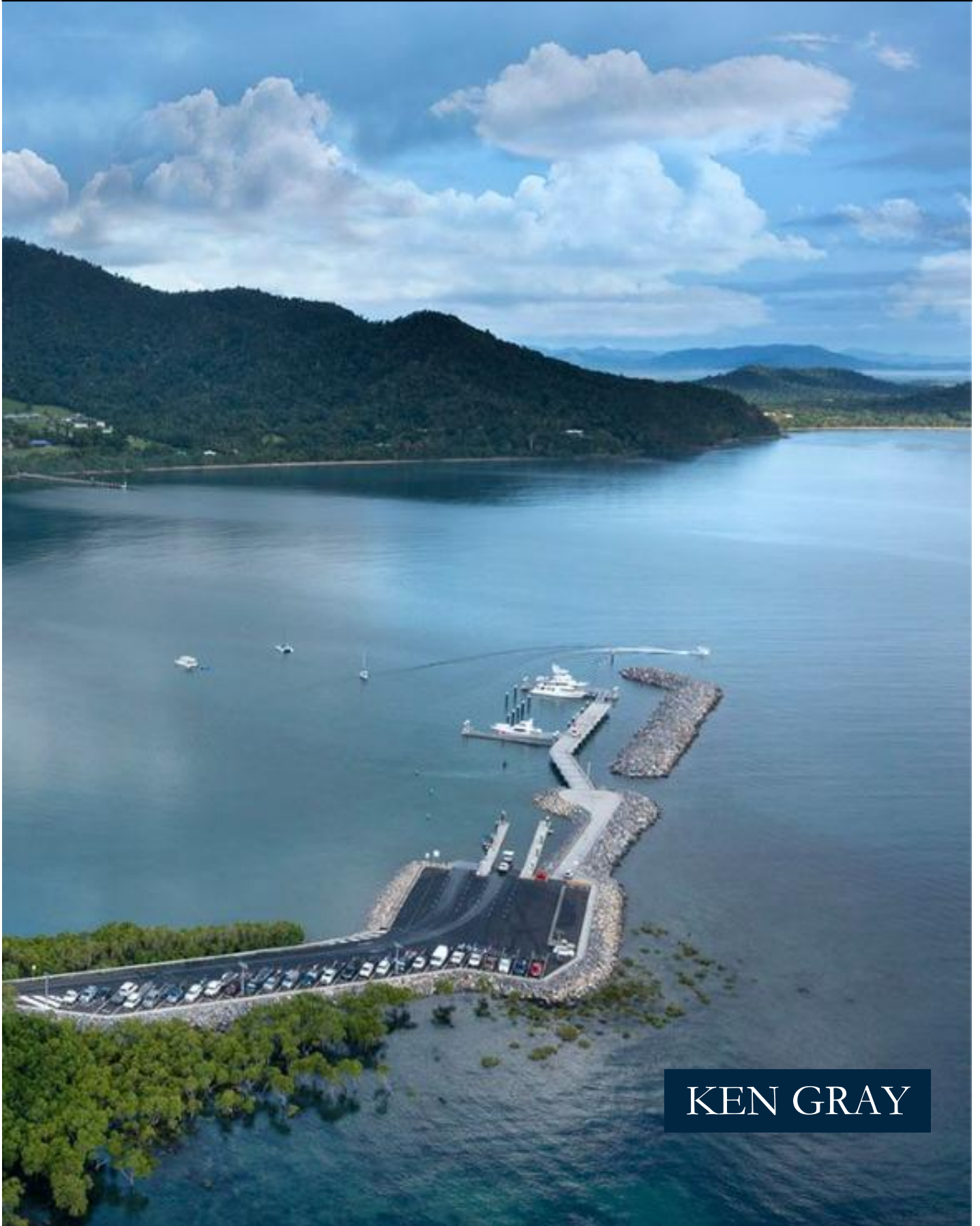


BOATING BATTLES

MISSION BEACH BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE HISTORY



KEN GRAY

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Cover

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Acknowledgements

My thanks to Peter Heywood for many corrections and additions of important information. Also, to Danny Dade who has vast knowledge of boating facilities in the district having spent most of his life here as a Captain of Dunk Island barges and of many Reef boats and as a constructor and extensive user of boating infrastructure. His recall of dates and events is second to none. Thanks also to Graham Ross and Rotha Jago for editing the monograph and eliminating errors.

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INTRODUCTION & EQUITY PERCEPTIONS

This is the history of all boating facilities in the Mission Beach district and is not focused solely on the most recent addition at Clump Point (at Boat Bay at the south end of Narragon Beach). Discussion of the new facility does occupy much of the article's contents, nonetheless. We started with desktop research to gather all available information and documentation and created a first draft of the story then used the draft to seek input from long-term locals and people known to be actively involved in campaigns to encourage governments to build infrastructure.

Mission Beach residents have always been galvanised when the issue of boating facilities arises.

In 2010, debates were heated about who could use the Clump Point boat ramp (recreational or commercial or both) and the idea of a marina was still being floated. John Hughes, owner and editor of the *Tully Times*, was astounded at the reactions to his extensive coverage of the issue and declared in his August 19 issue in 2010 that news of the Clump Point boating facilities had created the greatest response he had ever experienced in the newspaper which started in 1963.

Winning funding for infrastructure for Mission Beach was always the roadblock that prevented progress; along with the inability to reach a consensus on what to build and where to build it.

Unfortunately, the old established towns of the region have always been at the front of the queue when Councils make decisions on capital expenditure.

In 1961, there were two main towns in what is now known as the Cassowary Coast region: Innisfail and Tully. At that time, Mission Beach had a population of fewer than 200 residents while sugar towns were booming: El Arish, for example, had 775 residents in 1961 and dwarfed Mission Beach which was not among the top 10 towns in the region. The small Mission Beach economy until then was driven by fruit production, mainly banana farms.

In the period from 1966, when Perry started his Reef and island tours, until 1996, the population climbed from 163 residents to over 3,500. Mission Beach became the second-largest town in the Cassowary Coast Region in 1990 and in the 2021 census, greater Tully had a population of approximately 3,000 residents while greater Mission Beach had over 4,000. That population nearly doubles with visitors in peak periods. Many of the visitors have boats or want to go out in boats too.

This history starts with the battle to win funding for a boating facility that would allow both commercial and recreational boats to be used safely in the Mission Beach district. Mission Beach people had been seeking a solution for decades without success and when the jetty at Boat Bay, Narragon Beach was replaced after being destroyed by Cyclone Yasi in 2011, the boating facility debate reopened with renewed vigour.

The Mission Beach community had always felt that its Councils treated their town unfairly in terms of infrastructure. It started in 1912 with the Cuttens - Herb Cutten was elected as the Secretary of the new Progress Association of Clump Point, he wrote in the *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, firmly in his sights was the Johnstone Shire Council:¹

¹ *Clump Point Wants*, *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 11 April 1912, accessed on Trove, January 2022 at: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/58826826?searchTerm=Clump%20Point%20Wants>

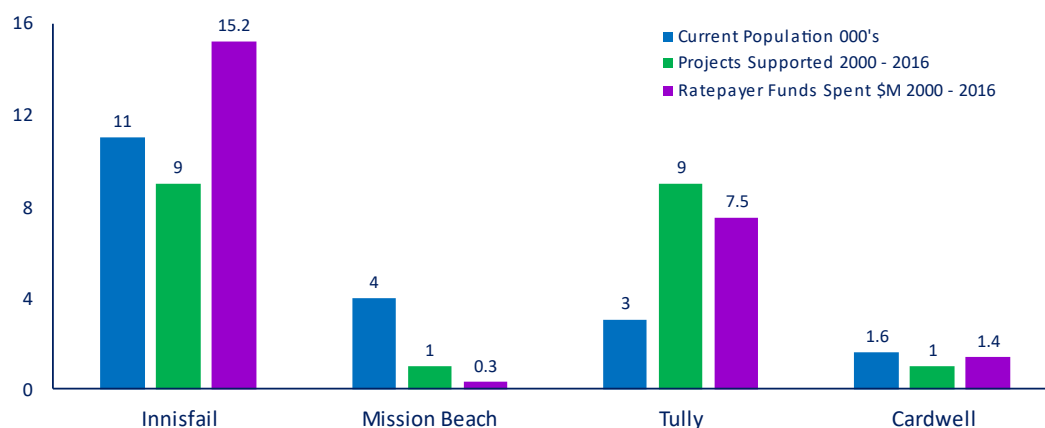
Moreover, we claim that we are entitled to some consideration from the Government, which levies tremendous taxes from us, for which we receive no adequate return. We have no roads other than what we have ourselves made, and the country is seamed with deep and ever-running creeks; the Shire Council, which collects a large sum annually from us has not for the past 20 years expended a single shilling in the making or maintenance of any road the settlers use or are likely to make use of.

This strong feeling of inequity persists to this day among many residents of Mission Beach. Pool advocates analyzed Council capital expenditure patterns and in particular the amounts spent on *discretionary infrastructure projects* in each of the four main towns of the region, Innisfail, Mission Beach, Tully, and Cardwell. Discretionary capital expenditure is where the funds are not spent on essential water, sewerage, roads, or waste infrastructure. These findings were equally stark. Up until the year 2000, the Councils had not invested more than \$200,000 of ratepayers' funds in Mission Beach for any discretionary infrastructure projects.

Between 2000 and 2016, when Mission Beach was merely asking for a 25-metre swimming pool (Innisfail, Tully and Cardwell all had 50-metre Olympic pools), the Councils provided ratepayer funds to build many major discretionary infrastructure projects:

Innisfail got nine major projects funded from ratepayer funds - totalling \$15.2M. **Tully** also won nine projects receiving ratepayer funds of \$7.5M. Cardwell got a Library at \$1.38M and received a mammoth multimillion dollar project renewing the town's foreshore areas after Cyclone Yasi in 2011 but that was fully funded by other levels of government, not the Council. In contrast, **Mission Beach** had no major projects funded by Councils 2000 – 2016. Just one minor one:

Ratepayer Funds Invested by Councils
By Town for Discretionary Infrastructure Projects 2000- 2016



As Mission Beach was closing in on a solution for its essential boating infrastructure, the replacement jetty at Narragon Beach was built in a manner that would not allow commercial boats to use it safely. Furthermore, the boat ramps used for recreational boating were grossly inadequate and unsafe, so the community voice for a new facility was reaching a crescendo.

Vital questions being raised were, what should be built and where and how could it be funded? Would Council take up the cause and address decades of funding inequity and contribute significant funds to this vital Mission Beach infrastructure? Would they work with the Mission Beach community to fight for the funding to build this vital infrastructure to ensure that Mission Beach would remain the core growth node of the Cassowary Coast Region, or would they revert to form and focus primarily on Innisfail infrastructure?



Innisfail Commercial wharf, 2016.

The Innisfail Commercial wharf, a minor marine facility compared to the project planned at Mission Beach, cost \$2.85M to build in 2015 and Council invested \$1.6M of ratepayer funds to make this happen. That was 56% of the full cost.

Mission Beach, the hub of the Cassowary Coast Region's tourism, needed at least \$20M to build a facility to fit its growing boating demand. Let's see how much CCRC invested in that important region-wide infrastructure project.

CHANGING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

Unsurprisingly, the town's needs for boating infrastructure changed dramatically in 137 years.

In the first 45 years, when the Cuttens were at Bingil Bay (1885 – 1930), boats were mainly used to transport fruit from the district to southern markets. They were also used to bring supplies to farmers and bring new settlers to the region.

Some locals, such as the Cuttens, the Banfields (Dunk Island) and the Kennys (South Mission Beach 'mission') had their own motorboats and/or yachts for transporting goods and occasionally to go fishing or visiting places of interest. However, the demand for facilities to launch recreational boats was minimal early on.

The Cuttens moored their boats at a rock and timber jetty they built at the south end of Bingil Bay. John Kenny moored his yacht and motorboat close to the beach (South Mission) and Ted Banfield had a boat shed for *Nee Mourna*, his motorboat, close to the beach at Brammo Bay on The Spit and built his own hardwood rail from the shed into the water.

Robert Reid and his cousin, David Reid, had two 160-acre fruit arms just north of George Webb's farm at the south end of what is today named Wongaling Beach, and they owned a 33-foot launch named *Grae* that their father, Captain David Reid purchased for them. Robert Reid gained his licence to run the vessel and to carry passengers on the vessel. They moored the boat in the Hull River and used it mainly to transport fruit from several farms to Dunk Island where it was picked up by coastal steamers regularly visiting the island.

Robert Reid occasionally took passengers on social outings and travelled as far as Ingham at times and took people sightseeing and on picnics. The *Grae* was destroyed on its moorings in the Hull River in the 1918 cyclone.

There was only a bridle track from El Arish to Bingil Bay made by the farmers in 1924. Because there was no made road to Mission Beach until 1936 and no railway line to El Arish until 1924, the only easy way to transport goods and people to and from Mission Beach in the early days was by boat and the primary need for boating facilities was for a wharf that would allow small coastal steamers to load and offload freight. The Cuttens lobbied for years to gain such a facility and by the time the Queensland Government understood the need and built it in July 1917 at Narragon Beach, there were almost no coastal steamers left to call on the district. That facility was only used on three occasions before it was swept away in the March 1918 cyclone.

Regular Reef and island tours were not happening from Mission Beach until 1966 when Perry Harvey started running his first launch, the MV *Purtaboi I*. In May 1963, the Narragon Beach jetty was rebuilt and that was where MV *Purtaboi I* operated from. The Perry Harvey tours were hugely successful and drove the tourist economy. Other operators followed, but when Category 5 Cyclone Yasi struck in 2011 their jetty was destroyed. The one that replaced it was built well short of the previous length so was unsuitable for large tour boats. A new option was essential.

From that time on, the number of recreational fishing boats started to grow quickly and by the 1980s that became the greatest need for boating facilities in the district – safe boat ramps with enough capacity to handle the growing number of recreational boats.

A marina for the mooring of larger boats was also needed and proposals were made without success.

EARLY BATTLES over BOAT BAY

Rotha and Alan Jago made this story possible. Alan was a leader in the community group that advocated for a safe boating facility at Mission Beach over many years before it was built in 2020.

