

Dangar Island League

PO Dangar Island, NSW 2083
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Meeting between DIL and Elton Consulting re Dangar Island Ferry Wharf Upgrade – 14 April 2016, 6pm

Attendance: Brian Elton and Petra Fowler (Elton Consulting), Warren Sager (SMEC), and Sophia Walsh, Peter Wolfe, Ross Spence, Vanessa O'Keefe (DIL).

Elton Consulting began by explaining the purpose of the meeting: To get some initial feedback on wharf issues and a draft new design to take back to HSC for consideration prior to broader public consultation with island residents. They indicated that HSC was now keen to move the process along quite quickly over the next couple of months.

The new design brings the pontoon in slightly closer to the shore, leaves the RFS boat where it is while improving its exit capability, and shows a potential future DIMC structure with about 32 berths.

Issues raised by DIL:

- General support for the triple benefits associated with the public wharf upgrade. The DIL indicated there was virtually universal community support for improving ferry access for frail or disabled, the young and parents with prams etc. We also indicated support for some visitor berthing, pointing out the benefits not only to visitors, but also to island businesses. We also relayed the 'in principle' support for a cooperative berthing facility for 30-40 commuter boats as per the outcome of the DIL meeting of 2014, while recognising opposition to this from a minority involved in that meeting.
- Reliability and continuity of ferry service. DIL relayed community concerns about the reliability of the ferry service once the public facility was completed, and the community's desire for current service standards to be maintained. This obviously revolves around climate/weather conditions at any new structure and ferry operability during inclement weather. Elton/SMEC indicated this issue had been discussed with Rick Stockley, and that they would recommend strongly to HSC that the legal liability and risk issues should be explored further. Discussion was also had about short term interruption of ferry services during construction. SMEC undertook to have a closer look at this issue and come back with some estimates. Presumably some interim arrangements would have to be made.
- Regarding the structure itself:
 - Discussions were had about the location of the RFS boat, and SMEC/Elton indicated that: the RFS advised the current proposal was now workable with the reduction of berths in the proposed mooring coop facility and widening of the fairway but not optimal, the RFS preference would be relocation to the eastern side of the new wharf out of the path of barges; noting there would be costs involved in relocating.
 - Shelter, handrail and surface elements. While we have been assured by HSC that this is all in hand, and that all standards will be met, DIL impressed upon Elton/SMEC the importance of providing details at any community presentations and consultation to allay any fears. Discussions were had about the possibility of providing some shelter on the pontoon itself, given the increased distance from the ferry shed to the new pontoon. While windage issues would need to be considered, SMEC indicated this may be possible.

- As was previously the case, the new design shows any future cooperative facility being accessed via the public pontoon (obviously with locked gates etc). Discussions were had about the possibility for increased congestion, particularly on the narrower access ramp. While the issue was noted, it was not considered significant by SMEC.
- Questions were raised about access to the pontoon from larger vessels with higher decks such as the Riverboat Postman boats. DIL recommended that Elton/SMEC speak directly with the proprietors in this regard. It may well be that additional infrastructure will be required on these boats to board or alight at the pontoon.
- The relationship between the public structure and any cooperative facility. DIL indicated that concerns remained with some community members that a sub-optimal public facility would be constructed to provide for a cooperative facility that may or may not eventuate at some future time. That said, further delaying the public facility upgrade was not supported. DIL relayed a suggestion from some residents that perhaps a public structure closer to the existing wharf could be 're-purposed' (ie moved further out) if and when the cooperative facility went ahead. SMEC indicated that this would likely involve significant cost, and that DIMC would probably bear this.
- Decision-making and expectations of the island community. HSC is trying to gain an element of consensus among residents regarding the public wharf design. As with any community, there will always be disparate views, and these will be expressed in both consultative processes and statutory processes (such as will be required for any future cooperative facility). Expecting complete consensus is probably unrealistic. HSC is the 'decision-maker'.
- Incomplete information. DIL is still waiting for information previously requested from Council. This includes:
 - The views and/or requirements of Transport for NSW and NSW Maritime regarding the public wharf upgrade, public transport standards, and visitor mooring requirements.
 - The details of the development application process for the cooperative facility.
- Broader community consultation. Elton Consulting indicated a preference for informal consultation with residents, making themselves available on a particular day to listen to issues and provide information to individuals. While this was supported, DIL recommended a hybrid model, whereby a presentation of the facts was first made to all interested residents, so that we had a common understanding before chatting with the consultants individually or in small groups. Elton saw merit in this approach. In addition, DIL recommended a series of FAQs be prepared so that common concerns and questions could be anticipated and answered consistently. To this end, DIL offered to help devise or anticipate some of the questions.

Meeting ended about 7.20.