

20th December 2019

Hon. Cameron Dick.
Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning.
1 William Street, Brisbane Qld 4000
statedevelopment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

cc. Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk
The Premier
1 William St, Brisbane
thepremier@premiers.qld.gov.au

Dr. Michael Riordan.
Senior Policy Advisor
Michael.riordan@ministerial.qld.goc.au

Mr. Gerard Coggan
A/Deputy Director-General
Investment Facilitation and Partnerships
Gerard.coggan@dsmip.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister,

Re: 1. Proposed Super Yacht berths adjacent to Southport Yacht Club;
2. SeaWorld and Marina Mirage tourist helicopter rides

Item 1 Southport Yacht Club Super Yacht Berth. It has come to the notice of Gecko Environment Council (Gecko) that the Southport Yacht Club (Yacht Club) is proposing to construct a “165m super yacht berth west of the fuel dock at a cost estimated at \$7,500,000” and we seek further clarification of this project. As you are aware Gecko supports the implementation of the Master Plan and wrote a very positive testimonial about the community consultation process.

Gecko recognises that the construction of a super yacht facility adjacent to Jack Gordon Park and the Yacht Club was agreed as part of the Spit Master Plan as reflected in these two sections of the Plan. Page 92 states

“7.9 A superyacht berthing facility is located along the edge of Jack Gordon Park to the west of the yacht club building and provides access for large servicing and refuelling vehicles along the edge of the berthing facility. A secure transparent fence separates the berthing facility from the park

7.11 The striking stands of trees in Proud Park and Jack Gordon Park form part of the gateway to The Spit and facilities, such as playgrounds and toilets, are provided near the dog park enclosure where the park is at its widest.”

Our concerns relate to the pictures and diagrams provided by the Yacht Club for their members to consider at a special purpose meeting on Friday 29th November 2019. These images of the plans of the proposed facility appear to show that the super yacht facility will take over most, if not all, of

Jack Gordon Park, not just have “A secure transparent fence separates the berthing facility from the park.” If this is the case this is not in the spirit or facts of the Master Plan or the community consensus process that produced the Plan.

The information received about the proposal also mentions that the Southport Yacht Club expects to receive a \$4 million grant from some agency, though the source of the grant is not specified in the documents Gecko has viewed. \$4 million is a large grant and there is a striking lack of transparency and accountability attached to this activity, especially when it is recognised that once the Yacht Club has paid off the loan of \$1.5 million they need to proceed with this proposal they will be in receipt of income exceeding \$200,000 p.a in perpetuity. It appears that the Yacht Club will benefit considerably from this project, but the community loses important public open space, with no recompense. The community support for super yacht berths did not extend to losing well used public open space as a result.

Request: Gecko Environment Council requests clarification of this proposal including information about the source of the \$4 million grant and the process by which the Southport Yacht Club is obtaining this largess. Further we request information about the fate of Jack Gordon Park and what recompense the community will receive if this Park is removed from the public realm.

Item 2. Helicopter flights

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=603262127095701> and www.7NEWS.com.au

Gecko is aware that many of the residents living on The Spit and in surrounding suburbs have been endeavouring to have the frequency of helicopter tourism flights either stopped altogether or severely reduced because of the impact of the noise pollution on their health and the liveability of their homes. The flights from both the SeaWorld heliport and the Marina Mirage heliport take off and land every 5 minutes and it is not only a serious nuisance, but also a health risk. While this quotation does not relate specifically to helicopters the principle is the same. The impact of noise pollution on health is well documented and as stated here: “*In 2011, WHO quantified the burden of disease due to environmental noise exposure. Health end points included cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, sleep disturbance, tinnitus and annoyance. In one example of this, WHO estimates that at least 1 million healthy life years are lost every year from traffic-related noise in western Europe (WHO, 2011)*”

([https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A12B57E41EC9F326CA257BF0001F9E7D/\\$File/health-effects-Environmental-Noise-2018.pdf](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A12B57E41EC9F326CA257BF0001F9E7D/$File/health-effects-Environmental-Noise-2018.pdf)) . While this statement relates to Europe there is no reason to doubt that it does not apply to Australians.

Efforts by the Coalition Against Noise Pollution, formed by residents in areas around The Spit, seem to be unable to get any level of government to take action about this matter. The Sea World heliport appears to have been built on the carpark south of SeaWorld without requiring any planning permission and is certainly not congruent with the Spit Master Plan plans for that carpark namely ““*5.11 The Sea World theme park's car parking capacity is maintained in a well-shaded form that manages the quality of stormwater. Over time, a redeveloped car park accommodates vehicles in a multi-level structure*”. Nor do there appear to be any controls over the frequency of the flights. A similar situation existed for a short time at Bilinga in 2018 when a tourism helicopter ride service operated with take offs and landings every 7 minutes at the Gold Coast Airport much to the considerable distress of adjacent residents. The Gold Coast Airport finally shut down this venture on the basis that it violated their good neighbour policy. Unfortunately SeaWorld and Marina Mirage don't appear to have a similar policy.

Apart from the health impacts of constant noise Gecko also raises the possible negative impact of this noise on likely investors in the Village areas of the Spit. Who would want to invest in a commercial venture if prospective customers are driven away by this noise? It is also adjacent to the

proposed Indigenous open air facility and will be an unwanted and unwarranted intrusion on the development of this important cultural opportunity.

It is highly unsatisfactory for the Spit Master Plan to be undermined by the construction of this heliport, which was not included in the Plan and appears to have gone ahead without reference to either the Plan or the Department of Planning.

Request: Gecko requests that your Department immediately investigate the construction of the SeaWorld heliport in contradiction of the Spit Master Plan and the City Plan. Further we request that the helicopter 'joy rides' are either stopped or controlled by the relevant department so that they do not constitute a noise hazard to both visitors to The Spit and residents both on the Spit and in nearby suburbs.

Gecko members were very pleased at the outcome of the Master Plan overall. Our members did not get everything they had wished for, but generally believed that it was a good outcome. We remain opposed to the proposed cruise terminal on Philip Park, but we had expected that the various stakeholders in the development of the Plan would respect it. It now appears that some of those stakeholders do not intend to abide by the Plan and if this is allowed then the whole process will be undermined and all that effort and community goodwill will dissipate and conflict will become the order of the day again.

Gecko calls on your Government to take action on these serious matters.

Yours sincerely



Lois Levy
Campaign Coordinator
advocate@gecko.org.au
0412 724 222