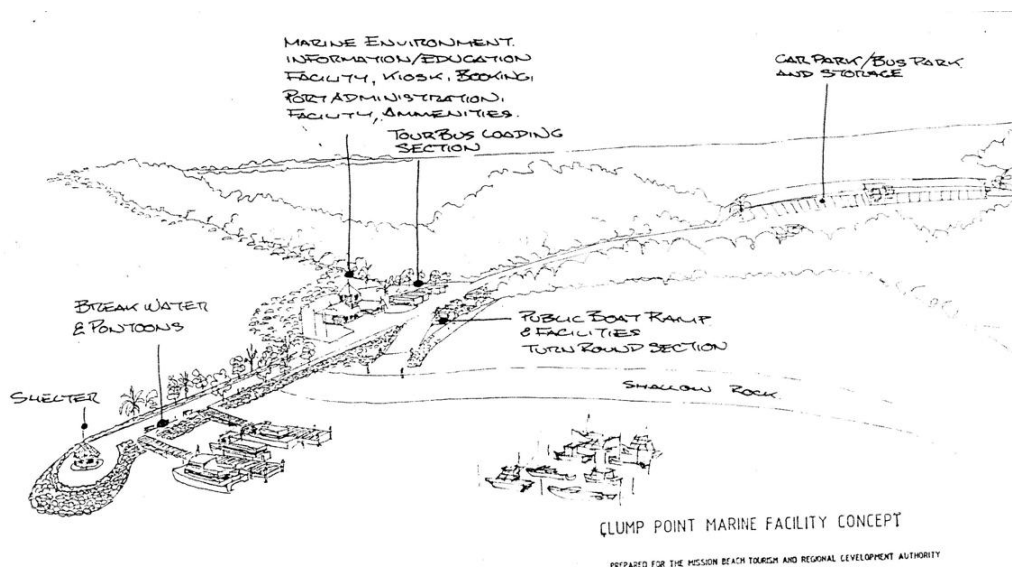
Alan not only created (or at least signed) more key documents, updates, and letters to make the case than anyone else did, but he was also a true bower bird and kept excellent records. Rotha, after Alan died in November 2017, presented his mass of letters, newspaper clippings, plans, minutes, and other documents and records of events to the Mission Beach Historical Society hoping that one day someone might use them to create a story.

We were delighted to do so. We augmented Alan's records with documents sourced from the CCRC (Tully Branch) Library archives.

The first serious lobbying for a safe boating harbour at Clump Point was probably 04 September 1975, when the *Tully Times* reported on a visit by a QLD Minister to hear the community speak of the need after the *Purtaboi II* was grounded in bad weather. The Aquatic Festivals provided funds for the swimming pool and for boating facilities and these funds were used to plan for future facilities. Nothing came of the 1975 lobbying and it recurred in 1986 after Cyclone Winifred – another Ministerial visit that was unsuccessful.

Federal MP, Bob Katter, said that Mission Beach requested a breakwater in 1984 when he was in government, and it was approved by Cabinet, but was not built. Alan Jago's records do not include the period 1984 to 2012 when there were many attempts to obtain funding, so this story mainly covers the period 2012 – 2020 after some funding was promised.

Infrastructure is hard-won in this district and advocates must be super resilient to prevail.



An early concept design sketched for Mission Beach Tourism in the early 1990s. Not too dissimilar to the end result in 2020.

If we start at 1984, Mission Beach waited 36 years for this vital infrastructure to be built. The 1990s concept design shown above was an indication of early lobbying by tourism.

The delays in this project will surprise no one in the town as history shows we waited about the same period for a swimming pool and the Cuttens asked for a road in 1885 and all but one of them

(Florence Alexander) were dead before it arrived 51 years later. They also waited 32 years for a cargo jetty to be built only to see it blown away nine months later in the monster cyclone of 1918.

In 1963, the jetty that was lost in the 1918 cyclone was rebuilt and is shown in the image below with two tourist tour boats moored alongside it. In the 1980s and 90s, Mission Beach had a booming Reef tourism industry with more than 50,000 visitors accessing the Reef each year from this facility.



MV Quickcat I and MV Lawrence Kavanagh moored at Clump Point Jetty in the 1990s.

However, all was not a bed of roses for tourist boat operators for while this jetty was OK in calm seas and good tides, it was often tricky to load and offload people in strong winds or at low tides. It was adequate, yet far from safe and these large boats were always in danger of being beached or worse in storms, especially in strong northerlies. Jim Whitehead operated *Quickcat Cruises* from 1990 to 1995 and wrote a letter in 2014 saying that over the years every commercial vessel moored at Boat Bay had been washed up on the rocks or beaches at least once and sometimes a few times.



MV Lawrence Kavanagh stranded on the beach after a storm.



MV Quickcat I on the rocks at Boat Bay.

Because of the substandard boating facilities, it was always a risky business running large boat operations here and insurance costs must have been very high.

In 2000, the boat ramp at Clump Point was slightly upgraded and there were two rudimentary boating facilities located at Boat Bay on the south end of Narragon Beach. The jetty was largely used by the

larger commercial boats, while the ramp was mainly used by recreational boaties with tinnies and other recreational trailer based vessels.

When Cyclone Larry plundered the district in 2006, it damaged much of the infrastructure and the jetty was unable to be used for some time. Commercial boat owners increasingly sought to use the boat ramp area with its rock wall shelter. This created much conflict when people had to wait to use the area safely.

In January 2009, locals led by Rotary, and the Safe Boating Committees Gill Goldsmith, with James Mort and Nancy Lowe, raised more than \$22,000 in donations and attracted some government funding to upgrade the boat ramp facilities at Clump Point. A pontoon was added and this greatly enhanced the facility making it far safer for recreational boaties to climb on and off their vessels. While this small enhancement was greeted with delight, it did not resolve the need for safe boating facilities.

The facility had insufficient shelter in bad weather and it lacked capacity to handle the massive demand. The boat ramp became more popular, and after Cyclone Larry, disputes were common among recreational and commercial users. The facility was not nearly big enough to handle both and Council quickly became the meat in the sandwich and the focus of community wrath.



A pontoon makes the boat ramp safer for users in 2009. *Tully Times* 08 January 2009. Image courtesy Tully Library archives.

In June 2010, the disputes between commercial and recreational boat owners over rights to use the facility broke out and escalated. In the 03 June issue of the *Tully Times* Annette Treseder of Tully wrote a letter to the editor pointing out the problems for recreational boat owners saying that if the big commercial boats were able to use it there would be no parking available.

On 12 August 2010 Calypso Adventures owner, Andy Wright wrote to the *Tully Times* challenging the Council to stand by its alleged commitment to commercial use of the ramp and pontoon.

The debate centred for a time on who made decisions on allowable uses of the facility. The State Government was embroiled in the debate and wrote to say they have not approved any commercial use and they were the only ones with the authority to do so. They proposed a Council workshop in September to examine options.

Battle lines were drawn when the Mission Beach Boat Owners Association was formed to represent recreational boat owners and the Commercial Boat Operators Mission Beach (CBOMB) was also formed. On 12 December 2010, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council determined that commercial boat owners could not use the Clump Point boat ramp facility. Things were heating up.

BIGGER BATTLES | 2011 - 2020

Over the years, many experts examined the situation and options, and the solution proposed was always to create a long breakwater at Clump Point's tip. Yet that obvious answer was repeatedly rejected by Queensland governments and Council which was never interested in creating such infrastructure, regarding it as a State responsibility, despite choosing to build the Innisfail wharf.

A turning point was created by an intervention of nature – Category 5 Cyclone Yasi of February 2011. This destroyed much of the district's marine infrastructure. Both the Clump Point and the Dunk Island jetties were severely damaged and needed to be replaced. The facilities at the Clump Point boat ramp also needed significant repairs.

Mission Beach had been devastated by three severe tropical cyclones within 25 years and had suffered through the Global Financial Crisis which flattened its tourist economy. The time was ripe for change.

Soon after Cyclone Yasi, the Council applied for National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) funds to replace the two jetties. On 08 December 2011, the Mayor announced that the jetty reconstruction project was launched. Splits in views about what should be done about the jetties emerged early with CBOMB proposing to use the \$5.5M NDRRA funds to build a jetty with a floating concrete breakwater to protect it from storms. CCRC was having none of that, knowing that would cost far more. They argued that they must rebuild the jetties urgently without such radical redesigns.

Alister Pike, a spokesman for CBOMB (Commercial Boat Operators Mission Beach) and Dennis Daly, CBOMB President, had the support of MP Bob Katter when they held a public meeting in December 2011 arguing for their plan for a jetty with a floating concrete breakwater. Mayor Bill Shannon and Deputy Mayor Mark Nolan, who were often at odds, were as one on that proposal. They insisted that a condition of the funding was that the Council must build like-for-like structures.

Another public meeting was held in Mission Beach during February 2012 and it was claimed that 97% of those who attended voted in favour of building safe boating facilities at Clump Point. There was no agreement on what would be built or exactly where, but the CBOMB proposal was discussed and Dennis Daly President of CBOMB and Maurice Franklin President of C4 (Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation) said that they had reached agreement on the proposal. Shortly after the meeting, an association of recreational boat owners was formed as the Cassowary Coast Safe Boating Association (CCSBA) probably from members of the former Mission Beach Boat Owners Association. The *Tully Times* of 31 May 2012 reported that this association was incorporated at that time with Glenn White as President and Annette Treseder as Secretary.

Council announced in the *Tully Times*, 10 May 2012, that they had accepted design and construction proposals from King Concreting and Civil Plus Contractors, to rebuild the two jetties (Dunk Island and Clump Point).

The Federal Labour Government was about to face an election, and independent MP, Bob Katter, ever the opportunist, agreed to support their re-election if they delivered a few things in return for his electorate. Deputy Prime Minister, Wayne Swan, quickly stumped up another \$5.5M in July 2012 for a Queensland Government study on an *all-weather boating facility* at Mission Beach. Two weeks later, the Queensland LNP Government agreed to provide an additional \$10.8M to construct the facility when a plan was decided.

The locals could be forgiven for celebrating and saying to themselves that the battle was finally over - the town would have the safe boating facility it had so long coveted. However, the battle had hardly begun, and it would take eight and a half more years to bring the project to fruition.

Almost immediately after announcing the \$5.5M fund for the project, the Federal Government received correspondence from the Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook Inc., demanding a written statement on the reasons for providing funds to build the facility. Resistance would be strong.

Simon Crean, the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government at the time, responded to a request for information from Senator McLucas and noted that he was aware that *there are mixed community views on a safe harbour and that there are environmental concerns*. Wayne Swan, Deputy Prime Minister, and Treasurer wrote to the Alliance saying the Australian Government *received strong representations on the need for an all-weather boating facility in the region to increase maritime safety and to support the continued development of the local community and economy, particularly as they continue to recover from the effects of Cyclone Yasi*.

The stars had finally aligned, and the timing of the request was perfect with the cyclone impacts and the looming election converging and creating this opportunity to gain funding, but the barriers were immediately signalled. Disunity in a community will always damage the prospects of any development proposal, but Clump Point was a special place both culturally and environmentally so these issues had to be addressed properly.

While details of how the *representations* were made to the Federal Government for funds are not evident in the written records, there was a rough concept plan drawn up by Cheshire Constructions to support the case. This was merely a 250-metre extension of the existing rock wall at Clump Point. The plan was named Clump Point Boat Harbour and the construction cost was estimated at \$2.7M. Cheshire met with MP Bob Katter on site on 13 June 2012 and provided the quote and drawing shortly after.



The 2012 Cheshire concept – a 250 metre rock wall plan.

The existing rock wall gave minimal protection to boats at the ramp, but this new plan proposed a large extension to overcome that weakness.



The boat ramp and breakwater facility at Clump Point that was upgraded by Council in 2000. The pontoon (left) was added in 2009.

In January 2013, Council announced that its jetty reconstruction project had begun the construction phase and that the Clump Point jetty would be 170 metres long and 5 metres wide while the Dunk Island one was to be 115 metres long and 4 metres wide. That was an extension of 50 metres length on the old jetty at Dunk. Council would provide an extra \$300,000 to fund the project over-spend.

The Council prevailed and built the jetty largely as like for like. By August 2013, the Clump Point jetty was completed and Cr Alister Pike strode onto it and declared that it was 3.88 metres short of plan. There were conflicting claims about the planned length and the length of the old jetty and about the water depth at the end of the jetty. Director of Works, Peter Trotter, told the *Tully Times* (15 August 2013) that there was a budget shortfall that caused the change.

The Queensland Government assigned the project to the Department of State Development often referred to as DSDIP at the time as it also covered Infrastructure and Planning. For brevity we will use the acronym, DSD in this history. DSD did not conduct a study of the needs of the community as the \$5.5M funding conditions provided by the Federal Government specified.

That was the main reason for the project stalling early and being delayed unnecessarily for more than eight years. They merely appointed consultants GHD to do a basic study using a couple of options provided by C4 and CCSBA without asking for any community input. This was money for jam! The objectives of the study were to ... *“discuss infrastructure options for providing safer boating facilities for the unloading and loading of passengers and goods at Boat Bay ...”* They held a ‘workshop’ on 30 November 2012 and the ten participants included:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • GHD employees | 4 |
| • GBRMPA employee (on phone) | 1 |
| • Consultant engineer (on phone) | 1 |
| • Main Roads employee (DTMR) | 1 |
| • DSD employees | 3 |

Not a single Mission Beach resident or boat owner was consulted and this was the foundation document for all DSD plans thereafter. This was a classic Claytons consultation: the consultation you have when you are not doing consultation. They released a report in February 2013 and then hastily convened a meeting to present their concept to a limited group of stakeholders in March 2013.

The ‘stakeholders’ included no recreational boat owners whatsoever and a limited number of people with direct interests in boating operations. The participants or ‘stakeholders’ invited and attending the meeting were:

• Government, including DSD and Council:	13
• Environmental advocates including the Department of Environment	10
• Marina advocates (Mission Beach Harbour Pty Ltd	2
• Others (Community Association and Resorts)	3
• Sum of non-boating stakeholders	28
• Sum of boat users consulted (only commercial)	9

The true and direct stakeholders (boat users) represented merely one-third of the participants and these people were given little or no briefing prior to being ambushed by DSD with their ill-conceived concept plans already decided. For community engagement, it was a classic snow job, a tick-the-box exercise and the plan was to quickly document the project and go to tender before 30 June 2013. There was no opportunity whatsoever in the process for boat users to consider the options and provide meaningful feedback.

The DSD Officers had swooped into Innisfail, presented a hastily prepared concept plan to a few people, and returned to Brisbane ready to finalize their tender documentation. They then appointed consultants Aurecon to do their documentation and returned to Innisfail on 18 October 2013 to conduct a ‘workshop’ to *review the responses of multiple stakeholders*. The *stakeholders* they met with were (in order as in their report) *Aurecon, Cassowary Coast Regional Council (CCRC), and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR)*.

