

Cossack Masterplan

A joint project between the Department of Housing and Works, the Shire of Roebourne and the Heritage Council of WA

Community focus group series

HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENT

Monday 3 April 2pm

Welcome Lotteries House, Karratha

Attendees at the meeting were

Ian	Crawford-Ferguson	Geoff	Van Waardenberg
Stuart	Otto	Terry	Patterson
Peter	Kendrick	Janice	Landy
Kate	Barr	David	Taylor
		Ian	Baxter

Project team

Kevin	Palassis	Mary	Power (facilitator)
Nerida	Moredoundt	Shontay	Cardew
Helen	Grzyb	Ray	Bird

David Taylor, Planning Projects Manager, Landstart, Department of Housing and Works, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Mary Power, facilitator, invited all the participants to introduce themselves.

Ian Baxter Director of the Heritage Council of WA spoke to the group about the background to the Council's role at Cossack and the unique opportunities offered by tourism at Cossack, keeping a balance between development and keeping heritage values.

Peter Kendrick, from CALM Karratha spoke to the group about environmental considerations at the town. He described the town as a tidal inlet that was differentiated from other inlets along the Pilbara coast by having road access to it. The environment was episodic and extreme. Flora and fauna numbers are directly related to the extremes of environment. There is a lot not known about the environment at the town, as there hasn't been much activity to find out, however it is known that the gold bat tree rat is native to the town, there are 7 species of mangrove, including the southern most mangroves, there are skinks in the town, and there are the standard northwest marine animals. Crocodiles have been sighted over the years, however a bigger problem is the sandflies in the area which are linked to the mangroves. The mangroves act as a buffer to the surges, they won't stop a flood, but may stop waves crashing in on the land.

The meeting was then opened to general discussion. Points made were:

- In the past, the shop had to close at 4pm due to the sandflies – could be a problem for tourism as they are very difficult to manage
- Tourism needs to be a balance between commercial and heritage
- Interpretation where historical items are accessible is important (not in a glass case)

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- Do need interpretation for historical buildings but also need to be used, eg backpackers.
- Entry statement be developed – an important first impression of the town. Appreciate that Cossack has a need to be Cossack
- Landswaps? What is Shire's position on this? Have private landholders all in one area?
- Front blocks are currently a bad investment as they regularly go under water. With global warming, this could increase. Karratha and Cossack will feel the impact of this over the next 20 years. Landscapes are so flat that the significance of these events is much greater.
- Historical items such as a pearling lugger has been discussed previously as an entry statement to the town. However this was never followed through .
- Leaseholds? Constraints of leasing for businesses.
- Identify qualities of Cossack that need to be taken into account.
- Wouldn't want Cossack to be like Broome – over developed (two participants supported this)
- What is the need for water at Cossack?
- Water sustainability? Is there enough water in the Pilbara to sustain a 'new town'?
- What is the Water Corporation's situation with water at Cossack?
- Building for purpose – depends on what development is at the end of the waterline.
- Waste management. Whilst trench open for water, power, put a sewerage line in at the same time.
- Archaeology provides enormous value – not bottle collectors but other academic archaeology.
- Archaeologists have dug over and over, not much left.
- Reinstate tramline to Roebourne
- What is so different about Cossack? There is a huge Australian coastline, so why come to Karratha and visit Cossack? Need to answer this to be able to increase tourism.

A short video was shown about Cossack which was kindly made available by Juluwarlu Aboriginal Corporation media students. Also available for viewing at the meeting were maps of the Cossack land region as well as photos of the damage caused recently at Cossack by cyclone Glenda.