

Hornsby Shire Council's Bushland Management Advisory Committee Submission - Hornsby Park Draft Master Plan – 2nd June 2021 (Final)

Council's Bushland Management Advisory Committee (BMAC) met on Monday the 17th May 2021 to discuss the Hornsby Park Draft Master Plan and to formulate a submission based on the agreed position of the members. This discussion followed the presentation of the Draft Master Plan to BMAC and other Council Advisory Committees held on Thursday 6th May 2021 at the Hornsby RSL Club. During the combined Advisory Committee presentation, attendees were provided an opportunity to ask questions of Council's Major Projects Team.

The following table presents the formal recommendations agreed upon by BMAC members that are consistent with the Committee's Charter.

The second table presents comments from some members that were agreed as being peripheral to BMAC's Charter but would be noted in the Committee's submission. Please note that the Committee does not necessarily support any of the comments listed in this table.

N.B. Recommendations and Comments in either table could in some cases equally apply to both the Hornsby and Westleigh Park proposals.

Theme	Recommendations:
General	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BMAC would like to see Hornsby Park demonstrate the Sustainability Agenda of Hornsby Shire Council and believe this is a great opportunity to see the actions in the Sustainable Hornsby 2040 Strategy and its supporting documents of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Urban Forest Strategy in particular, as well as the Water Sensitive Hornsby Strategy, Climate Wise Hornsby Plan and Waste Matters Strategy being implemented.
Vegetation Conservation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Committee notes the presence of high conservation value vegetation on site and strongly recommends that the principles of avoid, minimise, mitigate and offset be applied. 3. That vegetation be managed consistent with the comprehensive site vegetation management plan and habitat creation plan.

	<p>4. That more trees be considered to be planted in the amphitheatre area. This area is likely to be very hot at times especially during the height of Summer. A mixture of deciduous and evergreen varieties be considered.</p>
Powerful Owls	<p>5. That protection of all fauna, particularly Powerful Owls (and habitat) be prioritised by avoiding, minimising and mitigating impacts from, but not limited to, lighting, noise, track density, infrastructure positioning and increased intensity of use.</p>
Dogs	<p>6. That if dogs were permitted in Hornsby Park, they must be on-leash.</p>
Tracks and Trails	<p>7. That tracks and trails be prioritised for walkers at Hornsby Park as there are far more walkers than mountain-bikers and walking has a lesser impact than mountain biking.</p>
Proposed Link Track	<p>8. There are concerns for the potential impacts on flora and fauna along some sections of the proposed Link Track between Hornsby and Westleigh Parks.</p> <p>9. That if the Link Track proceeds, it must be routed to avoid or minimise vegetation and habitat impacts and utilise existing track as a priority.</p>
Mountain Bikes	<p>10. The Committee notes the presence of high conservation value vegetation and habitat on site and that the principles of avoid, minimise, mitigate and offset be applied.</p> <p>11. BMAC prioritises the conservation of CEECs such that all mountain-bike trails must be avoided within these communities.</p>
Sports Fields: Environmental Impact	<p>12. That infrastructure be designed in keeping with best practice such that edge effects are avoided or mitigated.</p> <p>13. That Maintenance Budgets must include provision for ongoing bushland management and opportunities for Bushcare groups to be sought and fully funded.</p> <p>14. The location of any playing fields near bushland is a concern, particularly synthetic turf. All playing fields must be designed in keeping with best practice such that all offsite impacts are avoided or mitigated.</p>

