

Prepared by Heather Vincent (Landscape Consultant)
The Sands Architectural Review Committee

Following quotes taken from 'The Sands, Torquay Building and Environmental Management Code' (BEMC)

Introduction (1.0 paragraph one)

The Sands, Torquay is a diverse, unique and integrated residential golf course project located adjacent to a sensitive foreshore environment and the Karaaf Wetlands within the Surf Coast Shire. The Karaaf Wetlands contain both wet and dry salt marsh and is particularly significant because of the adjacent Poa grassland and dunal system. The dunes along this stretch are culturally significant to the Watherong Aboriginal Cooperative, and are an important environmental conservation area with many remnant indigenous species including Moonah woodlands.

Objectives of the Committee from (Appendix 4.3)

The Sands, Torquay Architectural Review

Committee Terms Of Reference (points 1 & 3)

- *To ensure that development is sited and designed to protect and enhance the environmental qualities and landscape values of the Torquay coastal environment.*
- *To ensure planting and landscaping with indigenous species that will enhance streetscapes and protect the character and natural landscape features of coastal areas.*

Standard of Finishes (6.0 Landscape)

Landscaping should enhance the house and streetscape as well as add to the comfort and privacy of indoor and outdoor living. Appropriate selection of plant species, provision of boundary screening and minimisation of hard paved areas to driveways and gardens will be assessed by the Architectural Review Committee (ARC).

The Sands, Torquay sits within a sensitive coastal environment. The landscape design should enhance the overall image for the development and response to the architectural character and quality of the natural environment.

The Sands, Torquay is designed to create a unique coastal residential development.

To this end the following landscaping and planting requirements are made:

- *Only native, predominantly indigenous vegetation will be used in the planting and landscaping of private gardens except that vegetable gardens and non native (exotic) shrubs may be planted in backyards provided that they cannot be viewed from the streetscape or golf course when measured at maturity.*

Stage 2 (A) Detailed design and construction documents

Plant Selection

Indigenous species should be used in preference to native or exotic species.

Non indigenous species may be planted in private areas provided they cannot be viewed from the streetscape or golf links at maturity and do not pose as a weed species. The planting or propagating of environmental weeds is prohibited and a comprehensive list is provided of species that should not be planted.

Comments by Heather Vincent

I have been involved in The Sands, Torquay development as a horticultural consultant since the formation of the ARC. I have to thank Graeme Stockton from the West Coast Indigenous Nursery who is a specialist in Indigenous Plants on the Surf Coast and in many other regions who assisted in the compilation of The Sands, Torquay Indigenous Plant List and the banned environmental weed list. His contribution to the preservation and restoration of the natural environment has been huge particularly in our local coastal environs.

The Sands, Torquay developers had many hurdles to cross in getting this residential golf course development off the ground. Firstly and most importantly were the environmental issues of restoring and preserving as much of the natural environment as possible. The area was extremely degraded due to once being the town rubbish dump. As was written in the introduction of the *Building Environmental Management Code (BEMC)* this unique area which is surrounded by a dunes system with many important remnant indigenous plant species significantly Moonah Woodlands, wetlands, salt marsh and Poa grasslands which are home to many migratory birds as well as many, varied and diverse fauna and flora.

Therefore it is all of our responsibilities as developers, consultants, home owners, visitors to help protect what is so special at our back door. In choosing to live in this unique development would indicate resident's appreciation of their surroundings and the value adding of their investment if this natural environment is enhanced and protected.

Appreciation of the natural landscape was the driving force when preparing the guidelines. It was important to have an integrated landscape throughout the development and that the mature landscape should become the dominant feature rather than the built form. The use of indigenous canopy trees is therefore of great importance as they will be and are the most dominant landscape feature and will very quickly create an integrated landscape. To see Silver Birch or Pencil Pines popping up amongst the Moonah Woodland would be incongruous. The dunes to the south with their plant colours and textures should bleed into the golf links, club amenities, hotel and residential lots and this can so easily be achieved with using indigenous plants in the landscape. There are many benefits in using indigenous species; planted in the right aspect will thrive with little intervention, becomes habitat for fauna, preserves local species and biodiversity for our heritage.

In any established garden there will be natural attrition as plants have variable life spans. We should all be prepared for our gardens to change as micro climates are created when trees mature and light, shade, moisture and wind vary which often requires replacement of suitable understorey plants. Our buildings create micro climates as well and establishment of plants to suit can often be challenging. The landscape is a living, never static and evolving form that requires certain practice and patience to achieve your goals.

Living with this wonderful natural environment at their back door may inspire more residents of The Sands to become involved in community projects that raise awareness about the damaging effects of environmental weeds, the eradication of environmental weeds and restoration of our natural landscape.

Yours sincerely

Heather Vincent (Landscape Consultant 'The Sands Torquay')

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