

Quarantine Station Community Consultative Committee

Annual Report March 2021-April 2022

Independent Chairperson: Sandy Hoy

Co-proponent contacts:

- ❑ National Parks and Wildlife Service – Chad Weston, Jessica Dargan
- ❑ Mawland Quarantine Station – Max Player, Suzanne Stanton (until February 2022)
- ❑ North Head Sydney - Glenn Piper (February 2022 onwards).

1 Background

A permanent Quarantine Station was established at North Head in Manly in 1838 to quarantine people arriving in Sydney by ship to prevent the spread of disease to the colony. The Quarantine Station ceased operation in 1984, after which its management was transferred to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

The 27-hectare site comprises numerous historic buildings and roads, with a stunning backdrop of the native vegetation of Sydney Harbour National Park at the entrance to Sydney Harbour.

The NSW Minister for the Environment and Mawland Quarantine Station Pty Ltd (Mawland) signed a lease on 26 October 2006 for the North Head Quarantine Station Conservation and Adaptive Reuse Project. Mawland and the NSW Minister for the Environment/NPWS have been co-proponents for a period of 15 years to adapt the Quarantine Station site for cultural tourism purposes under a 21-year planning approval expiring in 2027, with further options for renewal. In late 2021 Mawland put the leasehold up for sale, with North Head Sydney the successful purchaser. It is understood at the time of writing that settlement of the sale is imminent, subject to approval from NPWS.

Q Station, as it is now known, has been operating since 2008 consistent with its approved uses for accommodation, conferences and functions, restaurant, visitor centre with a museum and cafe, environmental and cultural study centre, and guided tours. Open Days for the public are regularly held. Informal access to the site by the public is encouraged.

The Conditions of Planning Approval (CoPA) require that a Quarantine Station Community Consultative Committee be established for the term of the project. 64 meetings of the QSCCC were held until November 2018 when a process for inviting expressions of interest for nomination of members for a new QSCCC for a four-year term was undertaken by NPWS in late 2018-early 2019.

Sandy Hoy was appointed by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) as the Independent Chairperson of the QSCCC on 27 February 2019.

QSCCC members were selected from the nominations by the independent chairperson according to the criteria set out in the Quarantine Station Community Consultative Committee Terms of Reference, Conditions of Planning Approval (CoPA), and the DPE Guidelines for Community Consultative Committees for State Significant Developments (January 2019).

Several current QSCCC members were members of the previous committee, including the former chairperson Cathy Griffin. Their knowledge and continuity of connection to Q Station has greatly benefited the current QSCCC.

Members selected for the QSCCC signed a code of conduct and submitted a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

2 Membership and attendance

The QSCCC is chaired by Independent Chairperson Sandy Hoy, and comprised the following members in 2021-22:

Organisation / interest	Name	Meeting attendance			
		12 May 2021 (on-site)	11 August 2021 (online)	10 November 2021 (on-site)	9 February 2022 (on-site)
Community representatives	Cathy Griffin	apology	✓	✓	✓
	Adele Heasman	✓	✓	apology	✓
	Virginia Macleod	✓	✓	✓	apology
	Doug Sewell	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jennifer Wilson	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Beaches Council (elected representative)	Cr Candy Bingham	✓	✓	✓	✓
NPWS (co-proponent)	Chad Weston	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jessica Dargan	apology	apology		
	Rebecca Yit			✓	✓
Mawland (co-proponent)	Max Player	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Suzanne Stanton	✓	✓	✓	✓
North Head Sydney (prospective lease holder/co-proponent)	Glenn Piper				✓
	Alex Erasmus				✓
Independent Chairperson	Sandy Hoy	✓	✓	✓	✓

The August 2021 meeting was held online via Zoom due to the COVID-19 lockdown affecting Sydney.

There were no resignations from the QSCCC in 2021-22.

Jessica Dargan moved to a temporary role elsewhere in NPWS before the May 2021 meeting. Rebecca Yit took up the Environmental Liaison Officer role in November 2021 until March 2022.

Glenn Piper and Alex Erasmus attended the February 2022 meeting as representatives of potential lease holder North Head Sydney, subject to transfer of the lease from Mawland to North Head Sydney which is understood to be imminent at the time of writing.

Attendance at the quarterly meetings is consistently high, reflecting the interest and commitment of the QSCCC members. Occasional apologies are received mainly due to

unavoidable prior commitments. The QSCCC sets meeting dates 12 months in advance to avoid potential diary conflicts.

There is good rapport among all QSCCC members who understand the site, the issues and their roles well. Co-proponents NPWS and Mawland are co-operative and responsive to questions, feedback and issues raised by community members.

The community members of the QSCCC have a valuable contribution as a “sounding board” for NPWS and Mawland, providing advice and feedback to NPWS and Mawland from the various perspectives of community member, local resident, site visitor, activity participant, and overnight guest. The community members also act as a conduit between NPWS and Mawland and local community groups (such as Friends of Quarantine Station and North Head Sanctuary Foundation), Northern Beaches Council, and the State Member of Parliament for Manly.

It is expected this productive relationship will continue between the new co-proponent North Head Sydney, NPWS, and the community members.

Feedback from community members about the QSCCC meetings includes that the committee is working well with good working relationships. Meetings are considered to be well run with detailed minutes provided.

