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TO: Bayside City Council Parks Department

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Submission on Draft No. 1 of Bayside City Council Open Space Strategy 2007-17

Comments by Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc. on the above draft are as follows:

FATALISM ABOUT POPULATION: The above draft is extensive and detailed, and contains a good deal of useful specific information and guidance to Council. Its approach to the important matter of population estimates for the municipality is cautious and measured, but fails to provide any indication of the impacts of a larger rate of population increase or how that would be coped with. There should be specific recognition of Victorian governments' determined encouragement of population increase, as evident in *Beyond Five Million*, which is the current policy, and their reckless lack of adherence, over many years, to a consistent control over urban sprawl or over-development in greater Melbourne, including areas such as Bayside.

Such policies, which are seeing Melbourne's annual net population increase exceed 60,000 people *(75% of the population of Bayside, which has taken 150 years to reach that level),* are an enemy of open space. Part of the Strategy should be directed towards the need for Bayside Council to be a continual advocate to our governments of the importance of population levels matching desirable space and resource levels.

Melbourne's rapidly increasing population will quickly start affecting Bayside, given the mobility afforded by Victorians' reliance on private cars for transport, and the relative attractiveness of Bayside compared to some less responsibly-conserved areas of Melbourne. Bayside cannot quarantine itself from what the 2008 *State of the Environment Report* has aptly referred to as Victoria's becoming a 'fools' paradise'.

Control of Weed Plants in Gardens: Page 19 states: "*Neighbourhood vegetation controls* - in areas of high conservation importance, controls to be placed on nearby residences regarding the growing of some weed species." BCS Inc. does not oppose that proposal, but points out the large flying range of birds, which for most is at least all of Beaumaris, suggests that the radius within which such controls are needed should be large enough to ensure that such controls are really effective. Council should press bodies it is involved with and the State Government much harder to outlaw the selling of such species by commercial nurseries.

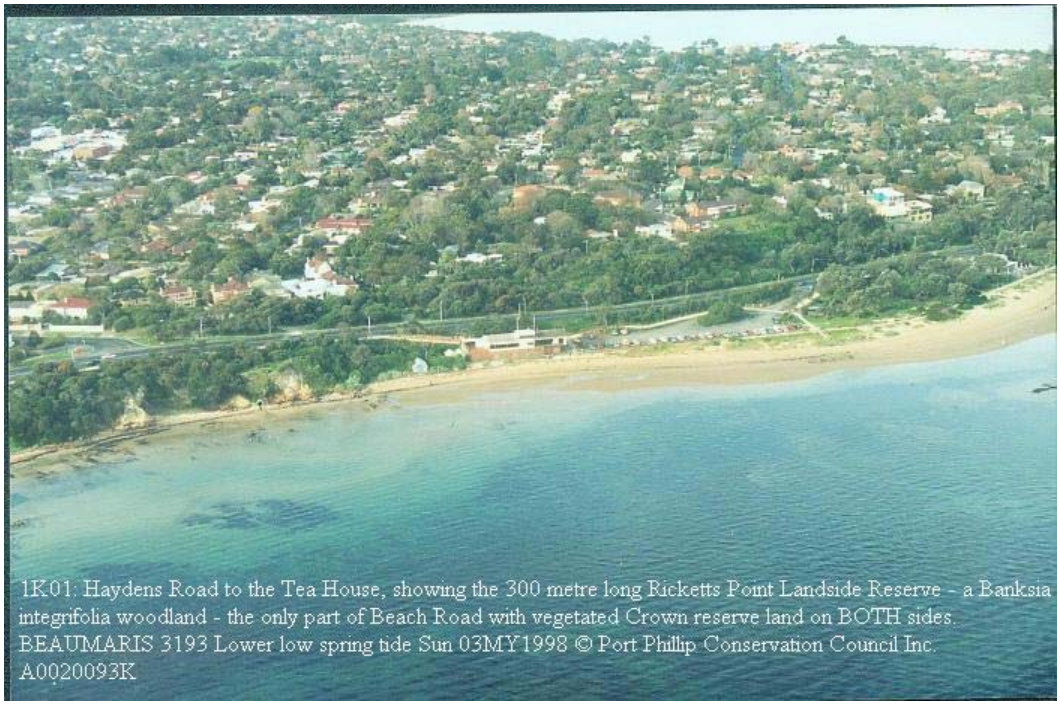
Infrastructure & Opportunities: Mention on Page 23 of this in relation to open space has the clear danger of not discouraging Council staff and others from overdeveloping areas that can be much more interesting without an array of standardized and predictable municipal "furniture" and "gimmicks" to overrun them. There should be parks with a minimum of clutter and introduced artefacts. The Beaumaris model should be followed in Beaumaris rather than the banal Bentleigh model.

Gray Court, Beaumaris: The failure of Map 6 on Page 28 to recognize the bushland area at the centre of Gray Court by means of the light green shading used elsewhere for 'Other Open Space' should be remedied. That area, although small, is all open space, unlike the much more compromised area of St Michael and All Angels' Anglican Church, which is recognized by such shading.

Current Provision of Open Space in Beaumaris: The table on Page 30 quotes over-optimistic areas for open space in certain Beaumaris reserves that have been very much taken over by other uses, which nullify a claim for those areas to be regarded as open space. BCS Inc. is not suggesting that open space consists only of areas that people can always walk over, but that its fullest interpretation should extend to areas that are in a relatively natural or undeveloped state so that the feeling of openness is perceived.

