

# Yorkeys Knob boat ramp

## Key messages/FAQs – October 2018

### 1. Background

#### 1.1 Where is the project located?

Yorkeys Knob is located approximately 20km north of Cairns.

#### 1.2 Is this project an election commitment?

During the November 2017 Queensland election campaign, the incoming government committed to a new boat launching facility at Yorkeys Knob with \$5.5 million allocated via the Marine Infrastructure Fund.

#### 1.3 What is included in the proposed project?

Planning is still preliminary, and the project scope will be refined as design and planning progresses. The project will likely include:

- a six-lane boat ramp with two floating walkways, located on vacant land immediately outside the existing western harbour breakwater at Yorkeys Knob
- two new breakwaters for wave protection
- a dredged basin (depth to -1.5 metres below Lowest Astronomical Tide)
- an access channel connecting to the existing dredged entrance servicing Half Moon Creek, Bluewater Marina, and Trinity Park canal estate
- a sealed car-trailer park, wholly located on state land
- a 100-metre rock revetment protecting the new car park
- a new access road (approximate length 500 metres) across state land connecting the proposed boating facility to Buckley Street

The project does not include any upgrades at other boat ramps, such as the existing ramp at Yorkeys Knob.

#### 1.4 What is the demand area for the new boat ramp to service?

The proposed boat ramp will be central to the demand area and will service all suburbs on the northern side of the Cairns CBD in addition to servicing northern beaches suburbs.

## **1.5 What are the underlying reasons for selecting Yorkeys Knob for the new boat ramp?**

The site at Yorkeys Knob offers the best combination of:

- least environmental impact
- greatest likelihood of gaining environmental construction approvals
- available state-owned land for the boat ramp car-trailer park
- all-tide access from the sea
- least ongoing maintenance cost
- ability to be connected via state-owned land to the road network.

## **1.6 What is the Department of Transport and Main Roads' (TMR) schedule for implementation of the project?**

The project scheduling is for technical investigations to proceed over the balance of 2018 and into early 2019, detailed design and agency approvals in 2019, letting of tenders late 2019, and construction in 2020. This schedule is subject to change.

## **2. Potential impacts**

### **2.1 Environmental**

As part of its planning activities, TMR will undertake investigations, including hydrodynamic and sediment transport modelling (flooding and coastal processes), marine and environmental surveys, and geotechnical studies, to ensure the design minimises environmental impacts. TMR will ensure that all planning and construction activities are carried out in accordance with environmental protection legislation. TMR will work closely with relevant environmental agencies to ensure that the works are carried out in a way that minimises impact on sensitive flora and fauna.

The proposed access road and creek crossing near Buckley Street are outside the Ray Howarth habitat reserve. Creek flows and drainage between the reserve and the man-made marina will remain unaffected.

The proposed boat ramp and car-trailer parking are on a previously disturbed dredge spoil area, where there are no mangroves and no longstanding habitat – either marine or land. Sites such as the one at Yorkeys Knob are preferred to sites having greater environmental impact, like the one proposed at Trinity Park.

Most of the proposed access road is also on previously disturbed land. The small creek crossing near Buckley Street will require disturbance of mangroves. Project design engineers will aim to minimise disturbance there and ensure tidal flows and drainage are not affected. The work will require environmental offsets so that the small amount of disturbance at the creek crossing is offset by improvements elsewhere.

The proposed site is excluded from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park owing to its man-made ‘disturbed from natural’ state, brought about by the construction of the existing marina. The effects of the new facility on the Great Barrier Reef are expected to be negligible.

### **2.2 Will the project affect flood flows and siltation at the entrance to Half Moon Creek?**

The project, via careful breakwater configuration, is forecast to have minimal effect on flood flows out of Half Moon Creek. Cairns Regional Council’s (CRC) dredging program at the creek mouth will need to continue. Modelling for the configuration of the breakwaters is the subject of advice being provided by a coastal process consultant.

