



139 Duringan St
Currumbin 4223.
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MEDIA RELEASE

A VISION FOR THE SPIT PARKLANDS?

In all the publicity surrounding The Spit and the ASF proposal the equally important survey for The Spit Parklands has been overlooked despite its central role in so many disputes about its future over the past two and half decades.

In seeking feedback on the integrated casino resort and ASF proposal, the Department of State Development also decided to gather feedback from Gold Coasters about the preferred future for The Spit Parklands.

Lois Levy, Campaign Coordinator of Gecko Environment Council (Gecko) said, "It is essential that a clear vision for The Spit parklands is finally developed which will enhance it as an asset to the city regardless of whatever gets developed south of SeaWorld. The consultation on the parklands has been totally inadequate, with no real information provided for the public to consider and then a last minute addition of Philip Park and Muriel Henschman Park to the mix. We can't help thinking that the Department really is not remotely interested in the future of these parklands, when we compare it to the 2009 Tides of Change consultation. "

The very basic map that was provided by the Department failed to delineate the different areas of The Spit each of which offer different features and experiences for the visitor. The Spit Parklands consist of Doug Jennings Park and Moondarewa reserve which was declared in 1988; 93 ha of Federation Walk Reserve; the Marine Stadium; the foreshores the Seaway wall; 19ha of Philip Park and 8.8ha of Muriel Henschman Park and other smaller lots north of SeaWorld.

Lois said, "Over the years those who wanted to exploit these parklands for their own commercial benefit have claimed that it was a wasteland frequented by perverts and the like. That this is patently untrue is borne out by the thousands of visitors who go there to enjoy the open spaces and waters. Within Gecko's time the Parklands have had to be defended from proposed constructions such as a sewerage system, a Horizon Tank, a maritime simulator, and a very large Ferris wheel, 10 arson events, as well as repeated attempts, still ongoing, to build a cruise terminal on public open space. All of these constructions would have alienated this irreplaceable and invaluable public open space from the Gold Coast community and all have been successfully fought off by the community. This is irrefutable proof that the Gold Coast community values the Parklands highly; that they want these areas retained as their public open space in perpetuity and that they will vigorously defend it from inappropriate development."

The Spit parklands are a major economic asset to the city as well as being a social and environmental asset. The 2012 Urbis Report valued the amenity and brand value of these parklands as highly significant and the non-residential land's economic value in 2012 was \$112,530,769.00, a figure that would be higher today. It is an indictment on both the State and Local Governments that so little investment has been made in this valuable and irreplaceable asset.

Gecko's vision for The Spit is for detailed planning for each of the precincts with maximum community input, with a priority on some shade tree planning, barbeques, picnic shelters and a small imaginative playground in part of Doug Jennings Park. The remainder should remain open space for large events with perhaps the addition of a sound shell facing out to sea. Ongoing financial support for the Friends of Federation Walk is also essential for them to complete their planting from Philip Park to the Seaway.

Lois said "Gecko also has a vision of no cruise ship terminal on Philip Park and improved management of this area which Council itself describes as *a quiet green area away from the road, with a beautiful lagoon in the middle..... Adjacent to stunning beach... and has green leafy tree background.*" (<http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/thegoldcoast/philip-park-27436.html> ."

The Spit Parklands are valued by the community for their open space, especially as a contrast and relief to highly urbanised area, as presenting a sense of space and horizon; the scenic and aesthetic values of place of beauty and diverse vistas; a seaward gateway to the city and a wide range of active and passive recreational opportunities both land and water based.

Contact;

Lois Levy
Campaign Coordinator, 0412 724 222

References:

Economic value

(http://www.saveourspit.com/No_Terminal/resources/Urbis-Baseline-Broadwater-Report-May-2012.pdfEnvironmental

Environmental value

<http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/documents/bf/ecological-investigations-part1.pdf>)