

Mt Keira  
Summit Park  
**PLAN OF MANAGEMENT**  
December 2019

### Acknowledgement of Country

Wollongong City Council would like to show their respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



The Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management was prepared by TRC Tourism Pty Ltd for Wollongong City Council.

### Acknowledgements

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## Abbreviations

IESCA	Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area
IESMP	<i>Illawarra Escarpment Strategic Management Plan 2015</i>
LEP	Wollongong Local Environment Plan
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
POM	Plan of Management



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Mt Keira Summit Park (the Summit Park) occupies a 9.4 hectare, relatively flat area of land at the top of Mt Keira about 10 km or a 20 minute drive from the Wollongong CBD. Mt Keira is a prominent scenic landmark which, at 464 metres above sea level, provides a unique visual backdrop to the west of the City of Wollongong. It is part of the Illawarra Escarpment which forms an impressive line of steep slopes and cliffs bordering the Wollongong coastal plain and is a major topographic feature that contributes to the character and amenity of the city and surrounding region.



Mt Keira and the Illawarra Escarpment form a prominent scenic backdrop to Wollongong. Mt Keira Summit Park is the highest point in this photograph.



Mt Keira Summit Park, managed by Wollongong City Council as an annex to the Wollongong Botanic Garden, is Community Land under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The Park contains visitor infrastructure (including the Victoria Lookout, a car park, kiosk, walking track and picnic facilities) and is accessed by Queen Elizabeth Drive from the Mt Keira Road. The majority of the Park is uncleared natural forest which provides habitat for a range of native animal species. It contributes to the high biodiversity and landscape values of general region and the surrounding Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area (IESCA) which is managed by the NSW National Park and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

The Summit Park is a special place for the Wollongong community, featuring unique layers of heritage and history. Its natural and scenic character has been enjoyed by generations of residents and visitors. Mt Keira's summit is important to, and actively used by, the traditional Aboriginal custodians of the Illawarra. The summit of the mountain is linked to Aboriginal creation stories of the mountain and surrounding areas. It also features stories of European settlement and development of the region, its culture and lifestyle and community participation in development of the Park itself.

People visit the Summit Park to enjoy the outstanding scenery and natural environment, to picnic, socialise, showcase the area to visitors and for outdoor activities such as bushwalking and rock climbing on cliffs bordering the Park. A network of walking tracks in the IESCA connect to the Summit Park. The summit is also a destination for road cycling and features in several regional recreational and sporting events.

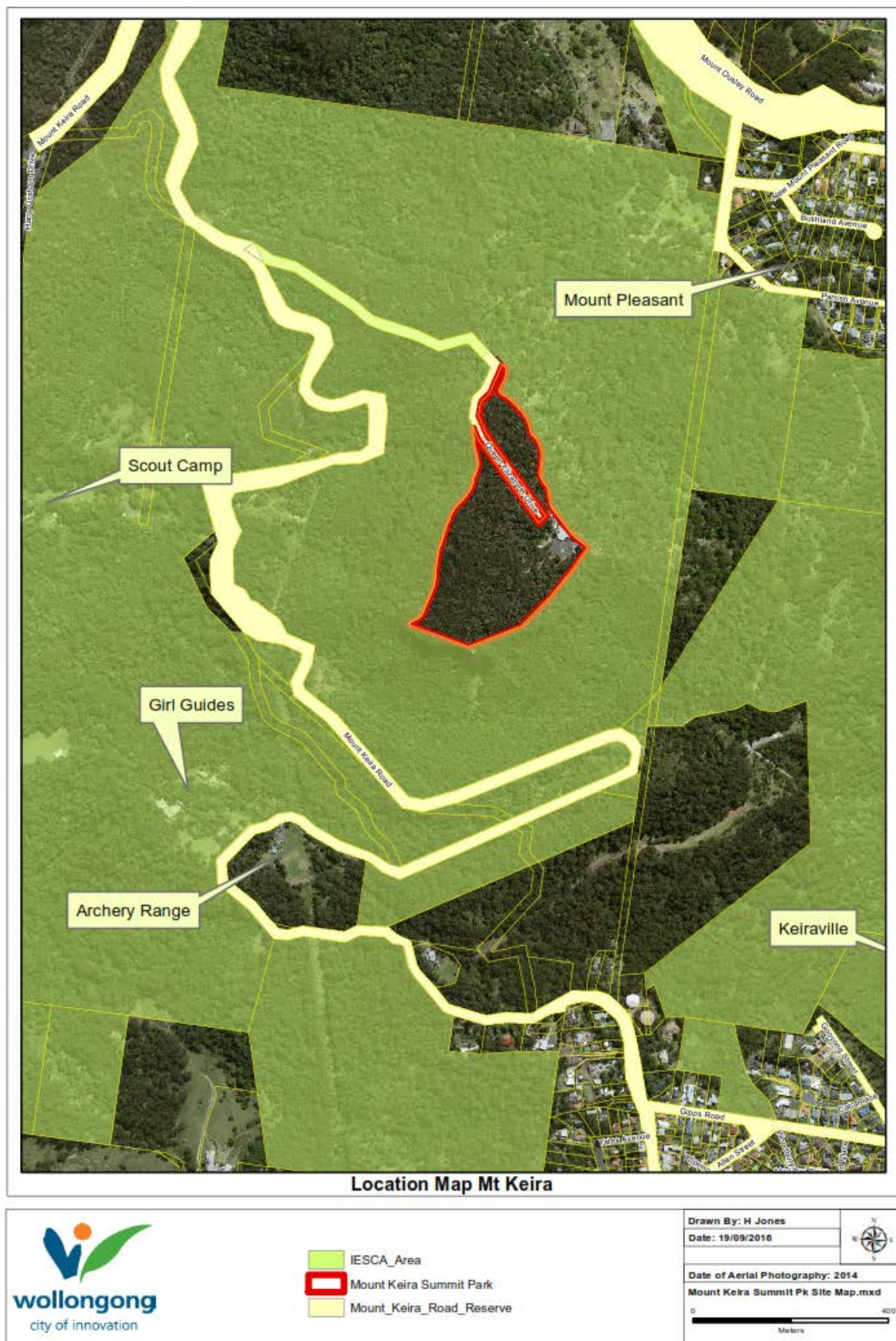
Recent changes within and adjacent to the Summit Park have affected public use and enjoyment and have had implications for the ongoing management and use of the Park that are addressed in this Plan of Management. Landslips and slope instability have led to the closure of the Five Islands Lookout in the Summit Park and parts of walking tracks in the adjacent IESCA which connected to the Summit Park. Rock climbing has also been limited to an area to the west of the Park. The former restaurant/function centre on the summit has been closed and the building has been removed and replaced by a container housing a kiosk. Upgrades of park facilities and services are being undertaken. In addition, it is envisaged that strong growth in Wollongong's population (across the range of age groups) and a projected increase in visitor numbers to the region will lead to increased demand for recreational use of the Summit Park and improved visitor facilities and opportunities.



