



**HARBOUR TRUST**  
**SUB BASE PLATYPUS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
8 September 2021

**Time:** 6:00pm – 7:30pm

**Venue:** Zoom Video Conferencing

**Present**

Trent Zimmerman MP, *Member for North Sydney*  
Melina Rohan, *Representative of Trent Zimmerman*

Ken Williams  
Matthew Lorrimer  
Paul Forward  
Phil Burfurd

**Apologies**

Cr Jilly Gibson, *Mayor North Sydney Council*

Amanda Sojan (for Romi Hoffenberg)  
Christopher Stapleton  
Neil Schafer  
Tammy Dodd

**In Attendance**

**Harbour Trust**

Michael Rose, *Member of the Trust*  
Jessica Keen, *former Member of the Trust*  
Janet Carding, *Executive Director*  
Kathryn Roberts, *Director - Marketing & Visitor Experience*  
Libby Bennett, *Director - Projects*  
Graham Izod, *Director Assets and Parklands*  
Michael Pender, *Development Advisor*  
Rebecca Hill, *Head of Marketing & Engagement*  
Claudia Rosario, *Communications & Engagement Manager*  
Ben Treble, *Program Manager*  
Patrick Lee, *Project Manager*



## 1. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

The Harbour Trust's incoming Executive Director, Janet Carding (JC) opened the meeting by acknowledging the Traditional Owners, past, present and emerging. JC introduced herself to the Sub Base Platypus Community Advisory Committee (SBP CAC) members.

## 2. Welcome from Executive Director

JC provided a brief overview of her professional background and experience. JC noted that having recently joined the Harbour Trust, she was excited by the opportunity to work on such significant heritage sites – places that are wonderful spaces of refuge as well as important destinations for local, domestic and international visitors. The Harbour Trust sites tell the story of Australia.

## 3. Introduction from Members

The General CAC Members introduced themselves and shared an overview of their expertise and areas of interest.

JC introduced Michael Rose (MR) who was in attendance on behalf of the Members of the Trust. MR noted that he is the Trustee appointed on the recommendation of the NSW Government. Sharing an overview of his current and past roles, MR highlighted his interest in placemaking and heritage. MR noted that the Members of the Trust have been intentional about increasing engagement with the Harbour Trust's advisory groups. He highlighted the value of input from the advisory groups, noting that the Members of the Trust are interested in hearing this input directly and developing more significant relationships with members. JC echoed this sentiment, noting that she would like to meet SBP CAC members in person when COVID-19 restrictions ease.

## 4. Project status and program update

Michael Pender (MP) provided an update on the status of the project including an overview of the revised program. MP noted that following the Stage 1 Tender, Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI), five Tier 2 and Tier 3 contractors were deemed capable and shortlisted. While the Harbour Trust is ready to go to market for a Head Works Contractor, MP noted that we need to be conscious of how the market will receive the tender. It is important for the Harbour Trust to keep a firm eye on risk.

MP discussed the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the construction industry and the current volatility of the market. The restrictions have caused significant disruption to the commercial construction industry primarily due



to the large proportion of suppliers and labour located within the several local government areas (LGAs) of concern. These LGAs are the primary supply zone to the city and make up a considerable amount of the trade labour. The commercial disruption to the industry is due to a heightened risk of cash flow, as commercial contracts have no current mechanism to manage COVID-19. Tier 2 and Tier 3 contractors are most exposed at the moment. The Harbour Trust has received advice from cost planners/quantity surveyors about the volatility of tenders and the likelihood of a reasonably soft market. It is anticipated that this situation is likely to abate in November.

As the Harbour Trust adopts a low risk profile in capital investment, the Members of the Trust have decided to delay the start of works onsite. The change to the schedule is in the order of 4 months with Christmas and the shutdown period having an impact on this timeframe.

MP provided an overview of the revised program. It was noted that the Harbour Trust is adopting a more flexible position in the tender document aimed at mitigating risk. This includes a longer tender period and a longer validity to the commercial offer. The Harbour Trust position adopts a risk mitigation strategy with a greater degree of flexibility, primarily around the Tier 2 and Tier 3 market.

