



SMBI FORUM

Forum of the Organisations of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands, Queensland
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Submission from SMBI Forum to Integrated Local Transport Plan Review

1 Introduction

The Southern Moreton Bay Islands (SMBI) Forum represents fifteen associations from the four islands: Macleay Island (including Perulpa Island), Karragarra Island, Lamb Island and Russell Island.

In response to Redland City Council's request, we provide herewith a report on the transport planning concerns of Forum for submission to the consultants undertaking the SMBI Integrated Local Transport Plan (ILTP) Review. It is based on documentation from, and information shared at, working groups and other community meetings held since the publication of the Master Plan and reflects the serious concerns the members of Forum have regarding the conduct of the studies Council is currently undertaking.

We describe briefly the main transport issues for islanders and include suggestions for transport improvements in a future in which the islands, particularly Russell and Macleay, will certainly grow much more populous.

1.1 Structure of this submission

We have divided the submission into three parts:

- ILTP Review concerns (Item 2)
- Redland Bay Centre and Foreshore Master Plan concerns (Item 3)
- On-island transport (Item 4)
- Inter-island transport (Item 5)
- Mainland transport (Item 6)
- Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning (Item 7)
- Implementation (Item 8)
- Recommendations (Item 9)
- Attachment: Can anything be done to relieve some of the travel to the mainland and congestion at Weinam Creek?

Due to the relatively short time frame for preparing this submission, we are not able to make this a comprehensive document. We have already submitted an extensive document regarding ways to improve uptake of public transport, particularly buses, on the mainland, and will not cover that territory in this submission. The Our Parking Spot lobby group will cover many issues relating to parking at Weinam Creek, and we share their concerns about the inadequacy of Council planning

for current and future island users of Weinam Creek. However, we have tried in this document to cover many transport issues that they may not address.

2 ILTP Review Concerns

We are concerned about a number of aspects of this review.

We are not aware of the terms of reference for the review. We have not even seen a formal announcement of the engagement of the consultants conducting the review. We know nothing about the firm that has been engaged to conduct the review.

We also have seen no formal announcement of the barge study being conducted by another group of consultants. Apart from the speak-out at Macleay several months ago and the offer to present this submission, there has been no attempt to engage islanders or gather our views directly for any aspect of this review.

2.1 SocialData Mobility Study

We have had somewhat more information about this, and many of us were able to meet with the principal of SocialData before their study was commenced. Following that meeting we detailed concerns about the study in a letter to Councillor Barbara Townsend on 3 April 2010. Some of our concerns have been addressed, but others could not be by the very nature of the study. We are keeping an open mind and look forward to seeing the results of the study.

Nevertheless, we remain concerned that:

- the random sampling and single day diary methodology may not reveal the unique situation of islanders.
- the survey allowed only for seven journeys or legs of journey for the day. As we pointed out to SocialData, a normal trip to the mainland would generally involve a minimum of eight legs, and usually many more.
- The mobility study focuses only on residents, missing the issues of non-resident (but often present) ratepayers, workers and visitors to the islands;
- The study may not directly address parking issues at Weinam Creek, and in particular the reasons islanders need to keep a mainland car.

2.2 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Again, we have little information about what this will involve. We have seen the terms of reference set out by Council but consider that, to be valid, a socio-economic impact assessment should cover broader issues than only the impact of a user-pays system at Weinam Creek.

3 Redland Bay Centre and Foreshore Master Plan

In 2009 Redland City Council adopted the Redland Bay Centre and Foreshore Master Plan. While many aspects of the master plan will be beneficial to mainland residents, the section relating to the Weinam Creek area is considered detrimental to the residents of the islands and seriously flawed.

In the Master Plan's introduction, Council states:

Redland Bay is the principal gateway to the SMBI, providing water taxi and vehicle ferry services between the mainland and the Islands. Weinam Creek also accommodates a small marina and a recreational boat ramp, contributing to the character, vitality and maritime

*heritage of Redland Bay.*¹

However, the proposals outlined in the Master Plan will effectively shut the gateway it lauds. The plan gives minimal consideration to islander issues, and in particular the requirements of a hub such as Weinam Creek, which currently serves 5500 to 6000 permanent islands residents, plus visitors and workers. Based on recent growth trends, Council predicts the number of permanent residents could double, to some 12,000, in the mid-2020s and to 24,000 by 2050 or so if and when all residential vacant blocks have dwellings on them (the majority on Russell)².

In the plan Council made a number of unreliable assumptions, including that 60% of islanders could move to public transport, and that 'demand management' (ie user-pays) would reduce the number of vehicles parking at Weinam Creek.