Once again, DSD utterly excluded the voice of the community.

They reported with delight that they had decided on the preferred option by the conclusion of the first half of the workshop. Aurecon analysed 19 development options, none of which were seen to be of any value subsequently by local boat users. As it unfolded, this rudimentary and rushed community engagement was a giant ‘own goal’ by DSD.

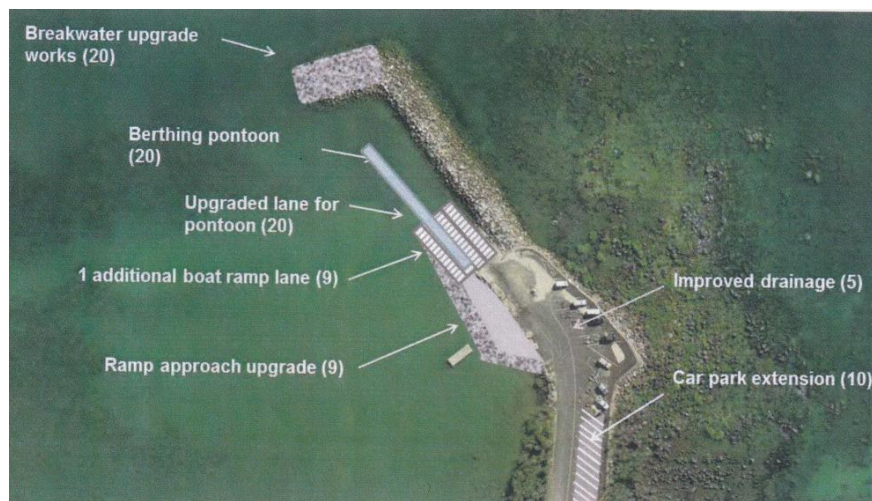
Alan Jago, a boating facilities user who was not invited to any of the workshops wrote to DSD immediately after the meeting suggesting that the best solution was the marina being presented by Mission Beach Harbour Pty Ltd at the time. Unsurprisingly, that option was rejected immediately ... *the Mission Cove marina, as proposed by Mission Beach Harbour does not align with the objective or budget of the MBSBI (Mission Beach Safe Boating Infrastructure) project.*

The Aurecon concept plan was in two parts: changes to the Clump Point Jetty (soon to be renamed the Perry Harvey Jetty) and changes to the Clump Point Boat Ramp. They responded to the concerns that CCRC expressed about the need to separate commercial and recreational boat users because of the regular complaints about that in the past.

DSD and their consultants, Aurecon, leveraged the disunity among Mission Beach boat users and offered a take-it-or-leave-it stance from day one. However, that community disunity was short-lived and when DSD revealed its concept plans, the town quickly did what it should have done earlier and reached a consensus on what they wanted (and did not want.)



Aurecon concept plan for the Perry Harvey Jetty.



Aurecon concept plan for the Clump Point Boat Ramp.

The Aurecon plans included a highly controversial breakwater at the end of the Perry Harvey Jetty and that was rejected by all community groups, including the environmental lobby. The changes made at the Clump Point Boat Ramp were minor and did not include a significant change to the breakwater length. They added a small almost right-angle section at the end of the breakwater.

On 03 December 2013, Mission Beach boat users responded in unison with a three-page letter from the *Mission Beach Marine Facilities Stake Holders Action Group*. It was signed by 10 boat users and copied to every politician possible including the Prime Minister and Premier.

The group stridently rejected the DSD proposal and underlined that they saw *the co-existence of Commercial and Recreational marine activities in the same area as critical to the most effective use of scarce taxpayers' dollars to achieve adequate, safe marine facilities in our area*. They stressed that *the proposed 120 metre wave breaker at the jetty is certainly not it* (the solution).

The campaign to reject Aurecon's designs had started in earnest. The *Overtopping Breakwater* (OB) was a lightning rod and became the symbol of the community's disdain for the plan as it was quickly dubbed the *Sausage* or worse, the *Big Turd*.

The *Tully Times* reported, on 05 December 2013, that there remained wide diversity of opinions on the project. Despite that, Aurecon stated that it was full steam ahead with their concept and they expected to complete the designs in February 2014 and complete construction by the end of 2014.

Cassowary Coast Safe Boating Association (CCSBA) emailed DSD strongly rejecting the concept design and backing the alternative concept of a single facility with an extension of the breakwater at the boat ramp.

By March 2014, the Mission Beach boating community was organized and largely speaking with one voice. Instead of having CCSBA and CBOMB at loggerheads with one another as had occurred, they looked to form one view. Had they been that well organized at the start, it is doubtful that DSD would have run roughshod over them and reached an impasse, but a determined rear guard action was now in motion.

They formed a group embracing the needs of all boat users, recreational and commercial. They called themselves Mission Beach Boating Association (MBBA) and drew up a concept plan at the Clump Point Boat Ramp site with a list of facility priorities. Then MBBA began to release information to the newspapers and actively engage with the community, businesses and politicians, seeking key letters of support and ideas and informing them of their progress or lack thereof.

DSD were unmoved and the *Tully Times* headline summarised their determination to move on without reaching consensus with the community when the plans were revealed:



The DSD ultimatum. The “sausage” breakwater at the end of the jetty, image *Tully Times* 02 April 2014, from Tully Library archives.

Take it or leave it the Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeney said – the designs are final. The battle lines were drawn with DSD and their consultants dug in together with the support of the CCRC Mayor, Bill Shannon and the CCRC Division 3 Councillor, Alister Pike. Tony Lee of Mission Beach Harbour Pty Ltd asked why their *Mission Cove* design was not considered but was told they were well beyond the budget.

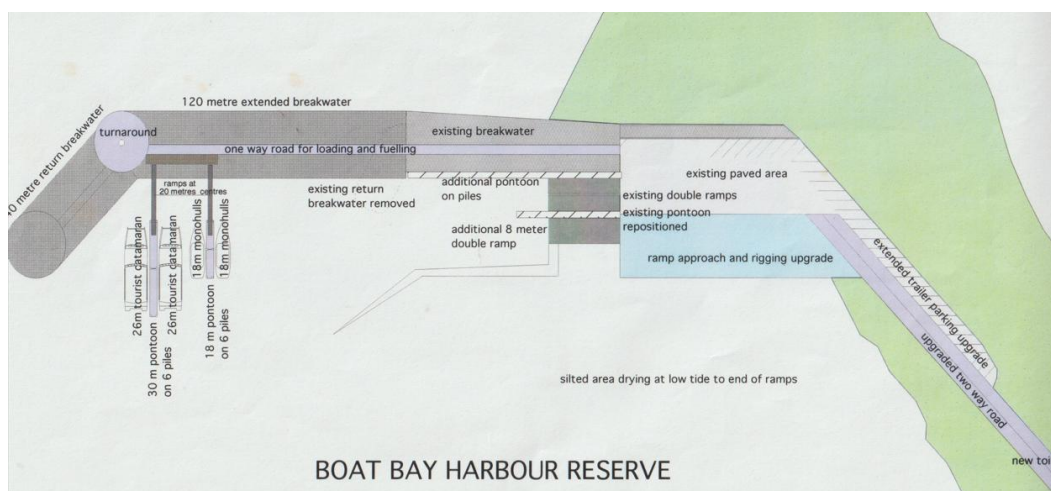
Rather than engaging meaningfully with the community to reach a consensus, DSD took a fixed position and campaigned heavily to convince the community that their Aurecon concept plan was the best option and that MBBA were misinformed. However, when DSD conducted a poll of 1,700 residents, they refused to reveal the results, claiming that they were vindicated. They stated that more than 50% of residents supported their proposal but would still not release the data.

MBBA knew that was a bluff as they polled meetings, conducted petitions, and polled the community online and the results were always around 90% were for the MBBA concept, 6% against it, and 4%

undecided. Voting on the OB (Overtopping Breakwater at the jetty) was always near to 100% rejection. DSD ignored it all and ploughed on.

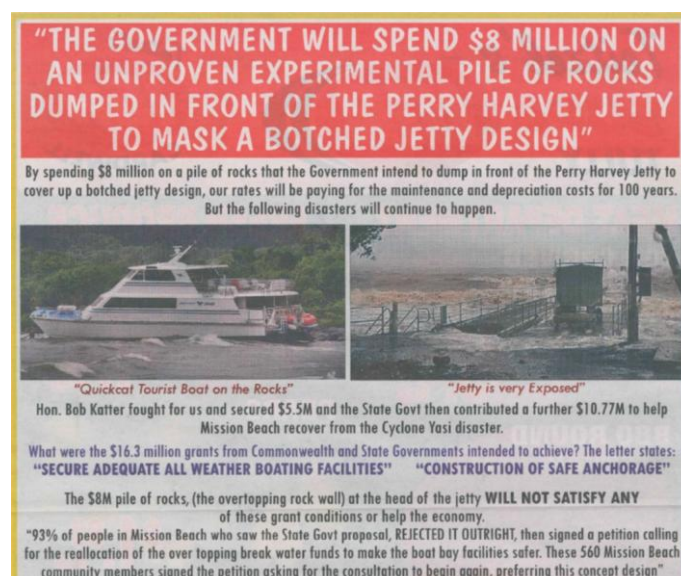
DSD set up a stall at Woolworths Supermarket in February 2012 to give residents a say then held two workshops in April 2014. They could not communicate their plans at one workshop because of the numbers of people demanding change. These were not listening sessions and merely endorsed the State's determination to get on with the consultant's initial design. The Mayor maintained that the State had undertaken adequate community consultation, but the community widely and assertively rejected that claim.

Interest in the project was so great at that time that the *Tully Times* featured it on pages 1, 2 and 3 of their 03 April 2014 issue. MBBA released its own Concept 1B Plan (*Tully Times* 17 April 2014) that was drawn by Michael Johnson. MBBA held a meeting to air their views early in April 2014 and more than 100 people attended.



Simplified version of Michael Johnson's MBBA Concept Plan (03 May 2015).

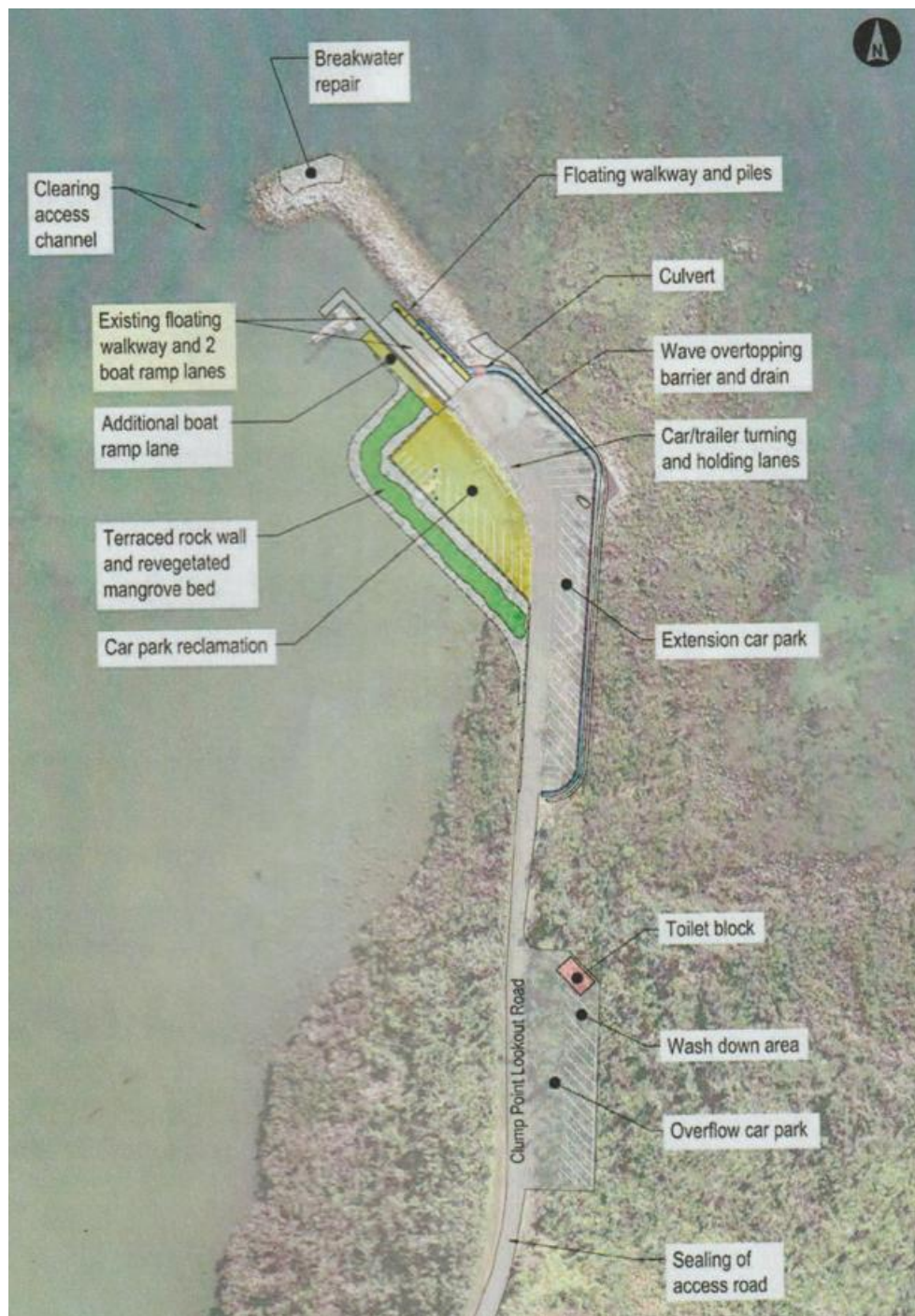
MBBA ramped up its campaign with an ad in the *Tully Times* of 22 April 2014 outlining why they did not approve of the DSD plan and what they wanted instead.



Part of MBBA ad in *Tully Times* April 2014.

Jim Whitehead, the owner of *Quickcat Cruises*, wrote a letter of support for the MBBA's plan explaining why it was far superior for large Reef boats and outlining why the Perry Harvey Jetty was never going

to be a suitable facility claiming it was a poorly built replacement of a redundant and dysfunctional jetty. Dunk Island Resort owners wrote to say they would never use the jetty. Despite this strong testimony and many similar letters of support from resorts, businesses, boat users and politicians, DSD stuck with their first plan.



DSD 2014 Boat Ramp Design – little would change.

It is always easy in hindsight, but the documentation shows that a major roadblock to changing the plan was Council. MBBA knew that Mayor Bill Shannon was doggedly determined to have the new Perry Harvey Jetty developed and used. Perhaps they tried persuasion and gave up, but this difference of views cost them three years of hard work.

