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## Flogging a dead horse

Is the boat ramp dead in the water?

The chances of getting this ramp built are close to zero. The Council made it very clear to the Trust that some serious experts in the community raised major concerns about almost every aspect of the proposal (see Sonja Lani's very good analysis in the latest Coastal news).

​Mr Marshall says the Trust has no more money and the Council should now pick up the tab.

Councillors are now very nervous (watch the discussion here):

* They doubt the Trust can fund the rest of the consent process.
* They doubt the consent will be granted. Mr Marshall was not convincing about how the risks would be managed.
* They know there are people in the community who will fund a legal challenge to the Environment Court in the unlikely event that consent is granted. Costs for that will fall on the Council.
* They are aware that even with a consent, the Trust will have to get a license to occupy which will involve another community consultation process.
* They observed that the Trust's 'bullish' approach to consultation has alienated the community, making it doubtful they could raise the money to build the ramp (Mr Marshall says there are millions of dollars of donations in the wings, waiting on consent).

​​The Trust is not going to get a ramp built in the Waterfront Park. It should withdraw its application and let the community implement what was in the 2018 Mapua Master Plan - before the Trust persuaded the Council to abandon it in 2019.

​The Council clearly regrets that now, and wants the whole thing to go away. It has been an enormous distraction for everyone at Council, and no one would be happier to see the Trust do the decent thing by pulling the plug.

​To help that process our Action Group is applying to the Council for support to build what was promised in 2018: shade sails, more seating, public BBQs, a small playground and outdoor exercise equipment while still retaining the green space. We also want an interpretive panel telling the extraordinary story of how the community rescued NZ's most contaminated site and turned it into a community park.

​The Council will then have to make a choice: continue to support a ramp that's already dead in the water or honour their promise to the community to finish the park.

## MCBRT behavior

Teaser: MCBRT: Misleading and Aggressive

The Trust, led by Mr Marshall, is consistently dismissive of anyone who doesn’t agree with them.

Mr Marshall made a misleading and arrogant comment when he said in his presentation ‘One of the big problems we have is submitters from outside, some of the submitters are from Port Chalmers, from Dunedin...'  Actually there were ten from out of region, and they were all from people who have deep and long-standing ties with Mapua. Some of their submissions were the most heart-felt and compelling.

In fact, most of the submissions from outside Māpua are from submitters *in support*of the proposal, who live in places like Nelson, Richmond, Brightwater, and Christchurch. Apparently these aren’t a big problem.

According to Mr Marshall a lot of these submissions are from people who ‘object for the sake of objecting.’

That comment is an insult to the many people who put hours into analysing and responding to the Trust’s shonky submission. If we’re flaky objectors, how come the Trust has had to pause the application?

We should be grateful to the Resource Management process, even if the Trust sought to abuse it by bamboozling us with volume and density. Imagine if the ramp had been allowed to go ahead without the scrutiny of such highly qualified experts in the community. Mr Marshall should be paying us rather than his ‘volunteers’.

Mr Marshall should pay more heed to the community, as 153 points out:

'The Māpua Boat Ramp Community Trust appears to have attempted to position themselves as representing ‘the voice’ of the Māpua community. In doing so they appear to

(1) overlook or seek to silence the genuine and reasonable concerns that so many people in Māpua and wider Tasman community [and wider public] have;

(2) provide information and surveys about so-called ‘support’ from the community without providing the necessary information, context, and methodology that would lend any credibility to that information;

(3) overlook that the democratically constituted Māpua Community Association has taken a publicly declared neutral position on this consent application;

(4) forget that it was members of the Māpua community that fought to get the land and estuary remediated and turned into Māpua Waterfront Park in the first place; and

(5) overlook or seek to silence the voices of people who don’t live in Māpua, yet what happens to the land and estuary affects not only Māpua residents, but also former and future residents, family members, visitors, and the wider public.

## MCBRT behavior 2

Teaser: ‘Misleading and aggressive promotion of the boat ramp

120. ‘This has been an ongoing issue as the Boat Club and its offshoot Māpua Community Boat Ramp Trust have pushed hard for a boat ramp in the Waterfront Park.

1) In this submission, as in many public gatherings, the Boat Club have opened with the history of the boat ramp. Nowhere in the RMA is there a history of the Waterfront Park which is well documented here environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/cleaning-up-mapuafcc-story.pdf.