Extensive views of Wollongong, the coastline and Illawarra Escarpment from Mt Keira Summit Park.



Figure 1: Location of Mt Keira Summit Park



## 1.2 Purpose of the Plan of Management

This Plan of Management has been developed to guide revitalisation and sustainable management of Mt Keira Summit Park in a way which protects and showcases its special scenic, natural and cultural values; recognises community aspirations for use of the area as an important natural, cultural and recreational asset; and provides quality experiences for its visitors.

The Plan of Management is a statutory document which sets out for the community how Wollongong City Council plans to manage Mt Keira Summit Park into the future. Division 2 of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires the Council to prepare a plan of management for community land and to use and manage the land only in accordance with that plan. The Local Government Act also requires that a plan of management must identify the objectives, performance targets and permissible uses for community land. Table 1 indicates how this Plan of Management incorporates the requirements of the Local Government Act. The relevant sections of the Act are provided in Appendix A.

**Table 1: Requirements of Local Government Act relevant to contents of this Plan of Management**

Requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>	Reference in this Plan of Management
<b>S. 36(2)(a) – identification of the category of community land.</b> <b>S. 36D(3)(a) – statement that the land is an area of cultural significance.</b>	Section 2.1.
<b>S. 36(2)(b) – identification of objectives with respect to the land</b> <b>S. 36D(3)(c) – identification of objectives .... designed to protect the area and incorporating the core objectives under the Act for an area of cultural significance</b>	Section 6.2 sets out management objectives.
<b>S. 36(2)(b) – identification of performance targets with respect to the land</b> <b>S. 36D(3)(c) – identification of ... performance targets designed to protect the area and incorporating the core objectives under the Act for an area of cultural significance</b>	Performance targets are identified for each action in the Implementation Plan in Table 4, section 6.2.
<b>S. 36(2)(c) – identification of the means by which the council proposes to achieve the plan’s objectives and performance targets.</b>	The Implementation Plan in Table 4, section 6.2.
<b>S. 36(2)(d) – identification of the manner in which the council proposes to assess its performance with respect to the plan’s objectives and performance targets.</b>	The Implementation Plan in Table 4, section 6.2.
<b>S. 36(3A)(a) – description of the condition and use of the land and any buildings and improvements.</b>	Chapter 3.
<b>S. 36(3A)(b) – specification of the permitted uses and developments of the land and any buildings and improvements, and the scale and intensity any permitted uses and developments.</b>	Section 6.1, Table 3.

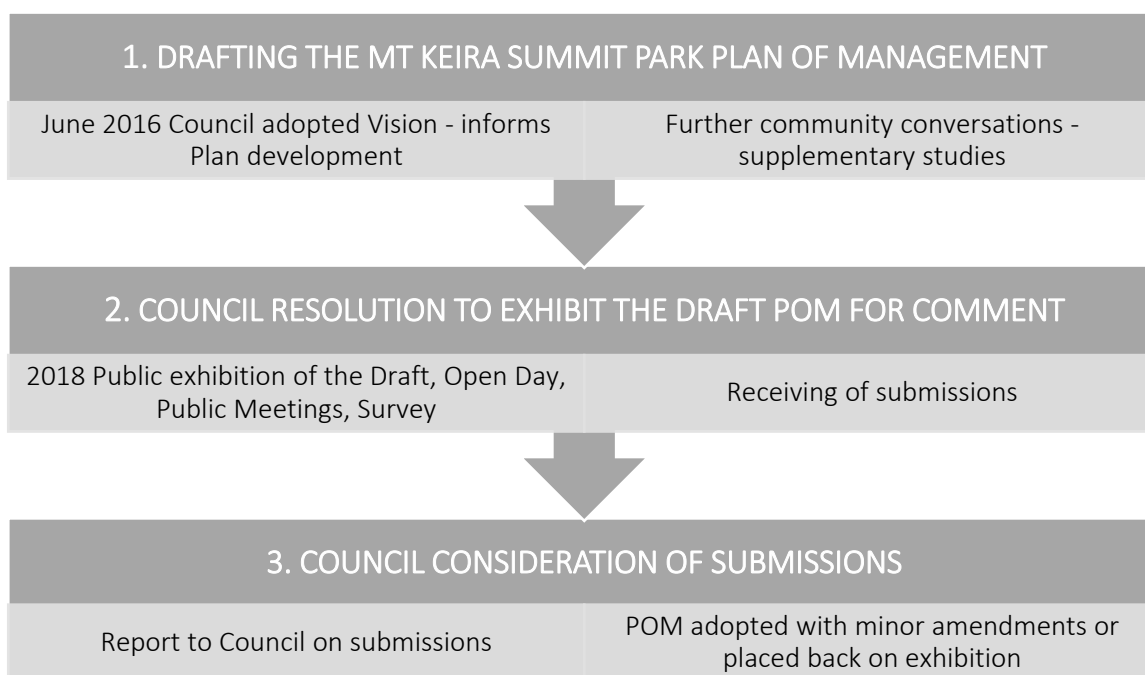
## 1.3 Making of the Plan of Management

As a first step community and stakeholder input was sought to develop a Vision that would set out the community's aspirations for the protection, use and sustainable management of Mt Keira Summit Park. An important element of this stage of consultation involved discussions with the Aboriginal community to understand their aspirations for this significant place. Between February and April 2016 information on the vision process was provided on the Wollongong City Council website. The views of the broader community, organisations and agencies were obtained through face to face meetings, a community open house forum, a visitor survey, a number of community workshops and circulation of a draft Vision to the community for comment. The Vision for the Summit Park was adopted by Council in June 2016 and has been incorporated into this Plan of Management (see chapter 5).