Some enthusiastic advocates confronted the Mayor at Mission Beach Community Association meetings. It is difficult to know if Bill Shannon would have accepted the MBBA plan had the group

worked with him on the sidelines, but public confrontation was never a good strategy and Bill, in 2012, was a powerful adversary. He was one of few Mayors who had gained re-election in the March 2012 Council elections, so had strong ties and influence in both Federal and State Government circles.

Cr Mark Nolan, in April 2014, put forth a motion asking that the Council write to DSD to delay the project and seek further consultation and stop the OB part of the plan. The motion vote was tied, and Bill used his casting vote to defeat it.

Despite the delays and dilemmas, when looking back on the documentation one can only admire the local advocates in MBBA and MBCA for their dedication, persistence and cunning. They tried every trick in the book and some that were not in any books. They faced relentless aggression and roadblocks from DSD who merely pushed ahead and did all they could to win the community to their view. Despite that, DSD made no headway on community opinion at all.

MBBA homed in on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) when it came time for them to approve the project and ran a strong campaign to have GBRMPA reject the application. They did the same with Council Planning, asking them to reject the Development Applications. There were times when it seemed that DSD would wilt and concede, but they always did a U-turn and stuck with their original plan. MP Bob Katter helped arrange further meetings with government departments, but no change was achieved.

In early 2014, DSD met two community groups in Mission Beach and tried again to convince them to accept their plan. They threatened the eviction of any participant who dared to voice an opposing view. Community outrage escalated.

The MBBA resistance campaign continued relentlessly for all of 2014. They tried to have a motion passed by Council to delay their approvals, but that was defeated by the Mayor. They had meetings with every influencer possible to no avail.

By March 2015 they succeeded in having LNP MP, Andrew Cripps reverse his support for the DSD Plan and back the MBBA Plan. In May 2015, Peter Heywood organized and ran a workshop under the auspices of MBCA with 24 participants representing different community organizations, and all bar one (an abstention) voted in favour of the MBBA concept plan presented at the workshop.

A strategy that started the cracks in the wall of DSD resistance was a campaign highlighting perceived flaws in the construction of the Perry Harvey Jetty. MBBA asserted that it was built shorter than the previous jetty, so the water depth was 900mm less than the old jetty making it unsuitable for tourism vessels. Steven (*Fozzie*) Foster submitted research on refuel options for a new 65-foot Reef boat, *Reef Goddess*, and demonstrated that it was impossible on the Perry Harvey Jetty because of the weight restrictions. The jetty was not built to its load capacity specification of 44 tonnes and was deemed fit for only 6 tonnes per axle. These were telling arguments, further weakening the resolve of DSD. After this, Peter Heywood found cracks in the jetty concrete and believed this was due to concrete degradation and this added to the doubts despite Council claiming that engineers found no such problem.

In October 2015, DSD promised that they would drop the dreaded OB option but then reneged. MBBA met with DSD once again but was told that if they did not roll over and accept the Aurecon design then the project could be abandoned.

In October 2015, DSD relented a little and agreed to evaluate the MBBA plan. They quickly rejected it claiming it was over their budget despite MBBA providing a robust cost estimate by Mager Constructions showing it fitted the budget.

MBBA battled on relentlessly, largely without joy until Minister Anthony Lynham called a meeting with boat owners and operators, Mayor Bill Shannon, and MP Andrew Cripps on 16 January 2016. Six community representatives from MBBA, MBCA, and CCSBA were each given 2 minutes to state their case. All six made the same case – the community was now 100% unified.

This was the big turning point in the campaign. Anthony Lynham was the first in the State Government to listen to Mission Beach boaties.

Another pivotal moment occurred in February 2016, when Michael Johnson, one of the leaders of MBBA and owner of Mager Constructions, submitted a comprehensive design and build proposal. To illustrate how the community were prepared to roll up their sleeves and contribute, the designers needed soundings to be taken of the water surrounding the existing boat ramp and breakwater. That was a cost MBBA could ill afford so Megan and Peter Heywood did the job themselves in a dingy using ropes and weights to measure the depths. Michael's new design included costings showing that the MBBA concept, contrary to DSD assertions, fitted well within the project budget. This was highly credible and undoubtedly created visible cracks in the DSD resolve.

In March 2016, in a teleconference arranged by Shane Knuth, Minister Lynham promised to produce a new plan based on MBBA's latest design. Bill Shannon and Alister Pike admitted at the meeting that they had been pushing for the redevelopment of the Perry Harvey Jetty. DSD maintained that the community was divided on the issues and to the extent that the boat users were at odds with their elected representatives in Council that was correct, but boat users were now solidly speaking as one.

Minister Lynham explained that after his January 2016 meeting with the boating community, he had decided to drop the OB (Overtopping Breakwater) and concentrate the project at the Clump Point Boat Ramp as in the MBBA proposals.

In April 2016, the Minister pulled the plug on the DSD and agreed to allow proper community consultation. At the time DSD had a workshop planned, but they had already decided to go to tender before that occurred. The *Innisfail Advocate* headlines on 30 April 2016 said it all: *Tide Turns for Long Awaited Boat Ramp*.

MBBA informed members that they had won the battle against the development of the jetty and the OB was dead, but there was still much work to do in the remainder of the plan. Aurecon was still dragging its feet and while the plans were altered to delete the jetty re-development and the OB, they did not alter their plan for the Boat Ramp to cater for commercial vessels. Alan Jago wrote to the Minister pointing out this gross anomaly and asking for the DSD tender to be stopped immediately.

DSD was then asked by the Minister to conduct a review of the MBBA proposal. This was done with a group including Mager, Aecom, Aurecom, MBBA and DTMR (Main Roads). It was suggested that Council should contribute some funds to enhance the land-based facilities. Newly elected Mayor John Kremastos agreed to review that.

Now the project was facing the daunting prospect of achieving GBRMPA approvals. GBRMPA indicated that there would be many barriers and delays and would not commit to a deadline for their decision.



Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mining Dr Anthony Lynham at Perry Harvey Jetty in January.

Picture: Chris Holme

Tide turns for long awaited boat ramp

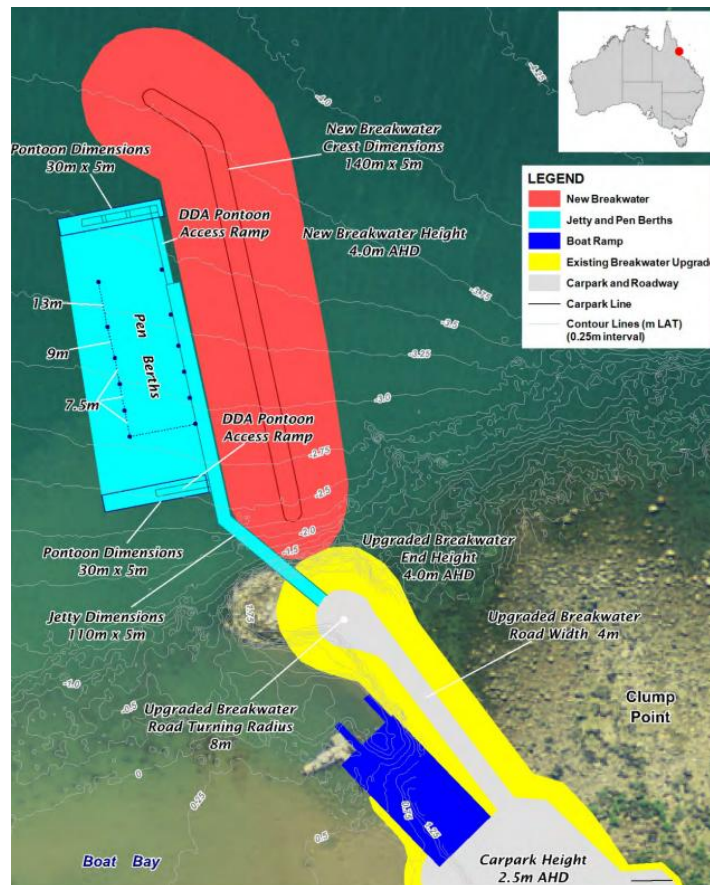


The *Innisfail Advocate* breaks the big news of Minister Anthony Lynham's astute decisions to listen and respond to Mission Beach people.

A Community Reference Group was formed in May 2016 and there were four meetings with three boat users appointed to the group (Alan Jago, Peter Heywood, and Stephen Chilcott) plus two environmental advocates. The delegates could send an alternate person to a meeting if they were unavailable. Peter Heywood and Alan Jago attended 3 of the 4 meetings while Stephen made it to one. The Overtopping Breakwater and Perry Harvey Jetty upgrades were off the table, and the focus was solely on where the community wanted it, at Clump Point Boat Ramp.

DTMR (Main Roads) advised that for a three-lane boat ramp facility there should ideally be 70 parks for cars and their trailers. The Reference Group functioned well under the guidance of an independent facilitator and by 27 February 2017, the community had a plan they could live with when DSD released their 152-page report.² The most critical issue, the 140-metre added breakwater, was agreed upon. Some wanted an extra 50 metres added to the breakwater, but the budget would not cover that cost. Others say they have measured it and the final design, and the actual build length was 190 metres anyhow.

² Department of State Development, *Clump Point Development Plan*, 27 February 2017: accessed online December 2022 at: http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/_entity/annotation/ba4ce803-6426-e711-b46f-005056ba00a8/a71d58ad-4cba-48b6-8dab-f3091fc31cd5?t=1493337600339



2017 Final Plan by BMT WBM. Approved by MBBA.

The plan was never going to meet all the requests from the community and in the end, only 44 parks for car-trailer units were built (including the 20 that CCRC built) but Council stated that it would look at building overflow parking in the future if demand was sufficient to warrant it. It is said that there is no land left on Clump Point near the facility that can be used for further carparks for a number of reasons.

During the design phase of the project, much funding was wasted by people without boating experience asking for design changes and considerable funds were spent trying to meet their demands and find solutions that were utterly impractical. That caused the project to fall short on some vital components like essential pontoons and more car parking bays.

03 July 2018 was a huge day. All approvals for the project were in hand. Now the incredible team of volunteers could safely celebrate. By November 2020, the pain and stress of the long journey evaporated.

The town had a wonderful new asset they would surely be proud of.

RECOGNITION

It is always difficult to know which of the many local volunteer advocates contributed most to the success of the venture. From my experience with such campaigns, the lion's share of the work is not done by those who merely present the cases made or appear in newspaper articles. More is done by those who conduct the research, document cases and organize events. Richard Giuliani was involved from the start in 1985 and has over 5,000 emails to and from people. That's similar for Peter Heywood and Alan Jago for emails are used most often today with phone calls to engage and seek actions.

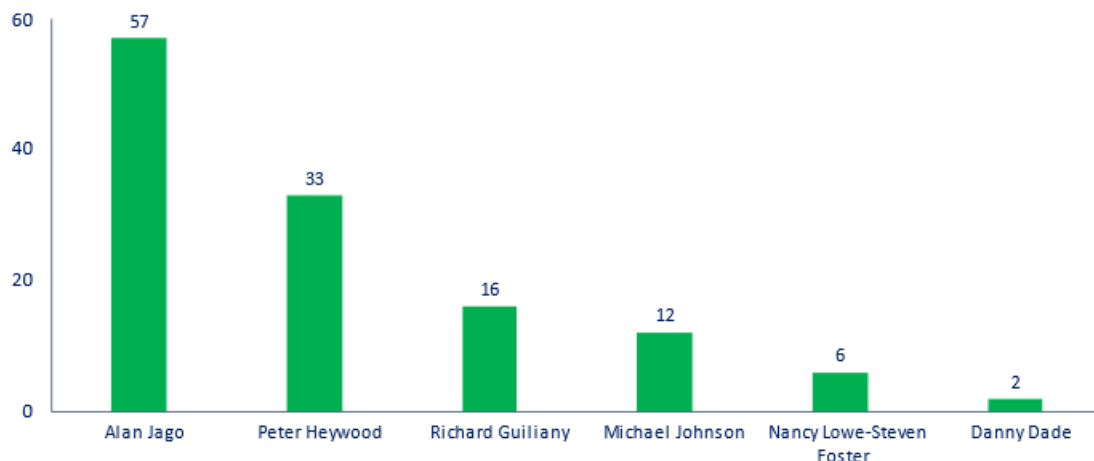
We analysed the number of significant documents written – letters, reports, meeting notes, presentations, newspaper articles and press releases, tenders, quotes etc. and did not include emails in the analysis charts below unless they had significant attachments.

After this analysis, we can see from the charts below that MBBA became the organization that led and organized the campaign. CCSBA were involved early on, but when the boat users united, most of the heavy lifting was left to the Committee Members of MBBA. MBCA provided a valuable role with its large membership base and its ability to provide the community with updates and a forum for debates and communications.

The four who wrote the most in terms of cases and planning and caused major impacts were:

- **Alan Jago**
- **Peter Heywood**
- **Richard Giuliani**
- **Michael Johnson**

Significant Project Documents Sorted by Author

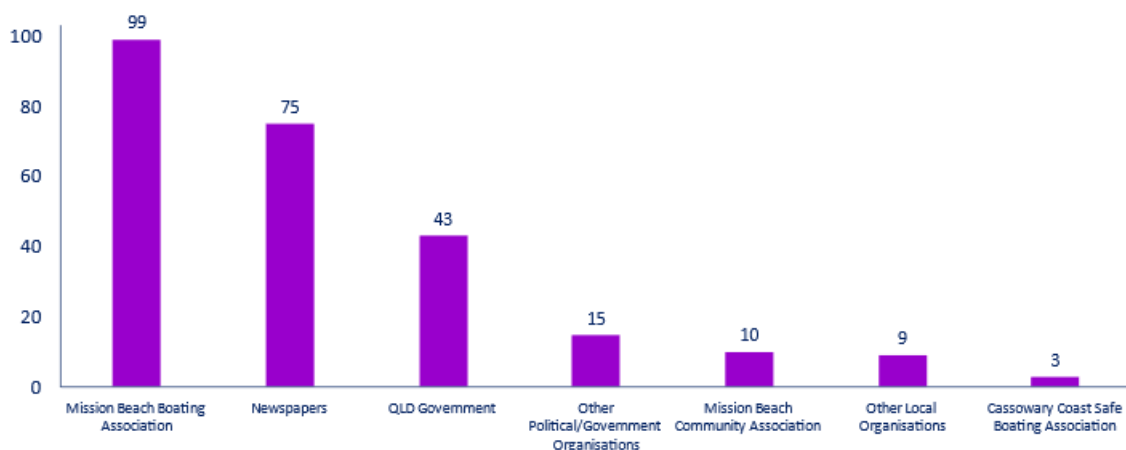


The number of documents sourced from the Alan Jago Catalogue, sorted by author. This does not include emails unless they were reports or similar and were written to external organisations.

