

Tuross Head Progress Association Incorporated

ABN 36038514293 Y11838-28

PO Box 3044

Tuross Head

NSW 2537

September 10th, 2011

The General Manager

The Eurobodalla Shire Council

PO Box 99

Moruya

NSW 2537

RE: The Dulcie Imrie Commemorative Seat and the Tuross Head streetscape

Dear Paul,

The THPA was recently emailed by Councillor Lindsay Brown asking what funds were held by the Progress Association for the provision of a commemorative seat for Dulcie to be placed along the cyclepath at a place to yet be determined.

His enquiry was bought about through his understanding that only \$1000 was held by the THPA and he wished to advise that Council would need \$3000 of more to provide the bench.

He wrote "the cost I have is around \$3k, however that is installed by Council and I was wondering if the seat was supplied at cost by council and the THPA arranged volunteers and paid or had donated the concrete required whether that would be a way to have it installed at lower cost?"

As you can imagine we are more than surprised to hear that a park bench now costs more than \$3000 to supply and install.

Our response to Councillor Brown presented the following

The style of seat that Council has THRUST on Tuross to establish a theme is not, nor has ever been, to the liking of those few who were "consulted" several years ago when the McWilliam Park Plan of Management was devised by a consultant landscaper.

- the cast iron option that is now in excess of \$3000 installed rusts and is visually fragile. It is unnecessarily ornate and looks contrived, best suiting the

more glamorized and sadly cloned streetscapes of Batemans Bay and Narooma - Tuross is an honest little town and all we want are honest functional seats as per the exceptional examples at Plantation Point Memorial Gardens and at Tarrandore Point. But sadly no-one bothered to listen and we now have a collection of these cast-iron contrivances, much to our embarrassment.

These seats meet our approval. They are solid, functional, honest, affordable, require little maintenance and have weathered storms and sea for many years and still serve this community well. In this day and age we are also very aware of environmental sustainability and are more than open to looking at the range of stylish and affordable recycled plastic park benches that are being picked up by Councils all around Australia – the following link is to a style of seat that we might consider that costs around \$900

http://www.replas.com.au/prod_pkfurn_seats_daintree.shtml



Some of the existing timber seats in Tuross:



Above: The benches at the Memorial Gardens



Above: the bench at Tarrandore Point

- Sadly the Council preferred cast iron seats rust and need to be removed to be refurbished - if you check the records you will find that it takes an embarrassing amount of time for them to reappear sandblasted and painted - all the while leaving just an empty slab to amuse passers-by and remove the opportunity of amenity.



Above: the rust to the Cast iron “Tuross Head” seats on Tuross Boulevard

We advised Councillor Lindsay Brown that the THPA does have \$1000 and will pass that on when required to purchase a seat and advised him that if Council still wishes to dictate it's awful taste and inappropriate seat selection then they might consider that that choice be funded from pockets that all too often cut ribbons and kiss babies but seem to be failing in considering the maintenance, replacement and the users pleasure, both functionally and aesthetically.

From further correspondence with Councillor Lindsay Brown he advised that:

- a compliant seat is required (insurance etc)
- he has sought from Council staff the seats available to suit the commemorative seat, info on costings, specifications, standards, description, design, requirements such as with or without arm rests so that a price comparison can be made to other seats available on the market that the THPA or Imrie's may prefer or supply.

Apparently this process is similar to other requests he is dealing with and I have been advised that the Narooma Quota Club are also being directed to purchase a \$3000 seat for their own commemorative project. I have also been told that their

initial request for a simple flat bench was met with a reply stating that a back was required for OH&S reasons and a flat seat would not be permitted. One concern in regards to OH&S with the preferred Council seat is that the iron becomes very hot in summer and as such offers risk to pedestrians. Steel slippery dips were removed for this very same reason.

In turn Moruya South Head were directed to the preferred cast iron seat style of Council and this chair was eventually paid for by Rotary. Will Rotary however meet the inevitable expensive maintenance costs and long term replacement cost or will that be met by the ratepayer. Taking on short term “gifts” is irresponsible to the future bottom line.

Before we continue any further with set or picnic table installations or replacements the THPA would like to initiate discussions with Council to determine a choice of public furniture that suits both parties in terms of aesthetics and affordability.

Presently in Tuross there is no single theme of park bench as can be seen from the array of seats below and now that we are advised of the installation costs in excess of \$3000 of the preferred Council option it is imperative that a more affordable solution be found.



Above: just some of the many and varied styles of public seating in Tuross.

Whilst we are going through this process it would be well timed to establish a preferred, affordable, functional and suitable replacement for our many picnic tables as the ones recently installed at Sandy Point and Evans Reserve were without precedent in this town and certainly if these new ones now represent Councils preferred style then we will want to investigate the long term affordability and serviceability to the ratepayer of this more expensive option.



Above: Five of the various picnic table styles in Tuross



Above: The new style of picnic table at Sandy Point and Evans Park as funded by the Federal Government

In a nutshell:

The THPA wishes to establish exactly what design/material criteria does Tuross Head need to comply with for the installation of future park benches and picnic table/shelters it wishes to see installed around the village. It is understood that no such directive exists under Statewide Mutual's Best Practice manuals nor in any draft manual by Councils insurer.

Other than the criteria that seats should be designed to avoid entrapment hazards (as per Australian Standard AS 1924.2 for head entrapment and Design Standard 15 Playgrounds and Playground Equipment for finger entrapment) what other considerations does Council wish to ensure in its street furniture.

I would like to direct you to one of the most thorough of urban streetscape design documents presently in publication in Australia being the DESIGN STANDARDS for URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0013/12505/ds19_bbq.pdf

The document identifies that street furniture needs to::

- exhibit high resistance to vandalism
- be durable against weathering and deterioration
- be suitable for use by people with a wide range of needs including children, the aged and people with disabilities
- have a low whole-of-life cost.

We wish to establish a style of picnic table and park bench that is affordable and financially sustainable for the Tuross Head community. Whilst the recently Federally funded picnic tables are stylish and modern they are contrary to the style of this town and certainly will not be affordable when it comes time to replacement.

A cast iron option at \$3000 installed does not suit this seaside location as the village is surrounded by corrosive saltwater with its endless saline se mists. With the

inevitable rusting and the recurrent high maintenance needs of these Council preferred benches they have now proven themselves to be financially irresponsible.

We would like to thank Councillor Lindsay Brown in drawing our attention to the costs of a new bench. The correspondence has reminded us of the many requests this Association made to Council over the years to establish a Town Vision for Tuross Head such as has been set in place in other townships throughout the Shire.

With the cycleway nearing completion Tuross will be attracting more and more visitors and it is anticipated that more seating facilities will be put in place to accommodate the increased numbers and infill what is now a sparse distribution of seating..

Dulcie Imrie's Commemorative Seat will be one of many new seats added into our parks and reserves at locations of our choosing in consultation with Council.

Additionally the THPA will be looking to upgrade some of the villages' existing benches and to also request upgrade of some of our existing picnic tables when they reach the end of their serviceable life.

We look forward to obtaining, in writing, the definitive guidelines Councils requires for new public seating and picnic tables so that we can best determine the seats we will pursue based on functionality and value for service and put these to the community for opinion. It is our understanding that there is no Australian Standard for park benches so we wait with interest to see how Council has determined such standards as "requiring bench backs due to OH&S requirements" as advised to Quota Narooma.

Once we sight the standards and determine the best option that suits this village we can move ahead on a variety of new bench and picnic table/shelter projects that might well be funded from the sale of the Progress Hall land, should that be the wish of the Tuross community.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely
Lei Parker
Secretary