

Minutes of the Tourist Attraction Signposting Assessment Committee

The Newcastle Room - Newcastle City Hall, King Street, Newcastle
20 November 2019, 9.30am

Members

David Douglas (DD)	Regional Coordinator TASAC and Drive, Destination NSW
Phil Oliver (PO)	Guidance and Delineation Manager, Roads and Maritime Services
Ken Saxby (KS)	Network and Safety Services Manager, RMS Hunter region

Also present

Louis Todd	Roads and Maritime Services
Samantha Wilcox	Business Development Officer, City of Newcastle
Anita Monticone	City of Newcastle
Julie Baird	Newcastle Museum and Fort Scratchley
James Cook	Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary
Simon Farrow	Visitor Economy Officer, Maitland City Council

Apologies

Roy Wakelin-King	Executive Director, Regional and Freight, Roads and Maritime Services
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Sam Bullen	City of Newcastle
Nathaniel Bavinton,	Smart City Team, City of Newcastle
Kylie Manderson,	Blackbutt Reserve

AGENDA ITEMS

1. PRESENTATIONS AND REGIONAL SIGNPOSTING ISSUES

1.1 Members' Report On-Site Inspections

The day before the meeting, KS and DD visited the attractions listed below within both Newcastle and Port Stephens local government areas.

Port Stephen Koala Sanctuary

See section 2.2 below for detailed information.

Irukandji Shark and Ray Experience

DD and KS visited this attraction and met with Ryan Pereira. Ryan has been operating the business for the last five years and has TASAC approved signs for the attraction on Nelson Bay Road. Ryan has lodged a DA process with Port Stephens Council to build a new facility in the area and relocate the business, hopefully in the first half of 2020.

Ryan contacted TASAC several weeks ago and has asked that the signs remain in place until the attraction ceases to operate at its current location.

The owner of the building from which this attraction operates, lodged an application with TASAC in August to operate a similar type of experience (Shark and Ray Ranch) once Irukandji has relocated to its new location. At that time, TASAC was informed that 15 December 2019 would be the date the Shark and Ray Ranch would commence operating.

The applicant and owner of Shark and Ray Ranch was given provisional approval from TASAC subject to the following conditions,

- 1) the provision of the relevant licencing documentation to show that the attraction holds all relevant government approvals. The committee have asked that you provide this information as it relates to the new operations set to commence in December 2019.
- 2) that a site inspection to is undertaken once the new operator commences management of the attraction in December 2019. RMS will commence planning and design processes for the new signage immediately in preparation for possible approval to be granted following the site inspection. This will prevent any delays in the installation of signage for the new Shark and Ray Ranch operation.

There appears to be issues which relate to DPIE licencing which may prevent both Irukandji from moving out by this date and Shark and Ray Ranch from commencing operating from December 2019. TASAC will liaise with both parties and only install signs for the new attraction once satisfied that all appropriate actions have been finalised.

Blackbutt Reserve

Blackbutt Reserve, located close to Newcastle CBD was also visited by DD and KS as Council had suggested this as a possible location for TASAC signage. This reserve is a large area of park and bushland set aside for locals and visitors to enjoy. The site includes walking tracks, animal enclosures and encounters, picnic and BBQ facilities, a children's play area and a kiosk which operates daily from 10am to 3pm. Information about the attraction can also be obtained from the kiosk as well as any tickets for animal encounters at the site.

The reserve is accessed from Lookout Road which is a state road and there is some signage already in place but this appears to have been erected in an ad hoc manner. It appears that Blackbutt Reserve may be eligible for tourist signposting in the Outdoor/Nature based category and Council were advised to consider applying to TASAC to enable a complete signage treatment to be designed and installed.

1.2 Local Signposting Issues

Sam Wilcox from Newcastle Council discussed ideas for possible signposting of attractions in and around Newcastle CBD. These attractions include, Fort Scratchley, Newcastle Museum, Anzac Walk and Blackbutt Reserve. Signs for the Newcastle Accredited Visitor Information Centre which is being relocated from the Newcastle Museum to the Civic Railway station in Hunter Street were also discussed.

A major issue which related to all CBD attractions in Newcastle is the lack of either dedicated parking for the attraction or limited on street parking at each location. The addition of the new

light rail system in the CBD has also changed the nature of the amenity of the area, with public transport and pedestrian access the preferred methods of access.

It was agreed that with this in mind, Council consider signposting a tourism precinct with signs directing visitors to parking facilities. Once parked, visitors could be directed via enhanced pedestrian wayfinding solutions to all attractions within the precinct. Council and TASAC agreed to work together on this project with a view to completion by the end of March 2020 when the new Visitor Information Centre is expected to open.

1.3 Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary

James Cook, Marketing Promotions Manager with Port Stephens Council attending the meeting and provided the committee an overview of the Koala Sanctuary being developed at One Mile. James gave a detailed presentation on the new attraction being developed and provided insights into the Sanctuary's funding model, partnership with Port Stephens Koalas, a volunteer organisation. James also provided details regarding the visitor experience which includes a Visitor Centre, Café, Treetop Canopy viewing area and Koala interpretive walk.

