

CHURCH POINT FRIENDS

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The General Manager
Pittwater Council
By email Pittwater_council@pittwater.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir

Re: Options available to decrease parking demand at Church Point

At the Council meeting of 16th December 2013, when the two-level car park was adopted, by a margin of one vote, Council also determined that a Demand Management Strategy be developed.

We ask that this submission be considered carefully as part of preparing a Demand Management Strategy. It is urgent to consider how the overall need for parking at Church Point may be reduced, and whether the solution offered by Council can be improved before Council embarks on the costly and divisive adopted proposal. In contrast, reducing the overall demand for parking is in the interests of both onshore and offshore residents and requires little expenditure or risk.

To assist the reader the submission is divided under the following headings:

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1.0 Executive summary

Analysis of the sources of parking demand was a fundamental omission in the Church Point Plan of Management. It fails to distinguish between the needs of residents, visitors and businesses. Combining the needs of all who may want to park at Church Point has led Council to adopt the biggest proposal. Yet, even this does not ensure a long-term solution, as offshore residents, relatively stable in number, still have to compete with an ever-growing number of visitors. This is confirmed by 4 car counts conducted by CPF and analysis of Census figures.

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The strategies offered under 7.0 of this submission seek a better balance between residents and visitors. By looking at the estimated offshore parking demand, what is available and who else might be using the parking, we are able to suggest strategies to reduce overall parking demand and **give priority to residents as occurs in other areas of Sydney.**

Suggested measures are simple to implement, cost very little, have no environmental impact, are completely reversible and address the core problem of offshore resident parking.

2.0 Background

The history of parking problems at Church Point goes back to the days when visitors, resplendent in their new cars, saw the area as a delightful destination supported by numerous activities and refreshment houses. The subdivisions of Scotland Island, construction of the Pasadena and marinas added to the general congestion and by the 1950s, Warringah Council considered that the chaotic parking situation needed to be resolved. This resulted in the 1960s infill of the sand flats now known as Church Point Reserve car park.

However, growth of visitations encouraged by new commercial interests has brought increased challenges to local residents.

3.0 Key issues

- **There will never be enough parking for all the people who want to park at Church Point.**
- Offshore residents need reliable parking.
- Church Point businesses profit from their scenic location, and State government and private marinas make money from the moorings. Together, these enterprises create a demand for many hundreds of parking spaces while providing very few.
- The two-level car park is to be funded mostly by offshore CP Permit-holders but offers them no priority over the general public with whom they compete for a space.
- Streets near Church Point are parked to capacity at peak periods, inconveniencing local residents and their visitors.
- There is too much car traffic in and around the small Church Point area due to the many competing interests.
- Parking demand varies significantly according to day, time and season, peaking in the evenings, weekends and summer holidays. However, new businesses and visitor growth are extending the high demand period.
- Many Pittwater residents, on and offshore, are clearly unhappy with building the proposed two-level concrete car park on the waterfront.
- Another car park open to the general public does not provide a long-term solution and does nothing to decrease traffic to Church Point; rather it will attract more cars.
- The iconic beauty and unique atmosphere of Church Point is being eroded.
- In a December 2013 Report to Council, the stated objective was.. *“To provide suitable parking arrangements for business, community and commuter transport.”* Residents are not even listed as a separate category of user. Surely Council’s prime responsibility is to its residents, and in the case of offshore residents, their need to access their homes.

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4.0 Who are users of Church Point?

4.1 Visitors:

- Day visitors come for entertainment, meals, coffee, walks, ferry rides, fishing, cycling, and kayaking. It is also a refreshment stop for numerous cyclists and motorbike riders.
- Day visitors use the ferry to access offshore destinations.
- Day and overnight visitors come to both offshore and onshore residents.
- Medium density over-55s developments near Church Point inevitably mean more visitors seeking a park.
- Most visitors prefer to avoid paying parking fees if they can find free parking in surrounding streets.

4.2 Businesses:

- The Waterfront Cafe has approval to seat 100, but up to 170 have been counted. There are an additional 5-8 staff plus owners who park in the surrounding streets. Regular musical events occur on Sunday afternoons, which fill the café. In addition to patrons of the café, there are customers of the Store and Post Office. **The business does not provide any parking.**
- The Pasadena has approval for a refurbishment with existing use rights for 138 patrons. However, **only 10 designated parking spaces will be provided!**
- More holiday rentals are bringing visitors and their cars. For example, Pittwater YHA at Morning Bay has 32 beds and advises its patrons to park in Eastview Road. The Hostel is usually full in summer and caters for large group functions. Furthermore, a growing number of offshore accommodation options add a further 30 beds, bringing the total found on the website, <http://www.stayz.com.au> to 62.
- Many small businesses operate from the Point such as the ferry, water taxi, boat sales, sailing school and Real Estate.
- Many offshore small businesses use Church Point to access the mainland.
- Workers and trades people working offshore daily.

