

## Meeting Notes

Meeting for Whole of CAC  
9 December 2009

**Time:** 6.00pm

**Venue:** Harbour Trust Boardroom Georges Heights

**Present:**

- Robin Derricourt
- Edward Elsom
- Paul Forward
- Ian Freeman
- Sue Halmagyi
- Oliver Irving
- Phil Jenkyn
- Jennie Minnifie
- Jim Morton
- Zena O'Connor
- Peter Poland
- Stewart Reed
- Mike Rolfe
- Terry Ryan
- Adrienne Sallay
- Neil Schafer
- Chris Skinner
- Belinda York
- Geoff Bailey
- James Leech (Trust)
- Peter Osmand (Trust)
- Nick Hollo (Trust)
- Jessica Sartor (Trust)

**Apologies:**

- Carole Baker
- Denny Linker
- Alick Osbourne
- Anne Connon
- Ian Henderson

**Purpose**

The purpose of the meeting was to give an update on the HMAS Platypus site and to give a general update on other Trust sites.

### HMAS Platypus

The project will be carried out in two stages. Stage 1 generally relates to the above ground and preparatory works, whilst stage 2 generally relates to the below ground contaminant removal or containment and ground water management works.

**During stage 1;** the wharf and part of the seawall will be repaired, sediments in the adjacent waterways investigated, dilapidation surveys will be undertaken, above ground contaminants including lead and asbestos will be removed from all buildings and surrounds, some in-ground services may be relocated, the retort building will be dismantled and the administration building and store demolished.



Community consultation involving the CAC, local residents, the North Sydney Council and other interested stakeholders are planned for March through to May 2010.

Timing for this stage is for the design and consultation process to be completed by around May 2010 after which the on site works will commence. Site works completion is planned for December 2010.

**During stage 2;** all below ground hazardous contaminants (located at the northern end of the site and estimated around 35,000 tonnes) will be removed and treated, contaminated fill located below or in the Rantme and coal store buildings will be removed, other contaminated materials located below existing pavements will be maintained on-site, contaminated ground and seepage water will also be treated.

Community consultation involving the CAC, local residents, the North Sydney Council and other interested stakeholders are planned for March through to the end of 2010.

Timing for this stage is for the design and consultation process to be completed by December 2010 after which the on site works will commence. Completion is planned for July 2012.

Determination of the most appropriate treatment method for the 35,000 tonnes of tar and tar impregnated fill at the northern end of the site is underway:

The treatment options being considered are;

- Off-site treatment: Digging up the contaminated material and transporting to a treatment plant where the contaminants are essentially destroyed. Clean material is then returned to site.
- Off-site containment. Digging up the contaminated material, stabilizing that material and then transporting to a licensed containment facility. Clean material is then returned to site.
- On-site treatment. Digging up the contaminated material and treating on site by thermal treatment.
- On-site containment. Digging up the contaminated material and placing in an engineered containment cell on site.

For all options, the critical issues of odour control, programme duration, traffic management, noise and vibration control, hours of operation and costs are being considered.

As part of the review process, the Trust will seek input from capable and experienced companies through an Expression of Interest process.

In February/March of next year we will hold another meeting to further discuss and consider the available treatment options and to determine the program of community consultation prior to and during the works.



## Questions and Comments

*The source of most of the contamination is from the Gasworks period and not from use by the Department of Defence.*

Yes the Trust is aware of this.

*Does the work involve removing the lift well that is currently there?*

Yes, the current lift will be demolished with the Admin building and a new lift re-built further south as per the plan.

*How will asbestos be transported from the site? Will it go by truck or barge?*

At this stage we are not sure of the exact method of removal but all work will be done to industry standards. Asbestos is usually placed in sealed bags for transportation. Removal by trucks would not be precluded as a method of transport.

*Will the majority of other contamination be removed by barge?*

We have yet to determine the most suitable method of removing the contaminated source material. All transport options are being considered as part of the Stage 2 review currently underway. Removal by barge is an option available to the Trust.

*Will there be an enclosure erected on the northern part of the site for the remediation work?*

Yes, the structure is put in place for odour and noise management and is a pressurised enclosure.

*Is all the contamination in the Northern end of the site?*

There is some contamination under the floorboards of RANTME building which we plan to remove. Other contaminants under concrete pavements or buildings at the southern end of the site will be maintained. The coal bunker contains hazardous contaminants and is being assessed as part of the stage 2 works.

*Will building 3 be demolished in Stage 1 of the project?*

This has not been decided but the building may be retained for use as a site office. The Department of Defence will only pay if the demolition of buildings is associated with the removal of contamination.

*What will be done about protecting the bay during the works?*

Sheet piling will be placed behind the sea wall at the Northern end and the sea wall will be re-pointed to stop migration. A siltation boom will also be put in place in the waterway adjacent to the site.