This Plan of Management was then developed with further input from the community and organisations and agencies with an interest in the Summit Park. Information about the development of the Plan of Management was presented on the Wollongong City Council website and a community workshop was held in September 2016 to identify the key issues to be addressed in the draft Plan. Several background studies were conducted to inform the development of the draft Plan and assess the feasibility of future options for the Summit Park. These included a Preliminary Biodiversity Assessment, a draft site Concept Plan and assessment of options for installation of a permanent power supply.

Before adoption of a plan of management section 38 of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires Council to place a draft plan of management on public exhibition so that the community has an opportunity to consider the proposed management measures and make submissions to Council.

The process followed in developing the Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management (POM) is summarised below.





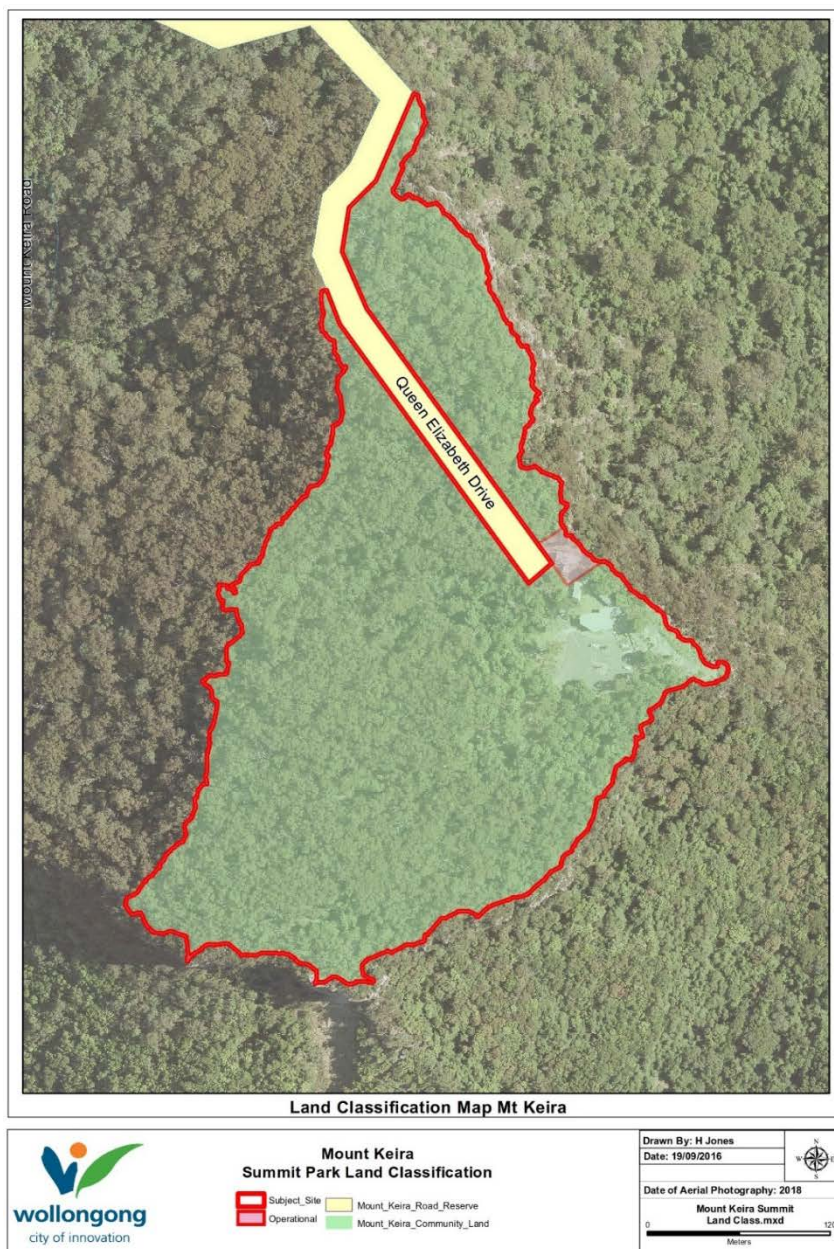
## 2 Planning Requirements

### 2.1 Park Area and Land Use Requirements

#### Land to which this Plan of Management applies

This Plan of Management applies to the area of Community Land (Lot 1 DP875991) identified in accordance with section 26 of the *Local Government Act 1993* as comprising Mt Keira Summit Park (see Figure 2). It does not apply to the adjacent area of Operational Land occupied by a telecommunications tower or to the road reserve for Queen Elizabeth Drive which provides road access to the Summit Park (see Figure 2). The boundaries of the Summit Park land adjoining the IESCA extend to the top of the cliff line. The cliff face and land below the cliffs is within the IESCA.

**Figure 2: Land Classifications under the Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management**



## Local Government Community Land Categories

Mt Keira Summit Park contains two categories of Community Land which have different management objectives under the *Local Government Act 1993* (see Figure 3).

The majority of the Summit Park is categorised as an **Area of Cultural Significance**. Under section 36H of the Local Government Act the core objectives for management of an Area of Cultural Significance are to retain and enhance the cultural significance of the area (namely its Aboriginal, aesthetic, archaeological, historical, technical, research or social significance) for past, present or future generations by active conservation (see Appendix A). This may include preservation, protective care and maintenance, restoration and reconstruction of the land (and any related buildings) and adaptive reuse to allow uses compatible with its cultural significance.