Since then two surveys, one by Council in 2009 and another in 2010 by the Our Parking Spot (OPS) lobby group, have provided some data to suggest that this is not possible. Submissions by many individuals and island associations to the draft Redland Bay Centre and Foreshore Master Plan have tried to substantiate why reduction in the number of cars parking at Weinam Creek is not feasible for many islanders. The Submission Review document attached to the revised draft Master Plan in 2009 showed that the Master Plan had been developed with great attention to foreshore amenity, but little genuine consideration of islanders' current, let alone future, needs³.

The Submission Review also stated:

The proposed funding model to implement the capital upgrade and on-going operation and maintenance works is based on the user-pays, public vs private benefit and affordability principles. The user-pays principle can be applied when an activity is of benefit to identifiable individuals or groups, which is the case in this situation.

Council has not yet proposed to apply the 'user-pays' principal to any other parking in Redland City. The SMBI Islands have, as a group, the poorest economic levels of the Redlands and should not be subjected to such a model, particularly, as in this case, with no consultation whatsoever with islands representatives before the model was proposed. We consider such a move to be manifestly inequitable and discriminatory.

Nor does the Master Plan propose anything like adequate parking for the current population, let alone give consideration to the projected doubling of population in 10-15 years, and ultimately up to as much as 24,000 population.

We are aware of Council's undertaking not to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan until after the results of the Review of the ILTP and the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment are in. We are also aware that Council has allocated \$ 2.6 M in the 2010-2011 budget for a Weinam Creek Car park Upgrade⁴.

Parking at Weinam Creek is not the only transport issue concerning islanders –although for many, especially since the Redland Bay Centre and Foreshore Master Plan came out, it is the predominant one.

We expect the SocialData results and the Socio-Economic Assessment Council is undertaking will provide additional information, but much of it is likely to simply confirm our own impressions and the results of earlier surveys and the 2006 Census.

1 Redland Bay Centre and Foreshore Master Plan, July 2009, page 6

2 Issues Paper – Population and Dwelling Profile, Southern Moreton Bay Islands, Land Use Planning Group, RCC April 2009 (for SMBI Communities Advisory Committee)

3 See Section 2 Redland Bay Foreshore and Section 3 Parking, Redland Bay Foreshore and Master Plan, Submission Review Report, July 2009

4 Redland City Council Budget Book 2010 – 2011, page 51

The gap in knowledge, after all these surveys, remains the reasons why many islanders require a mainland car. Until this information is gathered, systematically, and properly assessed, we contend it is impossible to plan around future islander needs at Weinam Creek.

4 On-island transport

Every island has different on-island transport issues, though there are some common themes. The most important common themes are around:

- Size: Russell and Macleay are too large to get by without some form of transport beyond walking. Lamb and Karragarra, neither of which has any form of public transport, are not really small enough not to need some form of vehicular transport, especially for our many older residents.
- Some roads are sealed, but most are unsealed, of poor quality and occasionally dangerous.
- Cycling and walking are difficult and often dangerous.
- The number of cars parking near jetties has been increasing, in line with that at Weinam Creek.
- Many islanders use mobility aids such as wheelchairs or walking frames, or have children in prams, or need to transport groceries or other items. Any public conveyances need to be able to accommodate these needs, which are not always catered for on normal bus services.

4.1 Proximity to shops and services

Karragarra has no shops, and Lamb only one. These islands rely on the mainland or other islands for all their shopping.

Russell Island shops and services are generally grouped at the top of the island and generally within walking distance of the jetty. The SupaIGA reduces the need for off-island grocery shopping and, because of its extensive range of goods and walking distance from the jetty, other islanders, predominantly from Lamb and Karragarra, often use it in preference to a mainland trip.

Macleay Island has three smaller shopping complexes spread along the main north-south axis, High Central Road, and for its residents to do a complete shop may mean several journeys.

However, for all the islands, many goods are not available on-island, and cannot always be delivered by post. Courier or delivery services to the islands are also problematic.

Additionally, many essential amenities are difficult to access without transport e.g. Pioneer Park (Lamb Is), Pat's Park, Tingarra Boat club, Bowls Club (Macleay Is), the RSL, Lions Park, and Bay Islands Community Services (Russell Is).

4.2 Taxi services

Both Russell and Macleay have adequate taxi services. These services are generally well-patronised by those who can afford them. However, each island has only one taxi operating at any one time. Both islands now have maxi-taxis that can accommodate small groups, wheel chairs, etc. Lamb and Karragarra have no taxi services.

