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# American River Tourist Resort

Major Project Amendment.

SHAPING  
GREAT  
COMMUNITIES



# Report Title

16 March 2021

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction and Background

URPS has been engaged by City & Central Consulting Pty Ltd to prepare this report in respect to an amendment to an approved major project involving tourist accommodation at American River, Kangaroo Island.

The then Development Assessment Commission (DAC) (now State Planning Commission or “SPC”) determined that the original application be considered through the Development Report (DR) process.

The application underwent public consultation where 35 submissions were received, 4 agency submissions and advice from the Kangaroo Island Council.

CCD Hotels and Resorts is seeking support for a minor amendment to the original development as authorisation granted on 27 January 2017. The engagement of Cox Architecture has resulted in a number of positive improvements being made to the scheme.

The existing authorisation comprises a 4-star tourist accommodation facility comprising 10 lodges (ranging between 6-7 storeys in height), 20 cabins and 20 cottages (with 323 rooms in total), along with restaurant, bars, pool, conference facilities and resort suites. A copy of the Gazette notice and approved plans is contained within Appendix A of this report.

The re-design of the proposal has been amended due to feedback from the public notification process as outlined in the original Response Document.

The main issue raised at this time was the perceived interface issues with Redbanks Road and the residential street network to the north. The new design has improved the scale and bulk of the structure, provided further screening and minimised potential visual impacts by locating car parks amongst existing vegetation. The need for excavation has been reduced and the overall building height has been reduced.

The Applicant subsequently met with the State Planning Commission regarding the proposed building and its desire for the villas to be relocated away from vegetation and to reduce the bulk and location of the staff village. Due to site constraints the position of the villas could not easily be amended. However, to appease the bulk and scale concerns raised by the Commission the Applicant has reduced the size of the staff village. Notably, the length of the staff village has reduced considerably from 87.9 metres to 63.5 metres.

The amended version of the proposal still targets a 4-star tourist accommodation facility but within 4 main buildings (at a lower height i.e. 4-5 storeys) and 16 villas, totalling only 134 rooms. The facility will also include a day spa, restaurant, pool, bars, conference facilities and staff village.

A more detailed description of the proposal and analysis of the changes from that which was authorised is provided further in this report.

As requested at our meeting, this report provides a detailed summary of the changes proposed through this amendment and then provides an analysis of the most pertinent planning considerations that were discussed in the DR process. This report has been prepared following our review of the following:

- Plans prepared by Cox Architects dated 13/11/2019
- Masterplan, staging and landscaping plans prepared by Cox Architects dated 22/09/2020.
- Google Maps and Street View.
- SAPPAs and Location SA Viewer online mapping.
- Original approved plans, technical reports and assessment report.

## 2. Proposal and Amendments

### 2.1 Amended Plans

The proposal is contained in the following amended plans as prepared by Cox Architecture and Matrix Living (refer Appendix B of this report):

- SCAP A01-01 Masterplan – Dated 22/09/2020
- SCAP A01-02 Staging Plan– Dated 22/09/2020
- SCAP A01-03 Aerial Image– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A01-04 Proposed Landscape Plan– Dated 22/09/2020
- SCAP A21-01 Hotel Buildings – Lower Ground – Floor Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-02 Hotel Buildings – Ground Floor – Floor Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-03 Hotel Buildings – Level 1 - Floor Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-04 Hotel Buildings – Level 2 – Floor Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-05 Hotel Buildings – Roof Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-06 Building 1 – Floor Plans– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-07 Building 1 – Floor plans– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-08 Building 2 – Floor Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-09 Building 2 – Floor Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-10 Building 3 – Floor Plans– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-11 Building 3 – Floor Plans– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-12 Building 4 – Floor Plans– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-13 Building 4 – Floor Plans– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-14 Day Spa – Floor Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A21-15 Typical Villa – Floor Plan– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-03 Hotel Buildings - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-04 Building 1 - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-05 Building 1 - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-06 Building 2 - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-07 Building 3 - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-08 Building 3 - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-09 Building 4 - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019