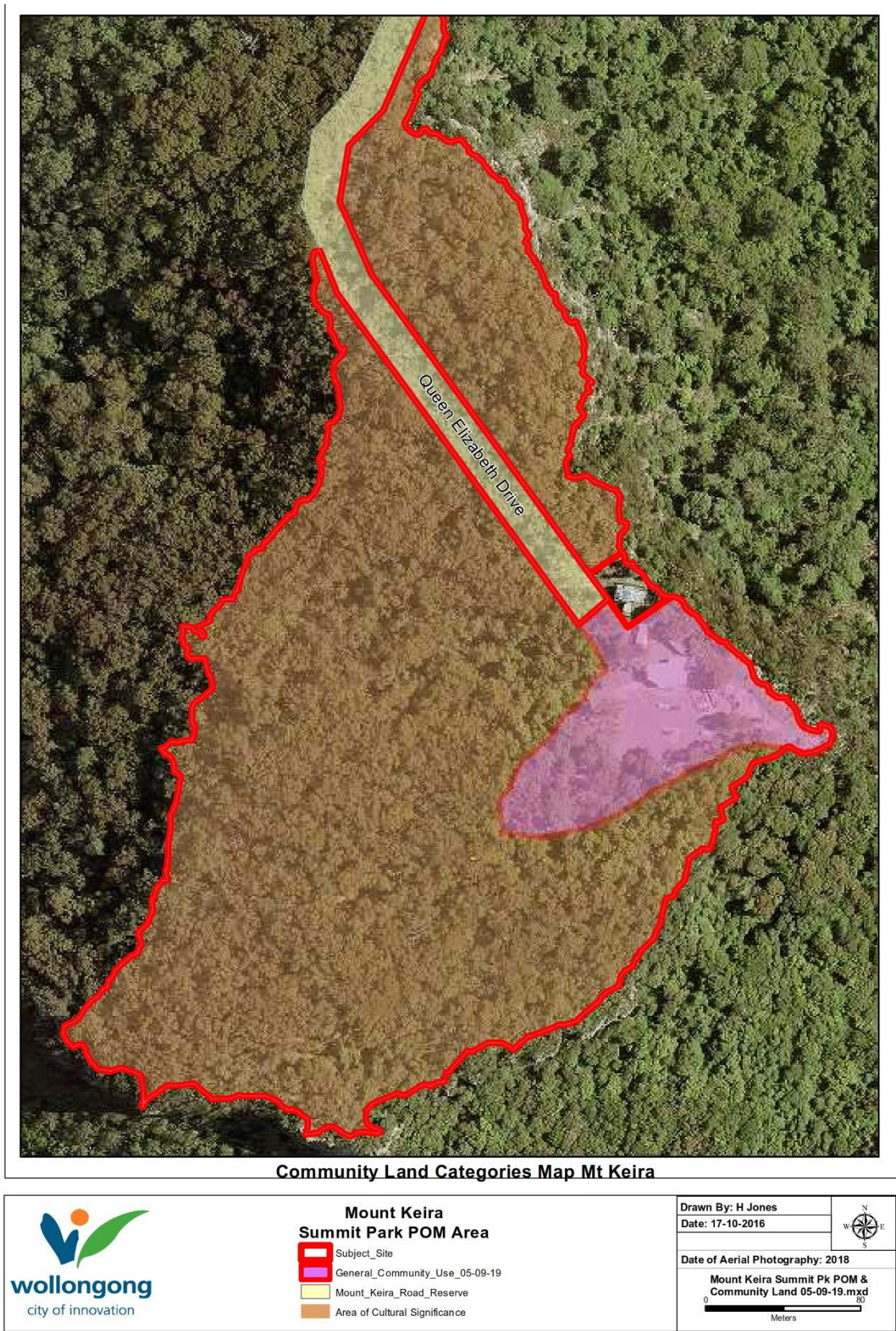
An area of the Summit Park is categorised for **General Community Use**. Under section 36I of the Local Government Act the core objectives for management of General Community Use land are to promote, encourage and provide for the use of the land and provide facilities to meet the current and future needs of the local community and the wider public in relation to:

- public recreation and physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare
- the purposes for which a lease, licence or other estate may be granted.

Previously the General Community Use area was limited to the former restaurant site and was included in Council's Generic Plan of Management for Community Land. By the making of this Plan of Management for Mt Keira Summit Park the General Community Use area will be extended to cover the Park's main visitor infrastructure which is in the vicinity of Victoria Lookout and carpark (see Figure 4). The former restaurant site will be excised from Council's Generic Plan of Management for Community Land. The rest of the Mt Keira Summit Park will have a Plan of Management over it for the first time.



Figure 32: Adopted Community Land Categories under the Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management





## Local Environment Plan Zoning

The *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009* (LEP) is a statutory instrument prepared in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* to set out development objectives and consent requirements for particular areas. Under the LEP most of the undeveloped land in Mt Keira Summit Park is zoned as E2 – Environmental Conservation (see Figure 4). The objectives of the E2 zone under the LEP are to:

- protect, manage and restore areas of high ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic values
- prevent development that could destroy, damage or otherwise have an adverse effect on those values
- retain and enhance the visual and scenic qualities of the Illawarra Escarpment
- protect land forming part of the Sydney Catchment Authority's hydrological catchment.