The Russell taxi now meets even the late night ferries, but on Macleay it must be booked for trips after 7pm.

While both taxi services will take additional passengers if the first hirer agrees, they offer no

discount for multiple hires.

Russell taxi now offers a regular commuter pick-up and return service with discounted prices. However, as a general rule, taxi services are considered a one-off or too expensive to use regularly.

The [shared taxi model](#) works well in many places, and we recommend further examination as to its usefulness and likely uptake on the islands. It is important not to undermine the existing taxi services on Russell and Macleay, but competition or a cheaper option could be useful.

4.3 Bus services

Bus services on Macleay and Russell were trialled unsuccessfully a few years ago. While the cost of buses was not a deterrent, the service was inadequate, running only during daytime hours, thus failing to meet the needs of the many commuters who leave early or return late. The population demographic has changed since then, but the need for early and late services would only have increased in that time. Russell Islanders found the service too infrequent, with two different routes to be serviced alternately, thus providing service from one region every other hour.

School buses on Russell and Macleay will also pick up paying passengers, but only make two trips in the morning (for high school and subsequently primary students) and two in the afternoon.

The licensed clubs all provide a free mini-bus service between homes or the jetty and the club. This service is well-patronised, and even more so since the regular police presence on Russell and Macleay. This service is staffed by volunteers and is generally not available for non-club purposes, which are likely to conflict with the busiest times for clubs. It does not benefit the majority of islanders.

Both Macleay and Russell now have populations that should be able to sustain bus services. Such a service needs to meet virtually every ferry – otherwise it will not be an element of an integrated local transport service.

We recommend investigation into the viability of these services along a more sustainable model than that trialled previously. As mentioned above, they would need to accommodate the additional 'baggage' so many islanders need to move around.

4.4 Island visitors

Many visitors and service providers come to the island and need to be collected at the jetty, or find some other way to get around.

Hire car services exist on both Macleay and Russell, but may not be promoted as well as they could be. Both islands are much too large for visitors not to need some form of transport. Too many only see the places the real estate agents drive them to.

Blue Care, which has a significant presence on the islands due to the large proportion of older residents, has recently acquired permanent cars on both Macleay and Russell.

A form of car share or short-term car hire may meet the needs of other regular visitors, particularly those, such as social workers, mental health workers, child safety officers, etc., who need to make relatively discreet home visits. This service could be provided through existing car hire businesses on Russell and Macleay, or alternately, co-ordinated through Bay Islands Community Services Inc.

4.5 Alternate forms of transport

Electric bicycles, normal push bikes and walking all have potential to be used more. Shared use

paths in particular could lead more islanders to use bicycles or walk. However, these methods are often not possible for the many elderly residents, and for others are not feasible due to:

- steep inclines on roads,
- volume and speed of traffic,
- drainage ditches on side of road coupled with a lack of safe shared paths, and
- inadequate lighting.

Karragarra Islanders use electric golf carts. Many islanders currently use mobility scooters. In many tourist destinations, such as the Bahamas, and islands in the US Great Lakes such as South Bass Island, electric golf carts are the vehicles of choice.

However, these both run into problems with Council approvals and speed limits. Slow vehicles impede the movement of other traffic as it is generally not safe (and sometimes illegal) to overtake.

4.6 Jetty car parks

Parallel with the increase in vehicles at Weinam Creek, the number of cars parking near island jetties has increased. It is becoming increasingly difficult to park near the jetties, and particularly on Macleay and Russell. Both have extensive official and unofficial parking areas. Council has been working on an extension of the parking area at Macleay and a new barge ramp for over two years, but this has apparently been held up by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM, previously the Environmental Protection Agency) since then.

The lines marking parking bays at both Russell and Macleay have faded to the point that people do not know where they should be parking and consequently often take more space than they should.

As with Weinam Creek, action is required to reduce the need to park at island jetties, through increased on-island facilities and support, bus/taxi services, more services and employment on the islands, and more attractive barge services.

5 Inter-island and Island-mainland transport

The SMBI are, of course, islands, and thus transport is, by definition, water-based. In spite of proposals for bridges over the years, many islanders would prefer transport to continue to be water-based.

5.1 BITS passenger ferry service

5.1.1 Mainland Services

BITS ferry service is good and reliable. It has increased over recent years to keep up with islander needs. Late night services on Fridays and Saturdays have enabled access to evening social and cultural events that only a few years ago were not an option.

The new boats have brought a big improvement in capacity and comfort, while addressing environmental concerns, particularly about propeller strike to marine wildlife. The boats may be causing damage to the foreshore, and they are required to slow down especially between Lamb and Macleay.