- SCAP A30-10 Building 4 - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-11 Day Spa – Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A30-12 Typical Villa - Elevations– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A40-03 Overall Building – Sections– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A40-04 Building 1 - Sections– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A40-05 Building 2 - Sections– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A40-06 Building 3 - Sections– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A40-07 Building 4 - Sections– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A40-08 Day Spa - Sections– Dated 13/11/2019
- SCAP A40-09 Typical Villa Section– Dated 13/11/2019
- Staff Village Drawings– First Floor Layout - 15/09/2020
- Staff Village Drawings– Second Floor Layout - 15/09/2020
- Staff Village Drawings– Third Floor Layout - 15/09/2020
- Staff Village Drawings– Elevation A - 15/09/2020
- Staff Village Drawings– Elevation B/C - 15/09/2020
- Staff Village Drawings– Elevation D - 15/09/2020
- Staff Village Drawings– Section A - 15/09/2020
- Staff Village Drawings– Section B - Dated 15/09/2020
- Staff Village Drawings – Window and Door Schedule – Dated 15/09/2020

## 2.2 Description of the Proposal

### 2.2.1 Summary of the Proposal

The proposed development is to now comprise:

- 4 star tourist accommodation (134 total rooms) in the form of:
  - 4 main buildings (4-5 storeys in height)
  - 16 villas
- Day spa and café building
- Restaurant
- Swimming pool
- Bars
- Conference facilities

- Car parking (with 217 vehicle spaces) and driveways, and
- Staged construction of staff village (for 60 staff) - Stage 1.

### 2.2.2 Materials and Colours

The design incorporates materials such as metal sheets, timber cladding, honed sandstone, rendered fibre cement sheeting (light and dark shades), concrete (oxide finish), fabric mesh and anodised aluminium (copper finish).

The materials are of neutral tones and are considered to complement the hues of the natural landscape.

Additionally, the materials have been chosen in context of the coastal area and will provide a level of durability to the weather elements including salt, strong winds, rainfall and sun.

### 2.2.3 Staging

The proponent is seeking staging of the application in the following stages:

- Stage 1
  - Preliminary landscaping and site establishment
  - Staged construction of Staff Village and associated infrastructure, car park and access road
  - Installation of two dedicated fire water tanks along Thomas Road
  - Removal of existing flora within Vegetation Management Zones of Stage 1 and 2 buildings, and
  - Establishment of services yard and access road as required to service Stage 1 buildings.
- Stage 2
  - Construction of Building 1 and associated facilities, including swimming pool and adjacent decking
  - Construction of 16 guest Villas
  - Construction of the Day Spa building
  - Car parking and site access associated with Day Spa building
  - Landscaping, including paths linking Villas, Day Spa building and Building 1
  - Construction of one (1) new vehicle access point along Thomas Road
  - Internal pedestrian/buggy and emergency access paths, and
  - Installation of remaining dedicated fire water tanks along Thomas Road.
- Stage 3
  - Construction of Buildings 2, 3 and 4 including associated car parking, service and loading areas
  - Construction of two (2) new vehicle access points along Thomas Road, and
  - Additional internal pedestrian/buggy and emergency access paths.



A Staging Plan has been prepared by Cox Architecture – refer SCAP A01-02 Staging Plan, dated 22/09/2020.

A detailed analysis of the amendment is discussed further in this report.

## 2.3 Summary of Amendments

The below table outlines the key planning amendments proposed when compared to the scheme authorised by DAC:

Original Approved Proposal	Amended Proposal	Difference	Comments
323 total rooms	134 total rooms	-189 total rooms	The proposed amendment will have fewer total rooms.
115 hotel rooms	102 hotel rooms	-13 hotel rooms	The proposed amendment will have 13 less hotel rooms.
20 x 4 bedroom cottages 20 x 1 bedroom cabins 10 lodges, 9 of which will be 7 storeys in height	16 x 2-bedroom villas	-34 structures	The proposed amendment consolidates the buildings in a tighter format over the site.
Car parking (325 total spaces)	Car parking (217 total spaces)	-108 spaces	There will be 108 less car parking spaces for the site.
Conference Facility (400)	Retained	No change	No change is proposed.
Spa/sauna/day spa	Retained	No change	No change is proposed.
Physical activities including horse riding, bush walking, conservation programs, bird watching etc.	Retained	No change	No change is proposed.
No staff accommodation	Staged construction of staff village (Stage 1)	New staff accommodation	Stage 1 includes new staff village

Original Approved Proposal	Amended Proposal	Difference	Comments
			(reduced version) to be incorporated into the amendment.

