaranteed it is recommended that the paramedic also take debris removal equipment
- Prepare an off-track camping area appropriate for the landscape setting of the area (2 in this case) half way along the track available to bush walkers through the camp booking system.
- *An amendment to the management plan will be sought to legitimise this new arrangement* ***or*** *MOU* ***or*** *letter of intent etc*

2. QPWS or Land manager to provide new pad to the south, illumination, move bollards and/or vegetation

helicopter can land at various beach locations if weather limits the Kooringal helipad

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Recommendations

Provide ATV access to QAS along the Rous track by:

1. gating enty/exit points
2. obtaining agreement through the Essential Services meeting forum
3. implementing a thrice yearly maintenance program (contractor)
4. provide an off-track camping site for bushwalkers
5. provide information and compliance signage

Assist with improvements to helicopter access by:

1. repositioning bollards and clearing vegetation perimeter or
2. add new concrete pad to the south with night lights – confirm with CASA the standards/ongoing requirements involved and suitable contractors to complete (QAS,CASA etc to contribute

Recommendations outside QPWS influence/control including:

1. QAS officer to be based in Kooringal
2. establish vessel based emergency response from North Stradbroke island. (Paramedic on a Jetski)
3. Raise or increase training levels of key residents to better assist in emergency situations

Ultimately Moreton Island is a remote location, the community Kooringal will not be able to expect the same level of emergency services as other places in South East Queensland unless such facilities are located in the township.

Rous Battery track - 9.8km one-way (Allow 3.5 hours each way) Grade: Moderate

See the remnants of a World War II fort scattered around the dunes. The walk follows the old Rous Battery service road. This is the only walk on the southern end of the island. You'll wander through scribbly gum forest and patches of the green, feathery ground plant called foxtails (Caustis blakei)*. Always carry sufficient drinking water. Bore water is available along the track near the ocean beach but should be treated before use*

The islands contains numerous shell middens, indicating Aboriginal occupation of the island for at least 2000 years

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Field observations – visitor usage of sites

Date: 15-8-2009 Time: From 1135 To 1145 Site location: ROCUS BATTERY TRACK DESERT END Recorder: C HANLON

Tide: ☐ Low ☐ Mid ☑ High Day type: ☐ Week ☑ Weekend ☐ School holidays

Visitor data			Site data			Activity data		
Type: (tick all which apply)		Independent	**Type:** (tick all which apply)		Lookout	**Type:** (tick all which apply)		Swimming
		Tour group		✓	Walking track			Tobogganing
		Resident			Vehicle track		✓	Snorkelling
		Unsure			Lagoon / creek		✓	Walking
				✓	Historic site EUROPEAN			4WD
Group dynamics: (tick all which apply)		Singles			Indigenous site			Beach activities
		Couples			Campground / camping zone			Surfing
		Family			Day use site		✓	Nature observation
		School group			Beach front		✓	Hiking
		Young adults					✓	Photography
		Senior citizens	**Facilities:** (tick all which apply)		Picnic tables			Boating
		Mixed			Seats			Fishing
					Car parking			Picnicking
Duration of stay: (only for long term observation)		Upto 1 hour		✓	Walking track			Cycling / mountain bike riding
		1-2 hours			Lookout / viewing platform			Horse riding
		2 – 4 hours			Toilets			Rock climbing / Abseiling
		Over 4 hours			Showers			Caving
					Water available			Orienteering / Rogaining
Mode of transport:		On foot		✓	Signage			Canoeing / Kayaking
		Private vehicle			Information centre			Camping - tent
		CTO vehicle			Shelter sheds			Camping - caravan
		Quad			Boat ramp			Camping – camper trailer
					Other			Other .....
Max. people at site:			**Comments**					

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Release

Minister: Noted / Approved / Not Approved
Signature …….. Date: ../..../….

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
MINISTER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY
GENERAL BRIEFING NOTE

CONFIDENTIAL: ☐

TITLE: Rous Battery Track, Moreton Island National Park. **Date:**

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1. RECOMMENDATION

- That the Minister **note** that:
  - upgrading the Rous Battery Track (walking track) on Moreton Island to take vehicles is not desirable from a DERM perspective due to the significant construction and maintenance costs,
  - improvements to the track could only be justified to provide better access to Kooringal for emergency services vehicles, and DERM is currently investigating this in further detail with the Queensland Ambulance Service.

2. ISSUES

- At times, high tides and beach erosion exposing coffee rock prevent vehicle access to Kooringal along Moreton Island's eastern and western beaches.
- The Rous Battery Track is an old, disused road installed by the army during war times which runs approximately parallel with part of the eastern beach.
- DERM has designated the Rous Battery Track as a remote walking track, and it has not been used by vehicles for many years.
- The current use of the Rous Battery Track as a walking track was outlined in the Moreton Island Management Plan, which was approved by Cabinet and subject to public consultation.
- Kooringal residents have long proposed to have the Rous Battery track upgraded to accommodate vehicles and facilitate easier access to the township, avoiding coffee rock on the Eastern Beach.
- Included in their concerns about access is the possibility that an ambulance may not get to the township in the event of an emergency.
- However, the Moreton Island Essential Services Committee (comprising Ambulance, Police, DERM and Council representatives) has previously agreed that the significant scale of works required to re-open the Rous Battery track is not justified, as all-weather access to the township would not be guaranteed and it can be serviced by other means during times of emergency (e.g. helicopter, vessel).
- Kooringal residents have difficulty accepting that the remoteness of their township precludes their guaranteed access, and has expectations that the DERM will provide a road network that is accessible during all weather conditions.
- At the last meeting of the Moreton Island Essential Services meeting, DERM agreed to work with the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to examine access constraints for emergency paramedics getting to Kooringal and look at options to improve the situation.
- DERM and QAS have agreed to more closely examine three options to enhance access 1) upgrade of the emergency helipad at Kooringal with better lighting 2) remove fallen timber on the western beach which blocks access to vehicles on higher tides 3) examine feasibility of an upgrade of the Rous Battery Track to western beach for emergency vehicles only, allowing continuation of the walking track for park users (subject to costs and environmental issues being acceptable).
- The cost of upgrading the Rous Battery Track is likely to be in excess of $200,000, with annual maintenance costs of $50,000 per year.
- Currently there is no ambulance permanently stationed on Moreton Island, with ambulance vehicles and a paramedic only present on the island during peak holiday periods.

3. BACKGROUND

- Kooringal is a small township located at the southern end of Moreton Island
- Vehicle access from Kooringal to the rest of Moreton Island is available along the eastern or western beach, but can be problematic if weather and tidal conditions aren't favourable.

