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BY EMAIL

Mr Chris Laidlaw
Chair Person Greater Wellington Regional Council
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Manners Street
Wellington

cc GWRC Councillors

30TH March 2017

Dear Mr Laidlaw,

Restoration of Natural Character in Lyall Bay.

Since the 1960's the "Corner" has been the Wellington regions most patronised surf break. Yet due to WIAL's activities along Moa Point Rd of late, this is no longer the case. As I write this letter, we are in danger of losing this regionally and nationally significant surf break as natural processes continue to adapt to the new "norm".

Lyall Bay has heritage status whether officially recognised or not, with Olympic swimming champion Duke Kahanamoku surfing the Bay in 1915. "The Duke" is considered to be the father of modern surfing, and was invited as a guest of the Lyall Bay Surf Life Saving Club, the first surf life saving club to patrol in NZ.

Historian Gavin McLean in his book Blue White And Dynamite (100 years of the Lyall Bay Surf Life Saving Club) writes an account of how the bay used to be from an old time surfer/ life saver John Watt, a member of the Lyall Bay Surf Club from the 1940s through to his death in 2012. He was a NZ Representative and a highly talented surf swimmer and surfer, from the book:

Many deeply regretted the losing the elegant eastern oval of the bay to the airport and to the later sewerage plant. Interviewed in 2008, John Watt recalled that:

"You had the full thing right around to Moa Point, you had the full bay and in actual fact, to get the good waves you virtually went into the centre of Lyall Bay, reasonable sort of waves in front of Lyall Bay clubrooms but for the best waves... You see there was a run out directly at the end of Onepu Rd. That was where the run out was. Which on a good surf, was like

hopping on an escalator and getting taken out, then you'd swim along and we would catch the waves in, Not on a big surf, just a little surf, we would go round to the centre of the bay...That went right round to Moa Point."

You see Mr Laidlaw, Lyall Bay has always provided exceptional surf breaks, and even though the Bay had been compromised by the original airport reclamation (1957 -1959), the Bay still held its outstanding natural character, and natural processes, which subsequently formed the Corner surf break, an Outstanding Natural Feature in its own right.

The Surfbreak Protection Society (SPS) and local surfers have been alerting WIAL even before meeting with the airport company in May 2015, about adverse effects on the natural processes that create the Corner Surf break by way of modification to the Moa Point Rd seawall.

The May 2015 meeting was a part of a consultation process with Wellington Surfers to mitigate adverse effects from the proposed airport extension on Lyall Bay surf breaks, with the understanding that where possible adverse effects on the Corner surf break would be avoided.

Over the last few years WIAL have also been remodelling the Moa Point Rd Seawall from its initial vertical profile that reflected and focused swell energy back into Corner surf break. The seawall is being increasingly remodelled by WIAL placing more rocks into an increasingly sloping profile, which absorbs much of the swell energy travelling shoreward along the wall toward the Corner Surf break, and is degrading surfing wave quality.

In June - July 2015 WIAL again carried out further works along the Moa Point Rd seawall. Local surfers had always assumed it was the Wellington City Council undertaking these works.

In December 2015 SPS once more requested information as to what organisation was responsible for these works.

With no response from Greg Thomas, the WIAL communications manager who consulted with local surfers from the beginning over the airport extension's impacts on Lyall Bay's surf breaks, and with concern regarding even more rocks placed on the landward side of the seawall ready for placement, SPS alerted GWRC, to seek the origin of these activities. SPS were informed by GWRC that it was not the Wellington City Council who is responsible for the works, it is indeed WIAL.

The works have been carried out under rule six of the existing Regional Coastal Plan (2000) without consulting Wellington surfers.

On the 5th of October 2016 SPS made an Official Information Act Request to WIAL and WCC (who hold a minority shareholding in WIAL) for work records on the modifications to the seawall. The request was denied by WIAL which in itself, does not contribute to open and transparent consultation over the airport extension project.

WIAL also propose to build a widened promenade along Moa Point Rd with a new seawall that provides viewing platforms down to sea level as a mitigation offset to impacts on natural character overall, from the airport extension.