### 3. Planning Considerations

#### 3.1 Minor Planning Considerations

The table below contains the analysis of amendments which we consider to be of a minor planning nature, in relative assessment terms, based on the most prevalent assessment criteria within the original Development Report (DR) and Assessment Report (AR).

	Original Approved Proposal	Proposed Amendment	Comments/Justification
Access	The original proposal had two vehicle access points from Thomas Road.	3-4 access points are proposed (day spa, main hotel (in and out) and staff accommodation).	Additional access points to Thomas Road have been dedicated to help reduce potential congestion to the site. This is seen as an improvement on access for the proposal.
Infrastructure	Stormwater management will be managed with bio retention, swales and rainwater tanks. A condition to the original application was applied that requires the proponent to prepare a 'Construction Environmental Management Plan' (CEMP) in accordance with the guidelines to further development management of stormwater and other relevant environmental issues during construction and operation.	No change proposed.	Condition regarding CEMP to remain. The application is happy and willing to adhere to this condition as part of this amended approval now sought for consent.
Noise	The EPA reviewed the technical report and advised that a final noise report be provided to demonstrate the noise criteria is met. A condition was applied to the application to this effect.	No change proposed.	Condition to remain. The application is happy and willing to adhere to this condition as part of this amended approval now sought for consent.

	Original Approved Proposal	Proposed Amendment	Comments/Justification
Waste Management	Rubbish will be collected and disposed of in accordance with the approved Operational Environmental Management and Maintenance Plan (OEMMP).	No change.	The amended proposal includes the same waste management strategies as previously approved. Acknowledging there are less rooms proposed therefore less waste will be generated from the proposal.
Country Fire Service (CFS)	The CFS recommended an approach comprising the 'over-engineering' of building fire safety elements such as passive fire systems (compartmentation), safe evacuation plans, mustering areas and warning systems such as internal sprinkler and smoke management systems. Conditions were applied incorporating the CFS's referral comments.	No charge.	The CFS conditions and recommendations will be adopted throughout the amendment proposal.

### 3.2 Analysis of Pertinent Amendments

Detailed discussion on the more significant amendments of the proposal, again in relative planning terms, where the planning considerations are more noteworthy in the context of the original assessment is provided below.

#### 3.2.1 Visual Impact and Building Height

We have reviewed the previous DR and AR documents.

With reference to matters of visual impact and building height, those reports gave strong consideration to:

- Views of the proposal from public roads in the locality namely Thomas Road and Redbanks Road.
- View of the proposal from adjoining residential properties within the locality.

In principle, we understand that the previous proposal was considered to be acceptable because:

- The design split the accommodation into a number of low scale cabins/cottages and taller lodges, rather than a singular large block on the ridge of the hill.
- The 'Courtyard Hotel' building was set down off the road and screened with vegetation.
- The typology and scale of the proposed cottages and cabins was supported as the designs achieved appropriate reference to the scale and form of the American River locality.
- A condition was applied requiring further details around the visual impact of the car parking areas and service road to the site boundary and public roads.

We have considered the visual impact of the proposal and note that by reducing the number of buildings on the site (by some 34 buildings) and reducing the overall building heights from 6-7 storeys to 4-5 storeys, the extent of built form has significantly reduced, therefore improving the potential visual impact upon the locality overall, in particular upon neighbouring residential properties.

The cluster of guest villas and the day spa building on the hill face will remain low profile in the landscape. Furthermore, as a result of less buildings on the land there is less need to remove native vegetation from the site.

A more detailed analysis follows.

#### Public Road Visual Impacts

As to improve the visitor experience, the main tourist accommodation building has been re-oriented to better capture southern and south eastern views, whilst also following the existing contours of the site. As such, the project is seen as an improvement on the original design.

With respect to its visual impacts on Thomas Road and Redbanks Road, we have considered the proposal plans and had consideration to how it would be visible by using 3D modelling in-context, aerial imagery and google street view.