### **2.3 Will the proposed project breakwaters negatively impact the existing western breakwater of Yorkeys Knob Marina?**

It is a requirement of the project approvals to ensure no adverse effect on adjacent structures, including the western boat club marina wall. The forecast is for the western wall of the marina to be less at risk than at present, through construction of the protective breakwaters of the proposed mini-harbour.

### **2.4 Will there be much current or wave action at the proposed new boat ramp?**

There will be no current at the proposed new ramp, owing to its location inside a closed mini-harbour. Wave action at the boat ramp is forecast by coastal engineers to be less than 0.3 m maximum for storms occurring on average once per year, and much smaller or calm for the majority of the time.

## **2.5 What are the parking and traffic impacts on Yorkeys Knob streets?**

Feedback from local boaties and residents confirms that demand at the existing boat ramp at Yorkeys Knob already exceeds capacity, which leads to congestion, parking issues and some antisocial behaviour during peak periods. After construction of the new boat ramp, existing demand will be spread over three ramps, two at Yorkeys Knob and one at Trinity Park. Parking at the new facility will be sufficient to handle predicted demand. TMR considers that the increase in traffic along Varley and Buckley Streets will have minimal effect, however the parking congestion in those two streets on busy boating days should be significantly improved.

Varley and Buckley Streets are council roads. As the project progresses, TMR officers will take up with CRC suggestions for consideration of noise reduction, and traffic control measures such as traffic moderating humps and small roundabouts.

## **2.6 Will there be sufficient car-trailer parking at the proposed new boat ramp?**

Car-trailer parking bays will be in excess of the number needed to support the four effective lanes proposed at the new boat ramp. There are four working faces to the two floating walkways proposed, and therefore four effective lanes. An additional lane is provided on each end to facilitate manoeuvring room for those not skilled at reversing a car-trailer rig.

When building new boat ramps, TMR is obliged to provide adequate car and trailer parking facilities to accommodate demand. The total number of parking spaces that will be made available is yet to be finalised, however, it will be sufficient to accommodate the number of effective lanes at this ramp during periods of normal demand.

## **2.7 What impacts will the project have on the Half Moon Bay Golf Club?**

The project will not require any golf club land. A golf course design consultant has been engaged to advise on safety and visual amenity issues associated with proximity of the Hole 14 fairway and green to the access road and parking area. This will include recommendations on tree retention, screening, protective bollards, and potential for fresh plantings. The consultant has advised that the playability of Hole 14 will not be affected by the project and it will retain its current national rating.

TMR has committed to working closely with HMBGC as planning progresses, to make sure any concerns raised by HMBGC and its membership are listened to and given proper consideration.

## **2.8 Will ratepayers or marina boat owners need to fund future maintenance dredging costs to maintain access to the proposed boat ramp?**

TMR will fund both initial capital dredging costs for the project and future maintenance dredging costs – to the depths needed for trailer boats. Coastal engineering advice from several sources confirms that the proposed TMR project will have little to nil effect on siltation at the mouth of Half Moon Creek, which will require continued attention by CRC.

## **3. Other sites**

### **3.1 Is a suggested site at the end of Reed Road, Trinity Park viable?**

At the request of community groups earlier in 2018, additional investigation was undertaken of a suggested site at the end of Reed Road, Trinity Park.

TMR's assessment of the Trinity Park site found that there are multiple issues, including higher upfront and ongoing costs, a more constrained coastal environment and more damaging environmental impacts. Environmental approvals for Trinity Park were projected to be much more difficult to obtain than for the site at Yorkeys Knob. Claims that a boat ramp of similar scale to the one proposed at Yorkeys Knob could be built at Trinity Park without the need for dredging and without constructing new protective barriers are not accurate.