The *Illawarra Escarpment Strategic Management Plan 2015* (see section 2.2 below) sets out desired outcomes for the management of all E2 zoned land in the escarpment as:

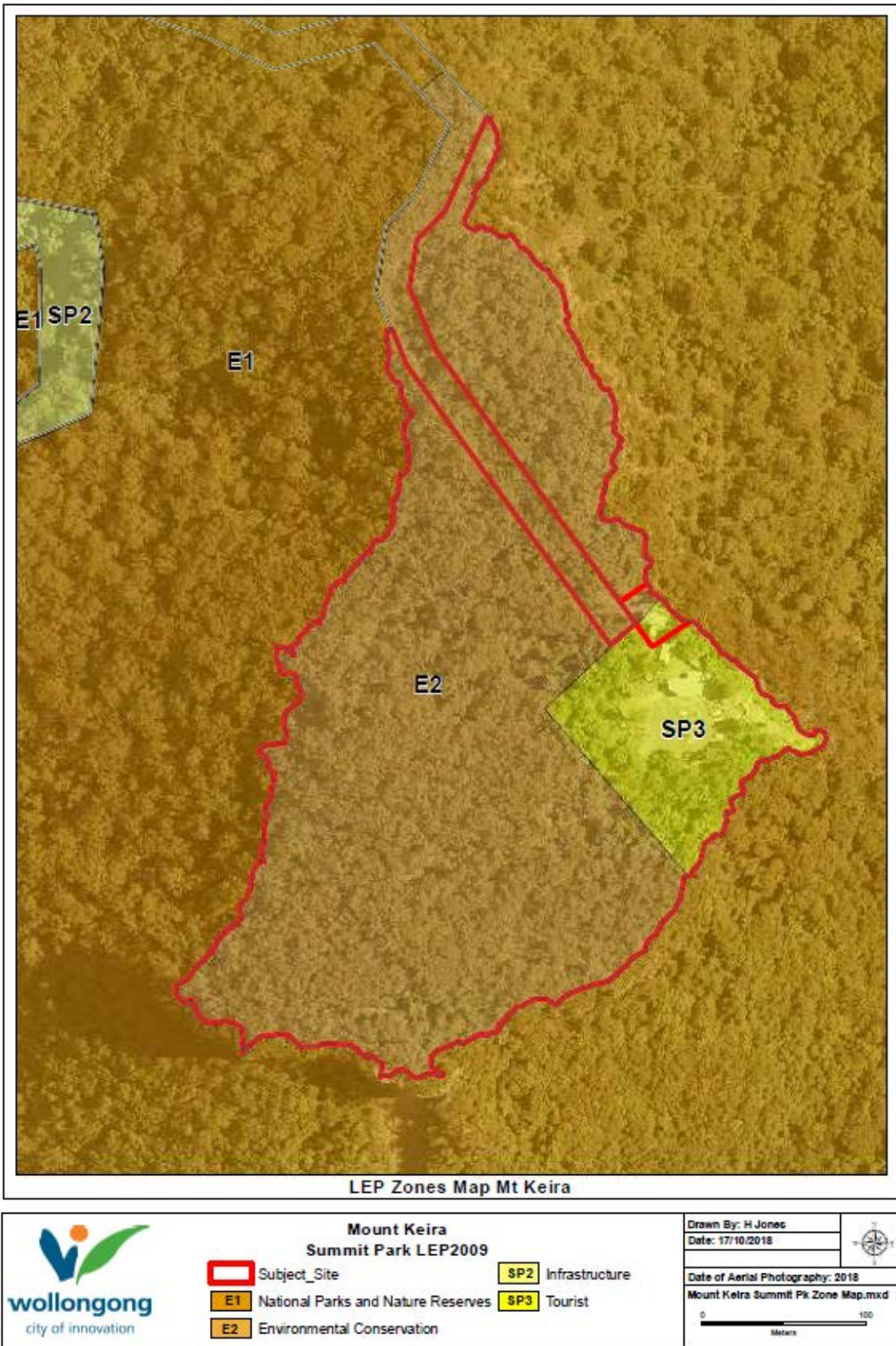
- land use which protects and enhances escarpment lands which have special conservation, cultural and historical, aesthetic or scenic qualities
- active management to enhance watercourses and their riparian buffer areas
- active management to conserve areas that contain high biodiversity values
- conservation of natural habitats for native plants and animals within the escarpment lands
- conservation of areas that comprise high visual or cultural amenity – such as cliff faces, ridges
- enhancement of environmental and/or ecological corridors
- provision of opportunities for public appreciation of the escarpment environment and its cultural heritage where conservation is not compromised.

Council's consent is required for the development of environmental facilities, environmental protection works, extensive agriculture and recreation areas in the E2 zone. Other developments are prohibited, including major recreation facilities, business premises, hotel or motel accommodation, industries, retail premises and housing.

The area occupied by the former restaurant, picnic area and Victoria Lookout is within the SP3 Tourist zone under the LEP (see Figure 4). The SP3 zone is intended to provide for a variety of tourist-oriented developments and related uses. Building and business signage is permitted without consent. Uses that are permitted with Council's consent include roads, major recreation facilities, outdoor recreation facilities, visitor accommodation, food and drink premises, kiosks, entertainment facilities, function centres and information and education facilities.

The two zones apply across the LGA and are not specific to Mt Keira. This Plan of Management provides an additional layer of land use control.

Figure 4: LEP zoning in Mt Keira Summit park and surrounds



## 2.2 Other Applicable Legislation and Plans

Under section 35 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, community land is required to be used and managed in accordance with a Plan of Management and any law permitting the use of land for a specific purpose. Table 2 sets out the legislation (other than the Local Government Act) which applies, or potentially may apply, to management and use of Mt Keira Summit Park.

