



Queenscliffe
Community Association Inc.

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25th of September 2007

The Secretary
Select Committee on Public Land Development
Legislative Council
Parliament of Victoria
Spring Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

Dear Select Committee Members

**RE: INQUIRY INTO THE SALE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LAND
AND OPEN SPACE**

Queenscliffe Community Association submits the following for consideration by the Select Committee:

1. QCA is strongly opposed to the sale of public lands and open space that rightfully belongs to the people of Victoria. The Association is especially concerned with the loss of public land in coastal regions where community assets are being sold off or quasi privatized by Local, State and Commonwealth Governments for the benefit of a few.
2. In recent times we have seen public land in Queenscliff sold to sectional interests which invariably ends up in the hands of wealthy land owners. Recent examples in Queenscliff include the Crows Nest Army Barracks in Flinders Street which has been sold and subdivided at huge prices so only the wealthy can enjoy coastal locations. Other examples include the proposed sale by Queenscliffe Borough Council of coastal caravan park (Golightly Caravan Park) in Bowen Road which means ordinary families will no longer be able to camp next to the foreshore over the holiday period. These lots will be sold to the very rich for their holiday homes and ordinary families will have to go elsewhere. Queenscliff Council also proposes to sell freehold land on Murray Road to achieve a similar outcome. No thought is ever given to providing affordable land for families.

3. State Government has also recently sold the prime portion of the former Queenscliff High School site (including elevated land owned by the crown and the Education Department) overlooking Swan Bay, to developers who are now in the process of selling their subdivision at enormous prices that most families could never afford. The former High School was nurtured (with fund raising activities over many decades) and prized by local people until it was taken from us and demolished along with the public sporting complex. The community then had to fight State Government to retain some of the site for open space and for a proposed community complex.
4. State Government is also allowing gaming machines and round the clock alcohol licencing on public land/reserves in Special Use Zones (SUZ) in the so called "interests of the community" whilst sporting facilities previously located on public land are being reduced in the township. Queenscliff now has more gaming machines (and liquor outlets) per capita than anywhere else in Victoria. Recent examples of the problems were the 3 soldiers who were killed when their car ran off the Swan Island Bridge after late night drinking at a local liquor outlet.
5. The QCA is also disappointed in the quasi-privatization of community harbour assets in Queenscliff where State Government has long-term leased (49 years) the entire harbour, through its Parks Victoria agency, to a private consortium who intend to force local people from their traditional moorings so they can charge some \$200,000 for long leasing (around 17 years) local wet berths. Again ordinary people and boaters cannot afford this. The heavily patronized community slipway is also being demolished so that private operators can monopolize boat repairs by charging higher prices for a travel lift. What is especially upsetting is that the harbour and approach channel at Queenscliff was all paid for with public monies.
6. The QCA is also concerned that a prime piece of public park land on the Portarlington foreshore, planned to be part of the harbour development, will be lost to the people of Portarlington forever.

The QCA does not support the sale and loss of any public land or public open space along the coast, especially very important coastal recreation areas including parks and reserves which the community values greatly. Recent examples in Queenscliffe demonstrate that selling public land and open space by all arms of government (Local, State and Commonwealth) means the loss and alienation of public assets forever and the land transfer inevitably ends up in the hands of wealthy individuals who only wish to develop, on-sell or subdivide for their own gain. The winners are those who can afford to get their hands on the public lands, the losers are the general public and ordinarily families who get priced out of the market and lose their access to public lands along the coast. Selling public land inevitably impoverishes communities as the rich use the assets for holiday homes whilst local schools, kindergartens and other services experience falling attendances.

The QCA strongly advocates that boundaries of seaside towns must be defined and Green Corridors maintained. The rapid rate of development along the coastal areas, particularly the Bellarine Peninsular, poses a threat through loss of identify for these charming towns as well as loss of open space and pressure on infrastructure, as development expands to create merging town boundaries. Urgent consideration must also be given to over-development and rising sea levels.

Thank you for the opportunity to have input into this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Johnson', with a small dot at the end.

Christine Johnson
Secretary, Queenscliffe Community Association