

Wetlands are promoting water quality

A series of wetlands, bioswales, retention basins, gross pollutant traps and regenerated creeklines are part of the water quality strategy in the Shell Cove master plan. These combine to form a water quality treatment train that will "polish" stormwater flows from the development and ensure there is no increase in pollution above the levels experienced before development.

So far three wetland systems have been constructed. An existing farm dam has been converted to a water quality wetland, more than 2.5km of creekline has been revegetated and eight gross pollutant traps have been installed.

The wetland systems provide an attractive element into the landscape at Shell Cove and provide a habitat for native birds. They also fulfil two functions in cleansing water. Firstly, their deep water-bodies allow sediments to settle out. Secondly the rhizomes of the macrophytes or water plants that fringe the water-bodies remove nutrients from the water. These nutrients come from stormwater runoff and include phosphorous and nitrogen. Some of these nutrients are natural but there are also man-made sources such as fertilisers and detergents. When there is too much nutrient in the water for the macrophytes to remove, algal growths develop to remove these pollutants, and although these may appear to be unattractive they are a native plant fulfilling a useful function.

We can all help the wetlands to function as well as possible by adopting a few simple environmentally conscious practices. In particular we can help reduce nutrient run-off by

- Minimising the use of fertilisers on your lawn and gardens and using an organic low phosphorous fertiliser;
- Avoiding the application of fertiliser if heavy rain is predicted;
- Being a responsible dog owner and picking up your dog poo so that it does not wash into the stormwater system; and
- Avoiding the use of phosphorous based detergents when washing your car or hard surfaces in the garden.



What's on at the Community Centre

Shell Cove Community Centre,
25 Southern Cross Boulevard, Ph 4297 7484

Activities

Info from Craig Swaney unless otherwise stated.
Call 4297 7484 or 4221 6170 or 0431 501613

- Euchre Players. Monday 1pm-4pm.
- Concerned Residents' Group Ward E. 1st Monday of month 7pm -8.30pm (Contact Geoff Rose 42955690).
- Playgroup (Current vacancies). Tuesday, Thursday mornings.
- Art Group. Tuesday 7pm-9pm. (Contact Leonie Barracluff 42376731).
- Heartmoves (gentle exercise). Wednesday, Friday 8.45am-9.45am.
- Craft & Coffee. Wednesday 10am-12pm.
- Social Group 3rd Wednesday of month 10.30am-12.30pm. (Contact Norma Gibson 4295 3329).
- Shellharbour Garden Club. 2nd Wednesday of each month. 12.30-3.30pm.
- Shell Cove Residents' Group. Dates to be advised 7pm. (Contact Allen Ogier on 4295 3951).
- Games Afternoon (Darts, Board Games, Ten Pin Bowling and Golf). Thursday 12.30pm to 3.30pm.
- Do-re-mi Music for 0-5. Thursday 4pm. Contact Sue Meith on 4295 4114 or 0424268842
- Shellharbour Bahai Community. 1st Friday of month 7pm-9pm (Contact Karen on 42969091).
- Park/Land Care (Weekends). Info from Craig Swaney
- Felt Making Group. Saturdays 10am to 4pm.

Future Events

- Back to Cards (Euchre) BBQ 13th October 12noon
- Morning Tea for Walkers and Push Bikers 17th October 10am
- Craft activities coming up to Christmas - Make your own Christmas Cards in November
- Breakfast for Breast Cancer November - Watch your Letterbox for details

Inside this issue: Boatharbour Update



Retirement Living at Shell Cove

Shell Cove is a community for all ages and as part of the Masterplan a retirement village site has been identified. It is planned that the site will be marketed this year for sale to a retirement village provider. The development will potentially provide both high and low level aged care as well as independent living opportunities.

The selected site is adjacent the future Harbour Boulevard on the approach to the future town centre. The development

will help to create a visual and physical landmark to complement the urban design for the town centre and its environs. Site access will be from Brigantine Drive until Harbour Boulevard is built.

This development will provide both a valuable community resource not only for Shell Cove but also for the wider area.

Boat harbour update

Residents will know that the next stage of construction of the boatharbour has been deferred. This has raised a number of questions within the community and, in the interests of keeping residents up-to-date, the following responses to key questions have been compiled.

Q. Why has the boat harbour construction been delayed?

The agreement between Australand and Council has been prudently structured to ensure that any construction within the Shell Cove Project does not financially expose either Council or ratepayers. All works are funded primarily from sales revenue, with no funds from Council or finance raised by mortgaging Council's land.

Having completed the detailed design and preliminary works for the boatharbour, July 2008 was forecasted for commencement of the main construction works. The public tender for these works had closed and Australand was assessing the replies.

However, the downturn in residential housing markets across Australia and NSW in particular, is having an impact at Shell Cove with reduced levels of land sales revenue. With those markets forecasted not to substantially improve in the near future, a cautious business-like approach has been adopted and the decision to delay the commencement of the next stage of work on the boat harbour.

