

BlazeAid Impact on Kioloa Oval

In the absence of opportunities for consultation, or to express our concerns, some local residents have studied the Shoalhaven Council's proposal to accommodate a BlazeAid camp on the Kioloa Community Centre site. As a result of this, we do not have issue with the admirable work they will be doing but reject the process, the location and the time-frame of the project.

We submit for your consideration some issues that may not have been duly considered which support the rejection of the Kioloa site due to its unsuitability. The concerns arise from conversations among the residents of Kioloa who have insights into the impact of this campsite, the challenges that may affect the experience of the volunteers and the impact on the community.

Location

Kioloa is at the southern extremity of the Shoalhaven Shire, surrounded by National Park and State forest, therefore most fencing repair work requested of BlazeAid would be located some distance away, nearer to the affected agriculturally productive areas of Tabourie, Ulladulla, Conjola, Wandandian, Kangaroo Valley, Sussex Inlet and surrounds.

By providing a more suitable vacant council area closer to those areas in need, the Shoalhaven Council would spare the group many kilometres and hours of travel on the highway and also extend any valuable daylight hours in which the volunteers have an opportunity to work. Their budgets for fuel are taken from donations to Blaze Aid and should be an important consideration. It is understood that the State Government or Council will bear the cost of power, hire of amenities, water and effluent removal.

Community Life

As a small population of around 280 residents, the majority of whom are retirees, Kioloa, zoned by Council as a "village", is not a suitable location to establish a working station such as proposed by DA21/1257. A working group camping in the very hub of our community impacts the values we hold regarding our lifestyle and routines, which, for many, revolve around use of the Community Hall and environs. A BlazeAid campsite will have the same disruptive impact as a construction hub being located in the heart of town on the lawns of the Ulladulla Community Centre. Current and past BlazeAid camp locations have been on council Showgrounds where suitable infrastructure exists and sufficient space is available to ensure it does not impinge on community activities.

Communication from Council

There has been no communication from Council to Kioloa residents regarding this proposal. The council process did not give sufficient time for the BPKCA to inform and consult with the local population. Additionally, BPKCA is an organisation that has only a small percentage of Kioloa residents as members who lack representation when decisions are made on matters which affect Kioloa residents. On a separate contentious community proposal, assurance was given in a telephone conversation with a Council officer that any Council proposal that affects community members would undergo a consultative process with ALL affected residents.

The local community within 100m of the DA would only include the two or three residences (two of which are rental properties) a cafe, and the caravan park. The council's declaration of a one-week notification by advertisement in a newspaper on an issue regarding the use of community land and the proposal to deny residents access to facilities is inadequate and suggests a lack of regard towards the more than 200 resident/ratepayers of the village. The Kioloa-Bawley Point "Messenger" newsletter is only produced every 2 months and has made no mention of the proposed occupation by BlazeAid.

Time Frame

BlazeAid has been aware from at least 22 Feb that they were to relocate at Kioloa, yet residents of Kioloa have still have not been formally informed. Those who have been recently informed by rumour are completely appalled that they were neither notified nor consulted.

<https://tatimes.com.au/blazeaid-set-to-reopen-next-week/>

The DA stated a start date of 29 March 2021 and permits a 6 months period of occupation by BlazeAid. The group would thus be on site until the end of November 2021 but now, hypothetically granting occupation commencing 29 May 2021, and by possibly extending this use to 8 months (as has been suggested) the village will be excluded from the site until February 2022.

Kioloa experiences all its tourism activity from Oct-March and hosts several Community Markets in that time including the annual highly anticipated Kioloa Fair.

Infrastructure Deficiencies

As a "village", Kioloa does not have access to town water or sewage and as there are no existing public facilities for day to day living on this site, these services will need to be trucked in, installed, connected to power and waste removed. Arrangements outlined by council to provide a water supply for laundry, personal hygiene, cooking, and then subsequent removal of all waste from the campsite are an added cost.

Consider that these might be options if the camp is to have heated showers.

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SHOWER SINGLE HEATED ELECTRIC



WASH STATION PORTABLE

The nominated patch of ground for the site has just received 195 mm rain which has, as it does after even 30 mm rain, rendered the ground boggy and completely unsuitable for any camping or parking . The ground is saturated and significantly, water pooled in several areas. The designated area of ground is not level and water runs through a creek line from west to east across the site. Without roadside guttering or drainage, runoff lies in puddles on the road-edge to be gouged into deep muddy potholes delivery trucks and parking vehicles. The condition of roads and roadsides are a continuing issue here in the village.

Heavy vehicles delivering portable ablution blocks, water tanks, fencing materials, vehicles towing trailers, RVs as well as sewage pump out trucks and the water delivery truck will need to drive either over the grass or across the basketball court. Parking along Murramarang Rd is already compromised by large muddy potholes and the extra traffic for 6-8 months will require repatriation work.

Any static camp meeting marquee, tent sites or office sites will presumably require some sort of “flooring”, which after a period of 6-8 months without sunlight will scar the ground and require repatriation. After damage from prolonged cover such as the DA proposes, the ground will be inundated with weeds or while being repaired, will be excluded from use. The caravan parks can explain to you their experiences of the impact placing infrastructure for the nominated length of time will have. A recent worrying infestation of Riccardia weed has appeared on much of the reserves, verges and properties in this area, indeed the whole of the Shoalhaven Shire. Consultation with the council’s Bushcare officer will give you an understanding of the impact caused by this recent environmental inundation of the weed.

Kioloa is at the end of the electricity grid and is familiar with power outages and irregular supply issues. Many residents have purchased their own portable generators for emergency power supplies. Lighting will be necessary at night for personal use and security for equipment. Generators may be necessary on the site. There are no facilities to provide recreation or social diversion to the group after dark in the village. Under what conditions will alcohol be consumed at the camp?

Error! Filename not specified.A Council Officer’s description of the established court area as “disused” and the proposal to fence off the area for parking and storage of equipment shows a lack of local knowledge by those compiling the proposal. A group of local youngsters from nearby Bawley Point regularly uses the basketball court. During the school holiday times when tourists are in town (2 weeks in July and 2 weeks in September and Dec-Feb)

the basketball courts and playground are a popular venue for children, teenagers and young adults.

Safety

The contractor compiling DA documentation might need to check that the ANU is currently the NSP (Neighbourhood Safer Place) as previously designated. The management of the ANU site has greatly changed recently and extreme restrictions have been placed on the use of the Kioloa Campus by the public. Consultation with the Kioloa RFS will reveal that during November 2019, when bushfire affected our village, the plan to evacuate to the ANU was untenable.

Resolution

Past and present BlazeAid camps across the state have been accommodated in council showgrounds which have established facilities required by the group and where the impact on the community and the environment is not a burden on the general community. It is inconceivable that there is no other site in the Shoalhaven Shire that the council has options to locate this camp on an appropriately serviced site, closer to the areas of work for the volunteers.,

Kioloa is an inappropriate site on which to place a BlazeAid camp and the proposal should be revisited in consultation with relevant Councillors, developers, contractors, community consultative bodies and residents of the local community.

The above concerns have been raised with the Mayor and Councillors and I would appreciate your response on the matters raised prior to the BPKCA meeting on the 16th May.

Sincerely,
Barbara White