4. CONSULTATION

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- Moreton Island Essential Services Committee
- Queensland Ambulance Service

5. MEDIA

☐ Positive ☐ Negative ☐ Possible Media Opportunity ☐ Draft Media Release Prepared

Comments:

……. **Date: …….**

John Bradley

Acting Director-General **A/Director-General's comment:**

Minister's comments

ATTACHMENT – Map

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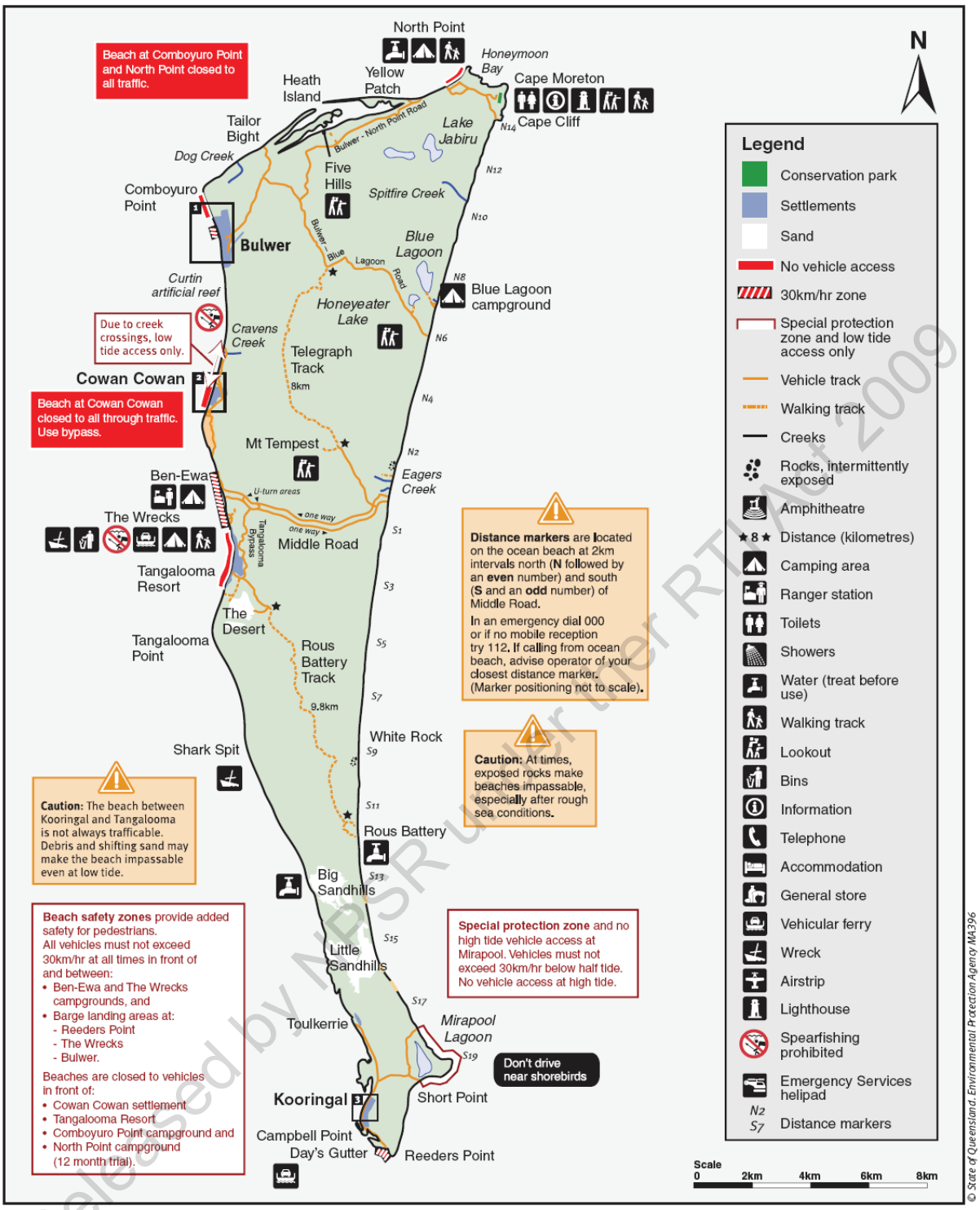

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Appendix 2: LCS Scoring Sheet

Date: 15 AUG 09

Recorder: PENNY WALKER

Site type & name: ROUS BATTERY WALKING TRACK (DESERT END)

Site location:

Overall Landscape class (Category with average closest to 9)	3 ~~2~~

Category	
Physical criteria	**Score**
Prevalence and permanence of visitor impacts	2
Viewscape (360°)	3
General landscape appearance	2
Prevalence and durability of impacts from non-recreation land uses or marine uses	/ ?
Naturalness of over-storey	2
Naturalness of understorey (including aquatic vegetation)	3
Naturalness of terrestrial, freshwater and marine fauna.	3
Water quality	n/a
***Total** (Sum of scores)*	15
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria) scored)*	2.5

Category	
Social criteria	**Score**
Evidence of other people (e.g. Sights, sounds and smells)	2
Sense of isolation	1
Interparty encounters while travelling	1
Interparty encounters on-site	1
Dependence upon outdoor skills	6
***Total** (Sum of scores)*	11
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria scored)*	2.2

Category	
Managerial criteria	**Score**
Access	3
Evidence of management personnel	1
Presence and extent of signage	2
Rules, regulations and law enforcement	2
Presence of management and visitor infrastructure	2
***Total** (Sum of scores)*	10
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria scored)*	2

The score for each criterion is the landscape class that best describes the site being assessed.

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Appendix 2: LCS Scoring Sheet

Date: 14/9/09.

Recorder: Marion / John / Chloe.

Site type & name: Ross Battery Walking Track

Site location: 200m South along track.

Overall Landscape class (Category with average closest to 9)	2

Category	
Physical criteria	**Score**
Prevalence and permanence of visitor impacts	2
Viewscape (360°)	1
General landscape appearance	2.
Prevalence and durability of impacts from non-recreation land uses or marine uses	N/A.
Naturalness of over-storey	2.
Naturalness of understorey (including aquatic vegetation)	2.
Naturalness of terrestrial, freshwater and marine fauna.	3.
Water quality	N/A
***Total** (Sum of scores)*	12.
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria) scored)*	2.

Category	
Social criteria	**Score**
Evidence of other people (e.g. Sights, sounds and smells)	2.
Sense of isolation	2.
Interparty encounters while travelling	1.
Interparty encounters on-site	1
Dependence upon outdoor skills	4.
***Total** (Sum of scores)*	10.
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria scored)*	2.

