

# Q Station

## Environmental Assessment in support of a s75w Modification Application



**Volume 2: Section 6 Appendices 6.1 to 6.8**

Report prepared for  
Mawland Quarantine Station Pty Ltd



August 2015

**Volume 2 Section 6: Appendices 6.1 to 6.8**

## 6. Appendices

### Introduction

The following appended documents are referred to within the proposals for modification to the Quarantine Station Conditions of Planning Approval.

- Letter from Paul Davies on architectural integrity issues and other matters (section 6.1).
- Advice from Dr Simon McArthur in relation to proposed changes to conditions to visitor numbers on site (section 6.2).
- Q Station Environmental Audit (2011) Executive summary (section 6.3)
- Report from Paul Davies Pty Ltd in relation to the provision of umbrella shade structures at the Q Station (section 6.4)
- Report from Biosis assessing the proposed introduction of ambient outdoor dining music to the restaurant area, including potential impacts on Little Penguins (section 6.5)
- Letter from NPWS concerning the proposals for modification of the CoPA – North Head Quarantine Station Conservation and Adaptive Re-use (section 6.6)
- Minutes of the Quarantine Station Consultative Committee meetings (section 6.7)

The documents are provided on the following sections.

Also included at section 6.8 are the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs issued by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment on 6 November 2014).

Finally, this assessment includes recommendations with respect to the other CoPA not addressed above. These recommendations are included as an appendix in section 6.9.

## **6.1 Use of Site, Air conditioning, Spatial Layout and External Structures**

Letter from Paul Davies, Heritage Architect, on architectural integrity issues and other matters

26<sup>th</sup> March 2014

The Director  
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service  
Level 14, 59-61 Goulburn Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

**re Quarantine Station - Modifications**

We have been asked to make comment on a number of matters that are currently being discussed in relation to modifying the conditions of consent that originally applied to the project and site.

The review is necessary as many of the conditions related to matters of construction and initial works that are now complete and some conditions related to the proposal as first submitted, that has now been adjusted in response to site conditions and a period of operation.

The matters that I can make comment on are:

**USE**

The consent responded to a 'zoning' (this is in effect what the proposal and consent achieved) of the site for various uses that were proposed by Mawland in their original submission. While the overall range of uses proposed was and is appropriate and approved, the limiting or allocation of uses to specific locations has been less successful in practice. The original outline of uses and locations was based on a limited understanding of the site and its constraints and opportunities and now, with a long period of works being undertaken and use of the site, there are clearly preferred and different ways of using the site, within the broad range of approved uses, that is appropriate from a heritage perspective and for the best use and understanding of the site.

We would also suggest that over time this approach will continue to be developed and uses may, in response to need opportunities, demand, etc shift. In essence this is an adjustment of uses around particular parts of the site, it is not a mechanism to introduce new uses.

Many parts of the site are limited by their nature to the proposed uses. This clearly applies to most of the accommodation rooms, bathrooms and sampled areas. However areas that do not have new clearly defined contemporary uses such as the hospital buildings and some of the wharf precinct buildings could easily have uses other than set out in the current approval that would not affect the consent.

There should be no consent impediment for Mawlands and NPWS to agree to minor variations of use of the activity where those uses are Permitted Uses, provided any

such minor changes are consistent with the intent of the original approval/permitted consent. We would also suggest that where this is agreement that a modification to the consent is not required.

This does not consider any physical works that may be proposed which will require a different consideration under the current consent.

## MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

The condition of consent limiting the use of Mechanical Systems on the site was intended to ensure that the buildings and in particular the accommodation rooms were not overwhelmed by the installation of air conditioning and plant. This was a reasonable consideration and a plethora of plant, ducts, etc across the site would inevitably have an adverse affect on the heritage values of the site.

In contrast the provision of a small number of discrete self contained units in limited locations and specifically not in accommodation rooms can be achieved without adverse impact and has the potential to interpret those rooms (that are all public spaces) as heating and cooling units do not be located within those spaces.

In terms of visual concerns, where fan coil units can be located sensitively under buildings and away from significant views and vistas and noise can be managed, the provision of air conditioning to public spaces such as lounge and conference rooms is a reasonable action that does not reduce the significance of the place.

In terms of guest amenity, providing air conditioning in spaces that are public and more intensely used is necessary to allow those buildings to be used in a reasonable manner. The argument that an authentic experience cannot be achieved with the use of installations such as air conditioning is not a valid one as there is no true authentic experience possible short of placing people in quarantine again. The approval to use the site for accommodation and conferencing while being controlled in terms of the changes that can take place also anticipates that these new layers of use are able to function to at least a level of comfort that meets basic code requirements. The provision of a limited amount of air conditioning in more intensely used public areas would seem consistent with the consent and the heritage values of the place.