**Table 2: Main legislation applicable to Mt Keira Summit Park**

Legislation	Application to Mt Keira Summit Park
<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)</i>	<p>This Act provides environmental planning instruments for development control at the state (State Environmental Planning Policies), regional (Regional Environmental Plans) and local (LEPs) levels.</p> <p>While this Plan of Management determines permitted uses in the Summit Park specific activity or development proposals will require assessments through a development application (DA) process under Part 4 of this Act. Where a proposal is likely to have a significant impact on the environment an environmental impact assessment (EIA) must be conducted under Part 5 of the Act.</p> <p>The DA and EIA (where applicable) processes consider and provide the public with information on the environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts of the proposed activity or development and enable members of the public to comment on the proposal.</p>
<i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)</i>	<p>Under Part 6 of this Act it is an offence to knowingly disturb an Aboriginal object or site without a consent permit issued by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). Traditional Aboriginal cultural activities, conservation works and emergency activities are exempt from this provision.</p>
<i>Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)</i>	<p>This Act covers the protection and management of non-Aboriginal heritage. It provides for listing of significant sites on the State Heritage Register or under Local Environmental Plans.</p>
<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)</i>	<p>Commenced in August 2017 (and replacing the previous <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i>) this Act provides for the management of biodiversity conservation and native vegetation, including through a Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, declaration of Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value and protection of threatened species. It provides for the listing and protection of threatened flora and fauna species and ecological communities and the management of threatening processes (which include some pest animals and pathogens). Any developments within Mt Keira Summit Park will need to demonstrate compliance with this Act.</p>
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth)</i>	<p>This Commonwealth legislation provides for the protection of nationally significant threatened species and cultural heritage. There were no nationally significant matters under this Act within Mt Keira Summit Park at the time of writing this Plan of Management. However, compliance with this Act should be demonstrated in consideration of developments within the Summit Park.</p>
<i>Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)</i>	<p>This Act provides for the management of animal and plant pests, diseases and contaminants that threaten the environment, biodiversity, the economy and the community. Regulations, policies and procedures for are being developed. This Act replaces a range of legislation including the <i>Noxious Weeds Act 1993</i>.</p>
<i>Rural Fires Act 1997 (NSW)</i>	<p>Under section 63 of this Act Public authorities have a duty to take steps to prevent the occurrence of bush fires on their land and minimise the danger of the spread of bush fires from that land.</p> <p>Bush Fire Management Committees are constituted for rural fire districts (in this case the Illawarra Bush Fire Management Committee) and required to develop Bush Fire Risk Management Plans.</p>



Several plans and strategies for areas in the region surrounding Mt Keira Summit Park provide guidance and principles relevant to the management of the Summit Park.

## Illawarra Escarpment Strategic Management Plan 2015

The *Illawarra Escarpment Strategic Management Plan 2015* (IESMP) was developed by Wollongong City Council in consultation with government agencies, landholders and community groups. The Plan guides the Council in its role of coordinating and influencing management of the multiple tenures of the Illawarra Escarpment (which includes Mt Keira Summit Park) in partnership with relevant government agencies and landholders and through planning controls in the Wollongong LEP. The IESMP vision and guiding principles highlight the importance of protecting and actively managing the natural and cultural values of the escarpment; taking a long term, holistic, cross-tenure approach to management; involvement of all sectors of the community in management; and the application of ecologically sustainable development principles to management of assets.

### VISION FOR THE ILLAWARRA ESCARPMENT

The Illawarra Escarpment is an outstanding feature of the Illawarra region providing a natural backdrop to the city as well as encompassing areas of high conservation value and rich cultural heritage. The long term vision for this area is for these values to be preserved and enhanced through public reserve or private stewardship.

*from IESMP 2015*

In addition to legislative requirements, the IESMP indicates that Wollongong City Council requires planning proposals within the Illawarra Escarpment to address issues related to protection of escarpment values including conservation and protection of vegetation and flora and fauna species; long term enhancement of the escarpment; reports on Aboriginal and non-Indigenous heritage values; a visual impact assessment; a bush fire assessment; a geotechnical assessment in areas of known instability.

## Wollongong Community Strategic Plan

Wollongong's 10 year Community Strategic Plan, *Our Wollongong 2028*, adopted by Council in June 2018 sets out strategies to achieve the vision:

*From the mountains to the sea, we value and protect our natural environment and we will be leaders in building an educated, creative and connected community.*

The Strategic Plan addresses challenges facing the City of Wollongong associated with enhancing the City's environment and character while addressing population growth and change, revitalisation of infrastructure and services, diversification of the economy, and maintenance of community wellbeing.

Strategies relevant to the Mt Keira Summit Park include:

- the protection, management and improvement of the natural environment
- active engagement of the Aboriginal community in management of Indigenous heritage
- provision of a variety of quality public spaces for sport, leisure, recreation and cultural activities
- building Wollongong as a tourism destination.

## Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan

The *Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2015* provides a strategic policy, planning and decision-making framework for government agencies, local councils and the community in achieving sustainable growth in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region over the next 20 years. In accordance with a planning direction under section 117 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* all planning proposals and reviews of existing planning controls in the region must be consistent with the requirements of this Regional Plan. Key principles underpinning the Regional Plan relevant to future uses of Mount Keira Summit Park are protection of land with high environmental value and protection of cultural heritage values; sustainable use of land; and building a strong, resilient and diversified economy. Tourism is identified as a priority growth sector.

## Bush Fire Risk Management Plan 2015

The cross-tenure *Illawarra Bush Fire Risk Management Plan* prepared in accordance with the *Rural Fires Act 1997* sets out actions, protection zones and guidelines for risk evaluation for management of bushfire risk. Mount Keira Summit Park is classified as having an extreme risk of bushfire and the Plan identifies requirements for hazard reduction around assets on the summit and vegetation maintenance works to reduce hazards in other areas.

The Bush Fire Risk Management Plan indicates that the Illawarra Escarpment in general has experienced wildfires on many occasions generally burning to the east driven by westerly wind and also initiating in the east driven by southerly or easterly winds. The main ignition sources for wildfires are arson (especially in high visitation areas during summer), car dumping, lightning (especially at the top of the escarpment), arcing from high voltage powerlines, and escapes from legal or illegal burns (generally in mid to late spring).

## 2.3 Relationship with the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area

The Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area (IESCA), managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) consists of six separate parcels of land extending for about 40 kilometres along the escarpment, including the portion at Mount Keira. The area was first gazetted in 1980 as the Illawarra State Recreation Area on land donated by Australian Iron and Steel Pty Ltd (now BHP-Billiton) and has since been extended.