Category	
Managerial criteria	**Score**
Access	3.
Evidence of management personnel	2.
Presence and extent of signage	1
Rules, regulations and law enforcement	2.
Presence of management and visitor infrastructure	2.
***Total** (Sum of scores)*	10
***Average** (Total divided by number of criteria scored)*	2

The score for each criterion is the landscape class that best describes the site being assessed.

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Release

From: Harrison Daniella **On Behalf Of** Corro NPRSR QPWS DDG
Sent: Monday, 9 December 2013 4:24 PM
To: grant.jalland@translink.com.au
Cc: DLO NPRSR; Corro NPRSR QPWS DDG
Subject: QPWS Response - INPUT REQUEST - MC73191 DocTrak: - About Barge/Ferry service to Kooringal - Moreton Island
Importance: High

Good afternoon,

Further to your request, please find below our DDG approved dot points in relation to this matter.

- QPWS maintain a number of inland sand tracks in the Moreton Island Recreation Area (MIRA). These tracks primarily provide access for visitors to the MIRA across the island in limited locations and around the back of townships and resorts where there may be beach closures.
- Some of these tracks double as fire control lines and are maintained as such.
- Vehicle traffic around the island is primarily along the beaches, depending on tides and beach conditions.
- Middle Road is the main east – west access track across the middle of the island and is not closed.
- In rare circumstances this track can have temporary closures to allow for fire management or maintenance. However these closures are of short duration, with traffic control in place to manage safe access across the island during these times.
- The letter from [redacted] refers to Middle Track, but it is likely that they are referring to the Rous Battery Walking Track.
- QPWS does not currently have the intention or the capital and recurring maintenance funding to turn the Rous Battery Walking Track into a vehicle access track.
- Moreover, QPWS cannot see any benefit in providing vehicular access on this route as it would not provide improved access to Kooringal Township, as sections of the eastern beach would still have to be traversed.
- QPWS has had previous discussions with The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee and the Queensland Ambulance Service regarding emergency access to Kooringal and all parties concur that existing arrangements are adequate.
- Moreton Island is a remote location with limited access to services readily available in larger urban areas.

Thanks,
Daniella

Daniella Harrison
A/Team Leader
Office of the Deputy Director-General
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Department of **National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing**
Level 4, 400 George Street, Brisbane
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From: Jalland, Grant [mailto:grant.jalland@translink.com.au]
Sent: Monday, 2 December 2013 12:10 PM
To: Corro NPRSR QPWS DDG
Cc: Cannon, Toni; TLCMU-DB; Motta, Marco
Subject: INPUT REQUEST - FW: MC73191 DocTrak: - About Barge/Ferry service to Kooringal - Moreton Island
Importance: High

Good morning,

I have been advised that matters relating to the closure of Middle Road , Moreton Island, fall under the responsibility of NPRSR. As such, TransLink Division requests any relevant input that would assist with our response.

Could you please forward your input by 9 December.

Many thanks

Regards

Grant Jalland
Correspondence Team Leader | Office of the Deputy Director-General
TransLink Division | Department of Transport and Main Roads

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CTS 02064/12

RECEIVED
08 FEB 2012
MARINE DIR.

Garth Barrett
President
Kooringal Landholders Association Inc.
PO Box 7095
Brisbane QLD 4001
07 3023 1300
Email:GBarrett@pilotpartners.com.au

7 February 2012

The Director
Department of Environment and Resource Management
GPO Box 2454
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Sir,

ROAD CLOSURE – KOORINGAL, MORETON ISLAND

I am writing to you as the President of the Kooringal Landholders Association Inc, on Moreton Island, about a matter which requires your urgent attention.

So you have a little background information, Kooringal, is the largest township on Moreton and is on the southern tip of the island. There are two other towns on Moreton Island, Bulwer and Cowan Cowan, and a resort, Tangalooma Resort. All roads on Moreton Island are sand tracks. In each town, electricity and town water is not provided for by any governmental authority, but we have public rubbish collection stations which are cleared by tender, on behalf of the Brisbane City Council. We have only volunteer bush fire brigades and first aid stations. However, we do have an extensive ranger station outside of the Tangalooma Resort, at Ben Ewa, built by your government at great cost, with modern accommodation and fully equipped with solar power, under the authority of the Department of Environment and Resource Management, (DERM) and manned by permanently stationed staff, whose duties are primarily to administrate the national park and associated recreational areas.

Kooringal, is totally isolated from the other towns and unlike many other waterfront areas, eg Amity and Wynnum, does not even have a public jetty or passenger ferry service, but at the moment has a privately owned weekend vehicular barge service to and from Amity. Our only other access is by four wheel drive 30klms down the Eastern surf beach or the inner bayside Western beach from Tangalooma. The Eastern beach is by far, the most preferable of the two routes.

Until recently, access by vehicle along either beach, has only been possible for the most part, depending on the tide height. However the recent heavy January rains combined with the high tides have caused trees to fall and block the Western beach track and have seriously eroded the Eastern beach access points near Kooringal in the Mirrapool area. More, to our deep concern, the main track into our town was also severed at another place which runs very close to the surf beach.

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This was the scene of a serious car rollover in January and but for the cautious action of the driver, who got his wife and children out of the car before trying to traverse the problem spot, would have resulted in, not just damage to his car, but may have caused fatal injuries to one and all involved.

At this point of time, we, as a town appealed to the relevant authorities, to have the road (sand track) which had to be completely closed, repaired and reopened or a permanent bypass to be built, as a matter of extreme priority. The Western beach is very narrow and rough and much more difficult to traverse at any given time and is very subject to tides. As such, it is not suitable for regular everyday traffic. Kooringal is effectively totally isolated from all outside help in any emergency, especially high tide.

Despite the fact that I have written numerous emails to DERM and the Rangers regarding the urgency of this matter, nothing has been done to our track by any officials. Our pleas have fallen on deaf ears! Yet ALL other towns and tracks on Moreton Island have been repaired and reopened. As a temporary mend, a "ramp" of sand and logs was built by us, but this has not been successful. We have had inspections done on behalf of the Acting Regional Manager of the Moreton Bay Region, and now have been told there is "not a quick fix solution and considerable works will be required to deal with the issue".

At this juncture, may I also say, this is not the M1 we want. It is a short bush track of less than a kilometre, through sand, and that we also offered manned earthmoving machinery which we had in Kooringal, to DERM, to cut a new track from Kooringal through to a relatively protected spot on the existing track behind the Mirrapools.

