BACKGROUND

During my current term as Administrator, I have had the opportunity to meet with residents and staff as well as attend a number of site meetings to discuss the future use of the public reserve located at the beachfront on Little Manly Beach.

Earlier this year the Council completed an upgrade to Little Manly Reserve with better gardens, connections and dinghy racks. The reserve is separated on land by a private residential property, but access between the two areas of the reserve can only be achieved by walking along the beach which isn’t accessible to people with poor mobility or the road which is a much longer route and not desirable. A number of stakeholders have been advocating for a contiguous link on the beach side to link the two parts of the reserve without walking on the beach or road.

In understanding the issue, I have considered a number of factors including the need to improve the amenity and public use of the area as well as the impact of the buildings that are adjacent to the foreshore.

There have been a number of attempts by the former Manly Council to find a solution to this complex matter given that there is a private residence situated in the middle of the sections of the reserve, both of which front the beach and divide the public open spaces of the Little Manly foreshore.

I believe the best solution is to create a harbourside accessible link between the two sections of the reserve by building a boardwalk in front of the residence to connect the public spaces as well as providing an accessible link for the Manly Scenic Walkway. Council would need to set the boardwalk at a suitable level to consider the amenity and privacy of the private residence and would work closely with the owners to ensure this.

Further to this, I believe Council should look closely at the usage of the buildings owned by Council to make the most of these important assets and enhance the entire public space area. Proposals that should be considered include the incorporation of a public café into 40 Stuart Street and community use for 34 Stuart Street such as the creation of an indigenous culture and education centre.

To this end, I propose Council develop a Masterplan for the area and conduct extensive community engagement. In preparing the Masterplan, staff will also take into account all the previous plans, concepts and feedback from the community as well as the amenity of the owner of the private residence.

This is a unique and very popular area and I have been convinced that we need to not only maximise its accessibility for use by the community and visitors to the area but develop a long term plan that will secure the future of this public asset.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

A. Build a boardwalk along the beachfront between 36 and 40 Stuart Street, Manly connecting the two public spaces known as Little Manly Reserve with work commencing in 2017/18.

B. Develop a Masterplan for the entire Little Manly Reserve area to ensure maximum accessibility and the future use of this public asset, including consideration of the incorporation of a public café into 40 Stuart St and community use for 34 Stuart Street such
as the creation of an indigenous culture and education centre.

C. Ensure funding for the project and the development of the Masterplan are available within the budget for 2017-2018.

Dick Persson
ADMINISTRATOR