All BITS improvements make it easier for islanders to commute to work and do more on the mainland.

However, the service is not cheap. The current cost of \$63/week full fare for a ten-trip ticket for regular commuters could be a deterrent to those on low incomes. We already get pensioner and children discounts, but prices are still an obstacle for many to travel to the mainland.

We consider the ferry service should be included in Translink services. Council mentioned in the Master Plan that this aspect was being investigated, but we have heard nothing more as to progress⁵. GoCard services are also an option, if BITS were included in the Translink routes.

5.1.2 Inter-island Service

More could still be done to encourage islanders to access services on other islands. Although inter-island travel is quite cheap, time tables do not encourage it, especially at night and on week-ends. For instance, to travel from Russell to other islands on Saturday, if you miss the 3.50 pm, you have to wait 1 ½ hours, til 5.25 pm.

5.2 Stradbroke Ferries Barge Service

Stradbroke Ferries have priced frequent use of barge services out of the reach of many islanders.

In April 2006, when Stradbroke Ferries increased their barge prices and at the same time eliminated the differential pricing according to car length, the return fare to the mainland for a small car (under 3.69 m) for islanders shot up from \$44 to \$69⁶. For non-islanders the fare for all vehicles went up to \$85.

The return fare to the mainland for an islander car is now \$84 (online booking) or \$87 (phone booking). For non-islanders the return fare is now \$102 for online bookings and \$105 for phone bookings.

Stradbroke Ferries has introduced weekday stand-by (\$54) and weekend (\$62) return fares which provide some assistance, but again these services often do not meet islanders' needs. The cost for trailers has become prohibitive for islanders, \$76 return for 4 metres, \$95 return for 5 metres, \$104 return for 6 metres).

Stradbroke Ferries does not offer the Age Pensioner discount for SMBI travel, though it does to North Stradbroke Islands.

The price of barge transport has seen keeping a mainland car become more feasible from an economic point of view. From a convenience point of view, in order to do the things islanders want and need to do on the mainland, a mainland car becomes much more viable than struggling with Stradbroke Ferries' services and prices.

5.3 Regulation of Vehicular Ferries

The ILTP recommended regulation of the barge services in 2002⁷.

In 2006, when Stradbroke Ferries dramatically increased barge fares and eliminated differential car rates, islanders circulated a petition asking State government to regulate the barge service to the islands under Section 42a of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, which allows for the CEO of Queensland Transport to enter into a service contract covering 'ferry' services.

In Schedule 3 of the Act, Definitions, “a public passenger vehicle includes ferries”, and a ferry

⁵ Redland Bay Centre and Foreshore Master Plan, 7.1.4, page 50

⁶ Prior to 1 April 2006, return fare for a medium-sized car was \$56 and for a large vehicle \$65.

⁷ SMBI ILTP 2002, PT 11, page 9

“includes ship, boat, barge and hovercraft”. Ferry service “means a public a passenger service provided by a ferry on or over water”. As Stradbroke Ferries does not permit unaccompanied vehicles and has 'walk-on' fares, it clearly constitutes a public passenger service.

We asked for this regulation so that Stradbroke Ferries, like BITS, would have to provide guaranteed service levels and justify any increase in barge prices or changes in service levels to Queensland Transport, rather than, as now, to introduce them as a purely 'commercial' decision. Our islands, which are predominantly residential, can and should be treated differently from islands such as Fraser, or even North Stradbroke, whose barge services, apart from supporting sandmining, provide a seasonal and predominantly tourist and recreation-oriented service.

Council supports competition and prefers not to set up monopolies. In principle we support this as well. However, it is a fact that competition is problematic for small populations, and has not served us in the past. The company that can operate at a loss the longest eventually drives out its competitors, and as frequently happened in relation to the islands, we end up with a single service provider anyway. We believe we would be better served by well-regulated services that had security of tenure.

We maintain that not only passenger ferries but barge services to the islands should be regulated under State government provisions, giving islanders a greater level of security that services are geared to our interests, and operators more certainty of tenure. This regulation may or may not include pensioner subsidies, or other costs for government. It is important, however, that the contract term be long enough to encourage the operators to invest in infrastructure.

5.4 Improvements to Stradbroke Ferries Services

Islanders have Stradbroke Ferries' business interests at heart: we rely absolutely on their services. Whatever may happen in the long term, we will continue to rely on this service for some time into the future. Apart from regulation by Queensland Transport, we consider a number of changes could improve services for the islands and demonstrate Stradbroke Ferries' good will to its clientele:

- Late night service to the islands (if the barge were moored overnight at Russell Island it would facilitate the following point);
- Early morning service from the islands, allowing us to take a vehicle and reach the City by 9am (currently the first morning services are almost completely booked by island businesses);
- Off-peak rates for trailers;
- Seniors rates;
- More flexibility in off-peak fares to encourage greater use of barges through the middle of the day;
- More flexibility for week-end rates, ie extend one day into the week;
- Extend week-end special rates to non-islanders.