This would ensure that we were not confronted with the same problem again. Our offer would have been done at our cost. This was refused. We made this offer because we were informed that DERM did not have the funds to proceed. I find this peculiar, considering the enormous sum spent on the ranger complex at Ben Ewa, specifically, one would assume, so that they, the rangers, would be available on-site for such emergency situations as this. We, in the town of Kooringal, have now been successfully put on hold by DERM, with a new revue date of sometime in April.

The small businesses and tradesmen of Kooringal cannot survive without proper town access. How do they earn a living and who will help them if there is another natural disaster, such as a bushfire, and where do they go to get any assistance should they fall ill?
How is the rubbish to be removed?
How do tourists and campers visit?
How can our volunteer fire brigade and SES function properly?
How does the Ambulance Service (which is stationed at Bulwer) get access to our town? For emergencies?
How do we exist until "sometime in April"?

My last communication was with our Member for Redcliffe, whereupon she was advised of new and totally incorrect facts. She was under the impression that the road was a private road. In actual fact, the track in question, was initially cut by the Rangers, approximately 10 years ago, as a bypass north of the Mirrapools, to reduce any environmentally damaging impact upon the birdlife colonies that rest on the seashore. All of the track goes through the national park.

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We have consulted the traditional landowners, the Quandamooka people, who have advised that they have no objection, whatsoever, to the track being made through their traditional lands. In fact, they realise, that this track will assist them in accessing the beach so they can fish their traditional waters. They were regular users of the original road before it was closed.

As a result, we see the delay in constructing the new track, as a complete abrogation of responsibility by the Rangers and DERM.

We need immediate action to rectify this situation.

Your assistance is urgently sought as our town is desperate and has been totally let down by DERM, who have created a bureaucratic nightmare to hide their inefficiencies.

You may contact me on my email address as above should you have any further queries.

Yours faithfully

sch4p4(6) Personal information

Garth Barrett.

Cc: The Premier of Queensland
The Honourable Anna Bligh MP

The Minister for Environment
The Honourable Vicky Darling MP

The Minister for Finance & Natural Resources
The Honourable Rachel Darling MP

The Honourable Lillian Van Litsenburg MP

The Honourable Mark Robinson MP

The Honourable Andrew Powell MP

Campbell Newman.

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CTS 02064/12

Queensland Government

Ref CTS 02064/12

Department of
Environment and Resource Management

29 FEB 2012

Mr Garth Barrett
President
Kooringal Landholders Association
PO Box 7095
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Mr Barrett

Thank you for your letter of 7 February 2012 regarding the closure of the access road to Kooringal on Moreton Island.

I am aware that recent severe weather heavily eroded this road and reduced the number of options for accessing the Kooringal Township by vehicle. I concur that there is a need to realign part of the road to re-establish more reliable access to the township, when beach access is impassable due to high tides.

I am advised that a range of works has been undertaken in an effort to maintain vehicle access around the site where the road washed away. These works included repairs to the ramps following tidal inundation and erosion. I also confirm that departmental officers are well-advanced in the planning and approvals stage of identifying an alternative track alignment and constructing a new section of road to address the problem. Pertinent issues include those aspects relating to construction and maintenance costs and environmental and cultural impact assessments.

I share your view about the compelling need to restore inland vehicular access to Kooringal Township and advise that the department is making every effort to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

Should you have any queries, please contact Andrew Hoffman of the Department of Environment and Resource Management on telephone 3131 2852.

Yours sincerely

sch4p4(6) Personal information

Jim Reeves
Director-General

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ABN 46 640 294 485

CTS10401/09

Department of Environment and Resource Management
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Advisor ..... Ok
Dated / /
Approved Not Approved Noted
Further information required
Minister.....
Dated 22/10/09.

TO: **Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability**

SUBJECT: Rous Battery Track, Moreton Island National Park.

Rcvd OEE 08 OCT 2009

TIMEFRAME

- Noting of this briefing note is non-urgent.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the Minister **note** that:
  - Residents of Kooringal on Moreton Island have made long-standing requests to QPWS to upgrade the island's Rous Battery Track to provide better access to the township,
  - The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee, comprising all relevant State and Local Government agencies, has endorsed the position that upgrading the track would be costly and is not necessary, and that alternative improvements to emergency access arrangements for Kooringal will be pursued instead.

BACKGROUND

- Kooringal is a small township located at the southern end of Moreton Island
- Vehicle access from Kooringal to the rest of Moreton Island is available along the eastern or western beach, but can be problematic if weather and tidal conditions aren't favourable.
- At times, high tides and beach erosion exposing coffee rock prevent vehicle access to Kooringal along Moreton Island's eastern and western beaches.
- The Rous Battery Track is an old, disused road installed by the army during war times which runs approximately parallel with part of the eastern beach (see Map – Attachment 1).
- QPWS has designated the Rous Battery Track as a remote walking track, and it has not been used by vehicles for many years.

CURRENT ISSUES

- The current use of the Rous Battery Track as a walking track (no vehicles) was outlined in the Moreton Island Management Plan, which was approved by Cabinet and subject to public consultation.
- Kooringal residents have long proposed to have the Rous Battery track upgraded to accommodate vehicles and facilitate easier access to the township from Tangalooma, avoiding coffee rock on the Eastern Beach.
- Included in their concerns about access is the possibility that an ambulance may not get to the township in the event of an emergency, due to restrictions from coffee rock or tide.
- The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee (comprising Ambulance Service, Police, QPWS, Department of Emergency Services, Qld Fire and Rescue and Council representatives) has previously agreed that the significant scale of works required to re-open the Rous Battery track is not justified, as all-weather access to the township would not be guaranteed and it can be serviced by other means during times of emergency (e.g. helicopter, vessel).
- Kooringal residents have difficulty accepting that the remoteness of their township precludes their guaranteed access, and have expectations that Government will provide a road network that is accessible during all weather conditions.

