



Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation

100 East Coast Rd Dunwich, North Stradbroke Island

Media Release

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CALL FOR FEEDBACK ON WHALE SHELTER CONCEPTS

Initial design concepts for Mooloomba's (Point Lookout's) landmark Yalingbila Bibula (whale on the hill), a shelter housing a rare 15-metre skeleton of a humpback whale, have been released for public consultation.

Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) CEO Cameron Costello said the stunning concept designs reflected community feedback that the shelter should have a minimal footprint, sit below the tree-line and complement and restore the environment.

"We had a fantastic response to our first round of consultation for Yalingbila Bibula, with more than 350 people taking part in public forums and an online survey," Mr Costello said.

"A major concern was the shelter's potential impact on the landscape, so we worked closely with the architects and experts in rehabilitation to ensure that not only does the design perfectly complement the environment, but the project will also restore sections of the original topography and vegetation, that had been disturbed by previous structures.

"The shelter will sit on the site of the old tennis court and club house, where an old concrete slab is still in place. It will be embedded into the landscape to ensure a low profile and has a footprint of about 295m² – less than half the size of a standard tennis court.

"I know Yalingbila Bibula will become a favourite place for locals and visitors from across Australia and the world. The chance to view a complete skeleton of an adult humpback whale is extremely rare, and the size and magnificence of these amazing creatures cannot fail to impress.

"Importantly Yalingbila Bibula will give visitors, students and locals a greater understanding and appreciation of humpback whales, their sacred place in Quandamooka culture, the history of whaling in Australia and Mooloomba's role in the ongoing battle against whaling in Antarctic waters."

Mr Costello said QYAC was now calling for feedback on the design through an online survey available at www.qyac.net.au. The survey closes on 31 May 2019. Final designs will be released mid-year with construction planned to begin in late 2019.

Leading whale researcher, University of Queensland Associate Professor Mike Noad said Mooloomba was the ideal place for Yalingbila Bibula.

"More than 28,000 humpback whales pass within 10 kilometres of Point Lookout on their way to and from Antarctica from June to the end of October every year, making it one of the best places in the world to see them. On a good day a lucky visitor might see 200 whales pass by from dawn to dusk," Dr Noad said.

"Structured surveys of the whales have been conducted at Point Lookout since the 1980s, creating one of the most comprehensive and longest running studies on any whale population in the world. The results

from Point Lookout are used by the International Whaling Commission as the official population count. The Australian government has also long held up these results in the IWC as proof that it was possible to monitor whale populations non-lethally, undermining Japan's long held argument for scientific whaling.

"Mooloomba has a rich scientific history to share, and I cannot wait for more people to understand what an important role this place and our community has played in ending whaling in the Antarctic."

Tourism Industry Development Minister Kate Jones said Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) has an exciting future as an international hub for eco and cultural tourism and research.

"We're committed to working with the Traditional Owners to deliver tourism projects that support local jobs," she said.

"Growing the tourism, research and education sectors of the Minjerribah economy will create opportunities for locals on the island.

"Yalingbila Bibula is just one of 23 projects that the Queensland Government is supporting with \$24.75 million to assist the transition of Minjerribah's economy away from sand mining.

"This is an exciting time for the Minjerribah community and I can't wait to see projects like Yalingbila Bibula transform the island into a global eco and cultural tourism destination."

For more information and to receive hi-res images of the initial design concepts for Yalingbila Bibula please email media@qyac.net.au. The online survey is now live at www.qyac.net.au

KEY FACTS ABOUT YALINGBILA BIBULA (WHALE ON THE HILL)

Mooloomba (Point Lookout) is the most appropriate site on the island for Yalingbila Bibula because:

- it is the best place to view migrating humpback whales in Australia – more than 28,000 humpback whales pass within 10 kilometres of the Mooloomba coastline every year, up and back
- whale research from Mooloomba played a key role in ending whaling in Antarctic waters, this needs to be celebrated
- the Quandamooka People have watched whales migrate along the Mooloomba coastline for more than 20,000 years, and each year the Quandamooka People 'welcome the whales', a traditional ceremony that takes place as part of the Quandamooka Festival
- Yalingbila Bibula will house the 15 metre skeleton of a male adult humpback whale washed ashore at Mooloomba in 2011.

The old tennis court and club house site is the best place for Yalingbila Bibula at Mooloomba because:

- you can view the whale skeleton and the migrating whales simultaneously, enhancing both experiences
- the site is large enough to contain the interpretative information without disrupting the view of the migrating whales or the Pacific
- only four possible sites at Mooloomba were identified in a 2008 Conservation Management Plan, the most appropriate of these was the site of the old tennis court and clubhouse
- the selected plot was previously the site of a tennis court and clubhouse, there is still a remnant concrete slab on the site. The footprint of the shelter is about 295m², half that of a standard tennis court at 593m²
- expert studies of the site show that cultural heritage will not be impacted at the old tennis court site.

The design for the Yalingbila Bibula shelter:

- strongly reflects the feedback received via community consultation. We thank people for taking part, we had more than 350 responses via the public forums and online survey
- has a minimal footprint of about 295m² roughly half a standard tennis court at 593m²
- is embedded into the landscape to make sure it sits below the tree-line
- is made of materials that complement the landscape, locally-sourced where possible
- will restore sections of the natural topography of the site and the native vegetation as part of the development.

Yalingbila Bibula will:

- give visitors, students and local residents a greater understanding and appreciation of east Australian humpback whales, their sacred place in Quandamooka culture, the history of whaling in Australia and Mooloomba's role in bringing about an end to whaling in Antarctic waters and ongoing role capturing research on the impact of climate change
- enhance the visitor experience of Mooloomba and Minjerribah.

About consultation:

- plans for a whale watching platform near Point Lookout were first flagged in the draft 2011 *North Stradbroke Island Economic Transition Strategy*. Following extensive consultation the final *North Stradbroke Island Economic Transition Strategy*, released in 2016, included plans for a whale interpretive facility. More than 2,400 submissions were received as part of consultation into the strategy
- public consultation was undertaken from December 2018 to February 2019 to ensure an appropriate design for the shelter, these initial designs respond strongly to all the feedback received
- consultation on the initial designs is now open and will close on 31 May 2019. Final designs will be released mid-year and construction is planned from late 2019.

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