4.3 Boat Owners:

- RMS leases 488 moorings to the public, located from Bayview to McCarrs Creek. (Moorings around Scotland Island and the Western foreshores are only available to residents).
- RMS has progressively been moving moorings from Bayview to Church Point.
- The Quays Marina has 95 berths and 69 swing moorings. Holmeport Marina has 160 swing moorings and a rule that only one car per boat may park.
- RMS and marina moorings/berths together accommodate 812 boats.
- Boat owners with either a private or public mooring often invite four or five other friends to come boating, all needing to park.

4.4 Offshore Residents:

- The number of offshore dwellings is relatively stable as nearly all blocks are built on and further subdivision or intensification is not permitted.
- There has been a modest increase in the offshore population according to the census figures from 2006 and 2011, which indicate a population increase for Scotland Island from 642 to 715 (11%). Figures for the Bays are not separated in the 2011 census.
- People are living permanently on boats.

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- Dispersal option: There has been a suggestion over a number of years to disperse offshore resident parking to other areas in Mona Vale and Bayview. The dispersal option is impractical for offshore users who require their vehicles to carry fuel and vests for their boats, plus wet weather gear, a change of clothing, manage children, shopping, etc.
- It seems reasonable that local residents should have priority over limited parking at Church Point, as occurs in other areas.

4.5 Onshore Residents:

- Once fees were introduced in the Reserve car park, a predictable though unwanted consequence was that drivers seeking to avoid the fees would go straight to nearby streets. Before the introduction of fees, these streets were used as a *last* resort, not a *first* choice.
- Both onshore and offshore residents leave parked cars, trailers and boats, for weeks or months at a time. Some offshore residents going overseas feel it is more “responsible” to leave their car in a nearby street, instead of taking up a sought after space in the car park.
- Some older Church Point houses only have one car space and use the streets to park a 2nd car.

4.6 Common interests of offshore and onshore residents

- Both on and offshore residents want a solution for offshore parking.
- Both are grossly inconvenienced by the traffic and parking needs caused by increasing visitor numbers.
- Both want Church Point to retain its character as the historic and scenic gateway to Pittwater.

5.0 What is the current parking availability?

Four car counts conducted by CPF on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings over 2013/2014 have identified that there is capacity for approximately 510 cars parked in the Church Point area including McCarrs Creek Road up to Browns Bay steps, Pittwater Road east to Bennett’s beach, the Reserve and back streets of Barooka, Eastview and Quarter Sessions. Holmeport private parking is excluded.

Of these 510 cars, about 330 (65%) were occupied by CP Permit-holders. The balance of about 180 (35%) cars did not have a Church Point Permit. We can only assume these cars belong to a mixture of visitors and residents who do not hold a Permit, but cannot estimate the number in each category.

The following table is a summary of findings with an example of actual survey results contained in Appendix A.

Area	Cars counted	Comment
Church Point Reserve	295	Possibly 300+ varying with specific use of unmarked spaces
Pittwater Rd (Pasadena)	14	Plus loading bay
Pittwater Rd (East of Reserve)	4	
McCarrs Ck Rd (Cargo to Botham)	61	3 spaces have been lost due to reconfiguration
McCarrs Ck Rd (Botham to Browns Bay steps)	34	
Streets of Barooka, Eastview & Quarter Sessions	103	
TOTAL	511	

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6.0 What is the parking demand?

It is difficult to clearly identify the number of offshore residents that are using Church Point, however, the following has been extracted from the last two census figures 2006 and 2011.

1. There is a total population of about 920 living offshore in proximity to Church Point with about 490 dwellings, of which 150 were unoccupied.
2. According to the 2011 census, there were 425 offshore cars listed and 340 occupied dwellings. This suggests a ratio of 1.25 cars per occupied dwelling.
3. It would be useful for Council to ascertain how many offshore residents are registered with onshore marinas around Pittwater. In the absence of this information, we conservatively estimate that 15% of demand, or about 64 cars, park in areas other than Church Point. This leaves about 360 cars parking at Church Point.
4. To estimate holiday demand, assuming all of the 490 dwellings are occupied at 1.25 cars per household, equates to a total 612 cars, less 15% as before would equal about 520 cars at peak times.

