



KEMPSEY
Shire Council

DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

3rd February 2009

DSS6	PETITION FOR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO CONSTRUCTION OF A SKATE PARK AT HAT HEAD FILE: 334 KLB {Folio No. *}
------	--

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the receipt of a petition requesting that Council give serious consideration to the construction of a skate park at Hat Head

◆◆◆◆◆

DESCRIPTION:

A petition has been received from Ainslie Ivin-Smith of Hat Head requesting Council give serious consideration to the construction of a skate park in the village of Hat Head. The petition and letter are attached at [Appendix C – Page H14](#). The petition consists of 9 pages with 160 signatures. 61 petitioners have noted an address in Hat Head.

Council has received requests or suggestions for the construction of skate parks at Stuarts Point, Frederickton, South Kempsey and Smithtown.

The Shire has three skate parks located in Kempsey, Crescent Head and South West Rocks. They are not funded for maintenance or replacement under a separate budget and require considerable maintenance as they are well used and aging assets.

About Skate Parks

Skate parks need to be located where there is good passive surveillance for anti-social behaviour control and where the potential for noise disturbing residents is low. Access for garbage collection is also important.

The size of the skate park and the site are important as undersize skate parks tend to be built on undersize sites that do not allow for landscaping or buffer zones between the site and adjoining neighbours. The facility should be able to be adapted to meet the changing needs of users and for future flexibility. Access to water for drinking fountains and taps is important whilst access to power for night lighting is not, unless night use of the skate park, is deemed desirable.

The types of activities and age groups the skate park should cater for are also important – a suitably designed and sized skate park can cater for skateboarders, inline skating and BMX riding and a good range of age

groups and skill. A skate park can also be designed so that a central platform can be used as a stage for performances.

Paying for a Skate Park

A Sport and Recreation Grant, if successful, will fund almost half the capital cost of installation (no GST) and no ongoing maintenance costs of a facility. Installation of a high quality, low maintenance, permanent skate park would address the issue of ongoing maintenance costs to an extent. A ball park cost to supply and install a low maintenance skate park ranges from \$50,000 plus \$23,000 for the concrete slab to \$135,000 plus \$60,000 for the concrete slab (RHINO) depending on the size of the skate park.

A low cost alternative suggested by Council's Youth Development Officer is to purchase a pack (SKRAMP) that includes a selection of ramps, rails and decks for \$6,400. This could be temporarily installed on an existing piece of concrete (or asphalt if it is smooth enough).

Another funding option, suggested by Council's Youth Development Officer, would be to enter into a partnership or contractual agreement with an organisation/s that would take ownership of the facility, once it was built, in return for maintaining the facility for its life expectancy. The details of access to the public, hours of operation and fees and charges would be addressed in the contract.

Council's priority, when funds become available, is to improve the safety of the three existing skate parks in the Shire. To this end Council has successfully applied for a grant to improve the Kempsey skate park. The cost is \$24,650 to concrete the rear of the ramps to stabilise the earthworks and put in rails at strategic points to reduce use of the earth berms and keep the area safe.

In relation to the petition for a skate park at Hat Head, Council's Youth Development Officer has advised that:

"the youth of the Hat Head community number less than 50. A generous estimate of about 15 youth may benefit from the establishment of a skate park, not including holiday makers. Outlying communities such as Bellbrook or Willawarrin would need to be taken into consideration before Hat Head. Perhaps a larger, more state-of-the-art facility at South West Rocks may make it worth a short trip to South West Rocks for the youth at Hat Head."

The Youth Development Officer has been consulting with the youth of the Shire on a range of matters and provided a report on the skate parks in Kempsey Shire that is attached at [Appendix D – Page H24](#).

Council's Youth Development Officer has suggested:

"In conclusion it is perhaps better to think of better facility rather than more facility when it comes to the Shire's skate parks. In a climate of limited resources, partnerships with local communities and existing clubs and organisations as in the case of the PCYC, Surf Clubs, Caravan Parks, Swimming Pool operators and the like would perhaps be more viable and sustainable."

Planning for Skate Parks

A Development Plan for Skate Parks / Wheel Sport Facilities could be included as a significant part of the Strategy for Improvements to Open Space and Recreation Areas Infrastructure and the Strategy for the Rationalisation and Upgrade of Playgrounds. Investigation into current and potential future needs of users of the Shire's playground facilities and skate parks, that includes specific demographic information, would be a useful starting point.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS:

- *Environmental*

Nil

- *Social*

Any action that will assist Council in planning for enhanced recreational experiences for residents and visitors in the Shire will have social benefits. The provision of suitable skate parks in certain locations has been shown to reduce the incidence of skateboarders in car parks, streets and CBD areas.

- *Economic (Financial)*

Initial surveys and consultation with users could be achieved within the current resources of the Youth Development Officer and Open Space and Recreation staff.

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

- *Director's Review*

Prior to developing additional infrastructure it is critical that a long term Strategy Plan be developed for the provision of and maintenance of such infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That a long term strategy be developed for the provision of youth related infrastructure on a Shire-wide basis.
2. That Ainslie Ivin-Smith be advised that the petition and request for a state park in Hat Head will be considered in the development of the long term strategy for youth infrastructure.

.....

Bruce Morris
DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES