

5 July 2021

Board Chair
Mercury Bay Community Board
Thames Coromandel District Council
10 Monk St
Whitianga

Subject: **Proposed Paid Parking at the Domain Car Park in Hot Water Beach.**

Dear Rekha

We note that at the Mercury Bay Community Meeting on 7 July 2021, the agenda includes a proposal to implement paid parking at Domain Car Park Hot Water Beach.

The Hahei Residents and Ratepayers Association, strongly opposes extending paid car parking at Hot Water Beach to include the Domain Car Park and would like to address the Board to express our concerns.

While we support the concept of having tourists pay for enjoying our local facilities, we oppose extending paid parking for the following reasons:

1 Lack of Consultation

There has been no public consultation about the implementation of paid parking at the Domain Carpark. We acknowledge that the subject was briefly mentioned at the South Mercury Bay Chairs meeting on 16th June 2021, but prior to the meeting we had received no background information so we not in position to discuss the issues properly. For us to provide an accurate reflection of our community's views, we need briefing papers at least 2 week prior to any TCDC meeting.

We therefore strongly disagree with section 3 of the Comprehensive Report, Significance and Engagement presented to board members. The changes proposed are very significant and there has been no engagement with our community.

Further, we would point out that at no time were we consulted about TCDC's decision to tar seal the Domain Car Park. As a community, we were happy with the state of the car park although the road into the car park as in need of upgrading.

2 Domain Car Park is Popular with Locals, not Tourists

The Domain Car Park is used extensively by South Mercury residents and ratepayers. Users are not just surfers, but walkers and anyone who wants to experience the beauty of an unspoilt local rugged beach. Charging local residents and ratepayers would have a material effect on their quality of life.

We recognise that some tourists may park there, but with good signage, most tourists will travel to Hot Water Beach centre where there are showers, toilets and shops. Any tourist parking revenue will therefore be small from the Domain Car Park.

3 Loss of Revenue Calculations

We do not accept any of the loss of revenue calculations. They are all based on courageous estimates with no facts to support them and should not be used for justifying any of the options.

Please note that TCDC already generates significant revenues from the existing parking charging on Hot Water Beach and we do not think the additional revenue from the Domain Carpark will make a significant difference to our rates.

We note our Council will increase our rates by 8.8% next year, and a further 737% in the following 2 years. This means that for someone paying \$3,000 in rates now, they will be paying \$3,786 in 3 years' time. Surely this increase in rates can cover car parking?

4 Paid Access only to Hot Water Beach

If paid parking was implemented, we believe that Hot Water Beach would become the only beach in New Zealand anyone would have to pay to access. This sets a terrible precedent for our beautiful beaches. We hope the Board will not allow this to happen.

5 Options for Board to Consider

Having reviewed the situation, we recommend the Board consider the following option

- **Option 1 – No Paid Parking at Domain Car Park.** This is our preferred option. We do not believe the revenues generated justify the loss in amenity that the residents of Mercury Bay will have to suffer, justify parking charges.
- **Option 2 – Full Public Consultation** – Prior to implementing any changes to parking in Hot Water Beach, there must be a full public consultation. Prior to publication of the documentation for your 7 July 2021 Board Meeting, there were virtually no details of what is proposed. This is an important matter that will have material impact on the people of Mercury Bay and you must implement at full public consultation

We look forward to discussing this important matter with you.

Yours faithfully



Penne Clayton

Chair of Hahei Residents & Ratepayers Association