**Committee feedback:**

- Paul Forward (PF): What is the impact of the deferral on the project budget?
  - o MP: There is a holding cost that will be incurred by the project deferral however it is not a significant cost.
- Matthew Lorrimer (ML): What is a contractor capacity in respect of certification, supply and fix and GC21?
  - o MP: Commercial construction contracts (generally not GC21) provide little ability or flexibility in certification for stage claims and payments representing considerable commercial disruption to Head Contractors cash flow.
- ML: What are the risk mitigation strategies aside from delaying the project?
  - o MP: There are limited other risk mitigation strategies. The delay allows flexibility and along with COVID-19 disruption clauses, there is no need to mitigate risk beyond the commercial offer given that it is a relatively straight forward project.
- Jessica Keen (JK) to PF: How do you think the immediate local community will feel about the delay?
  - o PF: Expect that this will not come as a surprise and that the community will understand why this decision has been taken. It is not anticipated that this will be an issue for the community.
- Trent Zimmerman MP (TZ): In the timeline presented, there appears to be a whole lot of non-construction work that is happening between now and March. What prevents the Harbour Trust from bringing the start of construction forward? Is there a risk there will be such a 'glut' of work that the Harbour Trust will not be able to secure a Head Works Contractor?
  - o MP: The five pre-selected contractors have expressed full confidence with adopting the revised program. The risk in the project being further delayed is very low. The six months before the start of construction is primarily interrupted by Christmas. The construction industry is forecasting an odd shutdown due to the



impacts on the COVID-19 restrictions. The industry usually shuts down for 3-4 weeks over Christmas, however this year we will not know what the shutdown looks like. The forecast of reopening and construction returning to normal is not expected to occur until February 2022. It is important to note that the industry cannot respond instantly, it will need to ramp back up to 100%. Additionally, there is considerable shortages in supply at the moment in terms of materials.

## 5. Detailed design progress update

MP discussed the five key design issues that the Harbour Trust is in the process of resolving, noting that these are minor changes in the scope. The design elements include the relocation of the toilets; the fire system on Level 1 (High Street level); the scope of demolition for the southern façade; decoupling the design of the foreshore park; and waterfront access to the Crown Lands parcel and Kesterton Park.

MP noted that the next meeting will be focused on program, the demolition and construction sequence, and the proposed interpretation scope.

### **Committee feedback:**

- JK: Regarding the Crown Land parcel, have you spoken to North Sydney Council about the negotiation? Council have negotiated Crown Land many times and would be happy to work with the Harbour Trust on this. I can connect the Harbour Trust with Council officers.
  - o MP: The Harbour Trust would welcome a discussion about this offline.
- PF: In response to Jessica's offer, I have had a lot of experience working with Council. It is important that there is a champion within Council to help progress the outcome. Jessica, are you offering to be that champion?
  - o JK: Yes, happy to take on that role.
- ML: How much design responsibility is the contractor adopting with respect to the landscape?
  - o MP: Nil. The Harbour Trust expects that there is approximately 75-80% known in terms of what is beneath the building. However, we are not confident in finalising documentation that would expose the Trust to a latent condition claim. We will adopt a provisional sum in the contract with informed design. Given it is so close to the water, the Harbour Trust is taking a conservative position on this.
- ML: Does the Harbour Trust expect there to be geotechnical risk considering only 10 boreholes have been taken?
  - o MP: The boreholes have been analysed for both geotechnical and HAZMAT data. The HAZMAT data gives us confidence. It is important to remember that we are not 'loading it' - this is not a multi-storey apartment block, it is a foreshore park.

## 6. Community and stakeholder engagement update

Claudia Rosario (CR) shared an update on community and stakeholder engagement including the activities undertaken following approval of the project in early June. CR provided an overview of the type of feedback



received from the community and local stakeholders during this engagement, noting that it was largely aligned with feedback received during the public exhibition period. CR provided an overview of communications and engagement activities that will be delivered leading up to the start of construction, including how the Harbour Trust plans to communicate the project deferral to the broader community and key local stakeholders. At the next meeting, the Harbour Trust will share an overview of the communications and engagement approach for construction works.