	<p>15. That best practice night lighting be designed and implemented such that offsite impacts are avoided or minimised. Further, the impact from night driving on fauna also be considered and minimised.</p> <p>[Adopt where appropriate, the guidelines set out in the attached UN Environment document regarding <i>the Convention on Migratory Species: Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife ... dated 30th January 2020 (prepared by The Government of Australia)</i>].</p>
Planting Lists	<p>16. That exotic species recommended to be planted be reconsidered due to their ability to spread into bushland.</p> <p>17. The Committee notes the limited selection of species in the documentation and strongly recommends that the suggested species list be reassessed and referred to BMAC for advice and confirmation.</p> <p>18. Whilst the limited selection of species in the documentation is noted, the Committee also strongly recommends that the species list for plantings at the Higgins Family Cemetery be reassessed. The proposed exotic plantings at the Cemetery, should only be species with known Heritage value. Again, this should be referred to BMAC for advice and confirmation.</p> <p>19. BMAC strongly recommends that wherever possible, native species are to be sourced from Councils Community Nursery <i>Warada Ngurang</i> at Pennant Hills.</p>
Pollution/ Contamination	<p>20. That any site contamination and pollution issues be managed consistently with relevant legislation.</p>
Education	<p>21. The Committee unanimously supports the establishment of an integrated site education program that promotes the values of Bushland (including CEECs and EECs) within the site and the Link Track area.</p> <p>22. There needs to be greater consultation and education when dealing with mountain bike riders and the wider community about the impacts on and importance of bushland.</p>
Hydrology	<p>23. That a total water cycle management plan be developed and implemented consistent with the principles of the Water Sensitive Hornsby Strategy, including potential Water Harvesting opportunities from local streets and other sources.</p> <p>24. That the water supply needs of the NSW RFS be considered for firefighting purposes.</p>

Comments noted by Bushland Management Advisory Committee peripheral to its Charter:

Topic	Comment
General	<p>1. Both projects are huge undertakings and could probably be regarded as having regional, as opposed to just local, development status. Both projects will attract bike riders from outside the LGA. This is evidenced by the sheer volume of correspondence Council has already received from the bike riding groups. Their submissions refer to Hornsby as being the only extensive bike riding area in the Sydney Basin. There may be an opportunity for Council to lobby hard for additional State and/or Federal funding to get both projects underway. Both projects will benefit not just Hornsby Council but also the broader Sydney community, particularly Northern and North West Sydney. I expect Hornsby Park, with its unique assets and close public transport facilities to become a Regional facility within 20 years.</p>
Site Design	<p>2. Hornsby residents again paid for other people's benefits. It turns out the Quarry did not need to be filled to be stable and there would have been enough spoil on the unstable northern bank to stabilise it anyway. It has lost a lot of its uniqueness!</p> <p>3. Concern with the Quarry development is the actual circle design within the Quarry itself. Presently apart from a general amphitheatre it does not appear very useful. Will the tree lined area have picnic tables? Can the tree lined area be extended more around the perimeter to ensure more shade and more picnic areas, without losing the open amphitheatre?</p> <p>4. A water play area would make the area more desirable for young family visitors. The design of a water play area should be constructed with materials reflective of the environment. For example, quarry rocks rather than just holes of water that spout up with plastic displays. Any water play should be in harmony with its environment.</p> <p>5. BMAC recommends serious consideration of winter shadow diagrams for the quarry void. There are shadows on the northern escarpment. There will be little sun exposure due to the steepness of the topography and the depth of the void area of the park which will impact the design outcomes for that part of the Park.</p> <p>6. BMAC recommends consideration of the water temperature of the proposed lake. It will probably be cold all year. Swimming may well need to be restricted to part or all of the lake for a significant part of the year.</p>