That documents ends (in the Conclusion) “A condition of the Government’s funding was that at least 40 per cent of the FCC site would remain as public land. This has led TDC, in consultation with the local community, to develop a waterfront park on part of the eastern part of the site.” Yes, the Boat Club has offered to swap Grossi Point for the area they occupy, but Grossi Point is not theirs to offer in a swap, and anyway Grossi Point was there before the TDC offered part of the Eastern side of the Waterfront Park to the Community. The Waterfront Park is not there for the Boat Club to take from green space.

By the Boat Club’s own [estimates](http://www.ourmapua.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/boat-club-submission.pdf) only one in eight Māpua residents have boats, and a sizeable number of those have Kayaks which do not need a ramp to launch. There needs to be a proper Council survey (not by the Boat Club) of the number of Māpua residents who have boats and will actually benefit from the proposed boat ramp.

2) The Boat Club consistently said that the MDCA supports a boat ramp. Firstly, yes, a motion was passed saying that “It was moved that Mapua and Districts Association acknowledge that they are in support of and recognise the need, for the establishment of a boat ramp in the community. ” Note no mention of its location in the Waterfront Park. However it should be noted that for that meeting a large number of Boat Club members paid $10 each and joined the MDCA for just that year. While completely this was above board, the MDCA has maintained a neutral position on the boat ramp (see February 3 2024 post on [www.facebook.com/MapuaCommunityAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/MapuaCommunityAssociation)

3) It is misleading calling the 4 large buildings on the site “Sea Scout/Community Sheds”. Clearly they are not “sheds” and neither will they be controlled by the Sea Scouts. The Boat Club will lease one shed to the Sea Scouts and they propose to place the Boat Museum in one of the other sheds. Surely a Museum is better placed where there is extensive foot traffic on the Wharf? Also why would the Sea Scouts require a Bar (see appendix 2 of B03)? Clearly the “sheds” will be owned and controlled by the boat club.

4) The trust set up by the Boat club is called “MAPUA COMMUNITY BOAT RAMP TRUST”. Clearly the boat ramp is not for the community as it has a barrier arm and a payment mechanism to inhibit community users from using the ramp.

5) The current advertising for the boat ramp (eg outside the Sprig and Fern and also on the Trusts web page) does not show anything like what is proposed in this RCA

6) The Boat Club keeps talking about a boat ramp to replace the one lost on the Wharf area. Clearly what is propose is not a replacement, but a massive extension to what they previously had at the wharf. That wharf ramp would not be capable of launching large boats. It was more suitable for launching dinghies to take people out to boats moored in the estuary.

7) There has been some discussion that this land is not currently being used by the community. The MDCA had a plan for a play-ground and a barbeque area on the southern side of the park. Rata funding was obtained for this. However, some of the funding had to be returned to Rata because with the possibility of a Boat Ramp in that area there was no point progressing this till there was some surety. The net result of this is a misleading campaign to get community support.

I think it is imperative that before the consent is given, TDC does a survey of people in Māpua to find out how many have boats needing an expensive boat ramp. Otherwise, the people mainly using this proposed ramp will not be part of the Māpua community and there are perfectly good boat ramps available to them in Motueka and Nelson that have none of the risks associated with the Māpua ramp. If a ramp similar to the one the boat club previously used by the Wharf, then there would not be a great influx of people outside Māpua to make use of these proposed facilities.

#### Submission 129 names the rampers’ game: bullying.

‘I believe the community consultation was biased and the figures being quoted in support of this project are also biased. I was personally approached twice to sign my support for the project. The first at a Boat Club event at which time the scale of the project was not provided and the second time when someone knocked on my door, at both times I found the approach to be very pushy and this experience suggests that people would have signed (1) Not understanding the scale of the project, and (2) Because the people gathering carrying this out were biased and coercive. I personally found it difficult on both occasions to get away from these situations without signing despite my strong feelings of opposition.’

Instead of engaging with people who have genuine concerns, Mr Marshall and his cohort of “rampers” have sought to simply ride roughshod over them, ignore them, play clever games like stacking the MDCA, bend the truth a little, carry out dodgy surveys, misrepresent people, coerce signatures of support, apply personal pressure to people who had the temerity to stand up to them, and troll opponents on Facebook.

They have destroyed their brand with a lot of people, which will affect their ability to get genuine support from the community, let alone get donations.