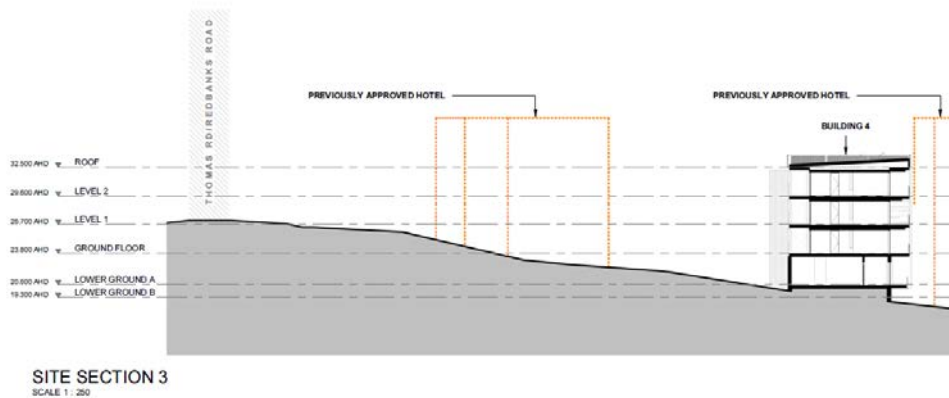
We suspect the amended proposal will reduce the visual impact of built form upon Redbanks Road and Thomas Road for two main reasons.

Firstly, the buildings will have an increased setback from both roads. The amended proposal seeks to set the main building further south from Redbanks Road by some 30 to 35 metres and subsequently the main building will be approximately 11.9 metres lower than Thomas Road/Redbanks Road level.

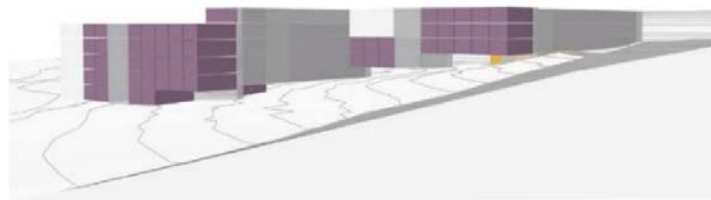
Secondly the buildings will have a reduced height. The proposal will now be 4-5 storeys whereas that which was proposed was in the order of 6-7 storeys. This, in metre terms, equates to a reduction in height of approximately 12 metres.

See **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** below for a diagrammatical analysis of the amendment and reduced potential for visual impacts to Thomas Road and Redbanks Road

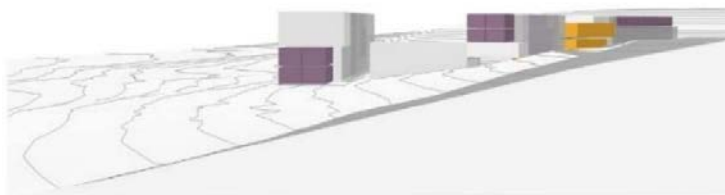
**Figure 1: Cox section diagram demonstrating increased setback from Thomas Road/Redbanks Road**



**Figure 2: Furthermore, Cox Architecture have prepared 3D massing studies of the proposed amendment as viewed from Redbanks Road against the originally approved scheme.**



**From Redbanks Road- Previously Approved Scheme**



**From Redbanks Road- New Proposal**

The proposed amendments slightly alter the location of the car park, however it remains forward of the main building to the road. Therefore, the original condition relating to “further consideration of the proximity of the car parks and service road to the site boundary and guest experience when arriving by car” remains valid and will be further considered by the proponent.

#### Nearby Residential Property Visual Impacts

With respect to its visual impacts on residential properties within the locality, we have considered the proposal plans and had consideration to how it would be visible by using 3D modelling in-context, aerial imagery and google street view.

Contextually, the landscape within the locality is a mix of cleared vegetation as a result of historical and ongoing agricultural activity to the west, as well as smaller residential allotments surrounding the site to the north, east and south. Native vegetation is commonly found along roadsides, along ridgelines and valleys in the area and are often tall enough to restrict views out across the landscape from the roads and residential properties surrounding the land.

