

Old Bar Community Conversation – 26 March 2019

Q1. What can Council and the community do to rejuvenate the Old Bar Beach foreshore for better access to the beach, better parking, more greenspace, and replacement of ageing buildings along with all day access to the pool.

A. The Old Bar Reserve is an area that attracts many tourists, travellers and locals. We acknowledge the area needs some work and we need an overall plan for the area. We currently have plans for the playground, and will be extending it by repurposing the equipment from Fotheringham Park in Taree (once the Livvi's Place All Abilities Playground is operational). We are also looking at natural shade solutions for the playground. The pool is managed by the caravan park but the land is State Trust/Crown Lands. In 2018 there was a new Crown Lands Act which changes the way this land will be managed into the future. We are currently working through this and will engage with the community in relation to this space when we are developing a long-term plan for it to ensure we understand how the community would like to see it used.

Q2. There is too much emphasis and focus on an ageing population. Young families surely equal or outweigh the demographics in the Old Bar and surrounding areas. How about making a plan to implement some more family friendly areas in Old Bar, such as shade cloth on all playgrounds, a larger or multiple barbeque areas to enjoy, redevelop the beach area so that parking can be maximised and actually have a layout rather than cars parking haphazardly. The new 'bicycle track' is a disgrace.

A. It is evidenced here tonight that we do not have any representation from young families which make up a very large part of the population in Old Bar. That is an issue of concern for us and we are working on ways to better engage with the younger section of our community. See answer to question 1 for comments on Old Bar Reserve and the answer to question 8 and 9 on the bike track.

Q3. Old Bar Beach could be a lot better if the rocks were removed. Is Council able to get a beach sweeper as they have in Surfers?

A. Council doesn't remove the rocks on the beach, they are a natural part of the landscape and as such we wouldn't remove them.

Q4. Can Council do something to improve driver visibility on both right and left for vehicles exiting Waterman St to Old Bar Road. It is extremely difficult to clearly see vehicles on the left.

A. We will take this request on board. Parking restrictions will be investigated and any appropriate modifications will be made after consultation with the Local Traffic Committee.

Q5 Short term parking is required in Cross Street Old Bar outside the Post Office for the clearing of post boxes and the posting of mail.

A We will take this request on board as a customer request for consideration and consultation with the Local Traffic Committee. It is not unusual for short term parking in these types of locations.

Q6 There is an issue of road subsidence adjacent to kerb and gutter in cul-de-sac of Gannet Crescent. Aged residents have tripped on this road damage and while no reportable injuries to date, it makes access to properties difficult.

A There are a number of kerb and gutter defects in the older areas where the roads aren't strong enough to withstand regular vehicle loads. Typically the edge of the road and the kerb and gutter becomes deformed, letting water into the pavement and making the situation worsen. Where the roads program includes sections that have this defect we will repair it. However we don't have a separate program working on kerb and gutter defects at this stage.

Q7 Can we get a footpath/cycle way along Saltwater Road into the National Park? Currently there are no footpaths anywhere in Wallabi Point, other than in the new estate. Saltwater Road is especially dangerous for children riding bikes as car drivers ignore the 50 speed limit, many travelling at 100km/ph. We at least need several speed bumps along this road.

A Council is currently working on preparing two strategies, one covering footpaths/pedestrians and a second one for bicycles/cyclists. These strategies will be combining the work previously done and looking at the areas which generate pedestrians/cyclist activities, the desired travel routes and local destinations. While it would be impossible to have footpaths and cycleways everywhere across the MidCoast area these strategies are intended to prioritise the areas where these facilities are needed the most so that we can target our resources to give the best benefits to the community. They will also allow us to seek grant funding so the resources that we do have can go even further.

The request for footpaths along Saltwater Road at Wallabi Point will be included in the feedback considered for development of the strategies. We encourage you to participate in consultation activities during development of the draft strategies. These opportunities will be separately notified by Council.

