

7. Fencing Issue – Lookout reserve, Tathra

Residents of Andy Poole Drive who live below the lookout reserve have requested Council action to address concerns about safety and anti social behaviour within the reserve. This report recommends that an existing timber railing barrier be repaired and a gravel/bitumen path in poor condition be replaced with a hard paved footpath to improve safety and amenity.

Acting Group Manager, Infrastructure Waste and Water

BACKGROUND

10 In November last year and in response to a request from adjoining property owners Councillors Seckold, Pincini and Campbell and staff met with residents to discuss concerns about activity and safety in the look out reserve. A location map of the reserve will be on display in the Council Chamber for the meeting.

The reserve and the neighbouring privately owned block to the west are well vegetated with medium height native trees. The reserve is accessed from Francis Hollis Drive and provides a viewing opportunity out over the Tathra beach foreshore to the east and north. The actual look out area is not visible from the street entrance to the reserve. A bitumen path (approximately 50 to 60 metres long and 1 metre wide) services the lookout area. It is located mostly on the ridge edge of the reserve and follows the fence line to the north eastern end of the lookout. Immediately below the lookout is a caravan park and residential units.

Residents are concerned for their safety and the safety of the visitors to the caravan park. Issues discussed with councillors and staff during the site meeting relate to objects being thrown from the lookout and the potential for damage/injury.

The residential units below the reserve have had objects thrown into the courtyards which are at the rear of the building, onto the roof and roadway to the north.

Residents at the meeting proposed that a barrier fence (called Securemax) should be installed by Council to address residents concerns. The suggested fence is:

- difficult to grip and climb
- allows for viewing through it (it is similar to the pedestrian barrier fence along the edge of the Sydney Harbour Bridge)
- highly anti corrosive (3-4 times more anti-corrosive than Hot Dipped Galvanising)
- cannot be cut
- can be curved at the top to minimise objects being thrown over it.

Advice from the supplier is that Securemax fencing is available in standard height of 2.4 metres and a width of 2.4 metres. A 3 metre high panel is also available. A product brochure will be available in the council chamber at the meeting.

40 An indicative installation cost from the Securemax supplier is between \$600 and \$800 per lineal metre depending on site conditions. No exact lineal measurements have been taken, however a barrier fence of this type could cost between \$24,000 and \$32,000.

ISSUES

Asset

The reserve is managed as a passive recreation local bushland reserve. Apart from the timber post and rail fence and the gravel/bitumen pathway there is no built infrastructure in the reserve and it receives little maintenance. The condition of the existing fence and pathway could be improved. Parking for car based visitors to the reserve is limited to the roadside frontage of the reserve or within the reserve.

Social / Cultural

50 Surrounding residents are very concerned about damage to property and the potential for personal injury as a result of what is considered anti social behaviour.

Consultation

Councillors and staff have met with residents to discuss their concerns.

Financial

Funding for improvements within the reserve beyond the existing maintenance regime is not provided for within current or planned budget.

CONCLUSION

60 This resident's main issue relates to safety and injury risk posed by objects being thrown from the lookout reserve. The installation of a 2.4 or a 3 metre tall fence at the cliff top edge of the reserve may restrict rocks and other objects being thrown but will not prevent it.

However action to minimise objects being thrown may also be achieved by hard paving the walkway which is currently in poor condition. The existing path has an abundance of stones/rock for throwing over the edge. Improvements to the existing barrier fence, whilst not eliminating absolutely the potential for someone to climb over, may serve as a physical deterrent.

Cost of the fencing recommended by the residents is considerable and there are significant adverse visual amenity issues that will arise should a 2.4 metre tall fence be built along a prominent ridge line. Accordingly, action to install fencing as requested by the residents is not supported by staff.

70 Minor works to improve the condition of the existing fence and pathway are proposed along with signage advising visitors to the reserve of the likely physical hazards.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council advise residents adjoining the Lookout reserve in Francis Hollis drive Tathra that their request for Council to install “Securemax” style fencing is not agreed to due to cost, visual amenity and effectiveness factors.
2. That Council install warning/advisory signage to the reserve entrance and interim works to improve the condition of the existing barrier fence and pathway.
3. That other more effective, less expensive and visually acceptable fencing arrangements be investigated and incorporated on a risk basis, into future management plans.

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