5.5 Alternate passenger or vehicle ferry routes

The Master Plan recommended investigation of faster vehicle ferry services⁸, as did the ILTP from 2002⁹. Council has engaged GHD to investigate the viability of alternate ferry and vehicle routes

8 Master Plan, Section 3.2.3, Point 5, page 19

9 SMBI ILTP 2002, PT 12, page 9

and we await this feasibility study.

5.5.1 Passenger ferry to Cleveland

A passenger ferry to Toondah Harbour, Cleveland (with complementary bus connection to the centre of Cleveland) operated until the Victoria Point shopping centre expanded services in about 2003, when virtually overnight it became no longer viable to operate.

For those choosing public transport, the 250 bus to Cleveland, which operates half-hourly weekdays, is probably as good an option as a direct ferry service to Cleveland. A connection to the train station is of little interest to those who know how to travel (more quickly) to the City by bus¹⁰.

5.5.2 Passenger or vehicular ferry to other locations

Various locations have been proposed from time to time. Some, such as to Brisbane City, may take far too long to be viable for commuters, even with fast ferries, and presumably also too costly. These might have some interest for tourism.

Any new mainland landing point for passenger ferries would probably replicate the parking problems at Weinam Creek. Also, Moreton Bay Marine Park means some options are not feasible, no matter how appealing they might be.

Nevertheless, we look forward to the results of the study.

5.5.3 The Island Way

Some islanders have been proposing what we are now calling "The Island Way". This would involve a southern link from the Gold Coast to Rocky Point on Russell Island, probably along the Energex power lines, an inter-island shuttle, and a northern link from Macleay to Victoria Point. Such a route could involve cheaper, faster, more environmentally friendly barges running regular, faster routes (it currently takes one hour and five minutes to travel from Russell to the mainland, the longest run on the barges). The southern route could be a cable barge, which would be even cheaper.

While these services would probably not suit commuters, many other islanders might abandon their mainland cars and utilise these alternate routes for personal business. The route from Macleay to the mainland would continue to take islanders into the Redlands, so businesses at Victoria Point or Capalaba would not suffer. Russell Islanders would be more likely to head towards Loganholme or the Gold Coast, but it is likely that many would still head toward the Redlands and the City.

An important aspect of The Island Way is that its ferries would be solely vehicular, thus avoiding creating another parking problem at Victoria Point or at a southern landing point.

Critically, this would need to be a total package – if only Russell or Macleay got an alternate barge route, there would almost certainly be negative impacts for the other islands, such as increased Stradbroke Ferries fares, and possibly more cars parking at jetties of the island that had the service.

One of the main benefits of this solution is the contribution it could make to building a tourist industry on the islands, as people decide to avoid the motorway and have a leisurely visit to the islands using the entire Island Way route. The obvious corollary to this is the US tourist route via the Outer Banks of North Carolina, and across Chesapeake Bay, avoiding the Interstate freeways. It could also reduce transport costs for goods coming to the islands.

There are clearly obstacles involved with this option. We have no firm information about possible environmental obstacles on the seabed between Macleay and the mainland, and the feasibility of

¹⁰ See our Submission: Mainland Bus Transport for Residents of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands

departure points from Macleay has yet to be assessed. Landing points from Russell to the mainland would require considerable road and other infrastructure development. We need more information on possible take-up of services to determine if they are commercially viable. Even if the route is viable it would take several years to implement, and DERM could delay it considerably.

Still, we endorse Council's decision to undertake a serious investigation of this option to determine whether it is feasible or not. And the question remains: if not this, then what?

5.5.4 Bridging the islands

GHD is also looking at this option. Bridges have been proposed not only at Rocky Point, Russell, but also (by the then Mayor of Redlands, Don Seccombe in 2008) from Kings Road Russell Island to Point Talburpin, Redland Bay, and from the southern end of Macleay Island or south of Perrebinpa Point to Moores Road at Weinam Creek.

The closest distance from Macleay to the mainland is nearly 4 kilometres, and such a bridge would be the longest in Australia. The bridge the then Mayor proposed from Russell to Point Talburpin would be even longer.

A bridge between the mainland and one island would only serve that island, resolving no problems for other islands, and possibly creating collateral damage, just as an alternate barge route to only one island might.