	<p>7. Council should wherever possible, use suitable cost effective recycled or second hand materials throughout the development. What protocols does Council have in place to ensure this occurs?</p>
<p>Interpretive Signage</p>	<p>8. It is hoped the suggested interpretive signs on page 148 remain a feature.</p> <p>9. The Quarry face is very likely unique in the world as suggested by the many geologists' reports and opinions that have been provided to Council since the beginning of the planning for the site. Only a suitably qualified geologist can comment on whether enough care is given to its interpretation and preservation.</p> <p>10. Notes that at the information pop-ups, many Hornsby residents had little or no idea about the Quarry or proposed projects. Information sharing about Hornsby facilities and attractions should be provided at key positions such as train stations and transport interchanges so that more people are captured in the consultation process.</p>
<p>User Conflict, Dangers and Risk</p>	<p>11. There are many visible safety issues such as tracks/paths intersecting, absence of high safety fences along trails with high drop areas; that is, people can fall off cliffs. Wetlands require protection from people and vice-versa; swimming requires lifeguards; water quality must be assured, and so on.</p> <p>12. Council must address the behaviour of park users relating to safety particularly in areas shared by cyclists, mountain bikers, walkers, and electric bikers and/or scooter drivers. Council must address park user behaviour where very young, very senior, those with physical or mental impairment, those managing prams or implements for mobility must mix and cross paths.</p> <p>13. Signage and behaviours: Need High Vis rules such as keep to the left or right and when and how fast and give way to pedestrians and so on. Signs on existing MBT's suggest mountain bike riders keep to the right. This can be disastrous as shown in recent accidents locally and elsewhere, if some keep to the left and others to the right, especially if pedestrians are also involved.</p> <p>14. The MBT's used to have mapped numbered positions displayed on signage and number signage along tracks so if there was an incident, and there have been many, their position can be identified for an efficient and effective rescue. These were pulled down with recent track upgrades and not replaced. There have been several accidents and serious injuries since. Very important for the difficult and remote areas of the track.</p> <p>15. Other risks include active adventures interaction with those engaged in passive recreation and play.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Traffic, Congestion & Parking</p>	<p>16. There appears to be concerns for the Quarry project from residents. For example, there appears to be only around 80 to 100 parking spaces for all the Quarry activities. This Park is to be the Centennial Park of the north with so many activities as a Shire wide facility with many people driving to the site, like it or not. Think a far greater number of attendances for both sites than Fagan Park that has large expanses of empty grassed paddocks it opens as overflow parking for busy times. These (Master Plan) reports should include a plan to manage these elements traffic, congestion, parking and amenity.</p> <p>17. One suggestion for the Quarry could be shared parking with TAFE. An existing TAFE car park is positioned on the western side of TAFE which is accessed from Bridge Road near to the OMV/Quarry entrance.</p> <p>18. Hornsby TAFE has a multi-story car park that may or may not be extended and/or used on weekends and school holidays. Overflow carparking arrangements or opportunities?</p> <p>19. Not enough provision for car parking. People from apartments and people from outside the Hornsby LGA might come by public transport, but that is not guaranteed and will become a real problem in the not-too-distant future. Council needs to plan for this future outcome.</p> <p>20. Most residents from surrounding suburbs will travel by car (due to poor connections with busses, trains and reduced weekend services).</p> <p>21. Concerns raised on increasing the carpark areas at either park site. Council is encouraged to identify more sustainable solutions for the parking considerations such as shuttle bus services that might for example run to the Quarry from the Railway Station at peak times and/or at least on a regular basis.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Access</p>	<p>22. Viewing platform and wetland would have been great and some ovals and facilities like Olympic Park at Homebush where the quarry section is fenced off to the public for environmental and safety reasons as Hornsby Quarry will have to be in some areas for public safety.</p> <p>23. Concerns about paths and lifts that do not appear to be necessary as the Quarry is a Quarry and people will be able to view it from the elevated platforms and trails. A drive/ walk down Rosemead Rd or the Bridge Rd will be good examples of its steepness.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sports Fields: Social Impact</p>	<p>24. Removal or reduction in the size of sports fields would allow for increased informal play area and increased size of water and play equipment area. Would be needed if it is going to be a Regional Park.</p>

