

## **Minutes of the Tourist Attraction Signposting Assessment Committee**

**Chambers of Council, 2 Castle St, Coffs Harbour**

### **Members**

Phil Oliver	Guidance and Delineation Manager, Roads & Maritime Services (RMS)
David Douglas	Regional Coordinator TASAC and Drive, Destination NSW
Tom Urban	TASAC Secretariat

### **Also present**

Greg Aitken	Roads and Maritime Services
Fiona Barden	Coffs Harbour City Council
Matt Day	Coffs Harbour City Council
Graham Oliver	Breakfree Aanuka
Bob Palmer	Yarrowarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre

### **Apologies**

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **1. PRESENTATIONS AND REGIONAL SIGNPOSTING ISSUES**

#### **1.1 Members' Report On-Site Inspections**

Prior to the meeting, committee members drove around the region and visited a series of attractions and places of interest.

Slim Dusty Centre – Kempsey

This attraction is well signposted from the Pacific Motorway but there are no signs at the entry on the local road network. There was also no sign on the motorway exit roundabout. RMS to follow up.

Kempsey Visitor Information Centre

Well signposted and helpful staff although no information available on Tourist Drive 12 specific to the route.

Tourist Drive 12

This drive leaves the Pacific Motorway and travels through Crescent Head and onto South West Rocks before re-joining the Pacific Motorway. Generally, signs for the drive are in reasonable condition although there was some confusion at critical decision points in both Crescent Head and South West Rocks townships. In Kempsey, green route markers have been based on signs instead of brown markers which is confusing.

Tourist Drive 15 (see additional comments at 4.1)

This new drive leaves the Pacific Motorway at Macksville, through town and follows the river to Nambucca Heads then returns to the Pacific Motorway to the north. The signs for this drive were recently installed by TASAC and look fantastic. The signs are a great example of what can be achieved by reviewing and updating tourist drive signage.

Signs were also observed for the newly signposted Frank Partridge VC Military Museum.

#### Raleigh Winery

This attraction is currently signposted and has recently changed ownership. The committee found the new owners to be highly motivated. The attraction was found to be of a high quality and, in addition to the signposted cellar door, also now includes accommodation on site.

#### Tourist Drive 18

See comments at 1.3 for further details.

Signs for the Dolphin Marine Conservation Park (approved October 2018) were still showing the old name of Pet Porpoise Pool. RMS has been waiting on the final signage designs before making the changeover. Phil Oliver will follow up on the progress of the new signage.

Signs for the Clog Barn were found to be old and faded. Clog Barn contacted TASAC in November 2018 and were told to submit a new application for signage. To date no application has been submitted. The Secretariat will contact Clog Barn to inform them that a new application needs to be submitted soon or the signs will need to be removed.

## 1.2 Local Signposting Issues

Graham Oliver from Breakfree Aanuka attended the meeting and flagged a recent controversial local issue. Blue signs for a series of large resorts were removed from the Pacific Highway and then reinstated following protests. Although this is not a TASAC matter (as it related to blue signs and not brown signs), the presence of an RMS representative and the importance of the issue amongst local stakeholders meant that the issue was appropriate for discussion. TASAC identified that the issue of signposting accommodation was one which has come up on a number of occasions. The committee identified several key points including:

- Road signs are not there to advertise businesses, but rather to provide information to motorists. Informing motorists of the presence of accommodation relates to safety and not marketing.
- Provision is made for accommodation to be signposted in regional areas where there are few options available. A town like Coffs Harbour would be an obvious source of many accommodation facilities for passing motorists. Signage is therefore not required.
- Resorts were originally signposted because they provided an all-inclusive experience (pools, restaurants, etc). Guests could remain at the resort for the duration of their stay without the need to leave. Recent changes in accommodation such as the development of holiday parks have changed the nature of the industry and made 'resort style' inclusions more common. Signposting all-inclusive accommodation is no longer feasible.
- Signposting accommodation facilities in Coffs Harbour creates a precedent for the signposting of other such establishments across the state. This is unfeasible as it would lead to an abundance of signage which would be difficult to establish/maintain and would compromise road safety.
- New and increasingly available technologies (such as the GPS) are making signage for pre-booked services such as accommodation less relevant.
- The best way for such resorts to ensure that they have adequate signposting in the future is to submit a DA to the relevant council for paid advertising signage to be installed on privately owned land.

Graham understood these points but also flagged a few key issues. He noted that technology has not yet progressed to the point where signage is not required and many of his guests still rely on the signs to locate the resort. He also pointed out that signage for Aanuka and other resorts were installed legally when such signage was allowed and should be left in place as part of a 'grandfather' policy. He also identified inadequate consultation prior to the removal of the signs – something which RMS disputes. Ultimately, it was noted that the signs were reinstated at the request of the Minster and RMS has no intention of removing them for the foreseeable future. The issue is therefore resolved and requires no further discussion or follow up.