The defining factor for any bridge would be the cost, measured against the amenity it might provide for the relatively small permanent resident population. The story, however, will be different if these numbers double in 10 years or so, as they are expected to do.

6 Mainland transport

We are currently funnelling about 5500 to 6000 permanent residents plus visitors to the islands through Weinam Creek. Council estimates this number to double within 10-15 years, and ultimately may quadruple. All islanders and our visitors suffer already from the lack of parking.

The results of Council's 2009 survey, the Our Parking Spot's recent survey plus the results we have not yet seen from the SocialData mobility study are likely to confirm what islanders already know: most of us, when we go to the mainland, cover a great deal of territory, perhaps combining a medical visit, shopping for items not available on the islands¹¹, conducting personal business, visiting relatives or friends, and if possible squeezing in a movie or a nice meal at a restaurant. We fan out from Weinam Creek in all possible directions.

The SMBI Forum has already provided a submission focusing solely on how to improve the take-up of mainland public transport. However, we consider that public transport, at least to the easier destinations, is probably close to saturation point now – other solutions must be found if the number of private cars at Weinam Creek is even to be held study at its current – untenable – level.

Many islanders use mobility aids such as wheelchairs or walking frames, or have children in prams, or need to transport groceries or other items. Any public conveyances need to be able to accommodate these needs, which are not always catered for on normal bus services.

6.1 Parking at Weinam Creek

The Our Parking Spot (OPS) lobby group will be providing their view on the problems at Weinam

11 Russell Island has not had a hardware store for some three years now, a real problem for an island where construction is the main industry.

Creek. We concur with OPS that there will always be a need for many islanders to park at Weinam Creek, and we agree that the Master Plan does not recognise our needs adequately. We also see possible ways to help ease some of the future difficulties at Weinam Creek, though these will in no way solve the current problem there.

In their Master Plan, Council appeared to assume that island residents maintain a car purely as a convenience. Census data from 2006 showed that in fact islanders had fewer cars per household than mainlanders – including the one we may keep on the mainland. Rather than being censured for wanting access to the same services as mainlanders, our relative restraint should be acknowledged. At the same time, our genuine needs must be recognised.

6.1.1 Certainty

The islanders who currently pay for parking, whether in the Council compounds or in any of the private car parks in the area, are paying for the certainty of having a spot when they need it – often after a long day of work. Many have negotiated with Council to get a spot that accommodates personal circumstances or disabilities that do not actually require a handicapped parking spot.

Higher-income earners from the islands are most likely to be commuters doing daily work away from the islands, and therefore dependent on their vehicles and the certainty of a parking place when they return from work. The lack of certainty may drive them away from the islands, and the loss of these people would considerably depress economic and social activity on the islands.

Council's proposal to charge everyone for parking at Weinam Creek, and the lack of any certainty of availability of a parking spot, is a discriminatory and unacceptable change to current practice and ignores islanders' needs.

6.1.2 Security

Security for our cars at Weinam Creek is a major concern. Even those islanders with either Council or private parking spots cannot be sure their car will be there when they come next.

Council recently installed a push-button opening in its compound, which allows thieves to leave with the wheels or stereo they have removed from a car sitting there. We presume this happens after the last ferry, when all the cars' owners are several kilometres across the water. There is generally no police presence there, and unless things have changed, the Redland Bay Police Station is not manned evenings or weekends. Lighting, particularly in the overflow areas, is inadequate to deter thieves or vandals.

It is virtually impossible to properly insure our mainland vehicles in open air parking.

6.1.3 Cost of parking

Again, the Socio-Economic Assessment will provide more information. Suffice it to say here that the bulk of islanders are in the lowest socio-economic classes. For many, working on the mainland is only just feasible: if they have to pay more for parking, on top of the \$63 per week in ferry travel, they are likely to abandon work altogether as too much trouble for too little reward, and instead rely on social services, further depressing the economic levels on the islands.

6.1.4 Islands demographics and actual needs

Islanders as a group are generally older than comparable mainland communities. A paper produced

for the Southern Redland and Southern Bay Islands Place Project in 2008¹² noted:

In 2006 the average age of residents on the islands ranged from 51-58 years - nearly twice the Redland Shire and Queensland average. Over two-thirds of the islands' population is over 40 years.

This means that many islanders have not reached retirement age and continue to work, while many others are retired. Those who are retired often have family responsibilities: whether for aged parents or grandchildren. Many have medical conditions that require frequent trips to mainland medical specialists.

We are concerned that no studies thus far have actually specifically asked the question: Why do you require a mainland car?