The chart above shows the number of significant documents by author giving an idea of relative campaign workloads. The record is no doubt incomplete and covers the period from 2009 to 2020 when most decisions were made. The person who signed a document was not always the one who wrote it, so the numbers are not exact.

Analysis of the document records by organisation shows that the major players in this event were the Mission Beach Boating Association members interacting mainly with the Queensland Government (mainly DSD personnel and DTMR.) Local businesses chimed in with valuable support at times and some members of CCSBA were involved at times, including at the pivotal meeting with Minister Lynham early in 2016.

Number of Significant Documents Sorted by Organisation 1990 - 2020



The number of documents by origin. This includes documents sourced from Tully Library archives and online.

Other locals who contributed significantly were numerous, including these long-term contributors:

- **Nancy Lowe**
- **Danny Dade**
- **Tony Lee**
- **Annette and Peter Treseder and Glenn White (CCSBA).**

Michael Johnston was on the committee and provided much valuable input in terms of concept plans, quotes, and engineering advice. **Nancy Lowe** was also on the committee, often as Secretary, and was always a credible advocate since she and Steve *Fozzie* Foster owned key boating businesses in the area and knew first-hand what their boats required in terms of infrastructure.

Tony Lee worked for years trying to gain approval for a marina at Mission Beach and spent much time and money on this endeavour and assisted MBBA when they needed help. He and his three partners in Mission Beach Boat Harbour Pty Ltd spent considerable money in their attempts to improve boating facilities for the district with little hope of recouping those costs.

Danny Dade had been always on the MBBA committee as well and provided vital technical advice for MBBA and other community organizations. He also chipped in with letters to the State Government and GBRMPA at important moments. Danny was the person everyone looked to for infrastructure advice as he is an experienced Captain with knowledge of all the large vessels used in the region and has first-hand knowledge of all the district's boating infrastructure (past and current.)

People will argue about which advocates were most important or had the most impact on the project. To some extent that is quite pointless if we accept President Harry Truman's wise tenet:

You can accomplish anything in life, provided that you don't mind who gets the credit.



Nancy Lowe



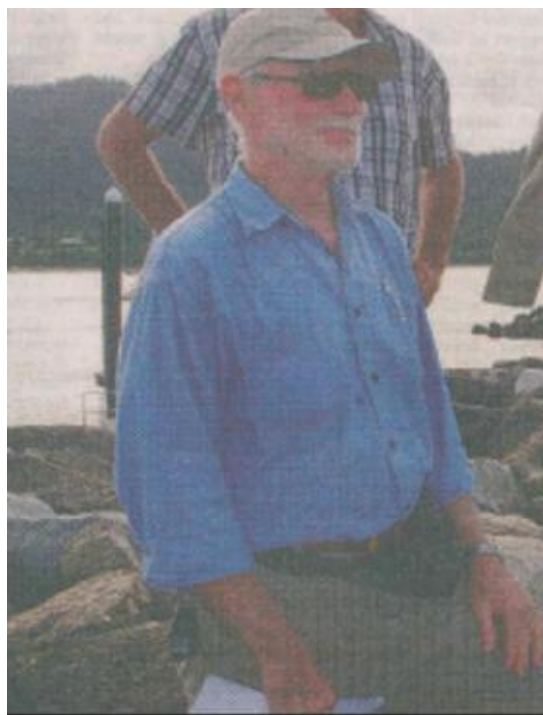
Danny Dade



Michael Johnson.

In 2020, as celebrations were subsiding, there was some chat in a local newspaper about who led the campaign. From the sidelines, one can see that the three people who were elected President of MBBA between 2014 and 2020, Richard Giuliani, Alan Jago and Peter Heywood, shared the bulk of the load leading the campaign. Invariably, in community organizations, the President is heavily involved and often the Secretary does much of the documentation work. They were all involved in boating organizations for decades before MBBA was formed in 2014 so the number of years of involvement of each person is not a factor that splits them.

The only valid data that we have to indicate relative impacts is the documentation work involved and that analysis favours an order of 1. Jago, 2. Heywood then 3. Giuliani. They all had strengths and weaknesses and each of them worked incredibly hard for the cause and created their own pivotal moments along the way. We should remember them all for their wonderful achievements. None, however, contributed more than Alan Jago when you evaluate the mass of available records.



Alan Jago, Architect and Engineer, Mission Beach Boating Association. Dedicated to the cause.



Peter Heywood



Richard Giuliany

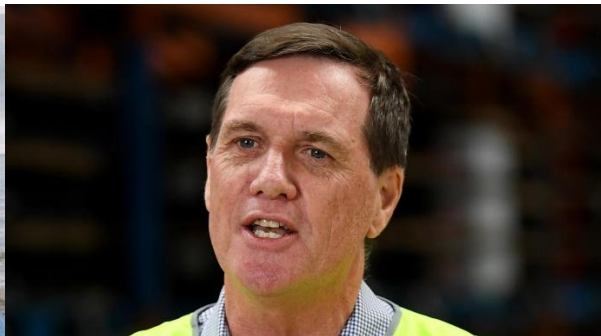


Tony Lee: marina advocate.

The project had three main stages. Stage one was obtaining the funding (1984 – 2012) and the star of that show was Bob Katter who saw an opportunity and took it to advance Mission Beach (and his election campaign of course). There were many involved in those early years, fighting, without success to win funding, but this story does not cover those disappointments. Stage two was agreeing on a project design that would suit most of the community's needs and not harm the environment or trample on sensitive cultural concerns. That was always going to be tricky with different groups having considerably divergent views.

Alan Jago and Peter Heywood were the ones that drove the project design advocacy most actively and ensured that we achieved an optimal outcome. Stage three was getting it built and Peter Heywood was probably the main player from MBBA in that period. Richard Giuliany deserves credit for initiating MBBA and achieving some unity among the different boating groups; that was a key step.

Let's call it a three-way tie as they all had an enormous impact.



Dr Anthony Lynham, *Innisfail Advocate*, 30 April 2016. Right: *Courier Mail* image of Dr Lynham, an oral surgeon before entering politics.

If we chose one politician who had the most positive impact on the project, it would be out of Bob Katter, Anthony Lynham and Mark Bailey. Looking at the documentation and records, I see **Anthony Lynham** as the standout contributor among the politicians involved. He was the one who overcame the immense hubris and got it over the line by listening to the locals. Without his effective intervention in 2016, we would now have a DSD nightmare outcome, the ugly sausage breakwater at the end of the jetty.

The Minister for Transport and Main Roads, **Mark Bailey** was also important in the chain of events since he was the one who had to deliver the finished facility. Mark had considerable foresight and knew that it would be folly to build something that was well below community expectations. He met

with Peter Heywood towards the end of the project and added necessary funding (\$5M) to make the facility functional while others in government were arguing for cuts.

Over the long haul, **Bob Katter** did all he could to influence governments and was ably assisted by **Shane Knuth** in the late stages of the project. Shane set up some vital meetings with Minister Lynham to ensure the community was heard. Bob was the person who leveraged the initial \$5.5M funding from the Commonwealth and that was the fuse for it all.

The change of the State Government was another turning point. Many people felt the project was doomed under the incumbent LNP Government. The Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeney, was stonewalling and not making DSD accountable to the community. The QLD Department of State Development Minister, Anthony Lynham, rescued the project after it had been so abysmally managed by DSD for years. He eventually ditched the dysfunctional DSD design, fired the tone deaf consultants, engaged meaningfully with the community, and ensured that the design met wide-ranging community expectations.

The Department of Transport (TMR) delivered the project well and once it was agreed to drop the jetty and overtopping breakwater concept and focus on the Clump Point breakwater site local boating people who were closely involved found TMR leaders and the Minister to be helpful and capable.

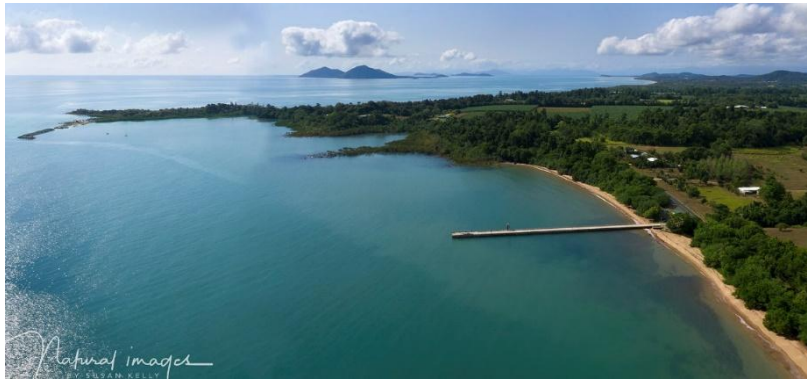
Some will wonder how well the Council (CCRC) performed on this project. There are varying views on that question, as always, but some suggest that CCRC missed a great opportunity to invest in a pivotal infrastructure project for the region's tourism hub. Bill Shannon always believed that the Perry Harvey Jetty was the best solution so did not support the thrust to build a commercial boating facility at the boat ramp. There were opportunities, after Bill retired in 2016, for the new Council to invest in the project, but they minimized their involvement and contributions.

Diversifying the economy is a proven lever for a region's success, so fostering tourism is a vital economic strategy. All new Councils promise that is what they will do yet very little is ever done and, on this occasion, the Council could have engaged properly and invested significantly in the project.

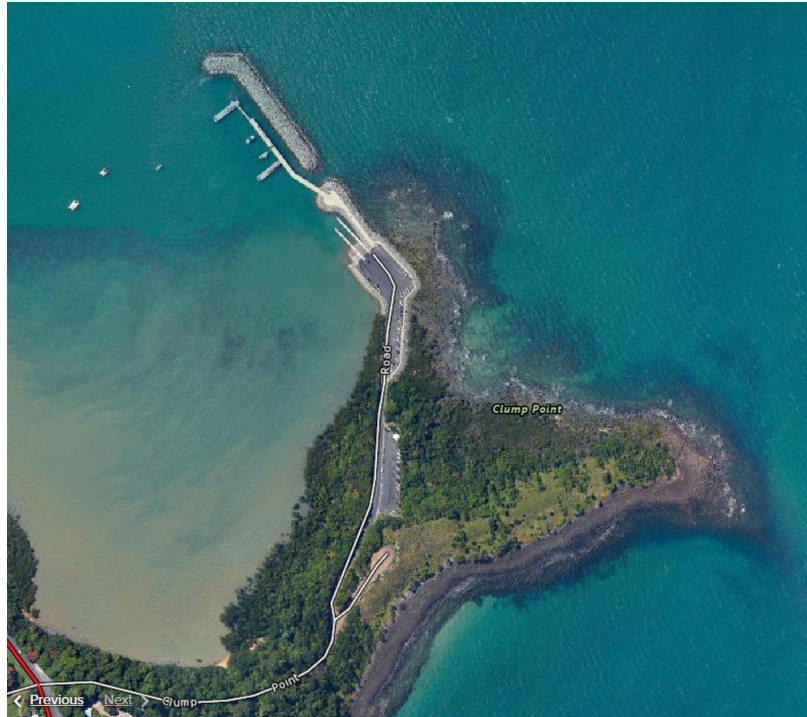
Council invested a small amount of ratepayers' funds (\$800,000) at the end of the project to build 20 parking bays. That was merely 3% of the total project cost (approximately \$25M) which is a minor commitment compared with the 56% (\$1.6M) that CCRC contributed to the Innisfail wharf in 2016. Some would argue that we needed a Council with greater vision and belief in tourism's ability to improve the region's overall economy. A \$5M investment could have been effectively made by CCRC without causing any financial stress. That would have enabled the addition of important facilities that were excluded due to budget constraints. For example, adding further parking and adding facilities that had to be eliminated from the ideal design such as pontoons that were eliminated.

Having said that, the car parks that Council added were vital and much appreciated. The number of car-trailer parks was ultimately only 44 all up and Main Roads recommend at least 70 for a three-lane boat ramp.

The facility was an immediate and booming success. Many days we see cars with boat trailers parked in Porter Promenade almost a kilometre from the boat ramps, so it is very popular and heavily used.



Perry Harvey Jetty at Boat Bay, Narragon Beach. Background left Clump Point Boating Facility being built. Susan Kelly, *Natural Images*.



Mission Beach's new Boating Facility, Clump Point. *Queensland Globe*.



Mission Beach Boating Facility at Clump Point. Image from Susan Kelly, *Natural Images*.

HISTORY of INFRASTRUCTURE by LOCATION

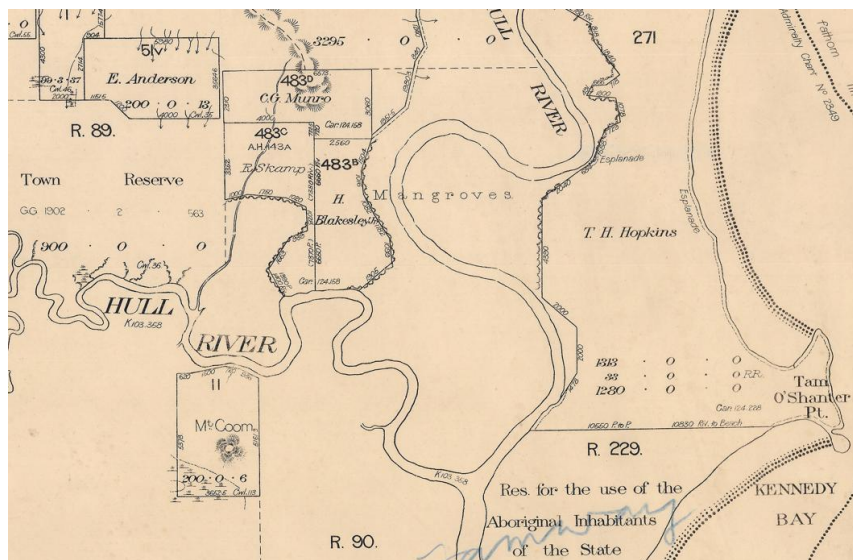
HULL RIVER



Henry Blakesley, from Ancestry.com.au

Henry Blakesley (1841 – 1919) was born in Warwickshire, England and emigrated to Adelaide in 1856 and moved to Brisbane in 1864.³ He was a timber cutter at Gympie and Maryborough and, in 1873, led a prospecting expedition from Noosa to Cardwell. By 1876, he was a captain of a ship in Sydney and took an expedition to Torres Strait and PNG. In 1881 he selected land at Lake Cootharaba near Gympie and had a lugger (*Polly*) built. In 1883, he married Carolyn Ingleby (his second wife) and in all, he had four children: Violet, Frederick, Cora, and Mary (Nellie).