All co-proponents and committee members have their own fields of interest/responsibility and strongly-held views. Issues are discussed and any disagreements are resolved amicably in a positive, supportive way and in the best interests of Q Station.

As of April 2022 there are two vacant positions for community members on the QSCCC. NPWS intends to advertise for Expressions of Interest for nominations to fill the vacancies.

3 Activities of QSCCC over the past 12 months

The QSCCC operates according to the Department of Planning and Environment’s Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects 2019, and the CoPA. DPE has advised that the CoPA for QSCCC take precedence over any inconsistency with the DPE CCC Guidelines.

Meetings were held at the Quarantine Station, 1 North Head Scenic Drive at Manly on 12 May 2021, 10 November 2021, and 9 February 2022. The meeting on 11 August 2021 was held online via Zoom due to public gathering and social distancing restrictions.

Minutes are prepared after each meeting and are approved by the committee members at the following meeting with amendments if required. Following approval of the minutes a summary of the meeting minutes is placed by NPWS and Mawland on their respective websites: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NPWS/AdvisoryCommittees.htm> and <https://www.qstation.com.au/our-story.html>

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the Sydney lockdown in 2021, activities that QSCCC members participated in at Q Station during the year were limited to the opening of *Les Sculptures Refusees* on 18 November 2021. The sculptures were on display at Q Station until 27 January 2022.

No joint meetings were held with any other CCCs.

4 Key issues

The Sydney lockdown from 26 June to 11 October 2021 had a significant operational and financial impact on Q Station. Booked accommodation and planned events and activities at Q Station often needed to be postponed or cancelled at short notice.

Compliance with the CoPA in relation to Community Open Days was particularly difficult in 2021 due to COVID-19. Community Open Days were not able to be held in their usual form on-site due to closure of Q Station and social distancing and public gathering restrictions. The sculpture exhibition *Les Sculptures Refusees* from November 2021-January 2022 was held in lieu of an Open Day.

It is understood that visitation, occupancy and normal operations at Q Station are slowly improving in early 2022 with the relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions.

5 Meeting reports

NPWS provided a report at each meeting on:

- environmental audits and monitoring
- annual compliance reports
- walking tracks
- vegetation and weed management – Pampas Grass
- wildlife management – Little Penguin monitoring, Long-nosed Bandicoot survey
- pest management – rabbits, foxes
- fire planning and management – hazard reduction, fire plans, vegetation management
- North Head Precinct planning.

Mawland provided a report for discussion at each meeting covering topics including:

- day-to-day operations
- conference and function bookings
- key staff changes
- visitation
- activities such as tours, events, Saturday Sessions
- excursions, education programs and support for local schools
- activation of buildings and spaces with compatible activities
- support for school students, artists and sculptors through providing a venue for preparation and/or display of their work
- partnership with local tour operator for walking tours
- site maintenance
- building refurbishments and other works
- impact of COVID-19 restrictions
- response to rain, fire, rock and tree falls, and other events which impact on the site
- tourism award submissions
- early exercise of the option to renew the lease of Quarantine Station before 2026-2027
- preparation of environmental reports to DPE
- update and review of the Moveable Heritage and Resources Plan
- application for National Heritage Grant for an immersive exhibition to interpret the Wharf Precinct and heritage of Q Station
- ceremony and plaque to recognise nurses Annie Egan and Elizabeth McGregor in the Hospital Precinct in December 2021.

In addition to discussing the above topics and issues, members of the Committee have raised issues and suggestions such as:

- improving the safety of people using the funicular stairs
- interpretation of the heritage significance of the P11 building stairs
- feedback on their experience as a guest or visitor at Q Station.

QSCCC members have supported Q Station with requesting improved bus services to North Head by Transport for NSW, and for NRMA/My Fast Ferry to reinstate the ferry service to Quarantine Wharf.

QSCCC members have also reviewed and commented on environmental reports and the Audit Report.

The February 2022 meeting marked the 75th QSCCC meeting attended by Max Player and Suzanne Stanton of Mawland. The QSCCC members thanked Max and Suzanne for their efforts to establish and operate Q Station over the past 25 years, and wished them well for the future.

The February 2022 meeting also marked the first QSCCC meeting attended by Glenn Piper of North Head Sydney. The QSCCC looks forward to working with Glenn and North Head Sydney as co-proponent from now on.

6 Focus for the next 12 months

Quarterly meetings of the QSCCC are planned to continue in 2022-23.

The settlement and handover of the leasehold from Mawland to North Head Sydney is a key process in 2022 that will influence ongoing management direction and operations of Q Station.

The planned activities of the QSCCC for 2022-23 will be guided by the contributions and interest of the QSCCC members, and ongoing and arising management direction and issues raised by NPWS and North Head Sydney. Such activities will include:

- providing ideas, feedback and support to NPWS and North Head Sydney for the ongoing activation of and increasing visitation to Q Station, and identifying management issues
- close involvement in the review of site-wide management plans and environmental monitoring and audit reports to provide informed feedback and recommendations to the co-proponents
- continuing to liaise with community and interest groups and with Northern Beaches Council on Quarantine Station related matters.



Sandy Hoy

Independent Chairperson, Quarantine Station Community Consultative Committee

29 April 2022

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