

MERRIWA DISTRICT PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

PO Box 144
Merriwa 2329
ABN: 59 244 901 419
(merriwaprogress@gmail.com)

The General Manager
Upper Hunter Shire Council
PO Box 208
Scone NSW 2337

Relocation of the Merriwa Driver Reviver

Mr Steve McDonald

The Merriwa District Progress Association (MDPA) would like to respond to the invitation to comment on the plans for the relocation of the Merriwa Driver Reviver facilities.

The artist's impression of the proposed combined toilets and driver reviver shows a modern attractive building. However, the proposed location for this building is not clear. The site plan obtained from Council's Manager of Works Delivery only shows the lot on which the building is to be located, not its position on that lot or any peripherals such as seating, shade sails, barbeque or litter bins.

Upon assessment of the plans for the combined toilet and driver reviver annexe, it is obvious that the proposed driver reviver facilities in Merriwa would be severely downgraded by the new facilities. The proposed building is totally inadequate for the specified purpose. The table below clearly indicates the comparison of important components between the existing facilities and those proposed under the plans on exhibition.

COMPONENT	CURRENT BUILDING	PROPOSED BUILDING
Working space	12 m ²	7.5 m ²
Storage space	15 m ²	0 m ²
Wash-up (kitchen) sink	Yes	No
Air conditioning	Yes	No
Under cover shelter	30 m ² + 3 m ² awning	13.5 m ² incl awning
Shade sail	16 m ²	No
Table and chair sets	6	1
Outdoor barbeque	Yes	No
Signage	Yes	Unknown
Litter bins	3	Unknown

The proposed working space is simply inadequate for efficient, practical and healthy food preparation. During holiday periods, up to four volunteers could be working to supply refreshments to drivers at any one time. The reduced size of the new serving area would be too crowded for the volunteers on duty. Apart from the area immediately behind the serving window, space is required inside for a small table and chairs for volunteers to rest while they are not actually serving, and a cupboard for their personal effects, coats, umbrellas, etc. Also an air-conditioner is essential for the comfort and well-being of the volunteers on duty, many of whom are seniors.

Space is required for a refrigerator and a kitchen sink for cleaning purposes. Space and facilities for providing boiling water also appear to have been overlooked. There needs to be enough powerpoints in the building to operate all the appliances in use. The proposed hand basin should be retained in the plan for regular hand washing away from the food preparation and washing-up areas. The COVID-19 anti-contagion precautions have increased public awareness of the need for effective hygiene and physical distancing.

The current facilities have a storage area of 6 m² in the building and another 9 m² in a nearby building. The proposed new facilities need to have at least the equivalent amount of storage space for holding sufficient supplies of consumables, such as cups, coffee, sugar, biscuits etc. The storage space also needs to be suitable to store cleaning equipment (such as mops, brooms, etc) that is stored separately from foodstuffs.

The driver reviver servery and storage areas should be spatially separated from any toilet facilities to minimise health risks to patrons and volunteers through faecal contamination. They should not be housed in the same building.

The plans for the proposed new facility also lack sufficient under-cover shelter for travellers from the rain and hot summer sun. Currently there is a 30 m² covered area (plus a 3 m² awning over the servery bench) and a shade sail that covers approximately 16 m². The new plans show only 13.5 m² under cover, which includes the serving area.

It is important that travellers can move away from the delivery point into a seating area once they have been served. This will be further exacerbated because the number of outdoor table and chair sets has been reduced from 6 to 1. Based on previous patronage of this valuable and popular service, that amount of seating is grossly inadequate. The opportunity to actually increase the capacity of seating at the Merriwa driver reviver should be grasped.

Located at the current driver reviver is an outdoor public electric barbeque, which does not appear in the plans to be relocated to the new facility. This oversight should be rectified to provide travellers the opportunity to enjoy a (cooked) picnic during their rest period. Having a barbeque in place also creates the opportunity for local community groups to utilise the facilities for outdoor functions.

The proposed plans also fail to indicate whether the provision of litter bins to match the 3 on the current site will be replicated, or whether there will be an outdoor tap for travellers to water their pets. It is further hoped that lighting will be installed to secure the premises at night time or illuminate outdoor areas.

These comments have been compiled following in-depth consultation with the volunteers who staff the facility during holiday periods. It would be a grave mistake to not at least replicate the scope of the current facilities, or even expand upon them at this current opportunity. We believe the \$291,000 should be adequate to implement improved toilet and driver reviver facilities in the proposed new location. However, if the budget is not sufficient, Council could investigate the Commonwealth Government's recently announced round of grants for driver reviver site upgrades.

It has been determined that the operation of the Merriwa Driver Reviver would be impossible in the proposed new facilities. If the proposed works cannot be modified to meet the essential requirements of this highly valued volunteer group, the option is to remain operating from the current facilities or totally cease this marvellous public service, which would be a great tragedy indeed.

We sincerely ask that Council reconsider the design of the proposed new toilet and driver reviver facilities and amend the plans to comply with the matters we have raised. It is suggested the officer in charge of the design liaise with the operators of the Merriwa Driver Reviver and inspect the current facilities to determine their requirements.

Yours sincerely,

Col Bates
President

Cc: All Upper Hunter Councillors

SKATEPARK UPGRADE AND DRIVER REVIVER RELOCATION

Merriwa park plans on display - upgraded skate park, new accessible toilet block and Driver Reviver facilities.

Draft designs for an extension to the Merriwa skate park and a new accessible toilet block and Driver Reviver annexe, have been put on display for community comment by 5 June 2020.

The park is on the corner of King George V Ave and Quigley St, Merriwa.

The bigger, better skate park is planned to include a bowl hip, two spines, a roof top grind ledge, roll overs and roll in.

Council staff met this week with John and Elaine Sparrow, who have been working with a committee of young people since 2005 on improving the skate park facilities through the Merriwa Rotary Club.

Another great addition to the park will be four unisex toilet cubicles with basins, including an ambulant toilet and a larger accessible cubicle with baby change table facilities.

The Driver Reviver annex will have a hand washing basin, security roller shutters and a covered outside aluminium bench seats and table.

This will provide a new Driver Reviver location and the old toilet block and shed will be removed.

Cr Ron Campbell said the proposed upgrade would benefit both visitors and locals.

"I commend the plans and invite interested persons to make comment," Cr Campbell said.

The \$291,000 project is being undertaken by Council and is funded by the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF). It is one of 12 projects underway across the Shire.

Residents are encouraged to provide written comment by 5 June 2020, via the website, emailed to council@upperhunter.nsw.gov.au or posted to PO Box 208, Scone NSW 2337.