## The myth of 90% support

Teaser: The myth of 90% support

Submission 120

‘Survey results published in the RCA and consistently used by the boat club shows 90% of Māpua residents are in favour of a boat ramp in the Waterfront Park. This survey (page 24 and 25 of RCA BO3 document) is clearly biased because it shows that about half the households had boats, yet the Boat Club itself said that one in eight Māpua residents have boats. Further, when that survey was taken, there was no mention of the extensive space the boat club and the subsequent building would take up. There was also no option of “yes, the boat club should have a replacement ramp (portrait as being similar to the old ramp) but not in the Waterfront Park”. I have asked TDC for a copy of the questions asked and information given for the survey. After a thorough search of the RCA documents nothing could be found so I was then referred to Mark Morris at Davis Ogilvie for a copy of the questions that were asked in the survey. But even after 2 weeks the questions asked and information given was not forthcoming. I do remember the person on a bike coming around to our place and asked if we had boats. We said we had kayaks and he immediately ticked “have boats”. Secondly the questions that were asked were completely leading, and the survey questions had nothing about the extensive buildings on the site.

It is our right, that if a survey is taken and the results in the survey are used as evidence, that the questions asked and the information given are in some attached appendix. This is especially true when the survey was taken by a party with vested interests in building the boat ramp and associated structures. I repeat my request from point 2 above that there needs to be a proper Council survey (not by the Boat Club) of the number of Māpua residents who have boats and will actually benefit from the proposed boat ramp’.

A large number of submitters raised similar concerns about the nature of the community 'survey', with many describing it as 'misleading', (eg sub 107) 'biased (eg submissions 163)', 'not impartial (eg submission 155) ; 'unscientific' (eg 168 and 124) and 'misleading' (eg sub 124) and 'meaningless' (sub 140):

  'the applicant has not presented any documentation to allow validation of this survey. They have not even provided very basic data such as the date on which the survey was taken...There is no description of the information presented to those surveyed, no description of the methodology, nor analysis method,'  'The lack of these basic survey characteristics makes the survey meaningless'...When the survey was conducted in January 2023, the info graphic of the ramp on the claimant's website was substantially different to the one in the proposal...it remains for the Māpua Boat Ramp Trust to establish that it has indeed consulted appropriately with the community.’

## Council process lacks integrity

Teaser: How did we get here (again)?

143

‘It’s the second time in seven years submissions have been presented to council, firstly for the ‘Māpua Masterplan’ and now the ‘Long term Council community plan’, yet most of the issues identified the first time still remain. Apart from the plan’s imposition and its limitations, then, I am also objecting strongly to the process, which seems unnecessary, repetitive, expensive and time-wasting

It is not that any of us are opposed to boating and who does not enjoy its many benefits? Nor are we unsympathetic to a club whose original launching area beside the wharf was denied them by the council’s commercial development of the wharf. But the scale of plans contained in this application is not about kayaking, packrafting, dinghies with outboards or in the end, even sail boats. It is about power boats and their imposition, in numbers, with noise, and disruption to the ambiance, to natural and daily life here.

It appears that seven years back a community-led, evidence-based decision by the council, based on cumulative effects and wider community considerations, triggered a concerted push-back by the club. Willingness to consult and to be flexible are fine qualities. However, for the council to now re-visit such a deliberate, inclusive decision made seven years ago in the way it has seems questionable.

The advance of such a large sum to one group in the community was understandable in the circumstances. Apart from the evidence adduced earlier in this submission, today’s extraordinary relitigation affects people’s willingness to re-engage with council. As a result, the precautionary principle is lost sight of. The risk is to intrinsic values of this district with its possibility of more compromised biodiversity. ‘Council’s preferred option was to take a long term view and a more regional and strategic approach for the whole District. Council are [is] proposing to review the current and future demand for a regional boat ramp by allocating budget for a feasibility study and boat ramp construction. This proposal will be included in the Long Term Plan 2018- 2028 which will be released for pubic consultation in March/April 2018.’ I would like to ask the TDC, what happened to this agreement?’

125

‘The proposed ramp is not in line with the "vibrant visitor destination" vision for the wharf precinct. Our small village community is not requiring of such a grand scale devleopment better suited to a main line town community of far more residents than Mapua is even projected to accommodate. It seems that this proposal holds gross benefit to the MBC while costing the community dearly in lost public space, carkparking and business downturn due to lack of summertime carparking.This project will have a massive impact rendering the current wharf usage irreparably damaged. The wharf precinct is not only historically preserved, but is a highly attractive area that promotes local and tourist usage. People come to Mapua to go to the shops and galleries, to swim from the wharf, to enjoy the various food and beverage outlets in peace and relaxation. A boat ramp does nothing to add to this. Additonally the methodology around risk assessment is flawed and biased, and the proposed mitigation measures fail to reassure.TDC’s decision-making process is highly questionable and there are serious questions about the influence MBC has had on this process’