As noted, the amended proposal reduces the maximum building height of the main tourist accommodation building and features a consolidated design approach with three linear buildings sited adjacent to Thomas Road with a fourth building sited slightly further east along Redbanks Road. Furthermore, the buildings will be set down the slope of the land to further reduce their view from adjoining residential properties to the north. Extensive existing vegetation to the east of the subject land will aid to screen the view of the buildings from residents in Bennet Court and Buick Drive.

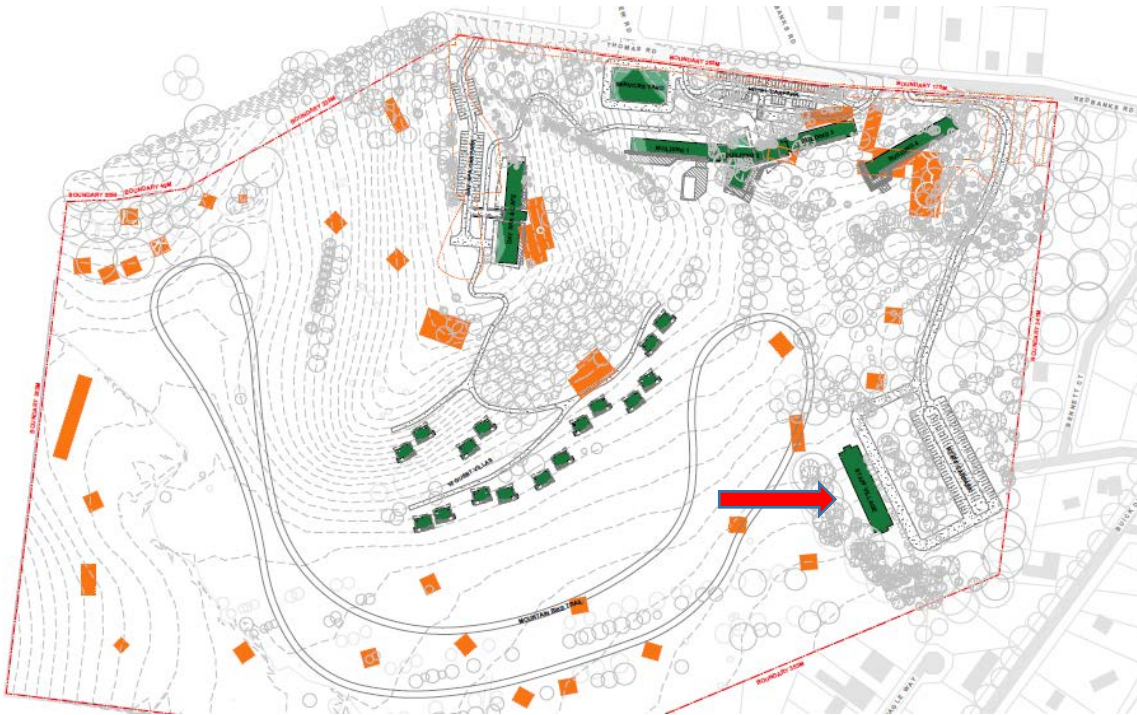
The villas and day spa facility will be located along the face of the hill located fairly centrally on the land. Whilst visible, these buildings will appear low in profile and achieve an appropriate reference to the scale and form of the American River locality and therefore are not expected to be visually dominant features. Visual changes will be moderated by the planting of native species on the site as proposed on the plans.

From our analysis it is determined that intervening topography and vegetation will largely restrict views of the amended 4-5 storey built form, day spa building and villas from the surrounding residential properties. Therefore, the degree of visual impact as a result of the amendment is considered acceptable.

Staff accommodation has been incorporated into the amended proposal which will be located in the south eastern corner of the development site. The staff village will be three storey in profile and be linear in nature to reduce the view as seen from the main hotel building being at the bottom of the hill.

Furthermore, the staff village building (indicated by the arrow) will be extensively screened with existing and proposed vegetation planting as shown in below image which demonstrates the future landscaping around the site. Therefore, the siting and design of the staff village is considered acceptable in context of other proposed structures.