Summary of estimated Offshore Resident Parking Demand (Refer note Appendix B)

Locality	Population	Occupied dwellings	Cars	Car ratio / dwelling	Less 15% distribution	Estimate of cars parked at CP
Scotland Is, Elvina, Lovett, Morning Bay	920	340	425	1.25	64	361
Estimate peak times	1325	490	612	1.25	92	520

7.0 An Immediate Solution - The Visitor Management Option

The above figures indicate that a **peak offshore resident demand, with all 490 houses occupied, is in the order of 520 parking spaces and that there is a total parking availability of 510 spaces** when adjacent streets are included. These figures suggest that the parking needs of the majority of offshore residents, both full and part time, could be catered for, **now**.

Visitors are the additional demand creating a parking crisis.

Strategies

The following strategies can be implemented immediately with minimal cost to the Council and if successful, would provide a sustainable long-term solution. If Council presents the case that these changes are in the community interest, this could fit within the requirements for the management of Crown Land and accord with current State Government policy to devolve decision making to local Councils.

1. Reserve parking to be limited in the evenings to CP Permit-holders, 6.00pm to 6.00am, seven days a week.
2. During hours when the Reserve car park has many empty spaces, parking could be available free for Pittwater Sticker holders weekdays only, between the hours of 6.00am and 6.00pm.
3. Existing nominated 4-hour parking spaces at the Reserve car park to be retained. Pay & Display to continue in the rest of the Reserve car park except in the evenings.

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4. Differential pricing for first and subsequent CP Permits: the first Permit should be issued at a reasonable price on the basis of 1 per rated offshore property, thereafter a somewhat higher fee which would also be applicable to other applicants if Council continues to issue them to all who apply.
5. Church Point streets to be designated 4 hours, Pittwater Sticker exempt. This would limit visitors outside the Pittwater LGA from parking for extended periods and conversely, allow all Pittwater residents full time free parking.
6. Research ways to encourage visitors, marina users, boat owners and holidaymakers to use alternate transport to Church Point.
7. In the medium term, 12-14 cars should be removed from the east end of the Reserve adjacent to Bennett's Beach to create a small park with these cars relocated to the area between Holmeport marina and the old bus turning area, *with no net loss of available spaces*.

8.0 Anticipated Outcomes

8.1 Offshore Residents

The critical evening period for offshore residents is assisted by giving priority to CP Permit-holders 6.00pm to 6.00am, seven days a week. Overflow evening parking in surrounding streets would be unrestricted to those with a Pittwater Sticker.

8.2 Onshore residents

Increased availability of evening parking spaces for offshore residents may reduce the problem of vehicles constantly circling the area looking for a parking space. Choking of local streets may be reduced, as visitors would be discouraged from parking long-term.

A decreased requirement for additional parking spaces may enable reconsideration of the current plan for Precinct 1 with its very substantial infill and two-level structure. Such reconsideration could potentially result in a scheme with reduced environmental impacts so that the unique character of Church Point can be maintained.

Free daytime parking in the Reserve, Monday to Friday, returns waterfront access for local residents.

8.3 Visitors

Visitors have access to all the existing Reserve car park on a Pay and Display basis from 6am till 6pm. They also are provided with 1-hour parking in front of the Pasadena, 4-hour designated parking in the Reserve and 4-hour parking in surrounding streets. Visitors with a Pittwater Sticker would have unrestricted parking in surrounding streets. Alternately, visitors should be encouraged to use public transport.

Long-term parking at Church Point should no longer be an option except for Pittwater residents.

8.4 Business

Commercial operators should be encouraged to provide parking certainty for their guests by offering alternate access to Church Point **at peak periods** via a commercially funded shuttle bus from designated parking areas such as Rowland Reserve, which is underutilised. Failure to do so will impact upon their business.

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8.5 Financial Risk

The cost to undertake the suggested Parking Demand Management is no more than the negotiation with Lands Department for changed conditions in Church Point Reserve, changed signage, public education and usual enforcement.

If parking demand management is successful, then there is the opportunity to reconsider the adopted two-level car park proposal. A less expensive solution would reduce the risk for offshore residents exposed to uncertainty about the long-term uncapped fee increases and, more broadly, Pittwater ratepayers concerned about the financial risk of this project.

If the two-level car park is still to proceed, reconsideration should at least be given to who uses it and who pays for it.

It is apparent that much of the parking shortage is being generated by visitors, not permanent residents. To date, the Council has required that the cost of additional parking should be borne primarily by the offshore community, though offering no exclusivity or priority in return unless a space is privately leased.

Many of the visitors are coming to Church Point to patronise businesses who profit from the scenic location, but contribute *little or no parking* for their customers. It would seem reasonable that businesses and visitors be required to pay substantially for any additional parking. Why should offshore residents effectively subsidise private profit-making businesses?

Alternatively, it seems visitor needs could be met by utilising available parking within a few kilometres of Church Point in concert with public transport or a commercially-run shuttle bus. If businesses and visitors were required to contribute realistically to meet the parking demand they create, the costs of a shuttle bus or special ferry service at peak periods would be attractive weighed against the costs of car park construction.

9.0 Conclusion

We ask that a comprehensive Parking Demand Management Strategy be undertaken immediately with the engagement of all stakeholders, taking genuine consideration of this submission.

Please inform us how we may be part of the consultative process.

Yours truly



Peter Altona on behalf of *Church Point Friends*.

CC:

All Councillors

Rob Stokes, MP for Pittwater

Associations: BCPRA, SIRA and WPCA.

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APPENDIX A –Example of a car count tabulation.

CHURCH POINT CAR COUNT

Saturday 6:30 - 7:30am
22 March 2014

SUMMARY	No	% of total
Total cars in CP Precinct incl streets above & up to Bothams:	469	100%
Total cars parked in streets above:	95	20%
Total CP Permits:	332	71%
Total without CP permit:	137	29%
Total cars in Reserve carpark:	295	63%
Total CP Permits:	264	56%
Total Pay & Display:	14	3%
Total with no CP Permit or Pay & Display:	17	4%
Total cars at Pasadena:	18	4%
Total CP Permits:	4	1%
Total with no CP permit:	10	2%
Other	4	1%
Patrons counted at Waterfront Store:		

Area	CP Permit	Pay & Display	No CP Permit or Pay & Display	Totals	
Reserve car park	264	14	17	295	63%
McCarrs Ck -Cargo to Bothams variable restrictions	47	n/a	14	61	13%
Baroona Eastview & Quarter Sessions	15	n/a	80	95	20%
Pasadena ~front excl loading dock -1 hr or overnight only	4	n/a	10	14	3%
Pittwater Rd 1P 9am-5pm Permit excepted	2	n/a	2	4	1%
Totals	332	14	123	469	

Trailers				3	
Motor Bike				1	
Possible Illegal				4	
Browns Rd	1		33	34	
Total spaces				511	

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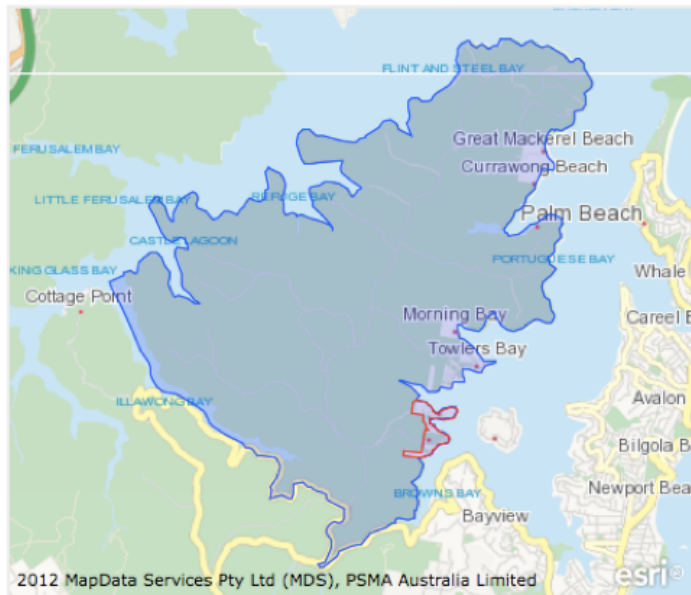
APPENDIX B – Basis of offshore population, dwelling and car ownership calculations.

Notes: The 2006 Census provided information on Elvina, Lovett and Towlers Bays. This could not be extracted from the 2011 Census as it combined information from all of the Western Foreshores stretching from McCarrs Creek to Great Mackerel Beach under the heading of Great Mackerel Beach (shaded grey on map). Resultant analysis is an extrapolation between 2006 & 2011.

Population: Takes into account increase on Scotland Island.

Dwellings: Assumed static.

Unoccupied dwellings: Assumed static.



M

Map of Great Mackerel Beach catchment – 2011 census.