## Safety

Teaser: An accident waiting to happen

The council's 2022 regional boat ramp study found 'The analysis undertaken in this study does not support use as a general public access ramp [at Māpua] due to navigational safety issues'. See also the harbour master's comments - which include:

''during ebb (outgoing) tides the wharf structure will create a hazard to the users of the ramp as they may drift into it and as the tide pushes against the upstream side of the boat it is likely to flood and capsize. Also, the wharf is used by swimmers during summer...and increased boating activity upstream of the wharf (during ebb outgoing tides) will create an increased safety risks between those conflicting user groups'.

Submission numbers 120,  149, 154, 155, 156, 163, 167, 58 note that launching and retrieving boats in this area, where the tidal stream runs extremely swiftly, is a risky activity, even for experienced boaties; and so too is navigating the Māpua sandbar at low tide. Then there are the risks to those who are swimming, kayaking, and wharf-jumping, who are mainly children. To say these risks can be managed with a few signs telling boaties to be careful is magical thinking, or, as local boaties put it, ‘an accident waiting to happen’.

149

The application says the risks crossing the channel bar from the new ramp are no different from Grossis Point. The submission says that’s wrong: 'it's not possible for most boats to launch at Grossis at low tide...I have been boating in the channel for many decades...and has been involved in a number of rescues...an increase in the volume of boats crossing the bar combined with the ability to do it at all tides will unreasonably increase the risk of tragedies’.

## Safety 2

Teaser: The ramp reality

140

‘The lack of a wharf or pontoon means that most yachts will be confronted by significant hazards in launching at this ramp.

1. Consider a 7.8m trailer yacht operating with the NZ Yachting criteria 8 HP outboard: At anything but the short duration of slack water at low and high tides, launching will require considerable skill, more so if windage becomes a problem because:

a. On launching from the trailer, the yacht will drift off its trailer and into the eddy current prior to starting its small outboard. It would then be rudderless until the depth of water was sufficient to lower its rudder, (otherwise the rudder will ground on the ramp as I have done a few times elsewhere in NZ). With the stern in a current and the bow in an opposite eddy current and no effective steerage, manoeuvring is very difficult at low velocity.

b. Retrieval will similarly be a problem. A trailer yacht in the main current will then enter the eddy while trying to line up for the trailer, all the while raising the rudder and manoeuvring on its outboard (assuming it is steerable) will be next to impossible. Queuing for ramp retrieval will also be difficult.

c. The key to launching and retrieving such a yacht at ramps is to use bow and stern lines from wharf or side pontoon to manoeuvre onto the trailer. On this ramp with no wharf or pontoon such control will be impossible.

2. The lack of a wharf or pontoon means:

a. Climbing on and off a larger trailer yacht from the ramp (assuming that the proposed H5 SED poles will be the method of tying off a vessel while returning trailer/vehicle combos to the parking area) will be very difficult as most trailer yachts have stern ladders for boarding and backing the stern of such a vessel on to the beach to the south of the ramp is, because of the rudder, incredibly difficult in any current.

b. Unattended vessels tied to the posts (or the stainless lashing points that are referred to in the reply document but are not on the design plan), will swing and ground either on the ramp surface or on the side boulders dependent upon current and length of rope.

c. Launching a small yacht (e.g. Laser, Paper Tiger) will be difficult as, after launching off its beach dingy, the vessel would have to either be tied to the lashing point or taken off the ramp and run up on the beach to the south of the ramp. There will be a significant drop off the ramp over boulders for the launching skipper to negotiate while controlling his/her sailing dinghy and preventing the beach trolley from drifting off in the current. This would be substantially more difficult than launching at Grossi Point even in a current, because at Grossi a beach trailer can be oriented with the current due to the abundance of beach. This ramp does not provide this. Add in current and It will be interesting to see how the Tamati Sea Scouts manage their cutters, let alone their proposed RS Fevers.

This proposed ramp will not be safe for non-motor powered boats or trailer yachts and thus the various claims by the applicant that the ramp will permit vehicles and trailers to be excluded from Grossi Point are disingenuous.’

## Environment risk

155

‘The engineering report at appendix 12 says there will be 60-70m3 of contaminated soil that will have to go to landfill...The land should be left undisturbed...I remember the chemical works fire, I remember the cleanup of contaminated soil paid for by the taxpayer and ratepayers ...The cost of getting this wrong is huge, a huge risk.’

