



Cleaner Production Australia

CAPE BRIDGEWATER HOLIDAY CAMP & CONVENTION CENTRE

APPRAISAL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

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Introduction

The consultant was privileged to spend eight days at the site on a family holiday and this time provided opportunities to assess the site itself as well as the immediate and close surroundings. In the past, he has spent holiday times in the area at Nelson and Port Fairy and has been involved in environmental business projects in the area. It is also important to state that the consultant's family has camped on holidays at many sites throughout Victoria and NSW over many years and this provides a useful basis for benchmarking and comparison.

The environmental education work of ex local, Robert Palmer, is well known and supported strongly by the consultant.

The 'Smelter in the Park' project at Portland Aluminium and its regional effects are also known and supported by the consultant.

With this background, the following appraisal for environmental project potential is given for consideration.

1. Location

The campsite is situated at Bridgewater, 20 km west of Portland.

Bridgewater is small and not over-developed like many holiday resorts.

It has a kiosk on the beach, a small afternoon tea room and a bed/breakfast facility as the only commercial operations beside the campsite in question.

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Close Features

- Long, sweeping, ocean beach extending from Cape Nelson to Cape Bridgewater. The beach is ideal for swimming (patrolled by Surf Club), surfing and surf fishing. The Bridgewater end is protected from southerly and westerly winds and it changes, under the cliff faces, to rocky shelves and smaller beaches with seal caves.
- The cliffs are ideal for abseiling, rock climbing and hand gliding.
- The cape, a volcanic headland, provides good walking (Great South West Walk) to a well stocked seal colony with occasional visits from dolphins and whales. The ocean and bay views from the cape are exceptional with the special added features of a blow hole, petrified forest and natural fresh water springs area.
- Bridgewater Lakes provide a safe haven for canoeing, water skiing, limestone caves and walks through National Park areas with unique fauna and flora.
- The nearby coastal beach (Discovery Bay) has a huge and spectacular sand dune area.

Nearby Features

- Bridgewater is close to a complex of National Parks including the Great South West Walk, Mt Richmond National Park and the Glenelg River Parks which all provide a broad range of environmental features and activities.
- Portland - historic features plus Cape Nelson only 20 km away. The dominating feature is Portland Aluminium's 'Smelter in the Park' environmental project that has won many awards and achieved international acclaim.
- Nelson and the mouth of the Glenelg River (only 70 km away) provide a beautiful estuary beach, Princess Margaret Rose Caves, limestone gorge and much more.
- The area is part of the green triangle (Millicent/Mt Gambier/Portland) and includes other highlights such as Port Fairy, volcanic crater lakes and aboriginal mission site.

2. Campsite

The site is an old church camp facility that was purchased by the current owner, Alan Smith, some 8 years ago. It covers about 2 hectares and has good cooking, laundry, bathroom and sleeping facilities for about 100 campers plus space for tenting. It has a games room and large dining hall which can double as a lecture theatre.

The buildings are adequate but need some attention in some areas. It is the owner's intention to remodel many of the existing buildings and add new buildings to the site, all to blend in more with the natural environment of the area. Some waste recycling techniques are already in use at the site and this activity will be expanded wherever possible.

The owner is a qualified chef with many years experience in catering for large and varied clientele and carries a good reputation for quality and variety in meals.

The site has been used already for company training, welfare institutions, schools and philanthropic groups as well as church groups in the past.

3. Environmental Project Ideas

The site is well suited to a range of age groups and it should not be limited to any specific sector of the population.

A theme such as '*Sustainable Living and Working with the Environment*' could be adopted as a broad basis to encapsulate the idea and scope of the project.

- Intensive Learning

Environmentally based subjects or segments of subjects from school age through to under and post graduate courses, could be taught on the site in intensive mode. Modules from 10 to 100 hours (as a starting point) could be handled on one visit or split into two or three visits.

Time for relaxation and appreciation of the natural environmental features should be built into *all courses* so that all students learn from actual experience about the true value and sensitivity of the environment in a non-pressured atmosphere.

Examples of possibilities are :-

School environmental, teaching camps

School or children's, environmental, adventure camps

Environmental camps for under privileged

TAFE courses in environmental management and cleaner production

Segments of Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and Masters courses

Intensive environmental training for specific companies or industry associations

Train the trainer environmental courses for teachers, lecturers

Environmental conference preparation camps

Environmental camps for families, special interest groups, philanthropic societies

Intensive, high level, environmental discussion/debate camps for specialists

Camps with industrial application should include a detailed visit to 'Smelter in the Park' and other appropriate industrial sites while some of the others could include less intense visits.

- Non-intensive Learning

Most of the above ideas could be reduced in content covered to combine learning with a holiday or health break from normal business activities.

- Practical Environmental Camps

Camps structured to show participants how to practise recycling and responsible resource use, both on-site and off-site.

These could include working on an environmental project (eg. building, planting, composting, working on National Park improvements).

Campsite rules could be structured to teach the practical principles involved in being environmentally responsible with respect to waste, litter, land care, energy efficiency, utilisation of natural and sustainable resources etc. (could be based on a competitive points system or fines/detention for breaches).

Participants could be introduced to surviving in the bush with outdoor, overnight camping off-site in the National Parks and shown how to care for them.

4. Likely Support

A major corporate sponsor is necessary to ensure the viability of the project. Portland Aluminium is the obvious choice because of its location and proven dedication to environmental improvements over a long time period. The company has shown interest in the site on previous occasions and a recent discussion with a senior staff member would suggest that it would still be interested.

There must be some real, tangible benefit offered to Portland Aluminium (see below).

The Australian's All project would be another support base in terms of supplying and delivering educational materials.

Cleaner Production Australia (environmental consultancy with UN connections) would also be available to support and work in the project.

There is a loose co-operative arrangement in the environmental education area in Victoria between Australian's All, Vic Univ of Tech and Swinburne Univ of Tech in a pre-school to PhD program in Cleaner Production. Brief discussions with key personnel in these institutions has revealed a keen interest to make use of the proposed facilities for specialist courses and modules. Environmental courses are on the increase and they should provide a steady flow of business.

The National Parks and Wild Life should be approached for co-operative links.

Other environmentally friendly companies and organisations in the area should be given the opportunity to be involved.

Local, Victorian and Federal Government representatives should be approached regarding financial assistance to the project.

5. Recommended Actions

The following suggestions are not given in order of priority but as a first draft of ideas for consideration.

- Formalise a core syndicate group to manage the project.
- Prepare an offer for Portland Aluminium as the major sponsor. Benefits to the company could include featuring in all advertising (on-site, in brochures, on application forms) and low rate use of the premises for company use.
- Preparation of a professional business plan for the project.
- Preparation of an advertising brochure for the project.
- Prepare a package plan for all possible outdoor activities and visiting areas.

- Consideration to purchase of additional land (corner paddock west of the camp site)
- Consideration to utilise more of the eastern area of the site for the project.
- Planting of indigenous plants and trees on the roadside border.
- Planting of indigenous type wind break on the southern border
- Seek advice for total site plan from environmental planners (eg Ross Mellor of 'Habitat' and Ken O'Connor of Portland Aluminium Nursery).
- Consider future installation of solar heating and wind generator.
- Consider use of Wind Mill to lift water to high elevation storage on the property.

6. Conclusions

There is no need to wait at all to make a start on many of the issues discussed here. The developments will require considerable funding but the project can develop as it runs and some of the projects can actually be done (at least in part) by some of the camping groups themselves.

We have a site, approved facilities and the personnel so make a start now.

