

Public Question Time – answers to questions taken on notice*

Questions from Isaac Hermann:

Isaac Hermann

Regarding the care of Point Ormond and Elwood Tea-Tree Reserves, with the presentation of a picture of a superb blue fairy wren native to the area.

1. Why is there no on-site signage naming Point Ormond Reserve?
2. Why is there no on-site signage naming the Elwood Tea-Tree Reserve?
3. Why does Council continue to dump contaminated soil in the Elwood Tea-Tree Reserve?
4. Will council pass a motion to immediately cease for now, and for the future all such activities which will hinder current amenity, degrade habitat value, and obstruct the future rehabilitation of this reserve?
5. Will Council recognize that the Point Ormond and Elwood Tea – Tree Reserve are being managed in a manner contrary to the requirements of their recent Management Plan; and community habitat interests?
6. How many years of neglect and under-resourcing gone by have brought these two reserves to the condition whereby Rhagodia and Madeira Vine just about strangle everything? Where was the custodianship and care these reserves were owed?
7. Will council put a halt to any further destruction which is scheduled to continue?
8. Will council recommend that local resident ornithologists and naturalists be consulted on the matter?
9. Will Council give an account of their open space and infrastructure expenditure in the area of sports ovals and facilities, in comparison with open parkland and reserves (excluding street tree and roadway costs)?

Response

1. Why is there no on-site signage naming Point Ormond Reserve?

There is currently signage for this reserve located at entrance point of Point Ormond Carpark. This signage is due for replacement in 2017/2018. The new signage will be consistent with our current Park Signage Guidelines and will include the name of the reserve, updated directional way finding and regulatory information.

2. Why is there no on-site signage naming the Elwood Tea-Tree Reserve?

The area referred to as Elwood Tea-Tree Reserve on Council's website is actually part Elwood Park and part Elwood Foreshore Reserve. Council will undertake an assessment to see if a name change and signage is required.

3. Why does Council continue to dump contaminated soil in the Elwood Tea-Tree Reserve?

Council's methodology for handling Class C contaminated soil is as follows:

- *If known contaminated Category C soil is to be transported past the soils origin site boundary, it must be moved via means approved by the EPA or other relevant authorities. i.e., using licensed vehicles for transport*
- *Known contaminated Category C soil can be relocated within the same site as long as the soil is effectively managed throughout the relocation process and sufficiently remediated in its final location*
- *An EPA exemption can be applied for should known Category C soil be transported from one site to another within the municipality. The transport would need to be via means approved by the EPA or other relevant authorities*

On the occasion in February 2017 when soil was taken from the upgrade of Head Street Sport fields and moved to the Elwood Tea-Tree area this methodology was followed as the soil did not cross any title boundary. Council will be implementing a Soil Management Plan for the site.

4. Will council pass a motion to immediately cease for now, and for the future all such activities which will hinder current amenity, degrade habitat value, and obstruct the future rehabilitation of this reserve?

Council will continue to manage soil movement in accordance with EPA Regulations (see methodology for Class C in previous question) and will be implementing a Soil Management Plan for this site.

Council has started the process of developing an updated Soil Contamination Management Policy. This policy will be finalised in the next 12 months and will form part of Council's proposed Soil Contamination Management Plan.

5. Will Council recognize that the Point Ormond and Elwood Tea – Tree Reserve are being managed in a manner contrary to the requirements of their recent Management Plan; and community habitat interests?

The removal of vegetation that has been completed to date is consistent with recommendations noted in the Foreshore and Hinterland Management Plan 2015. The intention of such clearance is to provide greater biodiversity, healthier plant life and a safer place for our community.

6. How many years of neglect and under-resourcing gone by have brought these two reserves to the condition whereby Rhagodia and Madeira Vine just about strangle everything? Where was the custodianship and care these reserves were owed?

This invasive vegetation is indigenous and was planted many years ago. The Foreshore and Hinterland Management Plan 2015 identifies the area requires the reduction of shrubbiness.

One of the main recommendations for the Elwood Tea Tree and Point Ormond area was the removal of dead, dying and hazardous trees and reduction of shrubbiness. Whilst Council recognises that the removal of vegetation has a short term impact, it is important in order to achieve the longer term objectives of improving plant health and biodiversity.

All care has been taken to minimise impact to breeding and nesting bird life. Over the past 2 years we have reduced shrubbiness across other sites and successfully revegetated with a variety of indigenous species.

These works have been undertaken in preparation for replacement planting that will occur this planting season with a total of 55,000 indigenous plants scheduled to be planted.

7. Will council put a halt to any further destruction which is scheduled to continue?

Council have temporarily halted the program until further discussion with community members occurs and advice regarding the protection of local fauna is provided.

8. Will council recommend that local resident ornithologists and naturalists be consulted on the matter?

Care was taken during the recently completed works to minimise impact on the local birds and other fauna.

The staff working on the site are experienced Horticulturalists with an understanding of the management of indigenous planting. Council will work with the Eco Centre and other local experts to undertake an Ecological Biodiversity Study in 2017/18.

Council officers have regular meetings with Earthcare representatives. The main focus of Earthcare's involvement was planting and they have programed to be involved in the planting a portion of the 55,000 indigenous plants during this planting season.

9. Will Council give an account of their open space and infrastructure expenditure in the area of sports ovals and facilities, in comparison with open parkland and reserves (excluding street tree and roadway costs)?

	2016/2017	
	Capital Budget	Operational Budget
Natural Heritage Area maintenance		\$203,000
Foreshore Vegetation implementation	\$150,000	
Sport Ground maintenance		\$412,000
Sport renewal program	\$200,000	
Parks and Open Space maintenance		\$3,700,000

The planting of Norfolk Island Pine within the Elwood Tea-tree area was undertaken to continue the previous planting that were undertaken many years ago along Ormond Esplanade. This is part of a historic planting alignment of this particular tree. These trees will not detract from the value of the tea - tree area and will assist with overall tree canopy.

*Note: answers to any questions in Public Question Time which were answered at the meeting are included in the minutes of that meeting.