140

Jenni’s submission

## Sea Scouts

58

'One very misleading part of the supporting information is the suggestion that the boat ramp is needed for Tamaha (Māpua) Sea Scouts...The Sea Scouts currently have excellent access to the estuary, an arguably even better than the past (as there is now no competition for the ramp at the wharf where they launch...Perhaps the TDC has a plan to remove the boat storage facility from the wharf of which I am not aware? If this was the case I would suggest the most pragmatic solution would be to store the boats in a shed adjoining the current Tamaha Hall on the Māpua Domain...it is actually very rare for the Sea Scouts to launch their boats at Māpua...this has nothing to do with access to launching facilities but is due to the inherent difficulties of sailing in the estuary.. in all the years I was a leader at Tamaha, we had not a single instance where sailing conditions were even reasonable...'

The Sea Scouts themselves are not as gung ho as they have been painted. At the time they were invited to join the application, they ‘were under the impression that the TC would like to fully commercialise the wharf area once this lease expires, and potentially our access using the existing boat ramp next to the wharf would cease…'. Their support was based on the perception that they were going to be homeless in 2025, which the Council needs to either confirm or correct.

And the Sea Scouts support is for a building – they’re silent on the ramp.

## The so-called promise

 'Fulfilment of Past Promises. The Tasman District Council  previously committed to providing a replacement boat ramp following the development of the Māpua Wharf Precinct, ...It is crucial for the council to honour this commitment...'.

There is no evidence or record of this promise anywhere. No one has specified who made this promise, when, in what context, for what. No one on Council has any knowledge of The Promise, and no one from the Boat Club can point to any specific conversation let alone a written record.

But in some ways it’s a red herring. A replacement boat ramp would be about 15m long with a single lane, minimal parking and free access (similar to what is at Grossi Point).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Old ramp** | **Grossi Point** | **Proposed ramp** |
| Ramp length | 15m | - | 50m |
| Lanes | Single | Single | Double |
| Parking | 15? | 20 | 78 |
| Building | None | None | 800sqm |
| Access | Free | Free | Paid |

This is important: ‘A boat ramp this size will just create demand from boat users from the wider district. it will attract bigger, powered boats, jet skis an water skiiers that will use an otherwise peaceful, pristine marine environment.’ (120)

As a local sailor and kayaker said ‘the present proposal … seems out of all proportion to the previous facility. It will adversely dominate the Waterfront Park and the whole waterfront area...’. (154)

Many of the brief submissions in support of the application don’t mention anything but the ramp. Are they aware of what’s proposed?

One person who was aware and not happy was Annette Walker. She was a leading light in the Boat Club and did wonderful job leading the preservation of the wharf (she also founded the maritime museum). In her submission she expresses support for the ramp but is strongly opposed to the building. One wonders how many other Boat Club stalwarts would have the same opinion.

## Privatisation paid for by the community

The primary beneficiaries of the application would appear to be those who would control access to the pay-to-use ramp and for-hire building, which appears to be the applicants themselves, ie the Trust. As submitters point out, there are many unanswered questions, such as

‘Who will own the facility?’ ‘Who will manage the facility?’ ‘Who is responsible if leaks of toxic material occur?’ ‘Who ‘picks up the tab’ if this is abandoned or perhaps damaged beyond repair? How is the Trust accountable back to the community?, In the event of the Trust winding up, is there any guidance on the distribution of funds’, and so on. There appears to be a real risk of privatisation and commercialisation of what is currently public space; and unanswered questions re the council's legal liability as the owner of the land. As one submitter put it ‘’This represents an unjustified and disproportionate expropriation of significant areas of public parkland, for the benefit of relatively small groups of people...'

## Iwi position

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rārua submitted a neutral submission (sub 145) on the proposal, but noted the importance of the area to them and their role as kaitiaki. They state ‘Waimea estuary as 'one of the seasonal harvest areas highly valued by tūpuna for its mahinga kai, rongoā and other natural materials...’.  One of the conditions of the consent they propose – free public access to the boat ramp – seems to be at odds with the Trust's proposal to charge fees.

Ngāti Tama ki Waipounamu Trust submitted in opposition to the proposal (sub 87). They note Māpua has been identified as an area of significance and state ‘to encourage any development in an environment that is highly sacred in the coastal and marine area and surrounding foreshore would be highly insensitive to the area…’ They note that Ngāti Tama therefore ‘object to the proposal’.

Ngāti Toa (sub 153) submitted in opposition to the application.