In 1884, Henry selected 160 acres of land on the Hull River⁴ at a site now largely included in Carmoo today. On 12 July 1889, he was granted the deed to the land (Lot 483B).⁵ Henry built his own landing (wharf) on the Hull River, which was most likely located where the Cassowary Coast Regional Council boat ramp is at Hull Drive in Carmoo today.⁶



1923 cadastral map of the Hull River-Carmoo area.

³ Ancestry.com.au, Henry Blakesley, accessed on Trobe, June 2022 at:

https://www.ancestry.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/44468980/person/162067888921/story?_phsrc=Fqa636&_phstart=successSource

⁴ *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 26 April 1884, accessed on Trove, June 2022 at:

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/23972130?searchTerm=%22H%20Blakesley%22>

⁵ *The Queenslander* (Brisbane) 17 August 1889, *Cardwell*, accessed on Trove, June 2022 at:

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/19816547?searchTerm=%22H%20Blakesley%22>

⁶ Dorothy Jones, *Cardwell Shire Story*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, 1961, P. 229.

Dorothy Jones says that Henry used his lugger to transport supplies and possessions to Bingil Bay when the Cutten family first settled there in 1885. She thought that Blakesley was already living on his land by 1885, but he did not comply with the land deed requirements until 1889 so his residence almost certainly came later.⁷

Henry returned to Brisbane in 1897 where he lived with his daughter, Nelle. He was listed as being a ferryman in 1903 and died in Brisbane in 1919 aged 78.

Timber getter, John Bunting, and his family lived in a camp at a small tributary of the Hull River, Sugar Cane Creek, in 1902. John and his son, Jack were cutting timber for the Rooneys in Townsville. They floated the logs down the North Hull River. Later, the Buntings built a landing towards the mouth of the Hull River, known as *Silky Oak Landing* and later named *Buntings Landing*. Long-term resident, Dave Nissen, was told by his father about a Bunting railway line from Wongaling (near the State School today) down to the North Hull River at the site of the current boat ramp and pontoon at Jackey Jackey Street. When Dave was young, he also saw the remnants of a jetty in the water near the junction of Carmoo Creek and the South Hull and that is most likely where *Buntings Landing* was located. That has now been confirmed by Mrs Dunlop who donated an image of a row boat in the 1930s leaving that site and she said it was named *Silky Oak Landing*. The Rooney's boats, *Chyde* and *Scout*, used *Buntings Landing* to pick up Bunting lumber.⁸

In 1910, the settlers of Banyan (Tully) decided that their preference for transportation of produce from the district was via a rail link to the Hull River mouth.⁹ However, their numbers were small, and the Cardwell lobby gained support for their port project at Oyster Point. Oyster Point was emphatically rejected as a proposal by the Queensland Government in 1934. After decades of advocacy, Oyster Point port never won funding and it was not built. The Butler brothers of Banyan were already importing 2,000 tons of cargo annually via Dunk Island and the Hull River mouth. But the Hull River was not developed as a harbour for shipping Tully produce due to the dangers of the sandbar there. A third port alternative for Tully/Banyan was prominent for a short while, at Tam O'Shanter Point, but that option also went nowhere after a full examination.¹⁰

In 1912, cousins Robert Kirkmichael Reid (1891-1967) and David George Reid (1888 - 1914) took up a selection each on land around where Dunk Island View Caravan Park now stands. They began clearing to farm bananas and citrus fruit.

Robert's father was Captain David Reid who piloted the ships through the Torres Straits, and he delivered a 33-foot launch, *Grae*, to the Hull River for Robert to use to deliver fruit to the larger boats that came to Dunk Island. By 1913, Robert had his third-class engineer's license and could take passengers on board.

David Reid died in 1914 and Robert moved to Sydney in 1917 to become an engineer on larger ships. Ted Banfield reported that Reid's motor launch was moored in the Hull River during the 1918 cyclone and was lifted and thrown into the mangroves.

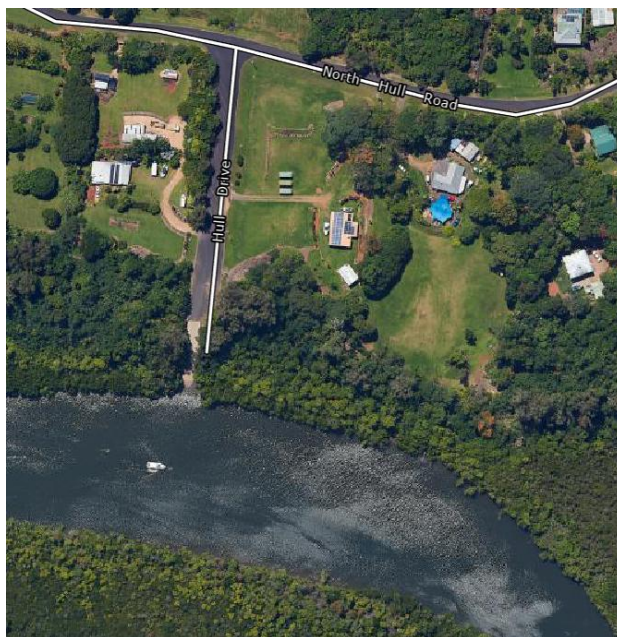
⁷ Dorothy Jones, *Cardwell Shire Story*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, 1961, P. 238.

⁸ Dorothy Jones, *Cardwell Shire Story*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, 1961, P. 296.

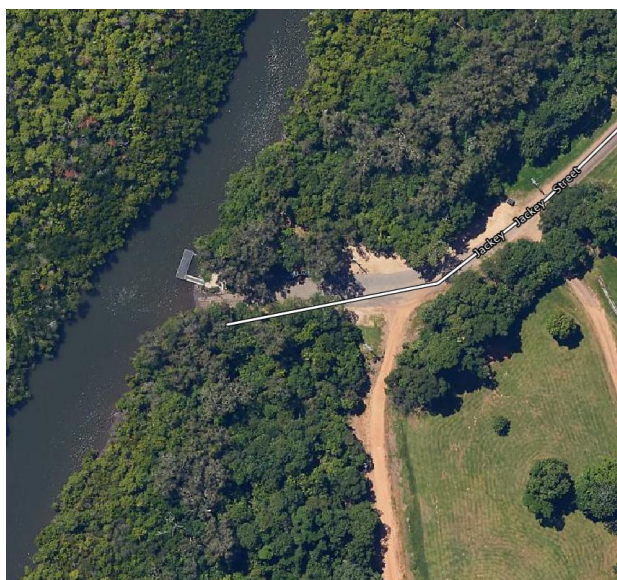
⁹ Dorothy Jones, *Cardwell Shire Story*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, 1961, P. 316.

¹⁰ Dorothy Jones, *Cardwell Shire Story*, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane, 1961, PP. 376-378.

In 2022, there remain three boating facilities on the Hull River: a boat ramp at Hull Drive, Carmoo in the location of Blakesleys Landing, a pontoon and boat ramp at Jackey Jackey Street and another boat ramp at the Hull Heads outlet on the south side of the river. The date of the first boat ramp construction at Jackey Jackey street is unknown (maybe that was where the Buntings had their landing). It was just built by locals using a little concrete and bitumen. CSC replaced it in 1978 but they lowered it and it was unsuitable for use in higher tides. Builders in the area started to construct a proper facility there at their own cost but CSC made them pull it out. It was upgraded by Council in 1995 with a small pontoon but has never worked well with boats dropping off into the deep. It does serve a purpose in rough weather at high tide but is not highly functional.



Carmoo Boat Ramp, Hull Drive. *Queensland Globe*.

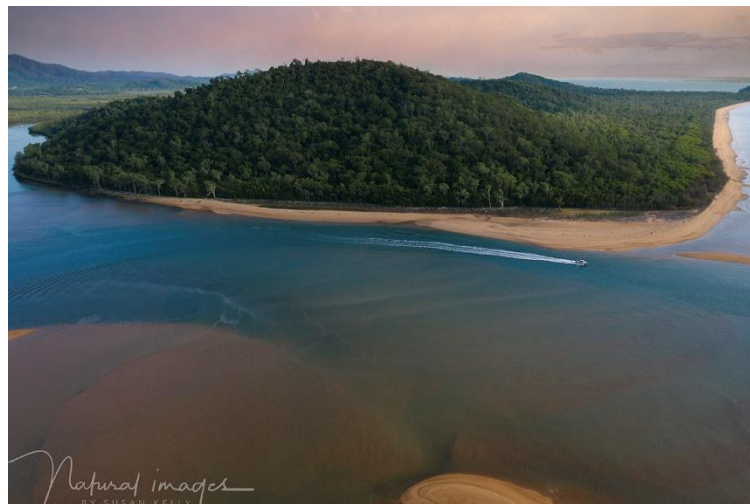


Jackey Jackey Boat Ramp and pontoon, South Mission Beach, *Queensland Globe*.



Hull River entrance to the Coral Sea. Susan Kelly, *Natural Images*.

This image, taken recently by Susan Kelly with her drone, shows clearly why the Hull River never became the solution for safe boating facilities at Mission Beach and Tully. This is at low tide where the dangerous sandbanks are shown. Even at high tide, these can be tricky to traverse, yet the river still has some use for recreational boating with its boat ramps shown earlier.

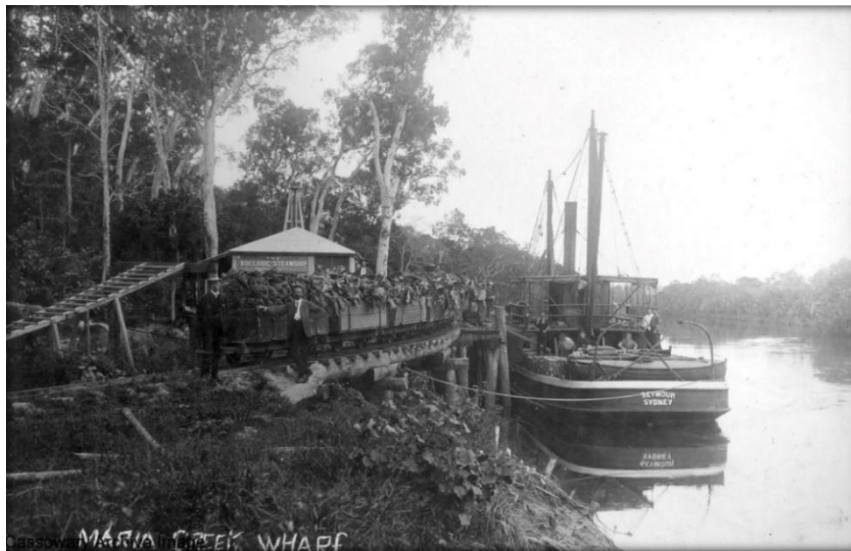


Hull River entrance to the Coral Sea at high tide. Susan Kelly, *Natural Images*.

MARIA AND MUFF CREEKS

Mission Beach district is bounded by the Hull Rivers in the south and Maria Creeks in the north.

In 1904, the Chinese started growing bananas on the southern branch of Maria Creek and the creek was cleared of snags and lighted to make it safe when navigating at night. A railway line was then built from Maria Creek to as far north as Liverpool Creek. In 1911, The Adelaide Steamship Company built a wharf at the junction of the two branches of the creek and acquired the railway line. Chapman and Co. also had a sawmill located on Maria Creek, so it provided sea access for ships exporting fruit and timber.



Maria Creek Wharf 1913, small coastal steamer, *Seymour*, Sydney, loading bananas. Image courtesy Oxley Library, QLD.

Ted Garner was initially living with his family at Cardwell in the early 1900s and was operating a boat out of the Hull River, supplying farmers, and taking their produce to steamers offshore for transport to southern cities. They moved to Bingil Bay in 1909 to set up and operate the Cutten sawmill. Ted selected 160 acres of land at Muff Creek in 1911 and started to clear it and plant bananas.

At that time, several national shipping companies such as the Adelaide Steamship Co., Howard Smith and AUSN Lines were regularly taking fruit from the district via Maria Creek, Dunk Island or the Hull River. The Garners built and operated several boats, some being up to 60 feet with steam or diesel engines. They operated out of Muff, Maria and Liverpool Creeks transporting produce to coastal shipping and supplying farmers nearby. By 1915, they had over 45 acres of land cleared with 30 acres of bananas, 3 acres of pineapples, 8 acres of citrus and 5 acres ready to plant. Some of them left for Silkwood during the First World War when the coastal shipping boats were seconded for the war effort.

Ted Garner mainly ferried farm produce and supplies to and from the Mission Beach district via the wharf at Maria Creek. By 1939, his wife, Edith had died and he was mainly working on his boats, taking fishing parties to the Barrier Reef and transporting lumber to Dunk Island to be taken south.

After WWII, when Ted's sons returned home from service, they built a 45-foot boat, named *Day Spring*, and continued their Reef tours into the 1950s.

Dave Nissen has lived in the district for his entire life of more than 84 years and came from El Arish to Bingil Bay and Mission Beach regularly in the early 1950s when he was not yet a teenager. He related a story of Cedar Creek, a tributary to Muff Creek, which was sometimes used for boating, having deep water right up to Jorissen Bridge:

This used to be a beautiful fresh running creek. Look at it now. Donny McConnell lived just downstream from Jorissen Bridge, and always had a 30-foot boat tied up in his front yard. Can you imagine that now? Inconceivable in that mud pond. Bloody croc just missed me in there once. I think the house is different today but where the boat was the creek had a huge deep drop-off. That's what all the silt has done to the creeks. We used to fish for barra in many of these small creeks.

There was a rudimentary boat ramp in Muff Creek near Bingil Bay Road for some time, but Council closed it in the 1990s, so there are no remaining boating facilities located on the Mission Beach side of Cedar, Muff, or Maria Creeks today. There is a basic boat ramp on the north side of Maria Creek servicing Kurrimine Beach boat users.