TMR found that, aside from high land acquisition/compensation cost, the scale of the project at Trinity Park would require extensive dredging (for safety of navigation), removal of foreshore mangroves, revocation of a declared Fish Habitat Area (Class B) to allow initial capital dredging, and rock walls – to control creek flows and protect floating infrastructure from cyclonic wave action during storm surge at high tides.

The Trinity Park boat ramp site is relatively undisturbed from an environmental approvals perspective. It compares unfavourably with the proposed Yorkeys Knob site, which is on previously disturbed seabed and land allowing relatively straight forward environmental approvals.

A high siltation infill rate is projected for the suggested Trinity Park site. This high siltation infill rate for the dredged basin would involve high ongoing maintenance dredging costs. In comparison, the proposed site at Yorkeys Knob will dredge previously dredged seabed, will have a minimal and infrequent maintenance dredging requirement, will require no mangrove removal at the ramp site, and will be built on – and accessed over – existing state land.

### **3.2 Has the Barron River been investigated as a potential site?**

Sites in the Barron River have recently been suggested, as well as being investigated by the 2016 community reference group. They have been rejected based on the difficulties associated with establishing and maintaining an all-tide access channel in the river entrance, along with issues related to installing and maintaining floating infrastructure in an area subject to strong flood flows.

### **3.3 Have sites upstream in Half Moon Creek been investigated?**

Sites upstream in Half Moon Creek were rejected based on need to remove mangroves, need to revoke a Fish Habitat Area (Class B) for dredging approvals, need for seabed/mangrove reclamation below high water mark, need for extensive dredging to create a basin for floating infrastructure and deal with navigational safety constraints, likely ongoing maintenance dredging need, and cost relative to proposed use of the previously disturbed site outside the Half Moon Creek entrance at Yorkeys Knob.

### **3.4 Have northern beaches sites been investigated?**

Several sites were investigated on the northern beaches including Palm Cove, Ellis Beach, Taylor Point (Cook Bay, Kewarra Beach), and Buchan Point. Each has significant wave exposure, shallow seabed, and environmental constraints.

## 4. Consultation

### 4.1 What consultation and advice was sought to select and brief on the Yorkeys Knob site?

From 8 December 2015 to 30 September 2016, TMR ran a state-wide community consultation via the QGOV 'Get involved' website inviting website feedback and direct email submissions. Much feedback was received including comprehensive emailed submissions about the Cairns area.

The survey information and emailed submissions were provided to the consultant preparing the *Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study 2016*. The consultant conducted face to face meetings with officers from CRC and, prior to publication, gained CRC's 'no objection' to its recommendations for the Cairns area. The study recommended as a Priority 1 (as soon as possible) a new boat launching facility at Yorkeys Knob.

In 2016, a community reference group made up of representatives from TMR, CRC, CAirns REcreational Fishing Industry Stake Holders (CAREFISH) and local boaties investigated multiple locations between Cairns and Ellis Beach. The reference group recommendation was for a site at Yorkeys Knob.

During 2017, TMR officers met several times with officials from the Yorkeys Knob Boating Club (YKBC). This extensive consultation resulted in TMR acceding to the YKBC request to not construct new boat ramps inside the marina harbour.

In June 2018, TMR officers met with officials from the Half Moon Bay Golf Club (HMBGC) and YKBC to brief them on the proposed project.

TMR officers conducted face-to-face consultation from 24 to 28 July 2018 at the Yorkeys Knob shopping centre. The sessions were well attended and enabled members of the public to engage directly with technical experts about the project. This consultation proved valuable for those who attended and for project officers, who gained many insights as to project impacts and possible solutions. 155 people attended. 63% of the 71 who completed a feedback form and who expressed a preference were in favour of the project, and 37% were against it.

TMR and CRC continue to liaise about the project, as they have done since mid-2016.

### 4.2 How do I find out more information on the project?

To find out more about the project please contact:

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- Email: [BoatingInfrastructure@tmr.qld.gov.au](mailto:BoatingInfrastructure@tmr.qld.gov.au)
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