**Committee feedback:**

- PB: Suggest there is an opportunity to share communications regarding the construction deferral with North Sydney Council, Trent Zimmerman's Office and Iora Apartments so they can share this update with their stakeholders via their own channels. JK supported this.
  - o CR: Yes, agree with this approach. The Harbour Trust has prepared content for Iora Apartments to post on their resident intranet. We will share the construction deferral communications with North Sydney Council and Trent Zimmerman's Office as well.
- Melina Rohan (MR): What level of detail in terms of timing will be shared with the broader community?
  - o CR: The timeframes against key milestones presented at this meeting will be shared with the community and other key stakeholders later this week.
- JK: Would encourage the Harbour Trust to present at the Precinct Committee Meetings.
  - o CR: Yes, we have discussed this with the Milson and Neutral Precinct Committees. The project team will deliver a presentation and Q&A to these committees closer to the start of construction.

**7. Sub Base Platypus visitor research**

Rebecca Hill (RH) provided a short overview of the visitor research undertaken over the past 12 months. RH noted that visitor data has been collected via Hello Lamp Post, a tool which allows visitors to have an interactive 'conversation' with object onsite to learn more about the history of the site and share their feedback. There have been over 2000 interactions with the five objects located at Sub Base Platypus. Generally, visitors were satisfied with their visit and the public domain. The data suggests that majority of people visiting the site during this period were first time visitors, which is surprising given the lack of domestic and international tourism over the last 12 months. The research also provided insights into visitor intentions, with data indicating that people were interested in the history; views and open space; and recreation and exercise. Kathryn Roberts (KR) noted that visitation has been down during this lockdown, however prior to this the site saw a significant jump in visitor numbers.

**Committee feedback:**

- PF: Some time in future, it may be necessary to review the wayfinding strategy for the whole site as there are opportunities for improvement. Some visitors have commented that they cannot find their way to the lift



which is not surprising. More people would use the lift if they knew it was there. Strategically placed signs would help to improve wayfinding.

- PF: We have had two cars trying to access the Kiara Close carpark via the gates which have been left ajar to enable disabled access.
  - o LB: After visiting the site last week, a potential solution has been identified which involves fixing the gate in a half open position. This will still allow for disabled access but not permit the entry of cars. As the gap will be visibly smaller, it is hoped that cars will not attempt to enter.
- TZ: Given that funding was allocated two budgets ago, what is happening in relation to Retort House?
  - o GI: Acknowledging that funding has been allocated for this project, the Harbour Trust has made the decision to deliver these works once the Torpedo Factory Renewal Project is complete. While the Torpedo Factory Renewal Project is in delivery, it is expected that design work will be undertaken for the Retort House. This would allow delivery to take place following completion of the Torpedo Factory works.
- TZ: Could works to the Retort House start before construction of the Torpedo Factory works are complete?
  - o GI: No, the key barrier is access to the site. There is one point of access for equipment and machinery. We need to work within the confines of the site. The area around the Retort House is also earmarked to be used as a truck parking/laydown area during construction.
- TZ: Will the Retort House works be ready to be delivered after the Torpedo Factory is complete?
  - o GI: Yes, that is our intention and what we are planning for.
- TZ: It is very important that the Harbour Trust is confident about the revised program that it communicates to the community. It is important that these expectations are met. At some point, we will need to look at why the original timeline did not reach fruition.
  - o GI: The Harbour Trust agrees with this.
  - o JC: There is an opportunity for the Harbour Trust and the SPB CAC to look back after the project is delivered as part of the project review and identify areas for improvement in future initiatives.
- PF: The Harbour Trust has done a terrific job in terms of the native garden, however there are now several plants in large pots between the two buildings (Buildings 2 and 10) that have died – perhaps due to lack of water. This needs to be addressed.
  - o LB: Yes, those potted plants have been affected by the lack of rainfall. We have recently installed irrigation and they have been replanted.
  - o GI: We have identified and delivered several short-term measures to address this issue. The Harbour Trust is in discussions with the landscaper about what we can do to improve that area more generally.

JC thanked everyone for joining the meeting, noting that it was great to see how engaged members are on the details of the project and Sub Base Platypus as a whole.

**Meeting closed at 7:25pm.**