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Author	Cleared by	Cleared by	Recommended:
Name: Miles Yeates Position:A/SD, Marine Tel No: 3227 8870 Date: 7 October 2009	Name: Terr sch4p4(6) Personal information Position: A/Asst DG QPWS	Name:Terry Wall 11.10.09 Position:Asso DG	Name:John Bradley Director-General, DERM Tel No: 389 63181 Date:
	Name: Position:	Name: Position:	

File Ref:CVL1534

- At the 2008 meeting of the Moreton Island Essential Services meeting, QPWS agreed to work with the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to examine constraints for emergency paramedics accessing Kooringal and look at options to improve the situation (including the option of upgrading the Rous Battery Track), and then report back to the committee with some recommendations.
- A joint report between QPWS and QAS was recently finalised and recommended that upgrading the track not be pursued (See Report – Attachment 2),
- This was endorsed by the MIES Committee at their meeting in September 2009,
- The report concludes that there are significant capital ($300,000) and ongoing maintenance costs ($30,000 per year) of upgrading the Rous Battery Track, with only minimal enhancements to access, which are still not guaranteed under some weather conditions.
- Additionally, the best way of providing emergency paramedic access to Kooringal would still remain the use of helicopter, even if the track was to be upgraded.
- The MIES Committee endorsed all QPWS/QAS recommendations to improve the situation, which included upgrading the lighting and size of the emergency helipad at Kooringal (Department of Emergency Servcies responsibility) and that QAS should purchase an all terrain vehicle to provide another option for paramedic access to Kooringal along the current Rous Battery Track if needed, without the need for a major track upgrade.
- This would give paramedics the marginal benefits of using the Rous Battery Track route, without the significant costs of upgrading the track to a standard suitable for ambulance vehicles.
- The MIES Committee also noted that many parts of Moreton Island (not just Kooringal), including popular campgrounds, are inaccessible to ambulance vehicles during high spring tides, and acknowledged that this is not possible to avoid in the remote sand island environment of Moreton Island.

RESOURCE/IMPLEMENTATION IMPLICATIONS

- There are no significant cost or resource implications for QPWS in the decision not to upgrade the Rous Battery Track.

PROPOSED ACTION

- The Superintendent of Police, will now write to the Kooringal Residents Association as chair of the MIES Committee to advise the residents of the whole of government decision on the matter (i.e., not to upgrade the Rous Battery Track).

OTHER INFORMATION

- *Consultation:* Detailed consultation was undertaken with all State and local government agencies, through the Moreton Island Essential Services Committee. Several meetings have been held with Kooringal Residents Association representatives in the past few years when they have requested that the track be upgraded.
- *Key Communication Messages:* Moreton Island is a remote sand island National Park, subject to a range of weather conditions. The accessibility of several places on the island, including Kooringal, is dependent upon local weather conditions, particularly tide.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Author	Cleared by	Cleared by	Recommended:
Name: Miles Yeates Position:A/SD, Marine Tel No: 3227 8870 Date: 7 October 2009	Name: Terry Harper Position: A/Asst DG QPWS. Name: Position:	Name:Terry Wall Position:Asso DG Name: Position:	Name:John Bradley Director-General, DERM Tel No: 389 63181 Date:

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Release

From: Miles Yeates
Sent: Friday, 2 October 2009 9:44 AM
To: Dirt Water
Cc: Leeanne Ferguson
Subject: briefing note

Attachments: Rous Battery Track update.doc; Review of future use for the Rous Battery Track no photos.doc

Hi Trin,

Briefing note for Terry's consideration (Plus Attachment). Simon Munro from Mins Office called me last week and asked me to prepare this.

Miles

Rous Battery rack update.doc

Review of future use for the R...

Miles Yeates | Regional Manager | Moreton Bay Region |
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
Department of Environment and Resource Management
34 Trafalgar Street, Manly 4179
PO Box 5178 Manly QLD 4179

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Review of future use for the Rous Battery Track, Moreton Island
Report to the Moreton Island Essential Services Committee
September 2009

Background

Residents and landholders of Kooringal at the southern end of Moreton Island have made longstanding requests to Government Agencies to consider opening the Rous Battery Track on Moreton Island to vehicles to facilitate enhanced emergency vehicle access to Kooringal.

The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee (comprising representatives of the Queensland Police, Ambulance Service, Parks and Wildlife Service, Rural Fire Service, Queensland Transport and Council) has discussed such requests in the past, and concluded that reopening the track is not necessary. However, at its 2008 meeting, the Committee agreed that the matter should be examined in greater detail by staff from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), with a view to reporting back to the committee on their key findings at the following meeting in 2009.

Moreton Island is located within the local government boundaries of Brisbane City, and has three small townships of Bulwer, Cowan Cowan and Kooringal. Additionally, the Tangalooma Resort is located on the central western coast of the island, and accommodates many hundreds of staff and guests at any one time. Approximately 98% of Moreton Island is National Park, with over 350 camp sites available in a variety of locations across the island. In this regard, the number of people on Moreton Island at any one time is extremely variable with tourism seasons, and ranges from a few hundred to several thousand.

Moreton Island is a relatively remote location, despite being located in South East Queensland, with barge and ferry services generally only operating a couple of times per day. Access is also available by private vessel or aircraft if weather conditions are favourable. The QAS recently (13 July 2009) established a permanent presence of paramedic staff on Moreton Island to meet the medical emergency needs of the island's residents and visitors. Prior to this, the island was generally staffed during the peak visitation times of long weekends and school holidays.

The scattered nature of Moreton Island's townships and campsites can make paramedic access to patients in need of emergency medical attention difficult at times. Many of the island's beaches become temporarily impassable on high spring tides, and natural coastal processes such as erosion and fallen trees can obstruct the passage of vehicles along beaches for parts of the tidal cycle. While most parts of Moreton Island are relatively isolated, the township of Kooringal at the southern end of the island is particularly so, with the temporary exposure of coffee rock on the eastern beach a regular occurrence limiting vehicle access to the township, even on low tides at times. It is this isolation that has led residents of Kooringal to request consideration be given to opening the Rous Battery Track to vehicles in an effort to provide an alternative route to the township.

The Rous Battery Track runs from the Desert track, behind the Tangalooma Resort, in a south easterly direction, roughly parallel with the eastern beach. It then diverges to

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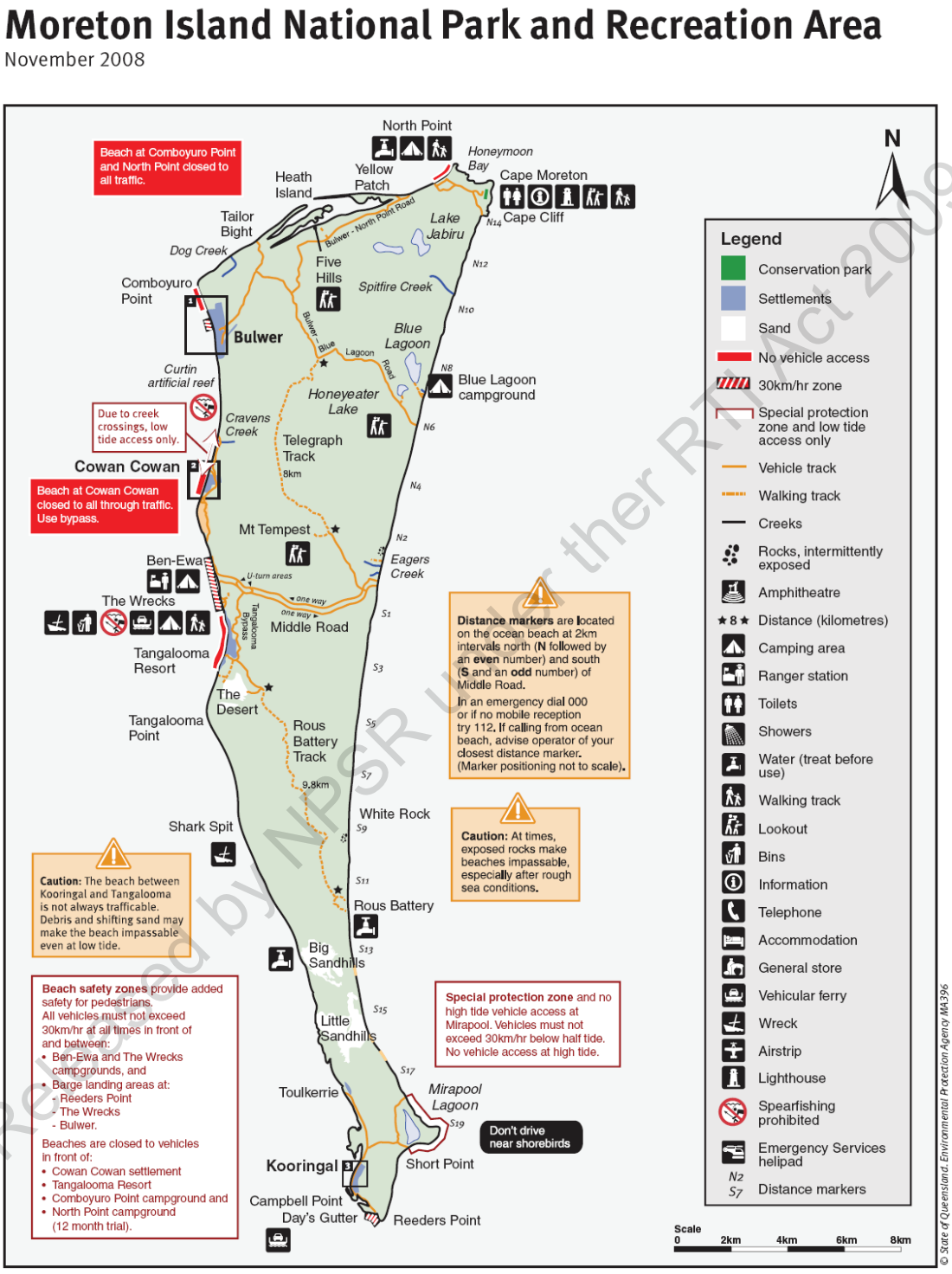
enter either the eastern or western beach, approximately 10 km north of Kooringal (see map). The Rous Battery track was originally formed during World War II as a transport link between the military installation at the Eastern Beach and the military bases at Cowan Cowan and Tangalooma on the western beach of Moreton Island.



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The site of the track and most of the island was declared National Park at various stages during the 1980's and is managed by the QPWS. The track was closed in the early 1990's due to its limited use (Middle Road is the most direct and strategically placed access connecting east and west), and high maintenance costs. In addition the Rous Battery Track was assessed as not suitable for a fire break. Instead the track has

been used as a remote walking track for the past 15 years, and was designated as such through the planning process of the Moreton Island Management plan, released in 2007.

Key Findings

The following options are currently available for paramedic access to the township of Kooringal from the Tangalooma section of the island (which is the current and likely future QAS base):

Option	Travel time	Limitations	Comments
Drive an ambulance vehicle via Middle Road and the eastern beach	35 – 50 minutes	Exposed coffee rock may prevent passage along eastern beach. Beach may not be passable on very high tides or during rough sea conditions	A good option if coffee rock not exposed
Drive an ambulance vehicle via the western beach	25 – 40 minutes	Fallen timber from natural erosion generally limits access on tides higher than 1.6 metres	Excellent option for low – mid tides. Removing fallen timber not an option, too large a scale.
Arrange emergency paramedic access by Emergency Management Queensland helicopter from Archerfield	5 – 15 minutes	Helicopter can't land if low cloud or fog is obscuring helipad.	The preferred option for emergencies. Better lighting at the helipad would improve responses in bad weather and at night.
Arrange vessel access from Amity on North Stradbroke Island	30 – 60 minutes	Unreliable option and subject to sea conditions.	Last resort if other options not feasible.
Arrange vessel access from the mainland	60 – 120 minutes	Subject to sea conditions	Slow response time makes this option undesirable

To summarise, the best method of providing fast, paramedic attendance for serious emergencies at Kooringal is use of helicopter. This has by far the fastest response time. QAS and QPWS spoke to the chief Emergency Management Queensland helicopter pilot as part of this analysis who made some suggestions to improve the helipad at Kooringal. These included trimming vegetation (already completed by

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QPWS), moving bollards (already completed by QPWS), extending the concrete apron to the south and installing lighting. The pilot advised that generally, the only weather conditions that will absolutely prevent landing at the pad are low cloud obscuring visibility of the pad from the air, particularly at night.

The next best methods of providing paramedic access to Kooringal were access via the western and eastern beach. The western beach becomes impassable on tides higher than approximately 1.6 metres, with the eastern beach more variable depending upon the exposure of coffee rock. Access by vessel is considered a last resort, due to the significant time delays and dependence on good sea conditions.

Rous Battery Track

QPWS and QAS staff undertook an evaluation of whether reopening the Rous Battery Track to vehicles would significantly improve or enhance the range of options outlined above, and if so, whether the cost and impacts upon the National Park and visitor use of the area made this a feasible option. A site inspection was carried out in two phases, with QPWS Rangers driving the entire route by quad and taking photos (see appendix) and Senior QPWS and QAS staff subsequently inspecting the track in a number of locations.

The following general conclusions were made on the likely improvements of upgrading the track to paramedic access to Kooringal:

- An upgraded track would bypass possible exposed coffee rock on the eastern beach, but still be tidal dependent once it rejoined the eastern beach, with access not possible on very high spring tides (above approximately 2.2 metres) or during especially rough sea conditions,
- An upgraded track would bypass considerable stretches of fallen timber on the western beach, but once it joined the western beach, access south to Kooringal would not be possible on tides higher than 1.6 metres due to fallen timber south of the beach entry.
- Enhanced access to Kooringal would generally only be provided when tides were between 1.6 metres and 2.2 metres (assuming sea conditions were not extreme). If tides were below 1.6 metres, the western beach would still be a faster response route than the Rous Battery Track.