Bob Palmer from Yarrawarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre also attended the meeting. The attraction is currently signposted; however, he has requested that additional signage for the centre be installed on the new highway. Eligibility for the attraction lapsed in February 2019 and so a new application would be required before this can be reviewed. The Secretariat will email through the relevant application forms for Bob to fill out and return. Once the attraction has been approved by the committee, the current signage placement will be reviewed and any potentially suitable new signage can be installed.

Coffs Harbour Council provided an overview of their dispersed Visitor Information model which they flagged as being a success. The model will continue in its current form for the foreseeable future. At present there are three sites with a scope for expansion to more sites as required. The three existing sites are all currently accredited level three centres and are operated by different businesses. Council are not averse to having a level one centre, however, they do not intend to contribute funding to the operation of a Visitor Information Centre so it is unlikely that such a facility will be established.

Coffs Harbour Council also flagged their intention to install some better road safety signage for international visitors and to introduce more information on driving on local roads. This includes reminding international drivers to keep on the left-hand side of the road as well as information on local road conditions (animals, etc). The region is a refugee resettlement zone and also receives a large number of working holiday makers each year who come to pick blueberries on nearby farms. These factors result in multiple international visitors and residents new to the region and to Australia who are sometimes unfamiliar with local driving rules and customs.

Image based bypass road signage for Woolgoolga was identified as a key issue for council. The signage is due to be installed soon. Council have selected their desired images and RMS have determined possible locations for the signage. RMS is currently managing the sign installation process.

### **1.3 Tourist Drive 18**

This particular drive was flagged as an issue at the previous TASAC meeting which took place in Coffs Harbour in October 2016. At the time, the drive was found to be confusing as it "*crosses from one side to the other side of the Pacific Highway at a number of points and its route is not easily distinguishable from other elements of the hinterland road system*" (Item 1.3, TASAC meeting minutes, October 2016). Coffs Harbour council were going to review their plans for the route and advise TASAC, however, this action was never completed.

Council noted that they are aware of the issues flagged at the previous meeting and agree that the drive can be changed to address these issues. They also noted that the proposed Coffs

Harbour bypass is due to commence construction soon and would require further changes to Tourist Drive 18 upon completion. It was agreed that no changes need to be made immediately, however, planning for changes to the drive do need to be considered now in order to be included in the signage plans for the bypass. It was suggested that splitting Tourist Drive 18 into two or more separate drives may offer an appropriate solution. Council did also express strong desire to keep most of the route as a numbered tourist drive(s), particularly past the jetty precinct which has been extensively upgraded over the past two years and is increasingly featured as a tourism focal point.

It was agreed that council will consider their position on the future of Tourist Drive 18 now with the aim of including this information in future discussions of bypass signage. TASAC is available to assist council as required regarding advice on the drive and suitable alternatives to the current arrangement.

## **2. NEW TOURIST SIGNPOSTING APPLICATIONS**

### **2.1 Royal Flying Doctor Service Outback Visitor Experience, Broken Hill**

The Royal Flying Doctor Service Outback Visitor Experience is an existing attraction based at the organisation's headquarters at Broken Hill Airport. It is recently visited by TASAC committee members in conjunction with the March 2019 TASAC meeting in Broken Hill. At the time it was found to be a high-quality attraction with poor quality signage. The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) were encouraged to apply for signposting for the attraction.

The attraction appears to meet all relevant criteria with the only exception being visitor hours. The attraction is open for only five hours on Saturday and Sundays, one hour short of the required six hours per day. Endorsement of the attraction has also been provided by Museums and Galleries NSW. The site inspection was waived on account of TASAC's recent visit.

The committee has elected to approve the application subject to a change in opening hours to meet TASAC's requirements. Emails between the Secretariat and RFDS suggest that such an amendment is currently being made and will be complete in the near future.

**Decision:** Application is approved pending necessary changes to opening hours.

**Action:** **TASAC Secretariat to liaise with applicant about opening hours and send relevant correspondence.**

### **2.2 Wirraway Aviation Museum, Pokolbin**

Wirraway Aviation Museum in Pokolbin have applied for signage in the museums category. The museum consists of a number of operational historic aircraft which can also be booked as part of a historic flight experience.

The information provided suggests that this museum could be an interesting attraction for guests, however, it also suggests that the museum is a secondary attraction for guests after the flight experience. A detailed site visit will be required to confirm that the museum is a sufficient

attraction in its own right. It is also required to confirm the presence of a sign with opening hours. Endorsement from Museums and Galleries NSW will also be required.