*If contamination is found in the sediments and water is there a preferred way to remove it?*

The general approach is to leave it. It is usually a low risk issue and is better left alone. The situation will improve, as we will be removing the source material which may have contributed to sediment contamination.



*Has Defence put a cap on the funding?*

The funding limit is not fixed however caveats on expenditure do exist to make sure funding is limited to remediation works only. There is scope to take into account any variations which may occur and any additional, unforeseen remediation required and verified by the site auditor. We are conscious that this project is being undertaken with taxpayers' money and therefore must be carried out carefully and economically.

*How do you trade off the environmental outcomes against cost?*

We will abide by DECCW (EPA) guidelines and requirements in relation to the environmental standards implemented on the site. The cost to carry out the works to these standards will be determined through the tender and subsequent on-site construction processes.

*Is there any dispute resolution factored into the contract?*

The pre-validation process is designed to remove most of the surprises which may occur with regards to contamination. The Contractor will be required to have a "hotline" or similar to provide point of contact to resolve concerns during works.

*What are the expected hours of operation during the works? Can you say that work will not go past 8pm for example?*

The hours of operation are not yet determined and will be considered as part of the stage 2 planning, currently underway. The Trust is keen to complete the remediation works efficiently and with the minimum impact on the residents. This issue will be subject to on-going discussion with the CAC, the North Sydney Council and the community.

*Is there a threat of contaminants becoming airborne? We live in close proximity to the site and this is a concern to us.*

All works are to be carried out in strict accordance with the DECCW environmental control guidelines and requirements which are set to ensure the maintenance of public health.

The odour tent proposed for stage 2 works is a sealed enclosure and all the air discharged from the structure has to meet established health guidelines. Also hazardous materials leaving the site are intended to be contained in sealed vehicles or containers.

*What about airborne contamination during the removal of buildings?*

The demolition of the two buildings at the northern end is expected to take about 5-6 weeks. Contaminants including asbestos and lead paint will be removed from the buildings prior to the demolition works getting underway. During building demolition dust will be managed by the erection of scaffold and shade cloth and by wetting down the works

## **Cockatoo Island**

Convict isolation cells in the barracks complex at the top of the island were discovered recently. Works to the barracks complex have also commenced and will continue in the coming year. These include the removal of the verandas and stone conservation works to the convict buildings.



A self directed convict trail has been developed and should be up and running in the new year. It includes the new elevated walkway between the side of the Turbine Shop that allows excellent views into the grain silos. This walkway is now open to the general public.

A new swimming area in the slipway has also recently opened.

The café has been relocated to a more suitable location on the eastern apron, facing the harbour with views of the city and harbour bridge.

A number of successful events took place throughout 2009 including

- Ken Unsworth exhibition *A ringing glass - Rilke* (June 1-28)
- National Art School *On an island: Selections from National Art School Drawing Week* (30 May– 28 June)
- William Kentridge artwork *i am not me, the horse is not mine* (Winter 2009)
- Comedy Festival (17 & 18 October 2009)

The next large scale event to be held on the island is the 2010 Sydney Biennale in May – August 2010.

### **Questions and Comments**

*One comment about the Unsworth exhibition was that the structure seemed to take away from the vastness of the Turbine Shop.*

It was considered acceptable because it was temporary. The Unsworth exhibition was very successful for the island in terms of visitation. The exhibition was originally meant to be held for one night only for the friends and family of Ken Unsworth. Fortunately we were able to keep the exhibition open for a longer period so members of the general were also able to experience the artwork.

*Is the search for tenants on the island now on the back burner?*

No, but we do want to ensure that we get the right mix of tenants and the right fit with the directions the island is taking.

*The connection between Cockatoo Island and HMAS Platypus should be emphasized in the island's interpretation.*

Yes this is something we will investigate further. It has been flagged in the HMAS Platypus plan.

### **North Head**

Australian Wildlife Conservancy moved into the Gatehouse at North Head recently. They have commenced work in establishing the Sanctuary. At this stage, their work is on bandicoot monitoring on Trust, NPWS and other lands.

The North Head Sanctuary Foundation Nursery opened it's doors in early 2009. Their primary work is to propagate native plants for bush regeneration over the headland. They also run tours and workshops.



School education visits to the site have increased as have film and TV shoots.

A large and successful event called Morning of the Earth was held on the oval at North Head in November. It was part of a surfing festival held in Manly.

A number of building works have concluded including repairs to building 1 and the Officer's Mess.

### **Questions and Comments**

*Will you be looking at new signage at North Head?*

A design of all signage including entry signage will be undertaken in the new year. We are aware that signage on the site is inadequate and we will review all signage to help orientate visitors at the site.

*The focus at North Head has been on the Trust's own site. The Trust is now at the stage where it needs to work with other stakeholders on not just planning but marketing and promotion. Is the Trust involved in the stakeholder committee at North Head? All stakeholders need to get together on this.*

North Head integrated management has always been something we have been keen to develop. We attend the stakeholder committee meetings and work with NPWS and other stakeholders on all operational matters.

