

FISHERMANS BEACH REDEVELOPMENT, TORQUAY OUTLINE - DECEMBER 2007



Artists Impression – Beach View (rescue facility on left, angling club facility on right [lower], restaurant on right [upper], public toilets & kiosk on far right [lower]).

Site

The site is coastal Crown land at Fishermans Beach in Torquay. It is bounded by the coast and The Esplanade, and incorporates the current site of Torquay Angling Club, Torquay Marine Rescue Service and a public toilet. Adjacent to the site is Taylor Park and Torquay Bowls Club.

The Project

The Fishermans Beach redevelopment will deliver a brand new, purpose-built community, tourism and recreation facility on the Torquay foreshore, including:

- New and improved facilities for Torquay Angling Club
- New and improved facilities for Torquay Marine Rescue Service
- New restaurant and kiosk
- New public toilets and change rooms
- New multi-purpose community meeting space
- Public viewing decks
- Open space, including walking tracks and landscaping
- Improved boat and trailer parking for boat ramp users
- Dedicated car parking for facility and beach users

The redevelopment will replace existing facilities at the site which are inadequate and in relatively poor condition, and which lack good public facilities. The existing Torquay Marine Rescue Service shed, Torquay Angling Club building and public toilets will be demolished.

Please note: Separately, but in conjunction with the redevelopment, GORCC intends to replace the boat ramp at Fishermans Beach which is a popular launching site for recreational fishing and boating.

History

The 1998 Torquay Foreshore Masterplan outlined a series of improvements to the site at Fishermans Beach, including improved facilities for user groups and the public.

Planning commenced in 2006 with the preparation of initial design concepts which were used as the basis for consultation with community and stakeholder representatives. In late 2006, GORCC commenced a detailed planning process which has continued throughout 2007, with close input of user groups, along with consultation with DSE and Surf Coast Shire.



Siting and Design

As a pre-existing site with a long history of use and built form, Fishermans Beach is considered an appropriate site (one of very few) in Torquay for suitable development. The project will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits, and is coastal dependent in use and nature.

The design for the new facility aims to provide a showcase building which is sensitively sited in a unique coastal setting, and which meets the needs of user groups and the community. The design incorporates a high level of sustainability features, including thermal mass, building orientation, natural heating and cooling and energy / water conservation. Materials have been specifically selected to be durable, aesthetically pleasing and sustainable in the coastal environment.

Structures are grouped on the site to minimize the extent of built form on the coastal environment, and are set back as far as possible, notwithstanding the coastal nature of the use and the physical constraints of the site. An assessment against predicted sea level rises has been made and the structure is assessed as being outside potential risk areas.

A comprehensive traffic and parking plan has been prepared and considerable investment will be expended to improve car and trailer parking and entrances/exits, including minimizing the impacts on pedestrian use of the site, and improving vehicle safety (entrance and exit).

Public access to and through the site will be enhanced by the integrated landscape plan incorporating walking tracks (at Esplanade and Beach level), viewing platforms and dedicated pedestrian zones in the open space in front of the buildings.

Vegetation on the site is of poor quality generally, and will be enhanced by revegetation with indigenous species in accordance with the landscape plan.

Improved Facilities for User Groups

Representatives from Torquay Angling Club and Torquay Marine Rescue Service have been closely involved in the design process to ensure the new facilities meet their requirements.

The project will deliver long term benefits to the recreational fishing public by providing substantially improved facilities to support and service recreational fishing in the growing area of Torquay. An estimated 19,000 launches occur from the adjacent boat ramp each year. Torquay Angling Club has more than 800 members and this project will deliver real benefits to these members, and other recreational fishers who use the site by:

- Providing improved meeting rooms and other space to support the growing membership of Torquay Angling Club and other fishers (and also be more accessible to the general public)
- Improving other facilities for recreational fishers, including new boat wash down bay, fish cleaning table, signage and landscaping

Torquay Marine Rescue Service (TMRS) is a volunteer rescue service catering for emergencies between Port Phillip Heads and Lorne and 15 nautical miles out to sea. Current facilities are in poor condition and do not cater for the service's urgent need for a larger rescue boat, along with facilities for members and control of emergencies.

The new marine rescue facilities will accommodate larger rescue boats, along with existing rescue craft, in a safe, secure and functional space, including supporting storage for fuel, equipment and volunteers. A dedicated control room will be provided to oversee rescue incidents, including radio controls. Improved storage space will be provided for tractors which are used to assist with launch/retrieval at Fishermans Beach.

Restaurant and Kiosk

The addition of a unique beach front hospitality facility comprising restaurant and kiosk is seen as an important opportunity to serve growing residential and visitor populations in Torquay and along the Great Ocean Road.

The restaurant and kiosk will serve site users, visitors and the local community in a new ocean-side hospitality facility. Whilst Torquay has a number of restaurants along The Esplanade, it has no "true" seaside restaurant. The site at Fishermans Beach is considered ideal for a new restaurant, taking into account its natural sheltered location and stunning ocean views. The kiosk is closely associated with public use of the coast.

GORCC has appointed a preferred operator for the restaurant and kiosk following a publicly advertised Expression of Interest process. The preferred operator, Richard Verrell, brings considerable relevant restaurant experience to the project, and recognises the potential of the new facility in Torquay. A 21 year lease under the Crown Land Reserves Act is proposed with the preferred restaurant and kiosk operator, subject to relevant approvals. Under the lease, the preferred operator will provide a capital contribution and annual rental to GORCC for the use of the site. Negotiations are continuing to confirm leasing arrangements.

Cost

The estimated cost of the project exceeds \$3 million. This includes all design, planning, construction costs, along with other civil works including walking tracks, landscaping and car parking improvements.

Funding

The project will be funded by GORCC, Regional Development Victoria and Surf Coast Shire. Torquay Angling Club and Torquay Marine Rescue Service will provide in-kind contributions. GORCC has allocated considerable financial resources (including the capital contribution from the preferred restaurant operator) to support the redevelopment in 2006/07 and 2007/08, and a further allocation is proposed for 2008/09.

Benefits

The project will deliver a range of community, economic and environmental benefits.

Community Benefits

- Torquay Marine Rescue Service will benefit from improved facilities, including storage space to suit larger rescue boats and equipment, along with a dedicated control room, allowing a better service to be delivered to the community.
- Torquay Angling Club will benefit from improved facilities which better cater to its needs, and provide additional space compared to the current ageing facility.
- New and improved public toilets and changerooms.
- Improved pedestrian access, including trails along The Esplanade and beach.
- Improved recreation facilities, including landscaped areas, tables and chairs.
- A new beachfront restaurant and kiosk.

Economic Benefits

- Local and regional jobs and economic growth will be generated by the development. The new restaurant and kiosk will generate employment.
- Local suppliers will be utilised where possible, delivering flow-on economic benefits.
- Due to its location and design, the restaurant will become a destination in its own right, adding significant value to Torquay's tourism industry, capable of servicing growing tourism markets of conferences, functions and international visitors, in addition to the existing high domestic tourism numbers

Environmental Benefits

- Showcasing energy and water efficient design in a coastal setting, including water recycling, passive solar design, rainwater tank to toilet systems and smart heating and cooling solutions
- Sustainable products and materials used in construction

For more information:

Further consultation will be undertaken in early 2008 to inform the community of plans for the project, including an open day on site to discuss the project with interested persons. Information about the project will be available on the GORCC website, in addition to that provided by Council's normal planning process requirements.

Contact the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee on 5220 5055, email: info@gorcc.com.au or visit www.gorcc.com.au