

'LAKE BALLARD' ASSOCIATION (Inc.)

SHIRE OF MENZIES
PO BOX 4
MENZIES WA 6436

Phone: 9024 2041
Fax: 9024 2110
Registered No: A1013272U



The Principal Research Officer
Community Development and Justice Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Yr. Ref:
Our Ref: LBA
Officer: Brian W Seale : drs

INQUIRY INTO THE "INSIDE AUSTRALIA" PROJECT AT LAKE BALLARD (MENZIES)

Discussion Paper to Assist the Lake Ballard Association with the Preparation of a Submission to this Inquiry

INTRODUCTION

Part of the terms of reference appear to refer directly to the sculptures which are now held by the State of Western Australia and which are not directly the responsibility of the Lake Ballard Association (LBA).

The LBA has the management order for the reserve area containing the sculptures. A management order is a form of title which provides the LBA with strong management rights over this reserve. It is not unreasonable to say that the management order is a form of ownership title over this reserve area – although the Crown can take back control if it deems necessary.

It is clear that there does need to be a close working relationship between the State agency (Department of Culture and the Arts) responsible for the maintenance of the sculptures and the LBA.

The formation of the Lake Ballard Advisory Committee, it would seem provides an ideal way for agencies and groups to provide expert advice to the LBA about various issues affecting the management of this reserve containing the sculptures.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This Inquiry has identified a series of terms of reference which it will address and which the LBA will need to comment on in this submission.

The following comments are made in relation to these terms of reference:

a. The history behind the instigation of this project, providing in particular information about the original scope and vision for this project

The history to this project could be broken up into the following categories:

- Approach by Gormley through Perth International Arts Festival (PIAF) to place the sculptures on Lake Ballard;
- The preparation and installation of the sculptures involving the people from the Menzies region;
- The negotiations which took place between the Shire of Menzies, Goldfields Land and Sea Council, Wutha people, Wongatha people, Department of Planning and infrastructure, Department of Culture and Arts and Antony Gormley;
- The formation of the **Lake Ballard Advisory Committee**;
- The formation of the **Lake Ballard Association (Incorporated)** comprising of four (4) Shire members and four (4) Traditional Owners;
- the preparation of the Site Master Plan by Richard Hammond;
- The issuing of the management order to the LBA;
- The preparation of the Land Management Plan by Ecoscape
- The donation of the sculptures to the State of WA
- The construction of the camping ground and associated infrastructure.

b. The role taken by the Department of Culture and Arts and the Art Gallery of Western Australia and other government departments and agencies in reference to this project

The Art Gallery of Western Australia holds the ownership of the sculptures on behalf of the State of Western Australia.

The responsibilities of the Art Gallery include the securing of funding to ensure there is adequate money to carry out maintenance and where necessary replace sculptures.

c. The costs and benefits and role this art installation project is currently providing to the local community of Menzies, the wider Goldfields region, and to the wider Australian community

It is difficult to provide these details within such a short timeframe.

BENEFITS

The following benefits are apparent:

- Due to the presence of this Gormley art, the Goldfields region (including Menzies) is now more internationally known;
- An increase in tourists to Menzies and to Lake Ballard;
- An increased demand on accommodation in Menzies;
- An increase in tourism ventures involving Lake Ballard;

Perhaps this Term of Reference could also have asked what social benefits this project is having on the community of Menzies and the broader region.

This project offers a real sense of uniting Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people including

- Willing involvement of the Aboriginal people of the Menzies region in the actual sculptures and assistance to Antony Gormley and his team; and
- A positive joint initiative between the Shire of Menzies and Traditional Owners of the region.

If there is a unified approach and support for this project (including its governance structure) from State agencies then it is apparent that a key benefit for future tourism and economic benefit is the involvement of Aboriginal people in this project.

It is clear that international visitors to Australia are interested in Aboriginal culture.