## SPATIAL LAYOUT

In Buildings P1 and P2, the Conditions of Consent required retention of the spatial layout and internal configuration. This created considerable difficulty, although the intent of the condition was sound, as it meant the buildings could not be used due to the high level of non-compliance under the BCA related to sole occupancy units.

A compromise was approved that irrevocably changed the spatial arrangement of the buildings in order to achieve some level of use to achieve a use for the buildings and some retention of spatial layout.

Fundamentally this resulted in the closure of the corridors and their adaptation in various ways.

With the integrity of the spatial arrangement removed as already approved, there would seem little point in retaining this condition. It is noted that we have prepared several schemes to undertake minor adaptation of these rooms as a result of the BCA restrictions and we would suggest that provided any fitout that may be added can be removed to recover the original corridors and doors that careful minor change to these two buildings will have no adverse heritage impacts.

Consequently we support the removal of this condition of consent.

#### EXTERNAL STRUCTURES

There has been considerable debate about the addition of shade and other small structures around parts of the site. Particularly this applies to areas where there is public dining and a need for some shade.

A permanent structure was added at the boiler house reflecting roughly the location of an earlier building and at times large umbrellas have been used.

There has been concern about the visual impact of such additions to the traditional character of the station.

Having worked on the Quarantine Station for 15 years including researching the site, preparing the CMP and undertaking the works that are now largely complete, we have come to the view that the addition of lightweight elements, on a need basis and with great care about how they are located is quite consistent with the traditional character of the site.

On reflection the station needs to be understood as a collection of structures that came and went, within a constantly changing landscape that was adapted by each group of users in innovative ways to make their stay at the site more palatable. While the core site retained a government standard of maintenance the people in quarantine added things around the site while in occupation.

The site was never presented as it is now, that is as pristine heritage site. It had accretions and additions and temporary structures, tents, washing, fences, sheds, fuel dumps, rubbish dumps, storage areas, etc. creating a working site with many unsightly elements as well as a lived in feel.

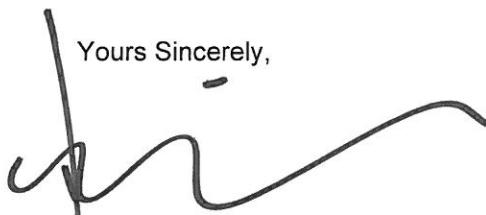
The addition of shade structures, preferably of contemporary design would seem consistent with that history and the actual adding of unexpected minor visual elements works in terms of interpreting the non-architectural and more sterilised understanding of history that tends to predominate.

What is important that any minor structures are of a temporary and ephemeral nature, that is they can come and go and may shift in location.

I can find no logical or historical reason to prevent the use of shade structures around the boiler house for example. While this would not have been there historically (as it was a boiler house without public access or a need for shelter) the change of and the setting and the need for some shade makes the provision of structures logical, understandable and appropriate.

Further consideration of other small-scale elements could also be appropriate at other locations on the site.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Davies', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Paul Davies**

Project Director

## **6.2 Numbers on site and potential impacts**

Advice from Dr Simon McArthur in relation to proposed changes to conditions to visitor numbers on site.

# SIMONMcARTHUR

TOURISM & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

A N D A S S O C I A T E S

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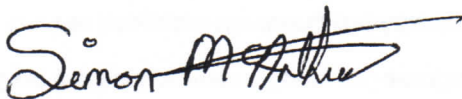
17<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Dear Max,

You have requested Simon McArthur and Associates (SMA) to provide you with advice relating to reforming the North Head Quarantine Station Condition of Approval 120. The following attachment provides advice, which can be tabled with the various Determining Authorities for review and feedback, or incorporated into a broader proposal for modifications to the CoA.

Though we do not believe that the following proposal triggers CoA 121, we have nonetheless prepared a scope for an impact assessment to increase visitor capacity regulations at the site. This scope can also be made available to the Determining Authorities for their review and feedback, if requested.

Kind regards,



SIMON MCARTHUR  
DIRECTOR  
Simon McArthur & Associates

## 1. Rationale to modify Condition of Approval 120

CoA 120 For the first 3 years after the commencement date:

- a) the visitor capacity for the site shall be a maximum of 450 people (including staff) on site at any one time;
- b) the optimum visitor capacity shall be up to 315 people (including staff) on site at any one time. The co-proponents shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the optimum visitor capacity (or less) is met for a majority of the time during which the site is publicly accessible

The lease and associated approval activities have now been active for five years. Given that CoA was put forward to assist manage the site for the first three years, it is now prudent to review the effectiveness of the this CoA and consider whether circumstances warrant an amendment.