	<p>25. Flat, boring and unshaded. Cannot be used as a Village Green at this scale, especially with synthetic turf.</p> <p>26. Looks like an entry to a Sporting Field Complex, not a great Regional Park!</p> <p>27. Traffic breaks up the area into two parts – not a coherent whole.</p>
<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>28. Presentation mentioned that the Quarry could be closed at night time. When and how? How is this achievable?</p> <p>29. Ongoing security and safety concerns.</p> <p>30. Access to onsite carparking: Hornsby LGA residents versus non-residents?</p> <p>31. There may be some choke points caused to enforce payment from non-residents. Plans for that scenario?</p> <p>32. We should charge non-residents and/or visitors to use our facilities. Locals should reap some benefits from their local resources.</p>
<p>Uses</p>	<p>33. Small and compact mini golf/putt-putt and other pocket activities could fit well, and quickly and cover weed infested areas.</p> <p>34. Need to ensure that there are lots of seating and eating facilities for large and small groups with shade for summer. There is very little in Hornsby at the moment and many people travel long distances to have a gathering. BBQ/cooking facilities? Access to a power source for individual users (including USB connections) apart from major event organisers?</p> <p>35. The idea of using the Crusher Plant at Hornsby Park for industrial heritage interpretation is a good idea and could be incorporated into any commercial business like a café or such like.</p> <p>36. Support for the idea of turning the Crusher Plant site into a museum/education centre.</p> <p>37. Like to see swimming allowed at the Quarry, such is the allure of places like Manly Dam, Parramatta Park and Pittwater Park.</p> <p>38. The heritage building (Crusher Plant) is important and could be incorporated into a heritage style Cafe easily. The need for Bike hire or admin area for paid camping or rock climbing etc, could see the construction of simple cabins near the heritage building to fulfil these purposes.</p>

	<p>39. Will the Cafe have a view of the Quarry? Cafes and restaurants with a view are hard to come by in Hornsby and would attract a lot of interest.</p>
Project Delivery	<p>40. The opening of Stage 1 for Hornsby Park is expected in 2023. That seems optimistic as there is so much to do. Also, unless additional funding is obtained from, say the State or Federal Governments or other another source, then multiple staging may be required instead of the planned 2 stages.</p>
Hydrology	<p>41. Is any work being considered with regards to parking areas, foot paths or road construction (hard surfaces) to either see the use of more sustainable materials in the construction of the carparks or if the carparks, walkways or roads themselves will be of a permeable nature, which would turn the hard surfaces into effect soft surfaces?</p> <p>42. Given both the proposed developments at Hornsby and Westleigh Parks are situated within bushland it would be a great opportunity to not just put down slabs of concrete and road aggregate. Every development that does not look to reduce its hard surfaces is a missed opportunity particularly within bush settings where you will see reduced run off into the surrounding bushland.</p>

Hornsby Shire Council's Bushland Management Advisory Committee Submission - Westleigh Park Draft Master Plan – 2nd June 2021 (Final)

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The second table presents comments from some members that were agreed as being peripheral to BMAC's Charter but would be noted in the Committee's submission. Please note that the Committee does not necessarily support any of the comments listed in this table.

N.B. Recommendations and Comments in either table could in some cases equally apply to both the Westleigh and Hornsby Park proposals.

Theme	Recommendations
General	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BMAC would like to see Westleigh Park demonstrate the Sustainability Agenda of Hornsby Shire Council and believe this is a great opportunity to see the actions in the Sustainable Hornsby 2040 Strategy and its supporting documents of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Urban Forest Strategy in particular, as well as the Water Sensitive Hornsby Strategy, Climate Wise Hornsby Plan and Waste Matters Strategy being implemented.
Vegetation Conservation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Committee notes the presence of high conservation value vegetation on site and strongly recommends that the principles of avoid, minimise, mitigate and offset be applied. 3. That vegetation be managed consistent with a comprehensive site vegetation management plan and habitat creation plan.