The following general conclusions were made on the scale of works likely to be required to upgrade the track to accommodate an ambulance vehicle safely:

- Currently the Rous Battery Track is used as a remote walking track, and significant works would be required to bring it to a standard to safely be used by vehicles,
- The track is currently overgrown by significant stands of vegetation, and has several steep sections that are potentially unstable (see photos in Appendix).
- The track would need to be widened significantly, and hundreds of trees and their associated roots would need to be removed.
- In some areas, steep terrain would require benching of the track to prevent the possibility of partial road collapse and ambulance roll over,
- The entry of the Rous Battery Track onto the Eastern Beach is extremely steep and long, and would require hardening or substantial works to render it safe for use by vehicles. The advice of an engineer would need to be sought to ensure the road was built to a safe standard.

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- The cost of upgrading the track is likely to extend beyond $300,000, and include engineering advice for the steep eastern beach entrance and cultural heritage assessments which would be required to be carried out under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act.

The following general conclusions were made about the impact of any upgrade to the Rous Battery Track on the National Park and its consistency with relevant park management legislation and management plans.

- The Rous Battery Track is designated as a remote walking track in the Cabinet-approved Moreton Island Management Plan, which also states that *Opening the Rous Battery Track is not a consideration as it was the most expensive option with access being much slower and unstable. It would also result in the loss of a unique bushwalking experience*.
- Widening of the Rous Battery track would require the clearing of hundreds of trees, and disturbance to a footprint approximately 8 km long and 4 metres wide.
- Significant earthworks would be required in some locations to bench the track to a safe standard, requiring assessment of potential impacts upon cultural heritage.

Other Considerations

Officers of QAS and QPWS concluded that the Rous Battery Track route did offer a small improvement in access arrangements to Kooringal, and agreed to investigate options of QAS staff having access to a small all-terrain vehicle that could transport a paramedic and their equipment to Kooringal via the Rous Battery Track in the event of an emergency when more desirable options were not available. The track would require only minor works and trimming of vegetation to accommodate a vehicle of this nature, and this option would allow a paramedic to access Kooringal to stabilise a patient in the event that a helicopter or vessel couldn't be used immediately and that tides were unsuitable for the western or eastern beach.

QAS and QPWS have agreed to further investigate this option. In this circumstance, the track would require regular checking for fallen trees, and the establishment of remote camp sites off the track to avoid blocking all terrain vehicle access in the event of an emergency. This routine checking could be done by both QPWS and QAS staff.

General Conclusions

Upgrading of the Rous Battery track would come at significant cost, and have a considerable scale of environmental impact to the National Park. While such costs and impacts may be acceptable in the event that dramatic enhancements would be made to public safety, this not considered to be the case for the Rous Battery Track, as several better options of access are available. If the track was upgraded, the use of emergency helicopter would remain the best option for paramedic access to Kooringal. Further the western beach would also remain a faster option for paramedics on tides lower than 1.6 metres. The Rous Battery Track would only improve response times between tides of 1.6 m and 2.2 m, and only if the lower sections of the eastern beach are passable (which is not guaranteed). Upgrading the track would also be inconsistent with the Cabinet-approved, Moreton Island Management Plan. By further investigating use of an all-terrain vehicle for paramedic use on the Rous Battery Track, QAS would obtain the benefit of having the track as a

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response option, without the significant capital and maintenance costs associated with the track's upgrade. Importantly, this option also supports the track being used as remote walking track, as outlined in the Moreton Island Management Plan.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for consideration by the Moreton Island Essential Services Committee to enhance emergency access for the township of Kooringal:

- The Committee endorse the position that upgrading of the Rous Battery Track for vehicles is not necessary (committee members).
- Lighting be installed on the helipad, and the apron extended to the south to assist landing of emergency helicopters (Department of Emergency Services)
- QAS consider the addition of an all terrain vehicle to their ambulance fleet which could transport a paramedic and associated equipment to Kooringal via the Rous Battery Track (QAS)
- QPWS make some minor improvements to the track to support safe use by an all terrain vehicle and identify some remote campsites along its route (QPWS)
- A regular routine of inspection of the Rous Battery Track be established should QAS obtain an all terrain vehicle (QPWS and QAS)

Appendix – Photographs of Rous Battery Track – February 2009

Document Set ID: 3... Version: 1, Version Date: 07/11/2019

CTS No. [CTS No.] [BNE No.]

Department of Environment and Resource Management
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Advisor ……..…☐ Ok
Dated / /
☐ **Approved** ☐ **Not Approved** ☐ **Noted**
☐ **Further information required**
Minister……..……..
Dated / /

TO: Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Rous Battery Track, Moreton Island National Park.

TIMEFRAME

- Noting of this briefing note is non-urgent.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the Minister **note** that:
  - Residents of Kooringal on Moreton Island have made long-standing requests to QPWS to upgrade the island's Rous Battery Track to provide better access to the township,
  - The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee, comprising all relevant State and Local Government agencies, has endorsed the position that upgrading the track would be costly and is not necessary, and that alternative improvements to emergency access arrangements for Kooringal will be pursued instead.

BACKGROUND

- Kooringal is a small township located at the southern end of Moreton Island
- Vehicle access from Kooringal to the rest of Moreton Island is available along the eastern or western beach, but can be problematic if weather and tidal conditions aren't favourable.
- At times, high tides and beach erosion exposing coffee rock prevent vehicle access to Kooringal along Moreton Island's eastern and western beaches.
- The Rous Battery Track is an old, disused road installed by the army during war times which runs approximately parallel with part of the eastern beach (see Map – Attachment 1).
- QPWS has designated the Rous Battery Track as a remote walking track, and it has not been used by vehicles for many years.

CURRENT ISSUES

- The current use of the Rous Battery Track as a walking track (no vehicles) was outlined in the Moreton Island Management Plan, which was approved by Cabinet and subject to public consultation.
- Kooringal residents have long proposed to have the Rous Battery track upgraded to accommodate vehicles and facilitate easier access to the township from Tangalooma, avoiding coffee rock on the Eastern Beach.
- Included in their concerns about access is the possibility that an ambulance may not get to the township in the event of an emergency, due to restrictions from coffee rock or tide.
- The Moreton Island Essential Services Committee (comprising Ambulance Service, Police, QPWS, Department of Emergency Services, Qld Fire and Rescue and Council representatives) has previously agreed that the significant scale of works required to re-open the Rous Battery track is not justified, as all-weather access to the township would not be guaranteed and it can be serviced by other means during times of emergency (e.g. helicopter, vessel).
- Kooringal residents have difficulty accepting that the remoteness of their township precludes their guaranteed access, and have expectations that Government will provide a road network that is accessible during all weather conditions.