Until this question is asked any suggestions for reducing cars parked at Weinam Creek are based on guesses, whether they be demand management, multi-storey parking stations, or some of the others we set out further in an attachment to this document.

Whatever the reasons, islanders do not have the option of parking anywhere else – there are no park and ride facilities in the immediate area, or other locations where they can leave their cars safely.

We also do not have the option of simply selling our island home and moving back to 'Australia' -- homes can take as long as two years or more to change hands on the islands.

7 Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning

Living in the Moreton Bay Marine Park, we appreciate the need to preserve and protect this important marine environment. But we are concerned by aspects of this zoning which prevent improvements to our amenities.

A good example is the delay caused to improvements to the planned extension of Macleay Island car park and boat ramp by the approval process from DERM. We are also concerned about the impact and long-term implications of restrictions to vessel operations under s45(2) and (3) of the Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2008.

There needs to be a balance between the provisions of the Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning and the reality of heavily populated islands, dependent on water-based mainland access, in the middle of the marine park. This may take the form of an exclusion of our travel nodes and routes from the provisions of the Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning.

8 Implementation

8.1 Short-term

The immediate requirement is to meet existing islanders' needs for adequate parking. This may mean an increase in available parking. We understand Council intends to upgrade the parking at the Sea Scouts hall, which is a clear priority.

Council also needs to supplement the data already acquired with information on islanders' needs for cars on the mainland.

12 Southern Moreton Bay Islands
Background Paper
, Prepared by Wyeth Planning Services
and 99 Consulting
, June 2008

8.2 Medium-term

Priority needs to be given to islanders' needs and working towards other solutions. We have not, as yet, been involved by Council in any discussions or work towards solutions, and object to this lack of engagement.

8.3 Long-term

Nothing in the current ILTP, the Redland Bay Centre and Foreshore Master Plan or any other document we have seen acknowledges or plans for the anticipated growth of the islands population. We hope the ILTP Review will take a long view of transport for the islands, and be appropriately implemented by Council to prevent the short-term, short-sighted actions that have allowed the current problems.

9 Recommendations

1. Encourage improvements to mainland public transport as set out in our submission.
2. Investigation of shared taxi model on islands.
3. Investigate bus services on Macleay and Russell according to a better model than that trialled previously.
4. Investigate short-term share car or hire car options for visitors to the islands.
5. Improve roads and shared-use paths and lighting to promote walking and cycling on the islands.
6. Paint lines at jetty car parks to optimise use of space.
7. Investigate ways to reduce need for mainland travel by increasing services on-island.
8. Include BITS in Translink network.
9. Improve inter-island BITS schedules, particularly on week-ends.
10. Introduce Queensland Transport regulation for any vehicular ferry services to the islands.
11. Introduce improvements to Stradbroke Ferries' services as suggested at point 3.4 above.
12. Continue serious investigation of alternate barge and ferry routes to the islands.
13. Find ways to provide certainty of parking spaces for those who need it at Weinam Creek.
14. Improve security for parking at Weinam Creek.
15. Ensure parking fees do not reduce incentives for islanders to be in paid employment.
16. Undertake a study to assess real parking needs of islanders if SocialData study does not provide that information.
17. Obtain agreement from State Government to exclude SMBI travel nodes and routes from Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning.
18. Implement appropriate short-, medium-, and long-term improvements to Weinam Creek as outlined at Point 6.
19. Investigate and introduce options as set out in the attachment.

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Attachment: Can anything be done to reduce travel to the mainland and the logjam at Weinam Creek?

There will always be a need for many islanders to keep a mainland car permanently.

Council needs to identify these genuine needs before proposing simplistic 'solutions' such as demand management, that have no likelihood of working and are just as likely to cause more problems.

In the long term, as the islands' population doubles and grows toward 24,000, it is hard to see how more parking at Weinam Creek can meet islander needs.

Real solutions must be found:

- to provide more, secure, certain mainland parking for those who need it;
- to enable islanders wherever possible be able to access services and goods without having to travel to the mainland; and
- to provide attractive, economically viable alternatives to having a car parked permanently at Weinam Creek.

We can see a number of options that each could play a small part in the solution. Proper introduction of them may make it possible for some islanders to no longer depend on a mainland car, thus easing up space for others.

None of them will eliminate the need for many cars to be kept permanently at Weinam Creek. In the long term, we see pressure on Weinam Creek only increasing unless dramatic steps are taken on a variety of fronts. Some of them have been discussed earlier (eg The Island Way, improvements to barge services) and others are suggested below.