*Can there be a further update on North Head early in the new year please?*

Yes, this will be included in the next CAC meeting for 2010.

### **Headland Park**

The Trust is currently designing a range of themed walks at its Headland Park site. These include a self-guided tour which integrates with National Parks sites.

The Trust has been liaising with Mosman Council about a location for a Men's Shed at Headland Park. There are two locations being investigated. One is at Lower Georges Heights in the pump-house and adjacent shed and the other is at the rear of the amenities block and Georges Heights oval.

### **Questions and Comments**

*Will you remove the amenities block at Georges Heights oval?*

No the building will be kept and modified. We have found that it is relatively quiet during the week and that this may be an option for the Men's Shed facility. It is the more costly version but with some refurbishment it may be a more suitable location. The amenities on the oval side would be retained and the rear of the building extended and opened up. It would also provide an opportunity to improve the appearance of the building.

*What will happen to the Naval cottages?*

We are obliged to retain at least 3 of them for their heritage significance. We are demolishing one very soon and then will commence landscaping around the area. The other houses will be repaired.

*The Trust, NPWS and Council need to coordinate and develop a joint map and joint signage.*

The new Headland Park map/brochure is a self-guided tour. The Trust has consulted NPWS and incorporated the NPWS tracks.

## **Woolwich**

Sea Wall repairs have been undertaken at the Horse Paddock. The function centre at the dock is currently underway and is expected to be completed in 2010.

### **Questions and Comments**

*What is the height of the sea wall at Woolwich?*

The sea wall the same height as the highest point of the wall near the Margaret St end and higher than the wall at Clarkes Point. It has been designed for the high water mark.

*Will the Trust try to get re-imburement from the Rivercats to repair the seawall?*

We have also had problems with the Parramatta Wharf at Cockatoo Island. Indicators are that we are unlikely to receive any compensation.

## **Macquarie Lighthouse/Marine Biological Station**

The site was formally handed over to the Harbour Trust in 2009. Minor remediation works and archaeological works will commence soon. 2010 is the Macquarie bicentenary and a number of events are being planned at the lighthouse to coincide with this.

### **Questions and Comments**

*What is happening with the townhouses?*

The management plan foreshadowed their removal and this has not changed. The timing of this has yet to be determined.

*The Trust needs an information board at the front of the lighthouse and along the cliff edge. What is there currently is inadequate.*

We will look at improving the signage and interpretation at the lighthouse. We will also need to provide interpretation for the archaeological works.

*The Trust should launch the new Bungaree book during the bicentenary of Macquarie in 2010.*

Yes, the Trust is planning to do so.

*What has happened with the illegal structures that have popped up at the MBS?*

The tenant has been instructed to remove them. This will need to be followed up.

## **Foundation**

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The Trust is aiming to launch a foundation in 2010. The Trust believes that the only protection for the sites is community engagement and that a foundation will be able to foster this engagement and help to raise revenue. It is the community that will ultimately protect the future of the sites.

### **Questions and Comments**

*How will North Head Sanctuary Foundation fit with the foundation as they have been a leader in this sense?*

This will need to be worked out with further collaboration when the foundation has been established.

*Will the foundation be a legal entity with a separate board?*

The Golden Gate Conservancy is a good model for comparison. The Foundation will be a not-for-profit organisation and it will be able to receive tax-deductible donations. It will have its own board and will be a legal entity.

### **Suggestions for foundation projects**

Some project idea that have been raised are:

- a ceremonial area for the Georges Heights Parade Ground.
- further themed walks at Headland Park such as a George Raper walk.
- conservation of Biloela House on Cockatoo Island.
- development of a Fauna Tracking centre NH
- interpretation of the Quarantine Cemetery
- conservation works to the remnant Greenway Lighthouse wall
- development of a Horse Paddock escarpment walk

### **Questions and Comments**

*Another suggestion for foundation projects is to purchase the lease of the houses at the Macquarie Lightstation.*

*Will the Trust be raising money for operational projects?*

The view is that most people are unlikely to donate towards an operational budget. People prefer to see a physical outcome to their donation.  
*What is planned for the Bungaree farm?*

We have thought about doing something near the wooden urn sculpture. Details of this will be developed in the new year.

*There is a lot of interest from overseas tourist in the Aboriginal Heritage.*



The Trust hoping to do some more work on Aboriginal interpretation. This is being flagged in the new corporate plan.

### **General Questions**

*Is there funding available for a Stage 3 at the Platypus site, that is, for landscaping and interpretation.*

There is no commitment for this phase however this is three years away and we will need to seek funding through the normal budgetary process.

*When will the committee meet again?*

We will determine some dates early in the new year. The Platypus CAC will meet in February/March regarding the remediation.

**The meeting concluded at 8.30pm**