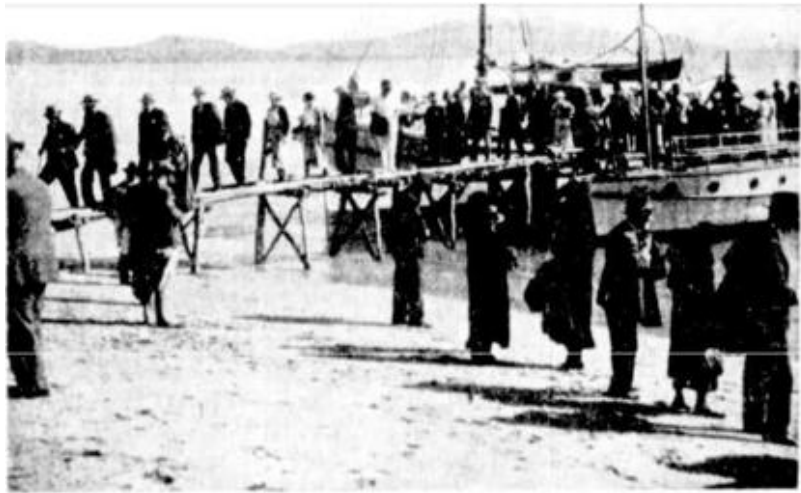
Muff (south) and Maria Creeks (north, larger) at the outlet between Kurrimine and Garners Beaches.

DUNK ISLAND

When Ted and Bertha lived on Dunk Island together (1897 – 1923), they did not have a jetty but did build a boathouse in the forest at The Spit and kept their motorboat, *Nee Mourna*, there. Ted had three different boats, each named *Nee Mourna* which he thought was an Aboriginal name meaning laughing waters. He often pottered around in his boat erecting signs on the islands to protect the wildlife and exploring the environment or visiting his friends at Mission Beach and Bingil Bay.

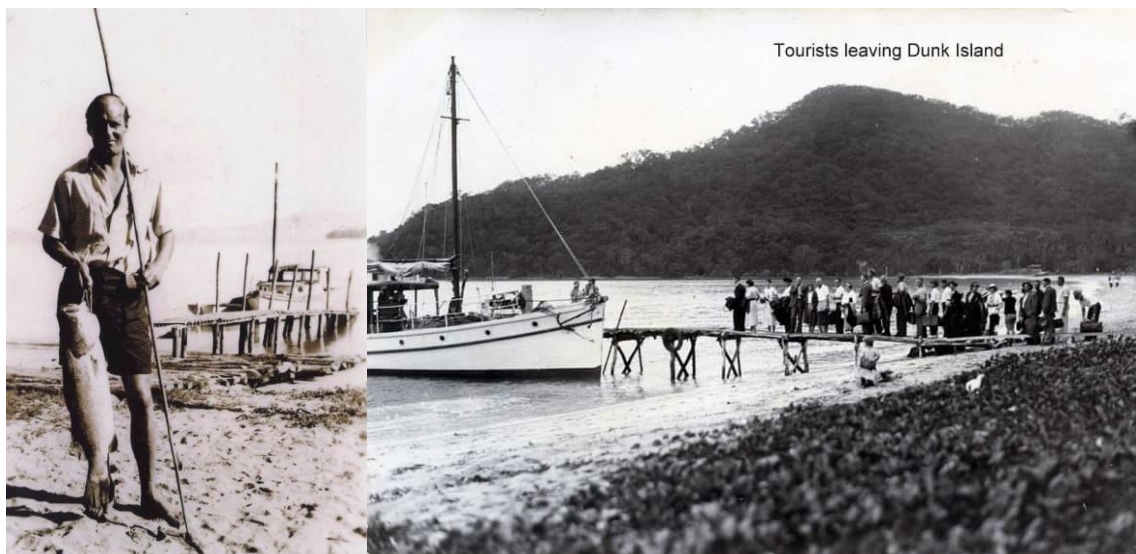
He built a short rail line from the boatshed to the sea so he could easily launch the boat in Brammo Bay using a winch. The railway was made from 3-inch by 3-inch hardwood.

When Spenser Hopkins sold his freehold land on Dunk Island to the Brasseys in 1935, Hugo and Christa Brassey built a small resort, and had several boats: a 68-foot yacht (*Sunbeam*), a 37-foot ocean-going motor launch (*Twilight*) and four small motorboats. They built a basic timber jetty and used that for transporting goods and people to the island.¹¹



DISSEMBARKING at Dunk Island—The *Sunbeam* and *Twilight* had full passenger lists.

Press delegates on the Brammo Bay jetty at the resort opening – from *The Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, 24 July 1936.



Hugo Brassey – resort pier in the background with motor launch *Twilight*. Dunk pier, image from Barry Anderssen Collection.

¹¹ Ken Gray, *Our Own Gatsby: Hugo Brassey of Dunk Island*, Mission Beach Historical Society, H002, 2021, PP. 15, 16.

The jetty was used by several commercial boat operators over the years. First were the Butlers who took goods to and from Dunk Island and the Hull River or Maria Creeks.¹²

Jim Butler was born in Townsville in 1896 and moved to Tully and married in 1933. He and his wife, Margaret ran a shipping service that ferried cargo, produce and people between Dunk Island and the Hull River landing. Jim took cargo to and from the coastal steamers at Brammo Bay, so creating a supply line for Mission Beach and Tully.

His first boat was *Tomboy* which became too small, so he bought a schooner-like vessel, *Silver Quay*. Jim died in 1969 and Margaret in 2006 and they are both buried in the Tully Cemetery.



Tomboy at Brammo Bay Dunk Island, in the early 1930s.



Silver Quay moored at the Hull River landing 1930s.

Another local boat operator at that time was Nobby Whiting with *Red Wing*. Brothers Ernest and Fredrick Whiting were English immigrants who had a cane farm near Tully around 1925.¹³ Their nephew, Fred *Nobby* Whiting, also migrated and helped his uncles clear and work the property. When they weren't working on the farm, they used small boats to ferry holidaymakers to Dunk and the surrounding Islands.

The wooden jetty that Hugo Brassey built was replaced a few times, first when the resort was rebuilt by Gordon and Kathleen Stynes in the 1950s. Cardwell Shire Council (CSC) then rebuilt it in 1967 at a cost of \$25,000. It was funded by the State Government 75%, CSC and Great Barrier Reef Hotels. A fourth jetty was built in 1990 beside the old one after Cyclone Larry had ripped the sand out where the pier met the beach.

¹² Deidre Holmes, *Mission Beach Street and Place Names: A study of local history through street and place names, Volume 1 Maria Creeks, Midgere Bar, Garners Beach, Bingil Bay and Narragon Beach*, Mission Beach Historical Society H009.1, P. 18.

¹³ Deidre Holmes, *Mission Beach Street and Place Names: A study of local history through street and place names, Volume 3 Wongaling*, Mission Beach Historical Society H009.3, PP. 29, 30.

After Cyclone Yasi damaged that wharf in 2011, it was renewed by CCRC using NDRRA funds and it was extended. It is now a concrete construction.



Red Wing, Brammo Bay, Dunk Is. c. 1930. John Scotty Wylie on right in the water, Fred Nobby Whiting in the water on left.



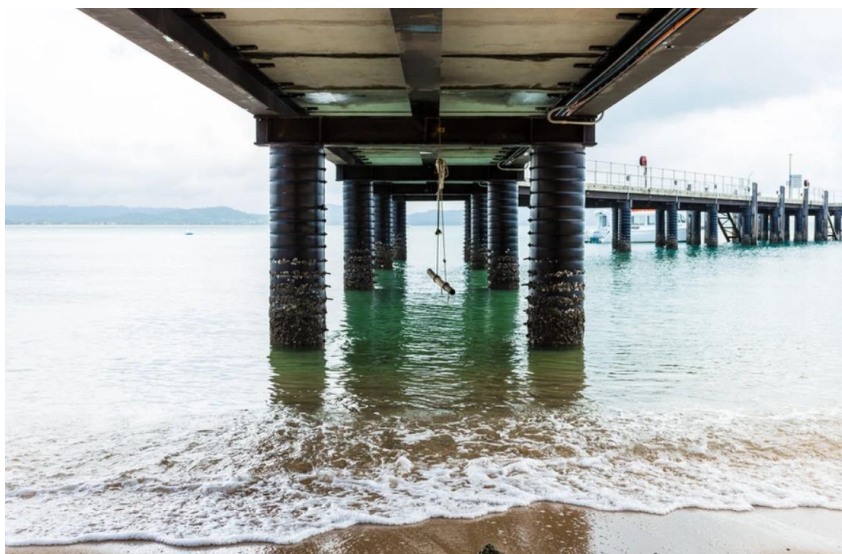
1970s: *Purtaboi* and *Purtaboi II* at Dunk jetty. Photo courtesy Sandra Harris.



Third pier built 1967 at Dunk Island, image taken late 1960s.



Current (5th) pier at Dunk Island.



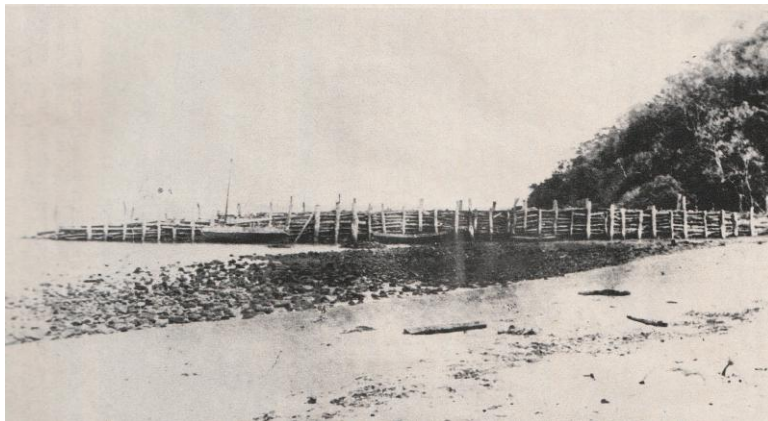
Current Dunk Jetty, substructure, image from TTNQ.

MAINLAND BEACHES (other than Narragon)

Over the years, some of the beaches had boating facilities built or planned yet while one boat ramp remains in use at South Mission Beach, none of these were a suitable solution for the district.

The first and only time that a pier was built on one of the eight mainland beaches in the district, other than at Narragon Beach, was at Bingil Bay when the Cutten family built a substantial rock and timber wharf on the south edge of the bay c. 1889. This jetty gave them some access to shipping but was far from being an ideal port. It was suitable for providing limited shelter for their small boats which they loaded up and took out to the coastal steamers waiting offshore. The coastal shipping companies needed loads of 10 tons guaranteed to stop at the area and sometimes the ships did not arrive when planned so the produce was wasted.¹⁴

Building the wharf was a mammoth undertaking for a private concern. It was over 80 metres long and built to last but was not spared by the monster cyclone of 1918. It was never rebuilt.



The 80-metre stone and timber breakwater with the Cutten's yacht and a dingy moored alongside.

In the 1960s, local boaties tried to create a boat ramp just north of the old Cutten jetty site and laid a mass of concrete and rocks there without approval, but it was transient and there are only remnant concrete lumps on the site today. It was never cleaned up after heavy seas destroyed the ramp.

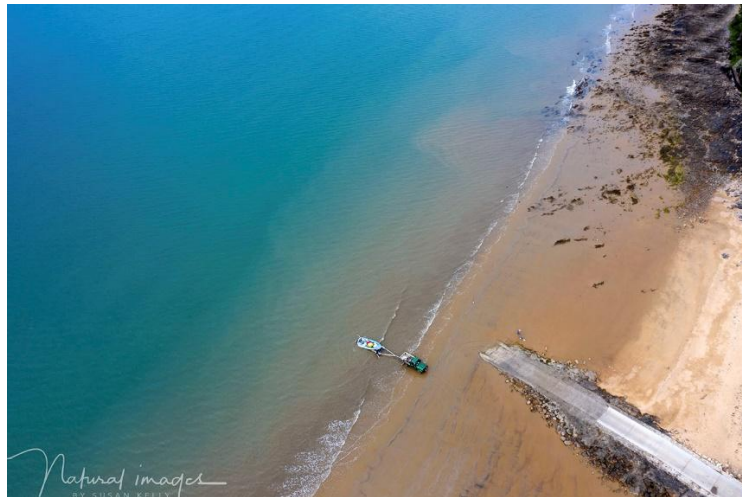


Bingil Bay, south end, remnants of a past boat ramp. Image courtesy Susan Kelly, *Natural Images*.

¹⁴ Ken Gray, *Bicton: The Cuttens of Clump Point*, Mission Beach Historical Society, H005, 2022, PP. 61 – 63.

From the 1950s, it was common for recreational boat owners to launch their tinnies on beaches and there was a large strip of concrete laid at the Council camping ground in 1964. It remains, largely covered in sand and a few still use this area and other parts of the beaches to launch and retrieve small boats, sometimes using tractors to do so.

However, this means of launching small motorboats has become decreasingly common since the district's new facility was built at Clump Point in 2020.



Launching the old way at the Council camping ground at Mission Beach. Susan Kelly, *Natural Images*.



Tractors are sometimes still used to launch boats at South Mission Beach today.

A boat ramp was built at South Mission Beach in 1969 by the Cardwell Shire Council (CSC) and it remains in use. It was first planned by CSC in July 1967 and the cost estimate was \$8,300. When it was approved in January 1968 the cost was budgeted at \$14,000 with CSC to pay \$7,000 and any cost over-runs and the State picked up the remainder. At the time, it was merely a couple of concrete slabs sitting on sand but in 1985 in a joint venture between CSC and Dunk Island owners Great Barrier Reef Resorts a strong concrete ramp was built for use by the Dunk Island barges. It was of 46 tonne capacity to allow transport of concrete trucks via barges to Dunk Island for the reconstruction of the airstrip there.

The ramp was upgraded by Council in 1995 then reconstructed after Cyclone Yasi in 2011.



South Mission Beach Boat Ramp, *Queensland Globe*. South Mission Beach Boat Ramp, image by Susan Kelly, *Natural Images*.

Long-term resident, Dave Nissen, who has owned boats all his life, has witnessed changes in the sand levels at South Mission Beach before and after this rock groyne was constructed. He recalls a windmill that was once located on the beach just north of the groyne and says that it would be 30 metres out in the sea if it existed today – such is the extent of erosion caused by that groyne.

Dave makes a good point when he observes that Councils usually construct sea walls and groynes to *prevent* erosion, but this one has *caused* massive erosion and environmental damage in his estimation. He demonstrates this by referring to the high costs of sand replenishment on South Mission Beach which would be unnecessary if the groyne had not been built. The evidence is quite compelling – even the drone image (above) shows a vast difference in the coastal alignment with the sand on the beach south of the groyne being at the pre-boat ramp levels and the land lost north of the groyne after it was built.