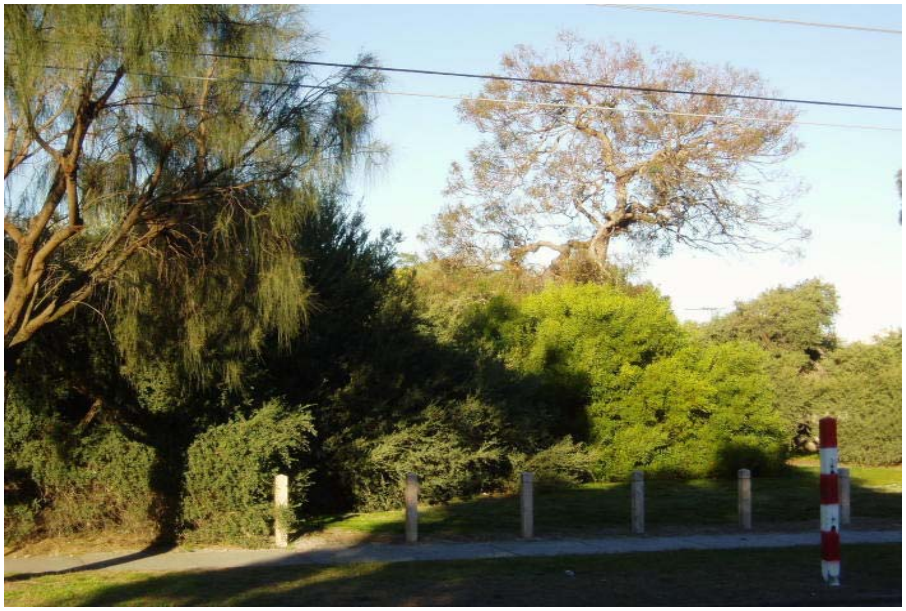
Examples of such compromised land, as far as it being open space, include the F L Yott Reserve, where the fragmented 'parkland' residue of this large publicly-owned area of over 2 ha is rated as 1.23 ha, but would, if non-parkland uses, and car parking for non-parkland uses, is subtracted, appear to less than a third of that area. Another example is Beaumaris Reserve, where large buildings, car parks and fenced tennis courts can hardly be counted as part of the claimed 5.25 ha. Including the grass playing field and residual bushland - but not those paved or built areas - would make the true area of open space less than 3 ha.

There appears to be doubt about the ownership of the land referred to as the Ricketts Point Landside. The table states that BCC **owns** it, but other sources claim that it is Crown land managed by either the Council, DSE or VicRoads. The Council should clarify that ownership, and make sure it is more widely understood, as any works on Crown land there without ministerial approval would contravene Section 37 of the *Coastal Management Act 1995*, which was drawn to the Council's attention when it was last considering encroaching upon it.



The Ricketts Point Landside Reserve in 1998

The Concourse Bushland: It is pleasing to see on Pages 33 and 34 that the Concourse Bushland is shown in dark green on Maps 7 and 8. BCS Inc. has previously written to Council asking for this Council-owned land to have its zoning changed from its present Business 1 Zoning to a Public Park and Recreation Zoning.



The Concourse Bushland in 2006

Linkages: The important concept of linkages is included in the draft, but it just left as a general concept. Day by day the private open space on residential land in Beaumaris is rapidly diminishing as the community's fatalism about the imagined inevitability of that land increasingly being covered by masonry and hard surfaces allows that to happen. BCS Inc. in its letter above instanced some small pieces of Council-owned land that are very vulnerable to disposal or loss of their open space quality because they are not named or identified as open space or as an open space linkage.

Those linkage areas include several opportunities to proclaim and perpetuate a little of the formerly renowned ambience of Beaumaris using existing Council land, which is an especially practical option, because no expensive or disruptive land purchase would be involved. There are three separate, distinctive pieces of Council land in the short length of Holding Street, Beaumaris, identified in that letter as the Holding Street Tree Space, the High Street Triangle and Tramline Corner.

The Holding Street Tree Space, saved from being sold in 2004

The High Street Triangle and Holding Street Tree Space seen by Google Earth in 2008

Tramline Corner, at junction of Holding Street and Reserve Road

The three small areas above could, if managed with a common theme consistent with Beaumaris's distinctive coastal bushland heritage, provide a vital linkage between remnant Beaumaris character in the F L Yott Reserve and the Anglican Church land to the east and the stronger remnant character to the west of Reserve Road. Such a management commitment should be made clear by Council bestowing a name on each site, or on the three sites as a linked group adorning Holding Street.

Linkages to Ricketts Point Landside Reserve: The Stategy should document the important linkages to this fine reserve provided by the deliberate avoidance of standardized street making style in Point Avenue and Coral Avenue where the absence of kerbs and channels retains and extends some of the open space character of the adjoining reserve, and stimulates adjoining landowners to follow suit.

Linkage to Illaroo Reserve: Maps 7 and 8 on Pages 33 and 34 should show the Illaroo Corridor, which is a pair of Council-owned lots between the Illaroo Reserve in Bonanza Road, Beaumaris, and Charman Road, as open space, and that piece of public land should be given an official name, such as Illaroo Corridor. This access route to the Reserve is presently grassed and mown, with little else apart from a pedestrian path and a bicycle road through it. The use of that path and road, and the approach to the Illaroo Reserve, could be made more compatible with the Illaroo Reserve by some more interesting indigenous planting.

Gramatan Avenue Heathland Sanctuary: On Page 117, it is stated that plaques or monuments might be included in this reserve. It would seem that the provision for interpretive signs would be enough intrusion into this reserve, and that plaques or monuments are unnecessary, incompatible and should not be allowed.

BCS Inc. supports the intention that the residual Coastal Tea Tree should not be there. An aggressive plant that shades heathland, it was nearly all removed before 1990 when Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc. leased and managed that land, as Coastal Tea Tree had, at one stage, covered nearly a third of that land.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Cerbasi
President
Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc.