

Clarification of issues related to the placement of stone restrictions on the Catherine Park foreshore.  
Update – Opportunity for community participation in Council facilitate consultation

Improvements to Catherine Park have been a long-term project as has so many other aspects of island living. SIRA has fought to facilitate buggy registration as well as a management plan for the park for it seems for 20 years. A key to moving ahead on a plan for the park has been the road and drainage work completed this past year. Improved drainage is critical to any other improvements, and yet there are still problems to solve. In addition, Council completed its Draft Landscape Plan with a final document to come. As with any project there will be those that are happy and those that are not. Yes, SIRA's R, D, E subcommittee has meant with Council on this and other issues, but we have stuck to our message as outlined in reports and stated on the website and this maintains that parking for those with mobility needs is important. We have submitted a great variety of options but left the decision making to Council as the land manager.

I understand that not all on SIRA can follow every issue. The R, D, E subcommittee is open to everyone, but as with so many subcommittees only a small core come to meetings and actively participate. Like so many items on the island often people only act when an issue affects their life.

It is important to realise that this is an interim step as the final decisions regarding the foreshore will come as part 2 of the Catherine Park Landscape Plan. It is my understanding that stone was chosen by Council as preferable to bollards because they are aesthetically more pleasing, provide foreshore seating and can be adjusted as might be required.

To assist the Committee in understanding what others seem to think was a decision by our subcommittee I am sharing an agreed response from the executive to an email that raised concern regarding the placement of bollards by NBC to limit buggy access to the Catherine Park foreshore. As requested, this item is listed on the agenda for discussion at the SIRA Committee Meeting August 20. SIRA's response reads:

1. Buggy access to the park is not just a matter of public opinion but a question of acknowledging relevant regulations. At present there are number of parameters that might be reflected in Council's decision.
  - The Service NSW website states clearly: Residents of Scotland Island are not eligible to apply for conditional registration of a golf buggy due to the road conditions. Reference <https://www.nsw.gov.au/driving-boating-and-transport/vehicle-registration/conditional-and-seasonal/vehicle-sheets/golf-buggy-registration-uses-and-equipment>
  - The Northern Beaches Council (NBC) FAQ sheet about access permits for vehicles on vehicles Island explains the position reached on conditional registration in early 2021. (later abandoned due to protests). Reference <https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/council/forms/scotland-island-access-permit-faqs>
  - NBC regulation makes driving of vehicles in parks illegal.
  - State and Federal law declares driving on pedestrian footpath illegal. Our foreshore serves as a pathway for pedestrian access to the park, playground and community centres.
2. SIRA's position - Scotland Island Community Website (provided by SIRA) demonstrates SIRA's obligation to acknowledge, share and respect decisions made by authorities regarding the registration of buggies.

[Vehicles on the Island – Scotland Island Community Website](#)  
[Traffic Management Plan – Scotland Island Community Website](#)

- Although golf buggies and quad bikes currently cannot be registered or insured, SIRA recognizes that buggies are a beneficial form of transport and that they have far less impact on the road network than a larger heavier vehicle. SIRA has worked for over 5 years to achieve this option and is continuing to do.
  - SIRA has advocated for mobility parking at the wharf and near Catherine Park. SIRA has not advocated for parking for others in the park as the area is quite small and there are safety risks for pedestrians or those at play. SIRA did insist that there be no change until parking was available below the fire shed. As an outcome of recent capital works this is now the case. Hopefully our community will leave the foreshore parking open to those with mobility issues.
  - In terms of equity, most people on the island do not have the privilege of driving to a level spot near a wharf, not even waterfront property owners. This was also true for Catherine Park until buggies found they could slip through the existing bollards on Pitt View Street
3. A number of additional points in the email were raised concerning the bollards and it was hoped the following responses would be helpful.
- There is no upcoming survey about Catherine Park – It seems that some incorrect information was posted in Facebook in regard to concerns about water and sewerage. In fact, as you might know from recent Comms meetings, SIRA is preparing a general survey. Implementation of this Survey will be proposed at the upcoming SIRAC meeting.
  - The survey referred to in the past was performed by Council, not SIRA. SIRA has never seen the actual results of the survey but were given the general response: that 60% of respondents were against parking in Catherine Park and 40% for it.
  - Nevertheless, the decision from NBC is not based on any survey. Jeremy Smith, Acting Executive Manager Parks & Recreation, Northern Beaches Council, explains: “Council has a duty of care to users of the park and foreshore to reduce the safety risk of buggies driving into these recreation areas. Council has not completely restricted access and has allowed for an area for buggies to pick up and drop off safely, noting that a decision on provisional registration of buggies by TfNSW is pending. I also note that mobility scooters will still be able to pass through the bollards.”
  - The Catherine Park Landscape Plan while not yet finalized is being developed after extensive consultation with the community and will reflect community needs/desires as well as Council’s regulatory obligations, environmental and social needs.

Our communication concludes: “Thank you for your correspondence and on-going support to our community. You would be most welcome to attend the next SIRAC meeting and we have placed your question on the agenda as requested. “

4. **Situation update** following heightened community concern and conversation with Jeremy Smith, Acting Executive Manager Parks and Reserves - Jeremy has agreed to facilitate a community meeting at the next Café August 27<sup>th</sup>. SIRA will assist by making available in advance the issues raised by the community to assist Council’s response. **Please note** that the present initiative is a Council initiative, not an outcome of SIRA or subcommittee correspondence or request.