	<p>4. That the vegetation on Sydney Water land be considered for future incorporation into a comprehensive site vegetation management plan.</p>
Synthetic Turf	<p>5. Artificial turf being used near any bushland area is of concern.</p> <p>6. That all playing fields, particularly synthetic turf, be designed in keeping with best practice such that all offsite impacts are avoided or mitigated.</p>
Proposed Link Track	<p>7. There are concerns for the potential impacts on flora and fauna along some sections of the proposed Link Track between Hornsby and Westleigh Parks.</p> <p>8. That if the Link Track proceeds, it must be routed to avoid or minimise vegetation and habitat impacts and utilise existing tracks as a priority.</p>
Night Lighting	<p>9. That best practice night lighting be designed and implemented such that offsite impacts are avoided or minimised. Further, the impact from night driving on fauna also be considered and minimised.</p> <p>[Adopt where appropriate, the guidelines set out in the attached UN Environment document regarding <i>the Convention on Migratory Species: Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife ... dated 30th January 2020 (prepared by The Government of Australia)</i>].</p>
Mountain Bike Trails	<p>10. The Committee notes the presence of high conservation value vegetation and habitat on site and recommends that the principles of avoid, minimise, mitigate and offset be applied.</p> <p>11. BMAC prioritises the conservation of CEECs such that all mountain-bike trails must be avoided within these communities.</p>
Edge Impacts from Sports Fields	<p>12. That all infrastructure be designed in keeping with best practice such that all edge effects are avoided or mitigated.</p> <p>13. That Maintenance Budgets must include provision for ongoing bushland management and opportunities for Bushcare groups sought and fully funded.</p>

Pollution/ Contamination	14. That any site contamination and pollution issues be managed consistently with relevant legislation.
Education	<p>15. The Committee unanimously supports the establishment of an integrated site education program that promotes the values of Bushland (including CEECs and EECs) within the site.</p> <p>16. There needs to be greater consultation and education when dealing with mountain bike riders and the wider community about the impacts on and importance of bushland.</p>
Hydrology	<p>17. That a total water cycle management plan be developed and implemented consistent with the principles of the Water Sensitive Hornsby Strategy, including potential Water Harvesting opportunities from Quarter Sessions Road and other local streets.</p> <p>18. That the water supply needs of the NSW RFS be considered for firefighting purposes.</p>
Dogs	19. That if dogs were permitted in Westleigh Park, they must be on-leash.
Future Planting Lists	<p>20. BMAC strongly recommends that wherever possible, native species are to be sourced from Councils Community Nursery <i>Warada Ngurang</i> at Pennant Hills.</p> <p>21. That any exotic species recommended to be planted be reconsidered due to their ability to spread into bushland.</p>

Comments noted by Bushland Management Advisory Committee peripheral to its Charter:

Topic	Comment
Mountain-Bike Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Should Hornsby Shire Council have a strategy to move bikes out of Berowra Valley? 2. Needs a Shire-wide strategy?
Land Purchase	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. I did not agree that HSC should have purchased and paid over \$20 million for disused polluted and contaminated land owned by the people and to be used for the people for facilities and parkland.
Traffic, Congestion & Parking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Residents of Westleigh have concerns and would like these reports to include a plan to manage these elements traffic, congestion, parking and amenity. 5. There is nowhere near enough car parking. Because Sydney has a history of poor public transport, with poor interconnections and reduced services out of peak hours, Sydney siders have a poor mentality to public transport. The people who use this facility will drive there, just as they do with the existing. All the car spaces could be used for a busy athletics carnival alone. 6. Support for paid car parking and resident exemptions. 7. The traffic report summary states, overall, the development of the Westleigh Park must include alternative vehicle access arrangements over and above those which currently are available in Quarter Sessions Road. 8. The traffic report recommends option 1 for the proposed road link through to Sefton Rd. The masterplan indicates that the whole of the east west access road from Quarter Sessions Rd, all the way through to Sefton Rd, is within Sydney Water land. The masterplan states that in principle agreement has been reached with Sydney water for this link road. The Committee could not find any details about cost of construction or land acquisition. It is assumed the road will be dedicated as a public road and vested in Council. There is concern about the costs Council is likely to incur from land acquisition and construction. If this is the scenario, then perhaps Council (if not already) should be taking the position that this link road will serve not just the playing fields but also as an essential benefit to the whole suburb of Westleigh and Thornleigh in not only easing sub regional traffic flow but for bush fire management. Therefore, this proposed link road is not a local requirement