Q. When will the boat harbour works recommence

Once the residential market returns to an acceptable level of sales agreed between Australand and Council, the next major stage of the boatharbour works will commence. A number of marketing initiatives are currently underway, or being developed, to stimulate land sales in Shell Cove.

It is important to note that a significant sum of money in the order of \$23 million has been spent to date on the boatharbour including the construction of the compensatory wetlands (Myimbarr), relocation of the old Council tip, detailed design and approvals, and stockpiling of rock in readiness for construction of the breakwater (namely 100,000 tonnes of large rock on the Bass Point quarry floor and 90,000 tonnes on the Shell Cove site).



Q. What has happened to all the revenue from land sales at Shell Cove

To date gross income from the project has totalled approximately \$210 million.

All revenue, with the exception of GST payments made to the Tax Office, has been reinvested back into the project including elements with significant broader community benefit, such as the Links Golf Course, the Myimbarr Community Park and Wetlands, the sealed road to Killalea State Park and the upgraded Shellharbour Road.

A summary of the expenditure to 31 August 2008 provides:

Land Acquisitions	\$33,000,000
Boat harbour	\$22,500,000
Golf Course	\$10,500,000
Major works	\$28,000,000
Subdivision	\$106,500,000
GST payments	\$11,000,000
Total	\$211,500,000

To understand some of the significant amounts in this table, the area of land to develop Shell Cove was set in 1993 at about 400 hectares, with Council owning about 55% of it. Land Purchase contracts were signed with the neighbours and these have all settled at market rates. Also, the Major Works include construction of sewer pumping stations, Cove Boulevard, major landscape works, road works on Shellharbour Road, wetlands and water quality systems throughout Shell Cove and major lead in services.

All income and expenditure is audited annually by KPMG, one of the Big Four international accounting firms.

Q. Are the Shellharbour ratepayers at risk and are they paying for the boat harbour?

The Shellharbour ratepayers are not financially exposed in any way by the construction of the Shell Cove project including the boatharbour. Under the agreement between Australand and Council, the primary funding for the project comes from land sales revenue. There is no financial exposure to Council or the ratepayers under the structure of the agreement.

Additionally, ownership of the Shell Cove land is retained by Council until sites are sold to individual purchasers and the land cannot be mortgaged under the agreement. This further ensures the protection of Council's assets.

Q. Why has the cost of the boat harbour increased from \$25million to more than \$100million?

The original estimate is more than 15 years old. Significant escalation has occurred in construction costs and in particular commodity costs such as fuel and steel, which form a major component of the construction of the boatharbour. It is important to remember that sales values of land have also risen over this period, from an average of \$85,000 per lot to nearing \$300,000.

Additionally, the original and earlier estimates were based on preliminary design work. Since then, detailed design work and site investigations revealed the scope of work involved in dealing with acid sulphate soils, soft soil conditions, and rock excavation requirements. Stringent environmental approval conditions, have also added to costs.

Q. What is happening with Australand's purchase of the Town Centre land adjacent the boat harbour?

The agreement between Australand and Council is for Australand to have an option to purchase the Town Centre land and adjoining apartment sites. The acquisition is subject to commercial viability assessment and approvals to create the subdivision of the land which will occur during the detailed design phase of the Town Centre precinct.

Also, Australand's payment for the land will occur during the construction of the boatharbour.

Q. What is happening in other parts of Shell Cove?

Civil works have commenced on an area of land mainly fronting the Links Golf Course. It involves a new and picturesque residential precinct, and the building of a major sewer pumping station and pipelines for Sydney Water. This will enable a number of prime lots to be released to the market early next year.

Q. Positive future for Shell Cove

Both Australand and Council have invested significantly in the project to date and remain strongly committed to the ongoing delivery of the Shell Cove precinct and the boat harbour.

Child friendly by design

The "Child Friendly by Design" project aims to involve children, young people, and families in the design and redesign of spaces and places, and will help develop a set of child-friendly indicators that can be used by developers, planners and designers to create more child and family friendly places. It is part of the Communities for Children Initiative, funded by the Australian Government under the Stronger Families & Communities Strategy. Barnardo's Australia is the Facilitating Partner working towards a child friendly Shellharbour City, with Healthy Cities Illawarra and Shellharbour City Council.

The Knoll at Shell Cove has been selected as a pilot site for the project. The Knoll is west of the Fig Tree Park on Fairways Drive, and includes the most elevated land in the precinct. It is surrounded by locally significant rainforest and combined with its spectacular 360 degree views provides an excellent opportunity to create a signature open space

A Working Group that includes members of the Shell Cove community of all ages has been formed for The Knoll and will assist with the concept planning of this parkland. As a result, community needs will be reflected in the final design, and the process will help Australand to ensure that Shell Cove's parklands cater for the needs and wants of the whole community including children, young people and families.

More information is available at www.healthyillawarra.org.au