Dave points also to the ugly coarse sand on South Mission Beach caused by the sand replenishment program – they use river sand which has sharp rock particles in it, so the texture is far from being akin to soft beach sand.

EARLY FACILITIES at NARRAGON BEACH

The first, desperately needed infrastructure that the State government built for Mission Beach, after much lobbying, was a jetty at Narragon Beach, 2km south of *Bicton*. That was to allow coastal shipping to pick up freight safely from the Clump Point farms. This 'Clump Point Jetty' was completed in July 1917 and was only used three times before being destroyed in the March 1918 cyclone.

By the time the government built the jetty, shipping was scarce due to the intervention of the First World War. It was all too late for the Cutten family anyhow but would have been handy for new settlers in the district. However, the great majority of settlers in the area had left before the cyclone, because of the inability to ship produce to markets. They only started returning in the 1920s.

A new concrete jetty was constructed all but 50 years later, in mid-1963. The project was fully funded by the QLD Government. By then, the main purpose of the facility was to transfer tourists and supplies to Dunk and surrounding islands because Mission Beach had road access to the rail head at El Arish. It was also used extensively for Reef and island tours for tourists after 1966. That was pivotal to the region's economic growth.



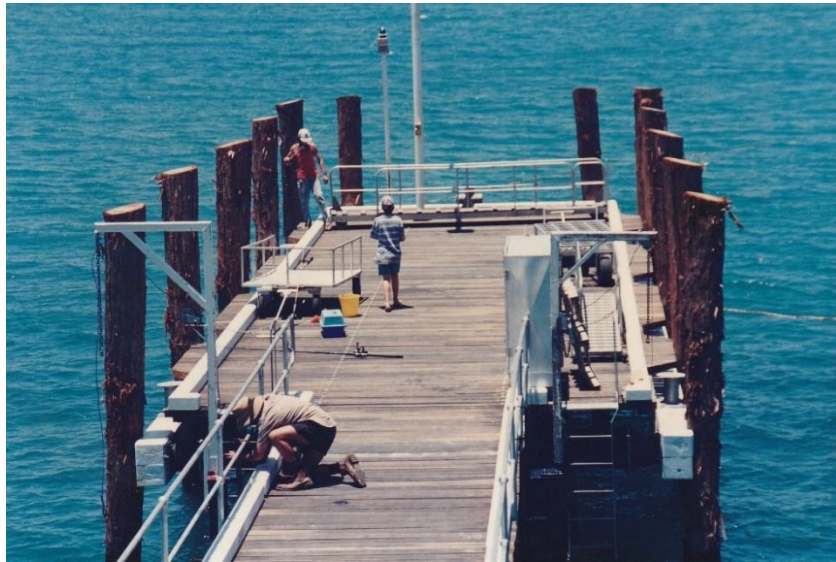
Second jetty at Boat Bay. Perry Harvey on the brand-new concrete jetty, May 1963.



Removing the old 1963 concrete jetty – new timber one (third jetty) alongside, 1994.



Second (concrete) jetty almost all gone, third (timber) built.



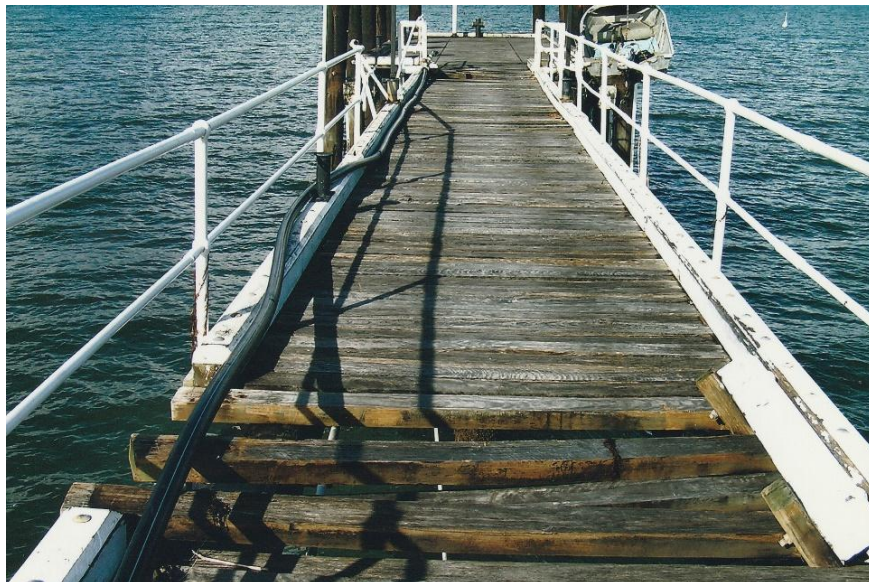
Third (timber) jetty is immediately popular.



Extensions to the jetty in September 1994. Image courtesy Don Campbell/



The third Clump Point Jetty; located at Boat Bay in the south corner of Narragon Beach.

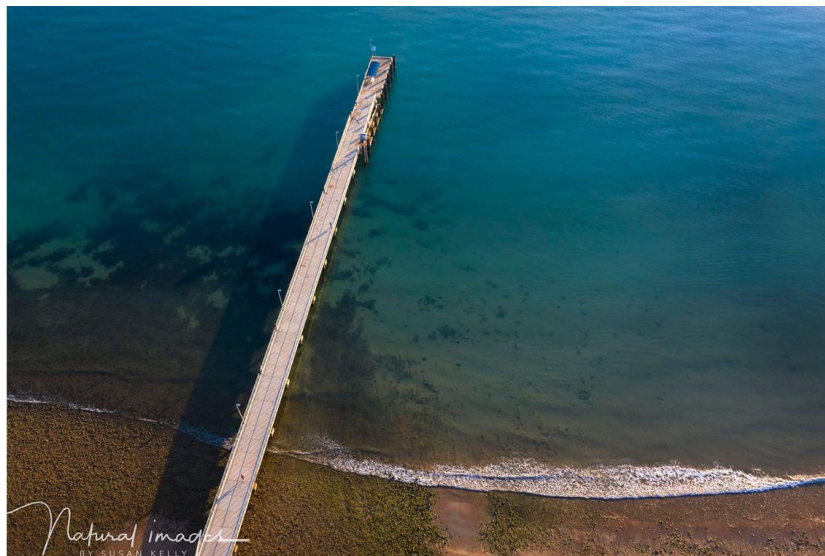


Some of the damage to the Clump Point jetty after Category 5 Cyclone Yasi in 2011.





Tourism infrastructure for Reef and Island Tours was also destroyed by Cyclone Yasi in 2011.



Jetty version 4: Perry Harvey Jetty at Narragon Beach. Completed in October 2013. Image Susan Kelly, *Natural Images*.

The current jetty (2013) was virtually condemned on the day it was opened. Council allowed the builders to place pile drivers on the deck and that cracked the concrete. The design was for 40 tonne loads and it was then limited to 1.5 tonnes. Further, because of its new location and design it was unsuitable for mooring of large vessels. It became a \$3M fishing pier.

It is well loved, nonetheless, but Council has declared that it is unwilling to depreciate it and allow for its future replacement ... that was not the fate of the Innisfail wharf of course.

The original boat ramp and rock wall built at Boat Bay was started in 1976 by locals. It was used by three Dunk Island barges and skipper; Danny Dade recalls that concrete trucks dumped unused concrete slurry in the rock crevices at low tide. That happened for almost a decade and it is more than 2 metres deep so could not be removed when the new facility was built there recently. In those days the barges came seven days a week back and forth and there were trucks there often so it was not a suitable site for recreational boats.

MARINA PROPOSALS

Don and Peter Wheatley were the first to propose a marina facility for the district in 1957. They had beachfront land at Wongaling Beach and started enquiring about the feasibility of building a marina there. Don recalled the occasion somewhat sadly and still felt it was a good idea and should not have been rejected:¹⁵

In 1957, Peter and I applied to Council to build a marina near Wheatley Creek. We had access to finance and owned the land and creek and we had machinery as well as a rock quarry and could access an engineer. Council was enthusiastic about the idea and held a full meeting on site. It was pretty much unanimous; the proposal was ideal. When Council applied for permission from the State Government, the answer was that the 'Beach Protection' department would not allow any development on the beachfront unless it was at least six chains from the high-water mark. So, disappointingly, it ended up as just another good idea.

The second marina proposal was at Tam O'Shanter Point in 1980 but that was not approved either. There was an outcry after Ansett declared plans to build a resort at Tam O'Shanter Point on Crown land and both projects were slapped down by protests in 1981-83. Tip Byrne, CSC Mayor, was all for both projects but the State Government was against exploitation of Crown reserve land.

At Boat Bay, on the south end of Narragon Beach, many proposals were put forward over the years for boating facilities, including marinas. The most advanced and persistent of these proposals started in 1993 when a group of four locals, Tony Lee, Mal Charlwood, Don Marsh, and Peter Heywood, started work to make that happen. After meeting with senior State Government officials, they were advised to start a commercial entity and Mission Beach Harbour Pty was born with the aim of making *Mission Cove Harbour* happen. The government at the time were not interested in building a marina and said the only way that the project could eventuate was via private investment.

Tony had a large motorboat that he kept moored off the beach at Wongaling near his home and wanted a safer place to moor it. He intensely believed that a marina was an essential facility to have in a successful tourist town. He was the main spokesman for the organisation for over 20 years.

Tony and Mal Charlwood made an impassioned presentation at the February 2013 meeting of the Mission Beach Community Association but the project was doomed. The four owners of Mission Beach Harbour Pty Ltd invested much capital in designing and proofing the project and conducted a community poll to demonstrate that, despite strong resistance from the environmental lobby, the project was favoured by most locals. The author of this paper questioned the validity of the poll at an MBCA meeting and asked those in the large audience to stand if they were in favour of the project: almost all stood in support of Tony and Mal, confirming the validity of their poll.

The project involved excavating the tidal mudflats at Boat Bay to create a 4-hectare island with a deep-water marina basin. The plan was for 170 berths and a 2-storey dry boat storage shed with a commercial centre, a swimming pool, tennis courts, a fuel dock, a clubhouse, and car parking. As the years went by the project became larger to make it commercially viable, but it was always going to take a huge investment to bring it to fruition. Private enterprise did not come to the rescue with a big bankroll and that was a stumbling block.

¹⁵ Ken Gray, *Wheatley Beach Tales*, Mission Beach Historical Society, H011, 2022, P. 34.



Proposed *Mission Cove* marina at Boat Bay.

The concept, while popular among local boaties, also had fierce opponents, so the community was divided. The campaign against the marina started early with several people demonstrating:



C4 (Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation) *Saving Boat Bay* campaign c. 2005. Images courtesy Brenda Harvey.

A case was made on environmental and cultural grounds. The anti-marina campaign claims included:¹⁶

- Clump Point had a unique basalt-soil-based rainforest that must not be compromised.
- The large basalt boulders in the mud flats are unique and provide a tourist attraction.
- A vulnerable bird species is dependent on the mud flats (Beach Stone Curlew) as are turtle species relying on the seagrass meadows in the area.
- Clump Point is the most significant cultural site in the district for the Djiru people,¹⁷ and the project could threaten that as well.

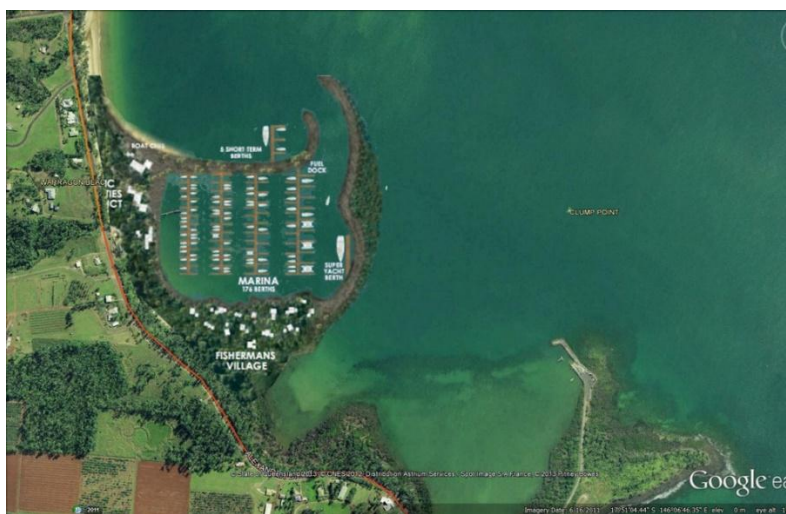
Boat Bay was reserved for marine infrastructure development in the 1970s, but in August 2011 that loophole was closed when the reserve was withdrawn by the QLD Government, ultimately, the marina was not approved, and the community retained the area in its natural state.

¹⁶ Liz Gallie, *Marina Proposal*, Mission Beach Cassowaries, accessed online December 2022 at <https://www.missionbeachcassowaries.com/marina-proposal.html>

¹⁷ Philip Pentecost, *Indigenous cultural significance assessment Mission Beach - An initiative of FNQ NRM Ltd*, produced for The Djiru Traditional Owners in conjunction with Giringun Aboriginal Corp., October 2007, accessed online December 2022 at: <https://www.wettropicsplan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Indigenous-cultural-significance-assessment.pdf>



Mission Cove marina proposal by Mission Beach Harbour Pty Ltd.



The Castaways super-marina concept proposal.

Castaways presented a marina that also failed to gain any traction. In July 2012, Tony Lee and Mal Charlwood presented their case in the *Tully Times* once more and said that many people thought it was a proposal for high rise development, but it was simply a safe boating harbour with up to 200 marina berths and a refuelling facility. Tony continued to encourage the State Government to adopt the Mission Cove Marina project instead of the DSD design but the government said the marina project would be well beyond the budget they had. Tony had surveyed the community earlier and found that 73.6% of residents supported his marina proposal. He said that a marina was essential for the Mission beach economy and that this private proposal was the best outcome for the State, providing far superior safety outcomes for boats.

In October 2013, the State Government was emphatic, saying they would not investigate the possibility of a marina at Boat Bay. That ended the dream of a marina. It seems unlikely that such a substantial project would ever be approved at this location with the retraction of the State Infrastructure Reserve and a stronger focus on First Nations people and their important cultural sites.

Compared to the marina proposals, the Clump Point Boating Facility that was built eventually is minuscule, yet the degree of difficulty in negotiating a middle ground was high. It seems unlikely that the 2020 facility will be expanded any time soon, despite demand already exceeding its capacity in terms of recreational boats. Mission Beach needs a marina, but the costs of such projects are greatly escalated when the sites present complex problems or strongly conflicting views.