Speeding on local roads is a challenge for local government, the police and communities. There is no one simple solution where people are inconsiderate of their neighbours and choose to speed. In some cases adding speed humps can be effective at slowing speeds in particular spots, however in others it can add additional risks and increase noise for residents. We are constantly looking for new ways to tackle speeding on local roads. There are no proposals for traffic calming measures at Wallabi Point and any future proposal would need to be considered against the other community priorities for their benefits relative to their costs.

Q8. What is going on with the cycleway? It is not maintained, it was a waste of money.

A. This is a bike track, rather than a cycleway. The money for the track came from grant funding of \$500,000. We have done the best we can with the funds available. 80% of the funds went into high cost works, such as culverts, drainage and road crossings that is why we have used material like gravel which is low cost to link it in with the high cost elements. We will continue over time to formalise and improve on the track. The track will hopefully be completed in full within the next few weeks. By the end of

April the signs and directions should be in place and finished making it easier for people to follow the route.

Q9. Why don't we know where the cycleway starts and ends, why didn't it go all the way up Old Bar Road in to the town?

A. The cycleway uses Berber Road running parallel to Old Bar Road to complete the link to the existing footpath into the shopping area. This helped keep cost within the grant funding budget and was a little bit safer. It avoided building across the frontage of blocks on Old Bar Road that are likely to redevelop at some time in the future.

Q10. What is happening with Masters/Biripi Way?

A. A cost benefits analysis was requested by Councillors at the February 2019 meeting of Council. This has been undertaken and will be delivered to council at the 10 April meeting. The elected Council will then make a decision whether to proceed or not. Information in relation to Biripi Way including all consultations, reports, studies, meeting minutes, and resolutions are all available to view on our website.

Q11. If Masters/Biripi Way goes ahead, will there still be shop fronts for other areas?

A. Yes, our district offices will remain as they are in Tea Gardens, Bulahdelah, Stroud and Gloucester and we have looked at the Civic Precinct, which is currently under construction in Forster as a customer service centre. We are also looking at the long term uses of our libraries as possible customer service centres.

Q12. The Special Rate Variation which was introduced to cover the predicted cost of road works required relating to road repair generational over 30 years. The special rate variation was to fix all roads calculating to 110km of road per year for 30 years. Has council fixed 220kms worth of roads?

A. We have a road works project of \$100 million which is made up of \$50 million from the SRV, which was then used to get an additional \$50 million loan. This program is to help us get ahead on our road works projects by at least 10 years, which will relieve pressure on future years, so that we can catch up. Our roads are an uphill battle to maintain as they are in need of high maintenance which is very costly but we continue to work at it. To reseal a road is at a cost of \$6 per square metre. To build a new road you are looking at ten times that, \$60 per square metre. We cannot promise that we will fix all the roads within 30 years, but we believe we are already, and will continue to be, a lot better off.

Q13. We have a massive amount of roadworks, can you tell me how many kilometres have actually been done in the last two years? Is it 220kms?

A. In the 2017-18 year we resealed 62 km of road, rehabilitated 24 km of road and replaced two timber bridges. In the 2018-19 year we plan to reseal 67 km of road, rehabilitate 29.5 km and replace two timber bridges.

Q14. As a part of the NSW election, the Liberal government promised to take back roads from local government. Does Council have a plan for this?

A. This was a commitment from the Coalition in the lead up to the election. We look forward to hearing how this will be implemented.

Q15. We need footpaths, there is no footpath from Old Bar Road down David Street to the school. The children have to walk on the road because there is no footpath and people park caravans and cars on the footpaths.

A. Footpaths are an important issue to the community, and we are taking that on board. As for this particular location we will report this to our compliance team and they can investigate. When the rangers attend it can be difficult if the vehicles are not parked there at the time.

Q16. Racecourse Creek - council has neglected to carry out their own development conditions attached to two development approvals when a retention dam should have been installed on land, now called Rushby Park, donated by the developer. The result was that stormwater, not only from those two development approvals but now from almost all development south of Old Bar Road is fed unabated into Racecourse Creek.

A. The approvals for development in the Racecourse Creek area go back to 1984. Council has received funding from the Coastal and Estuary Management program, managed by the Office of Environment and Heritage, to undertake a flood investigation of Racecourse Creek. The aim of this is to provide an understanding of flood behaviour and impacts and better inform management of flood risks at Racecourse Creek.

