



Councillor Andy Ireland
Livingstone Shire Council

25 February 2021

Email: Mayor@livingstone.qld.gov.au

CC: Andrea.Friend@livingstone.qld.gov.au; Adam.Belot@livingstone.qld.gov.au;
Nigel.Hutton@livingstone.qld.gov.au; Pat.Eastwood@livingstone.qld.gov.au;
Glenda.Mather@livingstone.qld.gov.au; Tanya.Lynch@livingstone.qld.gov.au

Re: Prioritisation of State Government funding for common-use infrastructure on Great Keppel Island.

Dear Mayor Ireland,

Thank you, and your fellow Councillors, for the opportunity to make comment on the use of State Government funds for the provision of common-use or public infrastructure on Great Keppel Island (GKI).

Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC) is the leading non-government, environmental organisation in Central Queensland. CCC has been advocating for the environment since 1973, with a particular focus on the Fitzroy River catchments and the associated coastal, island and marine environments. CCC are not anti-development, but we do advocate for sustainable development and the appropriate protection and management of our environmental assets.

The Capricorn Conservation Council committee held an out of session meeting on Monday 22 February 2021 to discuss Livingstone Shire Council's public infrastructure proposal submitted to the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS) by, and the GKI Progress Association's letter to Council outlining their submission to the DTIS in support of Altum's "project enabling infrastructure".

CCC supports investment in public infrastructure which will improve the visitor experience, support compatible tourism ventures and businesses, and which will assist in protecting and managing the natural values of the island. CCC does not support common-use infrastructure which is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment through construction and operation, or which if left un-managed and maintained, will have an adverse impact on the environment.

In general terms, CCC is supportive of the intent of the projects outlined in Livingstone Shire Council's GKI Priority Community Infrastructure Projects (January 2021). However, CCC would prefer that a Great Keppel Island management plan (or tourism infrastructure plan) was

developed in consultation with the community prior to the provision of the proposed facilities, particularly the proposed roads and remote beach amenities. CCC considers that the allocation of some of the State government funding to develop such a plan, with the remainder of funds towards the implementation of the plan and the maintenance and management of the public infrastructure post-construction, would provide a clear and accountable basis for the allocation of public funds towards community and tourism infrastructure on Great Keppel Island.

In relation to the priority infrastructure proposed by Altum and supported by the GKI Progress Association, CCC considers that there is insufficient information provided to establish that these are priority community and tourism infrastructure.

It is noted that the GKI Progress Association has prioritised only infrastructure or works to benefit Altum's proposed development and have excluded visitor facilities and walking tracks which CCC considers vital to present the island to visitors, and to protect the sensitive environment from unmanaged recreational use. For example, site establishment and mobilisation, site preparatory works, and bulk earthworks would appear to be for the company's personal gain and would not, in isolation, provide for vital common-use or public infrastructure to improve the visitor experience.

However, CCC considers that an investment into the sustainable provision of freshwater and the protection of the aquifer, along with a facility for the treatment of waste water, will benefit existing operators and essential to service additional visitor amenities and any future tourism developments such as the Altum's proposal. CCC also offers support for improvements to communications which will improve the visitor experience for many visitors, increase visitor safety, and it will greatly improve communication during land management operations and the ability to respond appropriately to emergency situations.

CCC have significant concerns about the development of a break-wall, the associated proposed dredging and installation of a barge ramp. As noted in the Great Keppel Island Resort Revitalisation Plan Coastal Environment Technical Report (Water Technology Pty. Ltd., May 2012), hydrodynamic modelling simulations indicate that there will be a local acceleration of current speeds west of the marine and a reduction in current speeds along Putney Beach either side of the break-wall. Combined with this, the models indicate that the break-wall will prevent the onshore migration of up to 1,500 m³/year of sediment to Putney Beach. Putney and Fisherman's beaches are in a dynamic equilibrium with respect to coastal process with shoreline recession evident and significant at the southern end of Putney Beach. They are both important beaches for visitor recreation, contain significant cultural heritage values and provide habitat for endangered marine turtle breeding.

The coastal technical report suggests that there would need to be periodic bypassing of approximately 5,000 – 7,000 m³ of sand every five years. This indicates that ongoing maintenance and management will be required to ensure sufficient replenishment of sand onto Putney Beach. It is unclear who will be responsible for the costs and works associated with this management and monitoring into the future should the break-wall be developed. As previously mentioned, CCC are not supportive of developments that will have an adverse impact on the environment if they are not maintained. In the current environment, there is no certainty of the 'ownership' of a break-wall and hence there is a high probability that the infrastructure will not be adequately maintained and ongoing dredging will not occur resulting in significant impacts to Putney Beach.

To conclude, CCC is supportive of further tourism infrastructure on the island and recommends that the State government funds are directed to public tourism and recreation infrastructure which:

- ✦ improves the experience for all visitors to the island whether day visitors or visitors using island accommodation facilities,
- ✦ supports compatible new and existing eco-tourism ventures and businesses,
- ✦ assists in protecting and managing the natural resources and values of the island,
- ✦ are of benefit to the local community and not solely for private gain, and
- ✦ is considered to fill the definition of common-use or public infrastructure.

If you would like to discuss this further or require any clarification, please don't hesitate to contact the CCC Coordinator, Dr Coral Rowston, on 0437 420 496 or email ccc@cccqld.org.au.

Yours sincerely



Paul Bambrick
President