Costs include the following:

- Maintenance of roads between Menzies and Lake Ballard;
- Maintenance of the camping ground area including:
 - Fencing repairs
 - Toilet maintenance
 - Water provision
 - Signage
 - Access tracks and parking
 - Protection of surrounding bush
 - Protection and recognition of Aboriginal culture
 - Provision of firewood
 - Provision of caretaker facilities
 - Other costs identified in the Lake Ballard Management Plan prepared by Ecoscape

- Maintenance of the sculptures – more a State Agency responsibility but which affects the integrity of the art display and therefore the entire project – which affects the community of Menzies;
- Costs associated with marketing as identified in the Draft Marketing Plan prepared by Department of Tourism

d. Any support that is needed to assist the Shire of Menzies and the local Menzies community in helping maintain and protect the project

Suggested areas requiring financial support include:

- Support for Aboriginal Tourism ventures
- Accommodation in Menzies including camping facilities and more up market accommodation;
- Maintenance of roads between Menzies and Lake Ballard;
- Maintenance of the camping ground area including:
 - Fencing repairs
 - Toilet maintenance
 - Water provision
 - Signage
 - Access tracks and parking
 - Protection of surrounding bush
 - Protection and recognition of Aboriginal culture
 - Provision of firewood
 - Provision of caretaker facilities
 - Etc
- Maintenance of the sculptures – more a State Agency responsibility but which affects the integrity of the art display and therefore the entire project – which affects the community of Menzies;
- Marketing and other associated costs
- Ranger programs
- Other infrastructure such as an airstrip

e. What steps, if any, need to be taken to promote this project as a significant visitor destination in WA

Suggested responses:

- Support for marketing campaigns
- Support for Department of Tourism
- Support for LBA to conduct its own marketing campaign
- Support for Aboriginal tourism ventures and marketing

f. The risks associated with any ongoing deterioration of or damage to the project

This is presumably referring to the sculptures which will need to be addressed by the Department of Culture and Arts

Other risks which should be covered include damage or deterioration of the camping infrastructure which may need replacing from time to time – partly covered in d. above

What is clear, however, is that the above information addressing the future maintenance of the sculptures needs to be shared with the LBA as it will need to prepare its own economic forecasts for the future which should be included in a business plan looking at the future economic viability of this project.

g. The opportunities for fully completing this project in accordance with the original scope and vision of the project

Again it is unclear exactly what this Term of Reference is referring to but it could be taken to include:

- The completion and installation of another 51 sculptures;
- The construction of buildings on the reserve near the camping ground;
- Other

Any expansion of this project will need to address:

- Endorsement by the LBA
- Environmental concerns including the proposed Ramsar Listing
- Protection of Aboriginal culture and heritage
- Economic costs and who pays
- Future Mining interests in the area (including on Lake Ballard)

h. What organizational framework and financial support is necessary to protect this project into the future

The State Government and its agencies should be providing every opportunity (including financial support) to ensure the existing governance structure is supported.

The governance structure involves a unique joint involvement of the Traditional Owners and the Shire of Menzies.

In addition one Aboriginal person represents the Shire as a member on the LBA.

The Shire should be congratulated and supported for its commitment to involve Aboriginal people in the governance of this reserve.

As stated earlier the LBA has the "Ownership" of the reserve which contains the sculptures with the Lake Ballard Advisory Group acting as a support and advisory group which makes various recommendations to the LBA.

The following governance issues should be addressed:

- Full support for the LBA;
- Financial support for meeting payments and travel costs for LBA members;
- An enthusiastic involvement by State agencies and other groups on the Lake Ballard Advisory Group;
- A coordinated approach between the "Owners" of the sculptures and the "Owners" of the :

i. What opportunities and benefits, if any, exist for additional art installation projects of this type in WA

The uniqueness of this project should be recognised by the State. Any similar projects elsewhere in the State could have the potential to detract from this project.

CONCLUSION

- (a) The State Government should be providing full support towards this unique governance structure involving the Shire of Menzies and the Traditional Owners of the Menzies region;
- (b) It should be recognising the involvement of other Aboriginal people who have participated in this project and who sit on the LBA as Shire of Menzies representatives;

- (c) The involvement of Aboriginal people in this project provides the opportunity to market this project internationally as having a strong Aboriginal aspect including importantly Aboriginal culture;
- (d) This project has provided an increase in tourism which will involve an upgrade of tourist facilities in Menzies including accommodation and amenities;
- (e) This project provides an improved economic benefit for the people of Menzies and surrounding areas (within the Shire of Menzies) – who have willingly participated in this project from its inception.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Seale', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Brian Seale
Secretary
LAKE BALLARD ASSOCIATION (Incorporated)

October 9th 2009 :drs

Emailed on October 9th, 2009: lacdjsc@parliament.wa.gov.au