This plan will identify potential solutions to mitigate hazards. We will review all the options to develop solutions for this space. We understand there is a view in the community a retention basin is the best option, however Council wants to make sure the management options for this catchment are well understood. This is to ensure the chosen management option is not only effective for current problems, but also for the future. We will report back to the community on the outcomes of the study as it is completed.

Q17. Are we going to open Farquhar?

A. It is important to understand the closure of the Farquhar entrance is a natural process. Council manages the Farquhar Inlet in line with the Farquhar Inlet Opening Management Strategy, and this involves the digging of a 50 metre flood notch under certain circumstances. We don't open the inlet. The notch provides a mechanism for the inlet to open naturally when there is enough volume of water in the river.

When we are experiencing dry times, such as we are currently, there is not enough water in the river to push open the entrance.

We are required to work with the Department of Crown Lands for the creation of the flood notch. The notch will require maintenance before the start of the next Little Tern breeding season in September. We are currently working on a Coastal Management Plan for all of Old Bar to Manning Point. This will consider all of the uses of the Farquhar entrance.

Q18. Why didn't you do the intersection at Old Bar Road and Saltwater Road when Old Bar Road works were done? The slip lane should have gone all the way to the corner of Saltwater Road

A. Over the next one to two years we have an ongoing road works project which will see Old Bar Road completed. We will deal with this intersection as a whole and the slip lane will then be reviewed at this time.

Q19. Will Council clean the beaches?

A. Council has a policy of not cleaning beaches. On occasion we will clean for an event such as a surf carnival, but this is an expensive exercise. For example, if there is

seaweed on the beaches we are not going to go and remove it, this cost would be extraordinary to remove this and take it to land fill.

Q20. Council performed sand scraping, do we have any information on how that has gone or is it being monitored? Where did the sand go when you scraped?

A. We undertook a trial of a temporary erosion control measure on Old Bar Beach in October last year. The sand scraping trial involved using earth moving equipment to create a sand buffer along a section of the beach. It is designed to be eroded by the ocean, and is there to protect the existing coastline on a temporary basis. We are looking at the results as part of our long term coastal management of the area. We now have an expert in sand movement on staff to assist in developing the best approach to erosion control on our beaches.

Q21. Can you provide an update on the Lewis Street development - was it approved? Do they have to fix the road? Is access through Wyden Street?

A. Yes, approval for this development was granted by the Land and Environment Court. The dwellings will be constructed on site. Access is via Lewis Street. It is not a condition for the developer to do any repairs to the road. In this case the conditions originally imposed by Council, including roadworks, were appealed through the Land and Environment Court.

Q22. Why should we have to pay \$2 to use the computer at Old Bar Library and why isn't the equipment up to the standard of other libraries?

A. We will look into this and provide a solution for the community. Funds have been put aside from Section 94 contributions to build a purpose built library in Old Bar.

Q23. Is there development going on for Harrogate Lane area?

A. The land has many different owners and for development to take place ALL the land owners need to agree. There has been significant delay in consensus being achieved because of the large scale infrastructure that needs to be undertaken. Council has now decided to undertake this infrastructure work to drive a cost effective strategy for a precinct to be developed.

Q24. Waterman Street - no one adheres to the average speed and there is no footpath to walk on so we need to walk on the road and someone will get killed.

A. The RMS set the speed limit. We would again suggest you contact the police if people are regularly speeding on this road.

Q25. Do we know what the expected population is of Old Bar for the next 5-10 years?

A. This isn't easy to answer, as Old Bar has the potential to grow significantly and quickly, but it depends on the growth of developments in the area. If agreement with land owners occurs, then development will take place which could mean 2,500 house blocks. We cannot determine if or when this will happen but if it does we could grow very quickly which will change the look and feel of Old Bar which will also put a strain on the Council in terms of us being able to provide infrastructure to meet the rapidly growing needs of the community.

Q26. Is there a strategic plan in place for Old Bar Road if there is a major event? There is only one road in and one road out.