1.4 Maitland City Council Signage Audit

Simon Farrow, Visitor Economy Officer with Maitland City Council attended the meeting to discuss a recent signage audit completed by Maitland Council. Most of the issues related to 'white on green' directional signage on state roads in and around Maitland local government area. KS agreed to work with Simon and Maitland City Council to work through any signage improvements that could be made. Most issues relate to changes to the road network with the opening of the Hunter Expressway and the changing nature of the Maitland CBD.

Signs for Morpeth were also discussed as it is signposted as an historic town from the New England Highway. Morpeth has requested more remote signage from the Hunter Expressway and M1 motorway and this is an ongoing discussion between RMS, Council and Morpeth Historical Society.

Maitland Visitor Information Centre, currently signposted was also discussed. Some time ago, Council reduced the opening hours of the Centre which resulted in a change in accreditation level. The Centre, currently accredited at Level 3, is no longer entitled to signs on the road network and signs for the Centre should be removed. However, Council is again reviewing the operation of the Centre and will advise TASAC in due course. It was agreed that no further action is required on this issue until the review is complete. DD also informed Simon that the Manager, Visitor Services from Destination NSW would be visiting the Maitland VIC and also meeting with Council staff to discuss accreditation of the Centre moving forward.

2. NEW TOURIST SIGNPOSTING APPLICATIONS

2.1 Lake Liddell Recreation Area, Muswellbrook

Lake Liddell Recreation Area is managed by the Lake Liddell Recreation Area Trust, which has lodged a signposting application to upgrade existing tourist signage, some of which is in poor condition. The trust manages the area under the Crown Reserve system administered by the Department of Lands.

The recreation area, which is open daily from 7 am to 10 pm, is 16 km south of Muswellbrook and 54 km north of Singleton. The lake, which is in the centre of mining and vineyard country, covers 1,133 ha and is 36 m deep with a storage capacity of 152,000 mega litres. It was constructed to store cooling water (replenished from the Hunter River) for Lake Liddell Power Station. Facilities at the recreation area include camping, powered sites, boat ramp, amenities, BBQs, wildlife, power boating, sailing and fishing. The brochure for the recreation area gives brief details about the history of the lake and describes its recreational attributes.

Use of the lake is not permitted at the current time due to issues with the water quality however, the site is popular for other non-water related activities.

Decision: Application is approved subject to a positive site inspection report.

Action: **Muswellbrook Shire Council have been contacted and asked to complete the site inspection on behalf of TASAC.**

2.2 Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary, Port Stephens

Following an application to the NSW State Government, Port Stephens Council successfully secured funding to build the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary at Treescape, One Mile Beach. The Sanctuary will incorporate a hospital function, rehabilitation and staged release facilities.

The Sanctuary will also include tourist and accommodation offerings, including an interpretive and an elevated treetop canopy walk, where visitors can view koalas in a natural habitat. Educational presentations and encounters will also be available through a visitor centre experience. Premium Bushland "Glamping" accommodation (20 tents) will be located within close proximity of the koala enclosures, offering a unique overnight guest experience.

DD and KS visited the Sanctuary and were given a tour of the construction site by Council staff members. DD and KS also identified possible sign locations on Frost Road and Nelson Bay road. There appears to be some unapproved signs for accommodation facilities at the intersection of Nelson Bay and Frost roads which may need to be rationalised in order to properly sign the Koala Sanctuary. RMS will liaise with Port Stephens Council regarding this issue.

Decision: Application is approved

Action: **Applicant has been informed and advised to make contact with RMS to discuss sign treatment. Applicant has also been asked to submit photos and marketing collateral of the attraction once construction is completed and the attraction is open to the public.**

2.3 Window on the Wetlands (WOW), Warren

The Window on the Wetlands Centre is located just off the Oxley Highway near Warren Western NSW. The Centre provides access to the Macquarie Marshes and is popular with visitors to the region. The Centre and adjacent wetlands area has walking trails and interpretive information regarding the marshes, their history and bird life and also information regarding local Aboriginal culture and significance of the area.

In 2014, the former church from St Mary's school in Warren relocated to the site to sit beside the existing old school house building and toilet block. Together they form the main built infrastructure of the Window on the Wetlands Centre.

Decision: Application is approved subject to a positive site inspection report.

Action: **Warren Shire Council have been contacted and asked to complete the site inspection on behalf of TASAC.**

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 16 OCTOBER 2019

The minutes of TASAC's meeting of Wednesday 16 October 2019 in Corowa were confirmed by the committee. All relevant actions have been completed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 Shark and Ray Ranch, Port Stephens. See detailed information at section 1.1 above.

5. INQUIRIES RECEIVED SINCE LAST MEETING

- 5.1 Richard Drooger, Window on the Wetlands, Warren
- 5.2 Simon Farrow, Maitland Signage issues
- 5.3 Ryan Pereira, Irukandji Shark and Ray Encounters
- 5.4 Lori Modde, Milparinka Signage Project
- 5.5 Sydney Indoor MX Dome
- 5.6 Moama intersection signage upgrade

6. POLICY ISSUES

6.1 RMS Signage Tracker Update

Phil Oliver presented an updated version of the RMS signage tracker. Signs for both Mt Penang Gardens and Raging Waters have now been installed. A large number of applications have progressed and are currently in the Planning/Installation phase.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 TASAC Meeting Schedule

Region	Location	Date
Southern	Goulburn	11 December, 2019
Sydney	Sydney	15 January, 2020

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled to take place in Goulburn on the 11 December 2019.

The meeting concluded at 12.45 pm.