## 2. Synopsis of the operating environment for CoA 120

### 2.1 Synopsis

Over the first five years of lease and associated activities:

1. The Integrated Monitoring and Adaptive Management System (IMAMS) for the site has been continuously operating, collecting data on key indicators of the health of the site, visitor experience and business
2. The Visitor Management Plan has been updated to reflect further understanding of how best to manage visitors
3. There have been a number of reforms to the way visitor access the site, move around the site, and are managed
4. The average number of visitors on the site at any one time has been less than the optimum visitor capacity
5. There have been a number of programmed events that have brought the number of visitors on site at any one time close to and perhaps marginally over the maximum of 450 people (including staff)
6. There have been no incidents recorded at the same time as visitation has been recorded as being close to or perhaps marginally over the maximum
7. There are a number of forecast periods on some days / evenings that attract additional requests to utilise the site for functions and events, that cannot be catered for because the additional visitation would take the site over its maximum
8. Turning away the function and event business loses goodwill, customers and valuable income for the business
9. Q Station believes that it can manage this pre-programmed visitation and not create any negative impacts on the site or other visitor experiences
10. Q Station would like to amend CoA 120 to accommodate this occasional business, while maintaining the current optimal and maximum people at any one time.

### 2.2 Changes to access and visitor management

Water access by ferry was proposed to enhance the arrival experience and interpretation of the historic quarantine operations, and reduce potential traffic, noise, light associated with cars, and reduce potential wildlife deaths – particularly bandicoots. Water-based access has been problematic, and particularly challenging to attract customers – people still prefer the convenience of their own vehicle. Nonetheless, water access has been established and some customers use it.

Conversely, visitor vehicular access into the site has been drastically reduced, with the shift of the reception area to the entrance and the use of the entry CP1 carpark for all visitor vehicles. The shuttle bus has lifted total visitor access into the site from 50% to 98%. There have been no wildlife deaths on the internal road system since this change. The cautious policy of no independent access into the site for day visitors was lifted three years after operations commenced, and now locals use the area for their exercise routes and casual visitation to the site. There have been no incidents resulting from this change in policy.

### 2.3 Visitation peaks and environmental condition

Visitation to Q Station peaks when there is a combination of group based visitors, in addition to the typical collection of smaller group independent visitors. Major drivers of these peaks are:

- school group visits;
- special events (such as a Community Open Day and Naval Week 2013 or move them up from below point); and
- when there is strong demand for functions (such as Mothers Day, Fathers Day, Christmas Functions, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Years Eve.

**Table 2.1** presents the known peaks that occurred between December 2012 and November 2013. **Table 2.1** indicates that peak visitation invariably occurs on Fridays and Saturdays, typically as a result of several groups using the site at the same time – not as a result of lots of independent visitors. **Table 2.1** also shades in red several occasions when visitation came very close to the 450 maximum, and at least one occasion when visitation probably went over 450 visitors by approximately another 70 group-based visitors.

There was not one incident recorded at any of the times that these visitation peaks were recorded. Specifically, there were:

- no vehicle incidents;
- no traffic complaints from residents or visitors;
- no bandicoot deaths within the lease area;
- no noise complaints from the neighbouring residents; and
- no customer complaints regarding crowding, noise or other impacts on their experience.

The nature of this group-based visitation makes it the most easy to manage of the types of visitors. For example:

- it is pre-programmed to set times;
- the number of visitors is pro-programmed
- the type of activity is pre-programmed; and
- more than 90% of the time that these visitors spend at Q Station is spent inside buildings, where noise and behaviour is highly contained.

It is therefore quite easy to place additional visitor management protocols on these groups to minimise their impact on the environment and other visitor experiences. For example, groups can be moved through the site with staff escort as pedestrians or within specially programmed buses.