A. Our first priority has been to get Old Bar Road up to a decent standard, which we are working hard on. The next step will be a plan for the future.

Q27. Do developers need to contribute to the roads for eg. Lewis Street/Forest Lane, should they have to upgrade them?

A. The consent on new developments includes a contribution to Section 94 funds which goes to many different things like libraries and community amenities. Older development consents do not necessarily have these conditions and may not have to pay these contributions.

Q28. Where is the Coastal Management Plan (CMP) for Old Bar at?

A. The CMP is a very large body of work, that we have a team working on. We recognise we need to explain more about our processes around our Coastal Management Plan. We will take this on board and provide more information to the community as we develop the plan.

Q29. Does Council have plans to do marked parking at the beach

A. This would be addressed as a part of a plan for the reserve – see answer to Q1.

Top priorities

1. Coastal Management Plan
2. Road
3. Stormwater
4. Greening/Wildlife
5. Compliance Development
6. Footpaths

Full list of priorities identified:

Group one priorities	Group two priorities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coastal erosion – protect the dunes, stormwater and detention ponds (Rushby Park) 2. Full library service – computers 3. Footpath/cycleways – strategy, pedestrian access/safety 4. Repair of roads, kerb and gutter 5. Rejuvenation of the foreshore and Old Bar – playgrounds, seating, Mudbishops reserve 6. Revise building height controls Local traffic Controls - speed in designated streets 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Old Bar Road – T intersection at Saltwater Road to Wallabi 2. Footpaths – are we looking at putting them in 3. CMP – beach, what is happening 4. Pool – why has it been fenced and costing to get in 5. Racecourse Creek – issue of flooding 6. Green Corridor / development

Group three priorities

1. Stormwater drains backing up in to backyards (Racecourse Creek, Blue Haven/Ocean Blue, Rainforest) – Need for management
2. Compliance and enforcement of DA Conditions
3. Need for wildlife corridors to protect and manage in DA approvals
4. Need for footpaths to schools and shops to keep kids off the road
5. New developments with inadequate infrastructure – electricity brownouts and stormwater

Group four priorities

1. Open Farquhar inlet – plus sand catchment, CMP – communication of where we are at with the whole program
2. Roads – fixing of Old Bar Road and residential streets
3. Consultation before works. Causeway for NP in wrong place \$30,000 especially with neighbours (Taree Equestrian) – Locals Know Best
4. Council work for the ratepayers not the other way round
5. Men's Shed – mucked around by different departments
6. Consultation and courtesy
7. Stop mowing sides of Old Bar Road and plant ground cover. Traffic is stopped. Something more cost effective.
8. Shorter parking outside of Post Office
9. Answer questions when asked never get a call back – courtesy
10. Lack of visibility of Waterman and Old Bar Road. Take out 1 parking visibility poor for traffic coming out of Waterman Street
11. Junction at Hall and David Street – blind curve if someone parks on the bridge, very dangerous
12. Control political advertising at roundabouts
13. Clean beach – enhance what we have – fix it first

Group five priorities

1. How do we get the sand out of Farquhar back to normal
2. Badgers stormwater detention drains
3. Extend the footpaths from David Street onwards
4. Green spaces in new development areas - planning
5. Speed humps
6. Rainforest – preserve
7. Business area plan
8. Alternate access to Old Bar Road
9. Forest Road – seal
10. East side David Street, clean drain/culvert to preserve rainforest
11. Stormwater management of Old Bar

Group six priorities

1. Finish Old Bar Road – good what has been done so far
2. Implement a solution to the beach erosion
3. Turning points – ensure good flow of traffic on Old Bar Road, danger turning into petrol station, put a No right turn at Old Bar Road and Cross Street and people would have to detour and use David Street
4. Footpaths – David Street from tennis courts to the school
5. Improve maintenance at entry points, beautify, holiday destination – make it look like it, eg Pacific Hwy roundabout to Old Bar – needs beautification
6. Seal Forest Lane and this will free up traffic using Wyden Street – fix intersection from Old Bar Road to Saltwater Road with slip lane