**Re: Stage 1 Catherine Park Landscape Improvement Plan**

Dear Jeremy,

When Scotland Island representatives met with Council staff on 1st June, we heard an outline of the timeframe and budget allocation planned for works in Catherine Park, with 2027/28 scheduled for most works.

**The only works planned before 2027/28 are the hydrological study in 2025/26 and the replacement of the playground in 2024/25 and 2025/26.**

Our subcommittee is surprised that replacing the playground was designated the most urgent priority. Until the drainage issues are dealt with the playground will always be subject to runoff and degradation. Lia Skountzos has clarified that the $50K allocated is to replace the climbing equipment only.

**We recommend that Council does not replace the playground until the drainage issues extending from the intersection at Pitt View Street are mitigated.**

**The priority drainage issue**: Stormwater from the Pitt View drain flows steeply downhill to make a 90 degree turn at the base of the hill and then flows along the swale behind the playground to the emergency road. Seepage through the swale bank at the turn floods the picnic area and foreshore. Frequent blockage at the lower drain adjacent to the playground causes a backflow of stormwater, sediment, and litter over the bank and into the playground.

The playground successfully caters to children from about 3 to 17 years with all ages enjoying the swings and climbing equipment. It is our understanding that the community will be consulted regarding any changes to the present arrangement. There has, however, been a request in the short-term to change the narrow swing seat to a wider one. There is currently a wide seat and a narrow one. The narrow one is not as safe for small children as they can slip off more easily. It is also less comfortable for bigger children or adults and so it would be safer and more enjoyable to have both swings the same width.

**Urgent works for 2023/24**

Following the extensive consultation and promises that improvements to the park would not be held up by this process, we are disappointed that the timeline for on ground improvement has been extended to 2027/2028.

We would support Council prioritising the following works as part of maintenance for 2023/24 to address the most urgent problems.

1. **Improve the flow of stormwater from Pitt View Street to and along the swale to the drainage pit adjacent to the emergency road**.

(Refer to comments provided for the revised Catherine Park Landscape plan.**)**

1. **Installing bollards and signage to prevent vehicle entry to the foreshore and beach.**

We understand that Council will soon install bollards to prevent vehicle entry to the foreshore and beach. We ask that Council communicate with SIRA, as agreed, about the location of the bollards, the location for mobility access, signage, and communication to the community.

It would be advisable to reinstall the post to the boom gate at the top of the emergency access and to place a stone edge to prevent side access at the same time to discourage other illegal vehicle entry. Knowing there is, strong community support for minimal signage especially on the waterfront we ask that careful consideration to be given to size and placement. There has been a suggestion that signage might be placed at the bollards on lower Pitt View Street. Again, we request that Council communicate to residents in advance and liaise with SIRA before installation.

1. **Replace soil and turf on eroded path and foreshore park.**

Substantial erosion has been caused by the years of SSVs and buggies driving illegally along the path and into the park. Some initial restoration such as edging and turf along the foreshore could be simultaneously carried out with the installation of the bollards so that the community immediately sees the benefits of protecting the foreshore. If Council provide a hose, a local volunteer would be happy to water any new turf on the foreshore or in the park.

1. **Install large rocks and possibly baffles to mediate the flow of stormwater at the outlet of the large new drain at the upper end of the gully.**

The extensive recent road works around the park are delivering stormwater in greater volumes and velocities and already undercutting the bank and roots of surrounding trees.

1. **Excavate the central drainage line and replace the ag pipes.**

This drainage line/creek and the ag pipes installed around 2001 worked well for a great many years. However, without maintenance both have filled with sediment. A longer-term solution is being considered as part of the Landscape Improvement Plan but since no works are planned till 2027/28, urgent maintenance is required to prevent the constant flooding of the play surface and facilities. Sediment should be removed along with other impediments to water flow i.e., logs, and the swale reshaped. Removing and replacing the old ag pipe could provide substantial improvement should be considered as in interim or longer-term measure.

1. **Construct a safer, level path between the two halls.**

Movement of equipment and people between the two halls is unnecessarily difficult due to stairs going first down and then up. In response to a request from SIRA, a Council worker recently cleared the vegetation to make a narrow informal path between the two sets of stairs leading to each hall. We ask that this be improved to provide a safe pathway as soon as possible.

1. **Install a few sandstone blocks at the base of the hill connecting the two halls to provide a garden edge and additional seating.**

The square wooden bench is the only permanent seating available. The blocks would provide not only an edge at the base of the slope but would provide a space for hall users to be seated when gathering outside.

**Revised Landscape Improvement Plan**

At the meeting of June 1st with Council staff, the main agenda item was bushland management and very little time was left to discuss the revised Catherine Park plan. Our subcommittee and community group of relevant professionals were very encouraged by the revised plan and again gave detailed comment. While finding much broader agreement with the plan, the proposal for a central pipe a major change and potentially brings new problems as detailed by a resident geohydrologist. We understand that a hydrological engineer will be contracted to provide advice on drainage through the park. We ask that Council continues to meet and liaise with us to develop the best possible solutions.

Yours sincerely,

Sharon Kinnison

Coordinator - Roads, Drain Environment Subcommittee Coordinator

SIRA Vice President

Cc: Landscape Architects Kathryn Hill and Lia Skountzos

Crs Michael Gencher, Miranda Korzy, Karina Page