**Table 2.1 Average number of visitors (and staff) counted and actually on site at any one time (Dec 2012-Nov 2013)**

Date	Staff on site	Accomm Guests	Resturant Covers	Function Guests	Tours	Visitor count on site	Visitors on site at any one time
Sat, 8 Dec 12	56	156	120	113	20	335	295
Fri, 14 Dec 12	66	83	73	319	20	385	358
Sat, 15 Dec 12	62	178	236	104	20	403	332
Fri, 18 Jan 13	59	144	75	70	20	280	252
Sat, 19 Jan 13	48	189	87	153	20	375	343
Sat, 26 Jan 13	54	172	80	143	20	353	324
Sat, 16 Feb 13	66	141	98	147	20	342	307
Fri, 22 Feb 13	64	140	47	320	20	431	410
Sat, 23 Feb 13	66	181	115	409	20	559	520
Sat, 9 March 13	62	185	76	272	20	455	427
Fri, 22 March 13	75	115	37	269	20	378	360
Sat, 23 March 13	61	159	64	295	20	438	413
Mon, 25 March 13	55	119	99	264	20	387	353
Sat, 6 April 13	64	150	102	147	20	351	315
Fri, 26 April 13	59	186	91	120	20	361	328
Sat, 27 April 13	57	176	115	262	20	451	412
Sat, 4 May 13	46	147	88	240	20	388	357
Fri, 10 May 13	59	80	97	330	20	394	360
Sat, 11 May 13	50	122	131	268	20	402	359
Sat, 8 June 13	38	182	69	0	20	253	227
Fri, 14 June 13	54	104	56	96	20	245	222
Sat, 15 June 13	42	113	60	275	20	362	338
Sat, 6 July 13	44	167	79	50	20	279	250
Fri, 19 July 13	47	110	60	232	20	335	311
Sat, 27 July 13	54	150	38	138	20	311	293
Sat, 10 Aug 13	59	116	37	350	20	419	401
Sat, 24 Aug 13	59	176	81	70	20	314	285
Tues, 27 Aug 13	43	63	77	222	20	286	257
Fri, 30 Aug 13	57	127	67	350	20	440	414
Fri, 20 Sept 13	61	142	42	297	20	414	394
Sat, 21 Sept 13	56	173	109	106	20	343	306
Sat, 28 Sept 13	48	191	125	280	20	474	433
Sat, 12 Oct 13	54	143	116	211	20	383	344
Fri, 18 Oct 13	63	175	88	160	20	378	346
Sat, 19 Oct 13	54	198	95	213	20	431	397
Mon, 28 Oct 13	55	104	2	396	20	419	411
Sat, 9 Nov 13	61	163	99	172	20	376	342
Fri, 15 Nov 13	65	103	146	77	20	276	230
Sat, 16 Nov 13	58	151	138	322	20	475	430
Sun, 17 Nov 13	44	47	120	130	20	228	188
Thurs, 21 Nov 13	51	104	148	276	20	396	349
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>341</b>

Assumptions for calculation of numbers on site at any one time:

1. Of staff, 80% on site at any one time
2. All accommodation guests are counted as on site at any one time
3. Of Restaurant guests, 60% are in accommodation, and the balance are split across 3 meal times
4. Of Function Guests, 35% are in accommodation, and balance are all in for a single evening single function
5. Assumption of 20 Tour participants per day.
6. Of Tour participants, 35% are in accommodation, and of the balance 8 are 'day' participants, and 12 are 'evening' participants.

### 3. Proposed amendment to CoA 120

It is proposed maintain the optimum and maximum visitation limits, but establish a higher limit for forecast, preplanned peak periods, to allow additional event and function visitation for limited periods. These peak periods would be tied to additional visitor management procedures. The revised Clause 120 could read as follows:

*CoA 120 Visitor management will be focused on the policies of the Visitor Access Strategy and insights from the Integrated Monitoring and Adaptive Management System. Supporting these:*

- a) *the optimum visitor capacity shall be up to 315 people (including staff) on site at any one time. The co-proponents shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the optimum visitor capacity (or less) is met for a majority of the time during which the site is publicly accessible*
- b) *the visitor capacity for the site shall be a maximum of 450 people (including staff) on site at any one time, with the exception of pre-advised dates and periods where events and functions require that it be lifted to 600 people for peak periods of up to six hours;*
- c) *the co-proponents will submit procedures to manage visitors and minimise impacts for the peak periods that go beyond normal arrangements, including the monitoring of actual visitation.*

### 4. No trigger of CoA 121

CoA 121 states:

*Any proposal to increase the site capacity or the optimum visitor capacity after this time must be publicly exhibited and submitted for the approval of the DEC and DIPNR. The proposal must be accompanied by a clear assessment of the potential impacts of any increase on the significance of the Quarantine Station and justification based on the results of the visitor and site monitoring programs.*

We do not believe that this modification to CoA 120 triggers CoA 121 because:

1. The optimum visitor capacity is unchanged
2. The maximum visitor capacity is unchanged.
3. The only variation is to introduce a peak capacity for programmed functions and events. These activities have historically driven the peaks in visitation, not independent visitation associated with normal daily activities. These activities are the easiest to manage, the easiest to monitor and the easiest to evaluate. Additional visitor management, including visitation monitoring, is proposed as a risk management tactic to ensure the successful visitor management to date continues.