The location of Mt Keira Summit Park surrounded by the IESCA means that there are interconnections between management and use of both parks. Actions in one park may have implications for protection of values, operations and visitor use in the other. Currently, walking tracks in the IESCA link with tracks in Mount Keira Summit Park and access to rock climbing on the Mount Keira cliffs (which are in the IESCA) is obtained through the Summit Park.

The Mount Keira Scout Camp and the Mount Keira Girl Guide Camp in the IESCA (which have traditionally used the tracks on Mount Keira and the Summit Park) are operated under licences from the NPWS which permit recreational activities compatible with the areas' values.

In 2019 a new Plan of Management for the IESCA under the provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* was adopted by the NPWS. Wollongong City Council and the NPWS are working cooperatively to achieve compatibility between the plans for the two parks and integrated approaches to management and visitor experiences. NPWS is undertaking consultation and planning related to the track network. Mountain biking opportunities across the IESCA and the Illawarra escarpment area are being considered by NPWS, the Council and other stakeholders.

## 2.4 Geophysical Constraints

The boundaries between Mt Keira Summit Park and the IESCA are formed by steep sandstone cliffs and slopes. Victoria Lookout and Five Islands Lookout are situated at the top of those cliffs in the east and south of the Summit Park respectively. The walking track linking the two lookouts skirts the top of the cliffs. Geotechnical assessments of the cliffs conducted following a major rockslide below Five Islands Lookout identified areas of instability along the cliffs. To mitigate public risk Five Islands Lookout in the Summit Park was closed and in 2012 NPWS closed an area of the IESCA below the cliffs to public access.

The instability of the cliffs has implications for the location of infrastructure and visitor activities in the Summit Park. Actions to address geophysical instability issues are provided in chapter 6 of this Plan.



Rockfall below Five Islands Lookout showing overhanging area of the cliff.

Source: Phil Flentje,  
University of Wollongong



## 3 Existing Uses and Structures

### 3.1 Site Infrastructure

The existing infrastructure at Mt Keira Summit Park is shown in Figure 5.

Road access to the Summit Park and Victoria Lookout is provided from the Mt Keira Road by Queen Elizabeth Drive. The gate to the park (located outside the Summit Park at the junction with Mt Keira Road) is currently closed between sunset and sunrise.

The visitor facilities at the Summit Park are concentrated at the end of Queen Elizabeth Drive near the Victoria Lookout. A sealed asphalt carpark provides 23 car spaces, 3 disabled car spaces and 2 bus spaces adjacent to the kiosk and Victoria Lookout. A gravel carpark adjacent to the picnic area has space for 20 to 21 cars. A toilet block is situated at the rear of the carpark.

A short path leads from the carpark to Victoria Lookout. The entrance to the lookout is framed by a sandstone wall that was part of the original mountaintop development.

A stone monument commemorates the donation of land for the Summit Park by E Vickery & Sons in 1925 and Australian Iron & Steel Pty Ltd in 1957 and the construction of Queen Elizabeth Drive and park facilities as an initiative of the Rotary Club of Wollongong and volunteers.

The Victoria Lookout structure, which has been gradually extended since the 1950s, consists of an open paved viewing area connected by a wide walkway and a lower viewing area. Seating and picnic tables are provided and safety fencing is located along the cliff side of the lookout. Binoculars previously located on a pillar in the lower viewing area have been removed due to vandalism. Vegetation plantings and regeneration works near the lookout are being affected by feral goat browsing.