Carshare

Carsharing is a model of car rental where members rent cars for short periods of time, often by the hour. These schemes give members access to a vehicle when they need it, for much less than the cost of ownership. Car sharing is not likely to be suitable for regular commuters. For those islanders who don't use a car more than once or twice a week, it can be a viable alternative to private car ownership, and could reduce the number of private cars at Weinam Creek.

GoGet (www.goget.com.au/), Flexicar (www.flexicar.com.au) and My Car Club (www.charterdrive.com.au) all operate car share services in Australian cities.

This option should be explored as a priority. It would need to be introduced very well – partial measures would not have a sufficient take-up rate to provide certainty to potential users.

Car Rental

Car rental services operating out of Weinam Creek (or nearby – the Betta Car Hire company at Cleveland delivers and picks up at Weinam Creek) would suit people who want to hire a car for a longer period – say two to three days -- for trips away from Brisbane.

We suspect a car rental service has less potential than carsharing, but could deliver some small benefits.

Car Pooling

Car pooling, where several travellers going to roughly the same location share a vehicle, probably has minimal potential to reduce the number of vehicles using Weinam Creek parking area.

Nevertheless, it is worth the effort of setting up a way for potential car poolers to get in touch with each other. The Northern Rivers Carpool (<http://www.nrcarpool.org/>) is a free online service sponsored by five NSW shires, which matches potential car poolers together. It also provides advice on car pooling agreements. This is an initiative Council could take up, in conjunction with Brisbane City Council, Logan City Council, even perhaps the Gold Coast City Council, and need not be specifically aimed at Weinam Creek.

Taxis

There is no taxi rank, no telephone, not even any advertising for taxis at Weinam Creek. Yet somehow taxis manage to find their way there. A taxi rank is an obvious addition, although the distances involved to most destinations are such that the cost will be prohibitive for many people.

Shuttles and chartered bus services

Two services to the airport currently service Weinam Creek: one run by Veolia Buses, and a private one, Bay-Air Airport Transfers. Both these are well publicised. The Veolia shuttle fare is quite reasonable, and Bay-Air prices, while much higher, are still cheaper than the cost of leaving a car in airport carparks for more than a day or two.

A shopper bus service between Weinam Creek and Victoria Point during peak shopping periods would alleviate some of the congestion which currently slows down existing bus services.

Whenever sporting groups from the islands play on the mainland, a funeral service is held for a well-known resident, or a group organises an excursion, a coach needs to be hired, often at some expense. Ways of reducing this expense would benefit many islanders, whether that has any potential for alleviating congestion at Weinam Creek or not.

STAR Transport

STAR Transport provides a service for people with medical conditions and probably needs to be promoted better. STAR will be giving a presentation to the SMBI Forum at its next meeting, and we hope that will give us ideas for making greater use of this service.

Reserved parking for shared vehicles

For shared vehicles options to work, any shared vehicles, whether car-share, car pool, hire car, shuttle or taxi, should have reserved parking close to the ferry terminal, with mechanisms to prevent others parking in the space if it is empty. This would encourage the use of these options, which together have potential to reduce somewhat the number of cars parked at Weinam Creek.

Park and Ride

No Park and Ride facility exists in the Redland Bay area. For islanders it would almost be the opposite of usual Park&Rides, with people coming back to it in the evening, and a shuttle service to Weinam Creek. Again, this is not ideal, but may yield some benefits. If it is true that mainlanders use Weinam Creek to park and then catch buses, it would probably serve them well. A paper

produced for the SMBI Forum Transport Working Group estimated a Park and Ride facility would be relatively cheap to fund compared with other options.

Increase businesses and services on the islands

Most islanders are required from time to time to travel to the mainlands for personal business, goods or services. An increase in these services on-island will reduce numbers of people travelling to the mainland.

For instance:

- there is no hardware store on Russell, and Russell Islanders now must travel to the mainland for any hardware needs.
- many people on Centrelink benefits are required to travel to the mainland one day to register, and often the following day to attend Job Network interviews. A Centrelink presence on the island would reduce that need.
- We have a general medical practice on Macleay and Russell, and some health services such as a podiatrist and physiotherapist come to the islands fortnightly, but for most medical services we are obliged to travel to the mainland.
- There is limited employment on any of the islands. Until a population threshold is reached which will make many services self-sustaining, there is a case for preferential treatment of island businesses, for instance in Council and State government contracts. Such treatment would allow local businesses to gain the necessary expertise and capital resources to be competitive in the longer term, and to train up apprentices. A good example of this was the installation of solar panels to the 140 households on the SMBI by local contractors who now have a high level of expertise.