



Protecting Grant Marine Park

In Cottesloe Coastcare's view Grant Marine Park is the wrong location for a skate park. This park is a relaxing, natural space that local residents escape to. The noise from a skate park will destroy the amenity of this place. As well, locating a skate park and two playgrounds in this small space risks encroaching on an important natural area. There are better locations, and this is addressed below.

We are also of the view that the evaluation matrix in the feasibility study is seriously flawed. This is particularly so in relation to the environmental impact of a skate park on different sites and some examples are noted below. It is not difficult to see how the outcome was influenced by incorrect evaluations. Cottesloe Coastcare is happy to provide input on environmental issues.

Amenity

Skate parks have a characteristic "impulsive" noise which will destroy the amenity of this sheltered natural space. The park is well used by residents of all ages - young families in the playground, older children on the oval and at the basketball ring and dog walkers. In summertime it is an attractive, sheltered place for evening picnics. Many older residents find this a sheltered place to walk to. This was particularly apparent in the recent Covid situation.

With increasing infill in our suburb, these small natural areas are becoming more important than ever.

The evaluation matrix did not adequately address the issue "*displacement of existing land use*" (ie Impact point 8) in its assessment of Grant Marine Park. It did not consider the effect of impulsive noise on people using the existing facilities of the park.

Impact on the natural environment.

Locating a skate park and two playgrounds in this small space risks destroying a natural area that is a safe refuge for birds and other native wildlife. With increasing infill and the loss of backyard vegetation, islands of natural vegetation are critical for the survival of local birds and wildlife.

Grant Marine Park is a special natural place and one of only 2 patches of secondary dune vegetation in Cottesloe. It is listed in the Town's Natural Areas Management Plan as a **high priority area**. In 2015 it was one of the few natural areas in Cottesloe that was assessed as being in **good to very good** condition.

Cottesloe Coastcare has been working in this area for more than 10 years and invested thousands of hours of labour and grant funds. It is a difficult and fragile site but Coastcare has transformed the space from a weedy degraded site filled with building rubble to one that now has more than 20 local plant species. It is one of only 2 sites where quandongs grow in Cottesloe.

It is a safe haven for birds and other wildlife and we are encouraged that birds like white winged fairy wrens are once more appearing on the dunes nearby as more native vegetation is planted.

A skate park will bring noise and night lighting to this area and will impact the bird and animal life the planting has sought to encourage. Night lighting means the noise impact will extend beyond daylight hours.

The evaluation matrix contends that this site has "*the ability to host larger crowds during programmed events*". It is hard to see how this can be accommodated without people trampling the surrounding vegetation.

Summary

Grant Marine Park works well as a sheltered, low-key natural area that successfully caters for a wide range of uses. Improvements to the playgrounds are needed, and to the paths and fencing of the natural areas, but the essential nature of Grant Marine Park should be preserved.

There are no other places like this in North Cottesloe and Council needs to protect it. It is not the right place for a skate park.

Alternative Locations

Given the impact on Grant Marine Park, Cottesloe Coastcare believes that John Black Dune Park is a better location for a skate park. It has several advantages for skateboarders and the community.

The feasibility study looked at locating the skate park in the carpark. A valid alternative is to locate it in the degraded area to the east of the car park and to reappraise the site against the evaluation matrix.

While John Black Dune Park is listed as a Potential Natural Area in the Natural Areas Management Plan, the vegetation is classed as highly degraded. There have been several plans to landscape and improve this area, none of which have come to fruition. Incorporating a skate park presents the opportunity to convert a degraded piece of land into a landscaped area with recreational benefits.

There is sufficient room to design and build a skate park that caters to a range of abilities. It avoids compromising the plan for the skate park by squeezing it into an area that is not big enough. The landscaping can be designed to minimise the impact of noise.

Other advantages include:

- Proximity to toilet facilities
- Closer to food and drink shops
- Closer to the activity centre of Cottesloe Beach
- No need to relocate an existing playground
- Amenity of Grant Marine Park is preserved
- Accessible to public transport

As planning for this part of the Foreshore is still underway Council can still consider how to incorporate a skate park. This is better than destroying a much-loved local park and compromising the design of the skate park.