	<p>for the playing fields only but an essential State Government regional requirement. Council could easily argue that this link is NOT essential for the operation of the masterplan, but simply makes it better from a holistic regional perspective.</p> <p>9. Accordingly, perhaps the masterplan should be restructured and reworded to make the link road a lower priority for Council's own essential needs and incorporate the link road's construction as a last stage with low priority. In other words, put pressure on the state govt to come to the party and fund and prioritise the link road.</p> <p>10. How often do the local bus services 586, 587 and 588 operate? The Traffic report has no timetable. If frequent, these services have the potential to take some pressure off the road network</p>
<p>User Conflict, Dangers & Risks</p>	<p>11. Lots of visible safety issues such as many tracks/paths intersecting, absence of safety fences along trails etc.</p> <p>12. Council must address the behaviour of park users relating to safety particularly in areas shared by cyclists, mountain bikers, walkers, and electric bikers and/or scooter drivers. Council must address park user behaviour where very young, very senior, those with physical or mental impairment, those managing prams or implements for mobility, must mix and cross paths.</p> <p>13. Signage and behaviours: Need High Vis rules such as keep to the left/right and when and how fast and give way to pedestrians and so on. Signs on existing MBT suggest riders keep to the right. This can be disastrous as shown in recent other area accidents if some keep to the left and others to the right especially if pedestrians are also involved.</p> <p>14. The MBT trails used to have mapped numbered positions displayed on signage and number signage along tracks so if there was an incident, and there have been many, their position can be identified for an efficient and effective rescue. These were pulled down with recent track up grades and not replaced. There have been accidents and serious injuries since. Very important for the difficult and remote areas of the track.</p> <p>15. Other risks include active adventures interaction with those engaged with passive recreation and play.</p>
<p>Sefton Road Extension</p>	<p>16. Support for the extension of Sefton Road. In a bush fire there is only one way in and out. This would provide an alternative escape route.</p> <p>17. Support for alternate road access for the residents of Westleigh especially with regards to bush fires.</p>

Community Feedback	18. Some Westleigh residents have said in general they were unimpressed. Apparently, some believe Ruddock Park is underutilised.
	19. Agree with the current concept although have some concerns about some people/groups not being included in the various stakeholder decision making and them thus believing the decisions made by others will be confounded.
Project Scale	20. Perception that we are trying to squeeze too much out of this parcel of land, and the scale of the proposal should be reduced.
Project Delivery	<p>21. The opening of Stage 1 for Westleigh Park is expected in 2023. That seems optimistic as there is so much to do. Also, unless additional funding is obtained from, say the State or Federal Governments or other another source, then multiple staging may be required instead of the planned 2 stages.</p> <p>22. Both projects are huge undertakings and could probably be regarded as having regional, as opposed to just local, development status. Both projects will attract bike riders from outside the LGA. This is evidenced by the sheer volume of correspondence Council has already received from the bike riding groups. Their submissions refer to Hornsby as being the only extensive bike riding area in the Sydney Basin. There may be an opportunity for Council to lobby hard for additional State and/or Federal funding to get both projects underway. Both projects will benefit not just Hornsby Council but also the broader Sydney community, particularly Northern and North West Sydney. I expect Hornsby Park, with its unique assets and close public transport facilities to become a Regional facility within 20 years.</p>
Sports Fields	23. The sporting and play areas are magnificent (coherent and elegant design suiting the needs of the users).