Local surfers are very disappointed about the adverse effects from the seawall on the Corner, as noted in a number of media articles¹.

Restoration of Natural Character in relation to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) and The GWRC Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP).

Surf breaks are recognised as Outstanding Natural Features (ONF's) in their own right in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. As a requirement of policy 13 (1) (c) The GWRC have duly mapped and identified Wellington's regionally significant surf breaks (ONF's) in schedule k for the Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP) including the Corner surf break. While the plan is still proposed, these regionally significant surf breaks are still protected under the NZCPS.

Under the NZCPS, objective 2 encourages restoration of the coastal environment, and policy 14 gives direction for Councils to restore Natural character where it has been affected by Human interference;

14 (iv) *rehabilitating dunes and other natural coastal features or processes, including saline wetlands and intertidal saltmarsh;*

Is but one example of clauses that facilitates giving direction to WIAL to restore the Corner in the NZCPS.

I would like to draw your attention to 4.4.2 *Natural character* in the PNRP;

Policy P24 Outstanding natural character where the policy re enforces policy 14 in a number of clauses, and importantly "*requiring built elements to be subservient to the dominance of the characteristics and qualities that make up the natural character values of the area.*"

The reverse has clearly been the case with WIAL's actions along the Moa Point Rd seawall impacting on the Corner surf break.

¹ <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/wellington/71843619/Surf-study-under-way-to-protect-Lyall-Bay-waves>
<http://www.ocular.co.nz/articles/how-to/real-surf-live-work-bay/October 20 2014 Wellington Boardriders Club letter to WIAL>

Policies p25 and p26 of the PNRP are also particularly relevant to restoring natural character attributes of the Corner surf break.

Chris, it would not take much expenditure in way of modelling to ascertain what the optimum slope angle of the Moa Point Rd seawall would reflect swell back into the line-up for the Corner take off point. Wellington City Council has already done this in regard to establishing wave action behaviour that impacts on the car park opposite the Spruce Goose Café in Lyall Bay, next to the airport.

With regard to the observed effects on the Corner surf break by the expert surfers of Wellington, I am reminded of a quote from Marilyn Waring:

“...Someone who has lived on the bank of the river as a subsistence fisherman, even when he or she is illiterate, is the expert on fish at that point in the river. He will always know more than the departmental scientist from Bangkok and the World Bank consultant from Cornell.”

(Quotes from Address by previous crown minister, Dr Marilyn Waring to SOLGM 2001: Absolutely Positively Local Government: Best practice for local government in the new millennium Wellington. September 10, 2001.

Dear Chris, The Surfbreak Protection Society has been approached by a significant number of Wellington surfers asking us to request GWRC, as the enforcing authority, to direct WIAL to undertake remedial action to restore the natural character of Lyall Bay at the Corner surf break where the natural character has become subservient to the modifications (built elements) of the Moa Point Rd seawall. There is direction under policy 14 of the NZCPS and policies p24, p25, and p26 under the GWRC PNRP. The works along Moa Point Rd also conflict with, (but not limited to); impacts on natural character and amenity values under policy 2.3.5, 6.2.2 of the GWRC Regional Coastal Plan 2000, as well as not meeting requirements under general standards of the RCP (14.1.6) where debris from the works extends further than five meters from the seawall (measured from the structure existing at 29 June 1994). Debris from previous airport works has also been an issue at the Airport rights surf break, at the southern end of the runway

Wellington surfers are deeply disturbed by WIAL's actions.

A best case appraisal is that WIAL are reacting in an ad hoc fashion to large swell events along Moa Point Rd, oblivious to any adverse effects on the Corner Surf break.

For anyone wary of WIAL's true intentions, it could be perceived that WIAL are doing their utmost to destroy the Corner Surf break, ahead of any airport extension consents...

The Wellington surfing community are seeking the restoration of the Corner surf break, and would very much appreciate the Greater Wellington Regional Council's assistance in this matter.

For the sake of the Corner surf break we seek that GWRC lend urgency to our request, and look forward to your response.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Shanks', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Shanks

President
Surfbreak Protection Society Inc.
