
Public engagement case study

Proposed port redevelopment

Port Brown is the original port for the city of Brownhaven, originally established in 1890. It was an active port up until the late 1970s, when a significant upgrade was required to cope with the larger ships and containers, but it was found to be expensive to upgrade it and so a new port was built 45km to the south. Port Brown finally stopped being used as a port in the mid 1980s, and the site gradually declined.

Figure 1 over the page shows the site and existing land uses.

The government has sold the site to a developer who proposes to redevelop the site for a combination of:

- Up market residential apartments and hotels;
- The port facilities upgraded to handle tourism and entertainment boating – similar to Darling Harbour in Sydney;
- Water fronted restaurants and other entertainment businesses;
- A museum to celebrate the history of the site (a condition of the sale); and
- A multi-purpose open space area to be used for a variety of events and festivals

The houses that were previously occupied by port workers (1) are now leased to a not-for-profit social housing authority – the lease runs out in 18 months - and some of the old warehouses (6) are used by artists as studios and the remainder officially unoccupied but known to be used by homeless people, many of whom are First Nations people.

There are several small businesses servicing the local and surrounding communities (7).

There is an undeveloped park and adjacent degraded wetland, a remnant of a larger wetland that occupied most of the coastal area of the site. It was associated with a watercourse which is now a stormwater drain. The wetland is used by migratory waterbirds, but its importance is unknown.

The undeveloped park is not well used but is a meeting place for local First Nations women and the significance of the site is unknown.

The port facilities area (2) has old cranes and infrastructure some thought to be at least 80 years old and maybe of heritage value.

The marine area is known to be part of a migratory path for two whale species, and the number of whales spotted off the coast has steadily increased since the port closed. There are three whale spotting businesses that use the harbour and are based in the site.

The laydown area is used several months for a local farmers market.

Exercise

The project is likely to be subject to EIA, but a referral has yet to be made as the project is still in the design phase, and you are tasked to develop a public engagement strategy. Produce a public engagement strategy that identifies the key stakeholders, the methods used to engage with them and plan this against the key steps in the EIA process.