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Author	**Cleared by**	**Cleared by**	**Recommended:**
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- At the 2008 meeting of the Moreton Island Essential Services meeting, QPWS agreed to work with the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to examine constraints for emergency paramedics accessing Kooringal and look at options to improve the situation (including the option of upgrading the Rous Battery Track), and then report back to the committee with some recommendations.
- A joint report between QPWS and QAS was recently finalised and recommended that upgrading the track not be pursued (See Report – Attachment 2),
- This was endorsed by the MIES Committee at their meeting in September 2009,
- The report concludes that there are significant capital ($300,000) and ongoing maintenance costs ($30,000 per year) of upgrading the Rous Battery Track, with only minimal enhancements to access, which are still not guaranteed under some weather conditions.
- Additionally, the best way of providing emergency paramedic access to Kooringal would still remain the use of helicopter, even if the track was to be upgraded.
- The MIES Committee endorsed all QPWS/QAS recommendations to improve the situation, which included upgrading the lighting and size of the emergency helipad at Kooringal (Department of Emergency Servcies responsibility) and that QAS should purchase an all terrain vehicle to provide another option for paramedic access to Kooringal along the current Rous Battery Track if needed, without the need for a major track upgrade.
- This would give paramedics the marginal benefits of using the Rous Battery Track route, without the significant costs of upgrading the track to a standard suitable for ambulance vehicles.
- The MIES Committee also noted that many parts of Moreton Island (not just Kooringal), including popular campgrounds, are inaccessible to ambulance vehicles during high spring tides, and acknowledged that this is not possible to avoid in the remote sand island environment of Moreton Island.

RESOURCE/IMPLEMENTATION IMPLICATIONS

- There are no significant cost or resource implications for QPWS in the decision not to upgrade the Rous Battery Track.

PROPOSED ACTION

- The Superintendent of Police, will now write to the Kooringal Residents Association as chair of the MIES Committee to advise the residents of the whole of government decision on the matter (i.e., not to upgrade the Rous Battery Track).

OTHER INFORMATION

- *Consultation:* Detailed consultation was undertaken with all State and local government agencies, through the Moreton Island Essential Services Committee. Several meetings have been held with Kooringal Residents Association representatives in the past few years when they have requested that the track be upgraded.
- *Key Communication Messages:* Moreton Island is a remote sand island National Park, subject to a range of weather conditions. The accessibility of several places on the island, including Kooringal, is dependent upon local weather conditions, particularly tide.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

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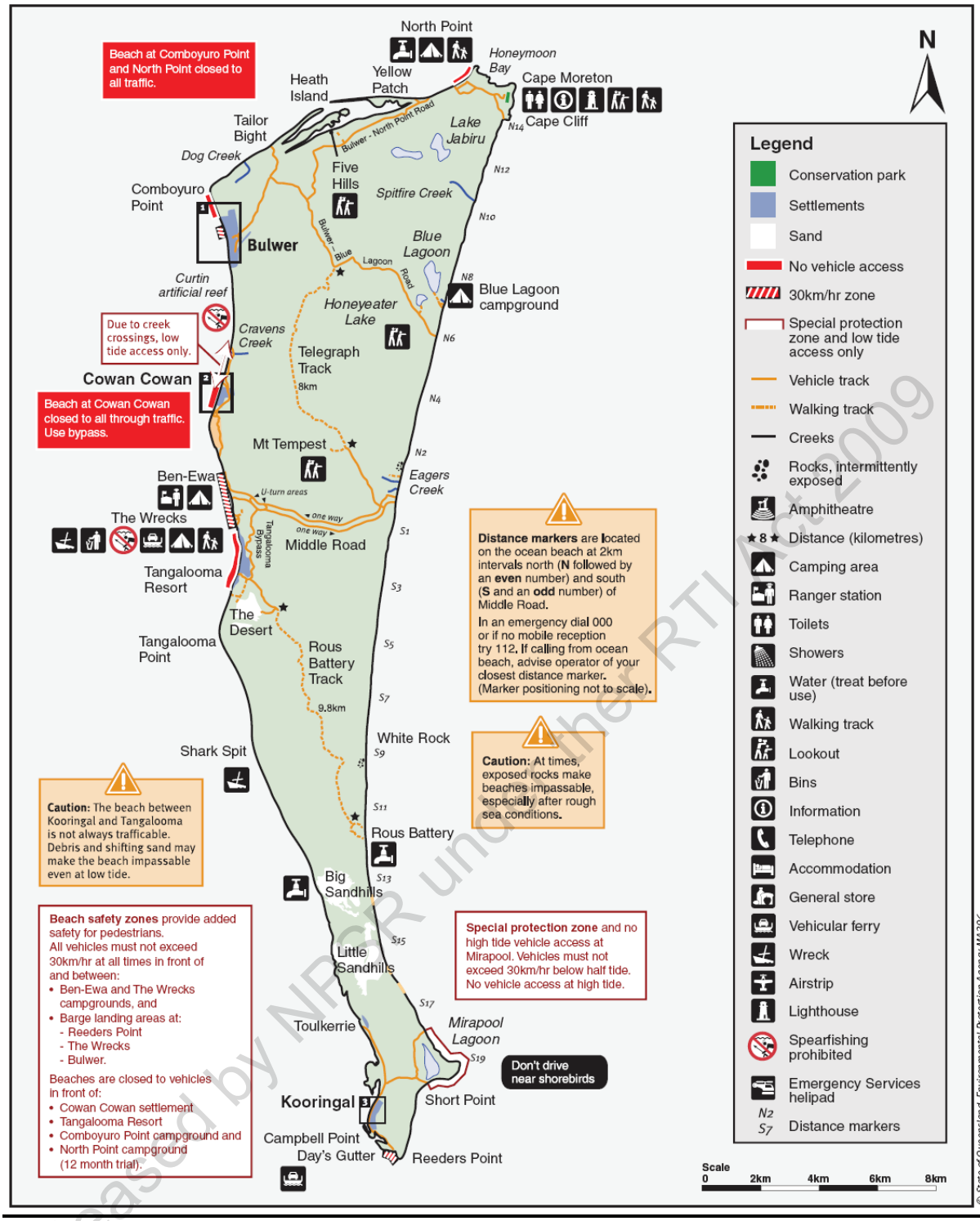
- Attachment 1 – Map of Moreton Island



- Attachment 2 – Report on Rous Battery Track prepared by QPWS and QAS

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