**Decision:** Application is approved subject to successful endorsement and detailed site inspection.

**Action:** **TASAC Secretariat to arrange site inspection and send relevant correspondence.**

*NOTE: Following the meeting, Georgia Lazzari from Destination NSW agreed to conduct the site inspection on behalf of TASAC.*

### **2.3 Dubbo Rhino Lodge (*application withdrawn*)**

The application for Dubbo Rhino Lodge was submitted to TASAC based on incorrect advice which was provided to the applicant by a third party. After discussing the matter with the applicant, they have advised in writing that they wish to withdraw their application.

### **2.4 Australian Reptile Park, Central Coast**

The Australian Reptile Park recently approached TASAC with a number of complaints about their signage. Some signs appear to be missing and/or difficult to follow including some signage on state roads. The signage for the park was done a long time ago and may need to be reviewed.

The attraction submitted an application to establish their eligibility for signage. A site inspection was also conducted by the TASAC Secretariat. The attraction and application were both noted to be of high quality and met all required TASAC guidelines. Sufficient information was also provided for the attraction to be approved in the State Significant category.

**Decision:** Application is approved.

**Action:** **TASAC Secretariat to send relevant correspondence.**

## **3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 21 MARCH 2019**

The minutes of TASAC's meeting of Thursday 21 March 2019 in Broken Hill were confirmed by the committee. All relevant actions have been completed.

## **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

### **4.1 Nambucca and Tourist Drive 15**

Nambucca council were unable to attend the TASAC meeting, however, Coral Hutchinson from council provided an email update on Tourist Drive 15. She indicated that all signage has now been installed including that for interim attractions such as beaches and lookouts. The

committee expressed their appreciation for the update and were pleased to hear that the Tourist Drive 15 signage is now complete.

## **4.2 Hartley Signage**

Louise Clifton from National Parks and Wildlife Service has indicated a desire to attend the next TASAC meeting to be held in Sydney in May in order to address this issue. As such, discussion of this matter was delayed until then.

## **5. INQUIRIES RECEIVED SINCE LAST MEETING**

- 5.1 Clarence Craft Brewery, Clarence Valley
- 5.2 Wildlife Park, Murrumbidgee
- 5.3 Line of Lode, Broken Hill
- 5.4 Broken Hill Solar Farm
- 5.5 Walkabout Wildlife Park, Central Coast

This attraction was contacted to apply for signage after the Australian Reptile Park (who have also recently applied) requested a review of their signage. This attraction and the Reptile Park both share signs on the motorway and any review was identified as an opportunity to refresh the eligibility of all attractions in the region and review the associated signage. It was also noted at this meeting that Glenworth Valley Horse Riding (now named Glenworth Valley Outdoor Adventures) should also be approached to submit a new application.

**Action: TASAC Secretariat to contact Glenworth Valley Outdoor Adventures and request a new application.**

- 5.6 Poachers Pantry, Yass Valley
- 5.7 Pepper Tree Wines, Cessnock
- 5.8 Naked Lady Wines, Rhylstone
- 5.9 Newcastle Signage

## **6. POLICY ISSUES**

### **6.1 Historic Towns**

Phil Oliver had requested a review of a number of towns recently announced as eligible for bypass signage. Some of the towns are likely to be categorised as historic. An initial review of the historic towns list suggests that two of the towns – Grafton and Kiama – are currently classified as historic. A third town – Port Macquarie – is not currently classified as historic but should perhaps be considered in this category.

It was decided that the matter needs to be taken up with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. The secretariat was asked to make arrangements for this meeting.

**Action:**            **TASAC Secretariat to arrange a meeting with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.**

## **7.        OTHER BUSINESS**

### **7.1      TASAC Meeting Schedule**

TASAC notes that the regional annual meeting schedule needs to be re-evaluated prior to setting more meeting dates. A new proposed schedule will be prepared for the next meeting where it can be confirmed by the committee and future meeting locations can be set.

## **8.        NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is currently scheduled to take place in Sydney on the 15 May 2019.

**The meeting concluded at 12.55 pm.**

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### Attachment 1 – TASAC Meeting Schedule

<b>Region</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Northern</b>	Coffs Harbour	17 April 2019
<b>Sydney</b>	Destination NSW Head Office	15 May, 2019
<b>Hunter</b>	Dungog	12 June, 2019
<b>Western</b>	Lightning Ridge	3 July, 2019
<b>TBC</b>	TBC	21 August, 2019
<b>TBC</b>	TBC	18 September, 2019