**Figure 3: Site plan showing location of staff village indicated by red arrow in context with other proposed structures on the site**



### 3.2.2 Native Vegetation Clearance

The original approved plan required the clearance of approximately 0.11ha of native vegetation which consisted of approximately 6 Kangaroo Island Leafed Mallee trees and understory vegetation.

The native vegetation (BushRAT) survey determined that the native vegetation is of a poor to moderate condition and is not nationally threatened, state listed or regionally significant. The survey went on to determine that the land contains small sections where endangered plant species occur as well as feeding and nesting habitat for the Glossy Black Cockatoo and potential habitat for the Southern Brown Bandicoot.

The original scheme proposed an extensive landscaping plan and report prepared by Botanical Enigmerase Consultants which proposed planting of 2,000 stems per hectare of native vegetation and infill the existing native vegetation to enhance the Glossy Black Cockatoo, Southern Brown Bandicoot and Kangaroo Island Narrow-leafed Mallee Woodland habitats.

The application was originally referred to DEWNR who did not raise any significant concerns regarding the native vegetation. The proponent was complemented on the sustainable approach adopted for this project.

The proponent has continued in this approach for the amended scheme and is willing to meet the original conditions imposed by the Minister under the development authorisation to provide a detailed landscape plan and strategy to ensure adequate clearances for bushfire prevention and infrastructure are met.



### 3.2.3 Car Parking

The original approved design provided a traffic consultant's report prepared by InfraPlan which addressed matters including layout of the resort, analysis of likely traffic generation of the proposed development and impact on surrounding road network.

The original approved design incorporated the main hotel car park of 75 car parking spaces, with a second car parking area for 200 guest vehicles and 50 staff spaces located to the south of the micro-hotel building in the north eastern corner of the development site. The 325 car parking spaces were deemed sufficient to meet the average demand generated by the resort.

The amended design proposes the main hotel car park of 58 spaces with a second car park near at the day spa of 64 spaces. Staff parking will occur at the location of the staff village and will provide 95 spaces. Overall a total of 217 is proposed under the new scheme with an overall reduction of 189 rooms within the resort based off the original approved scheme.

The InfraPlan report suggested a car parking rate of 1 per 3 guest rooms plus 1 per 15 square metres of total floor area of restaurant area be provided. The report however went on to suggest that the restaurant/bar is aimed at serving primarily resort customers so would not generate a car parking rate in itself. It was also suggested that the existing coach service between the Penneshaw SeaLink terminal and American River and Kingscote is anticipated to cater to some of the travel demand. The rate of 1 space per 3 guest rooms was therefore adopted for the original scheme.

The below table clearly delineates the car parking provided and required under the InfraPlan parking rates adopted in the original proposal:

	Total number of rooms	Total number of car parking spaces provided	Car parking requirement based on 1 space per 3 guest rooms	Total surplus of car parks based off rate
Original Scheme	323	325	108	+217
Proposed Amendment Scheme	134	217	45	+172

The proposed amendment will have 134 rooms and would generate a car parking demand of 45 spaces with this rate applied. Therefore, the number of parking spaces proposed is still considered to adequately meet the car parking demand of the resort and no further traffic studies are deemed required.

## 4. Conclusion

The proposed amendment is believed to be an improvement to the original design in a number of ways, delivering a better commercial outcome, improved design and consequently a better planning outcome for the land and locality.

We have considered the visual impact of the proposal and note that by reducing the number of buildings on the site (by some 34 buildings) and reducing the overall building heights from 6-7 storeys to 4-5 storeys, the extent of built form has significantly reduced therefore improving the potential visual impact upon the locality overall, in particular upon neighbouring residential properties. The cluster of guest villas and day spa building on the hill face will remain low profile in the landscape. Furthermore, as a result of less buildings on the land, there is less need to remove native vegetation from the site.

The inclusion of the staff village as part of this amendment is well removed from the main hotel buildings so as not to interrupt the guest experience and hotel operations. Technical reports and advice with regards to waste management, stormwater management, infrastructure and CFS are not proposed to change as a result of the amended plans. Car parking proposed as part of the amendment is considered to meet the demands of the resort.

Overall, we see the proposed amendment as a significant improvement to the original scheme and consider the changes to warrant SCAP's support.

# Appendix A

## Proposed Plans

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