Sealed carpark

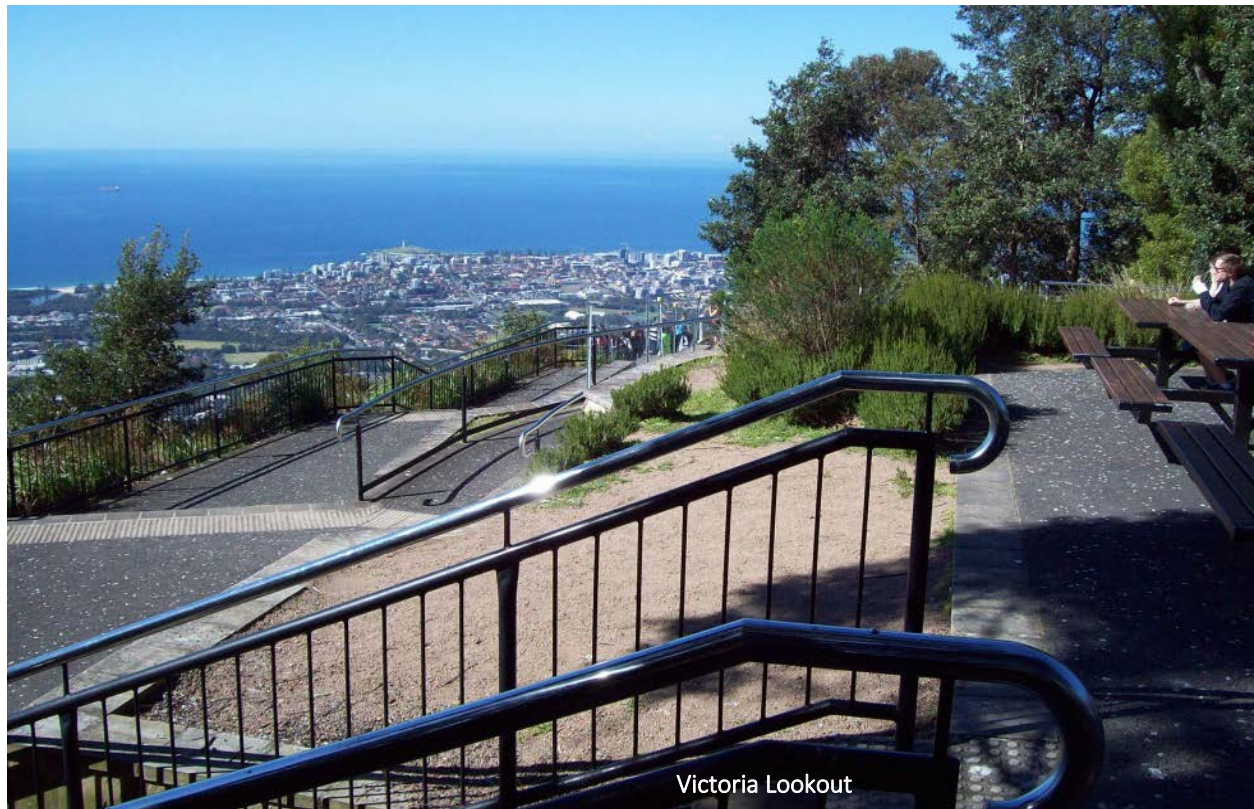


Picnic area and unsealed carpark



Rotary monument





Victoria Lookout

The former restaurant at the summit was closed and the structure was removed in 2015 due to its poor condition. Since December 2016 a food and beverage service has been operating under a Council license in a kiosk located in a container with an awning and disabled access ramp.



Kiosk and awning at Mt Keira

A walking track above the cliff line links Victoria Lookout to Five Islands Lookout through an area of attractive natural vegetation. The walking track is fenced on the cliff side to reduce risk to visitors. The visitor experience along the walking track is reduced by the visual impact of some of the fencing and the lack of views along the track due to dense vegetation growth. Five Islands Lookout itself has been closed due to the instability of the cliff edge and no views are possible from the area.

The 'Six Daughters of the West Wind' sculptures at a small clearing behind Five Islands Lookout commemorate the Aboriginal significance of Mt Keira and the associated creation story of the mountain and the five islands visible off the coast. This area also contains a Camellia Tree which was transplanted by Clive Albert Bissell (1911 – 1983) from a home (opposite Mt Keira School of Arts) that once belonged to a Mr MacDonald who had advocated for the road to the lookout.

Five Islands Lookout is also accessible from the carpark on a management trail that was previously part of the road to the summit.

The Summit Park contains a mix of wayfinding, information, safety and interpretation signs of various ages and designs.



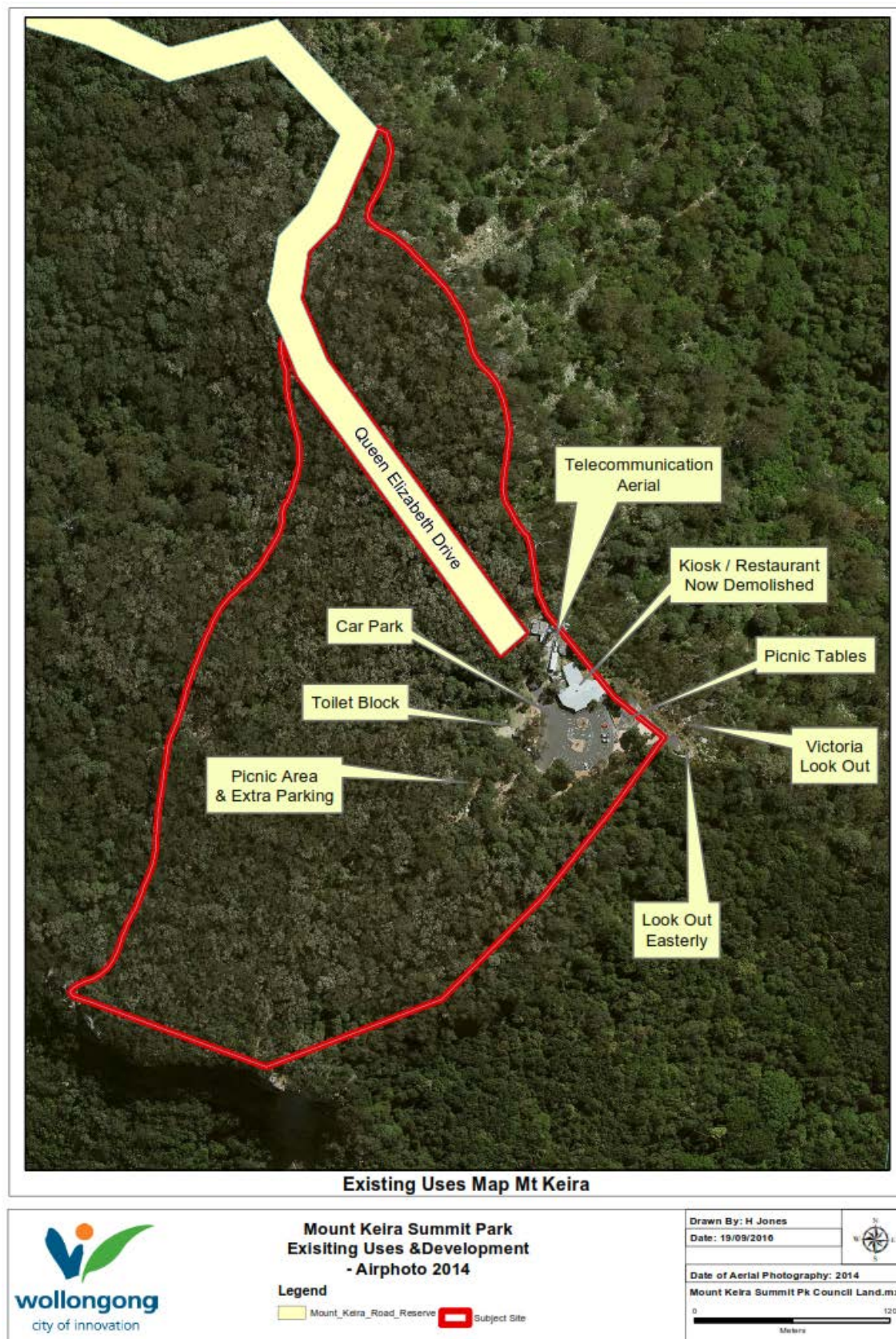
'Six Daughters of the West Wind' sculptures commemorating Mt Keira's Aboriginal significance



Access to Five Islands Lookout is fenced off due to cliff instability



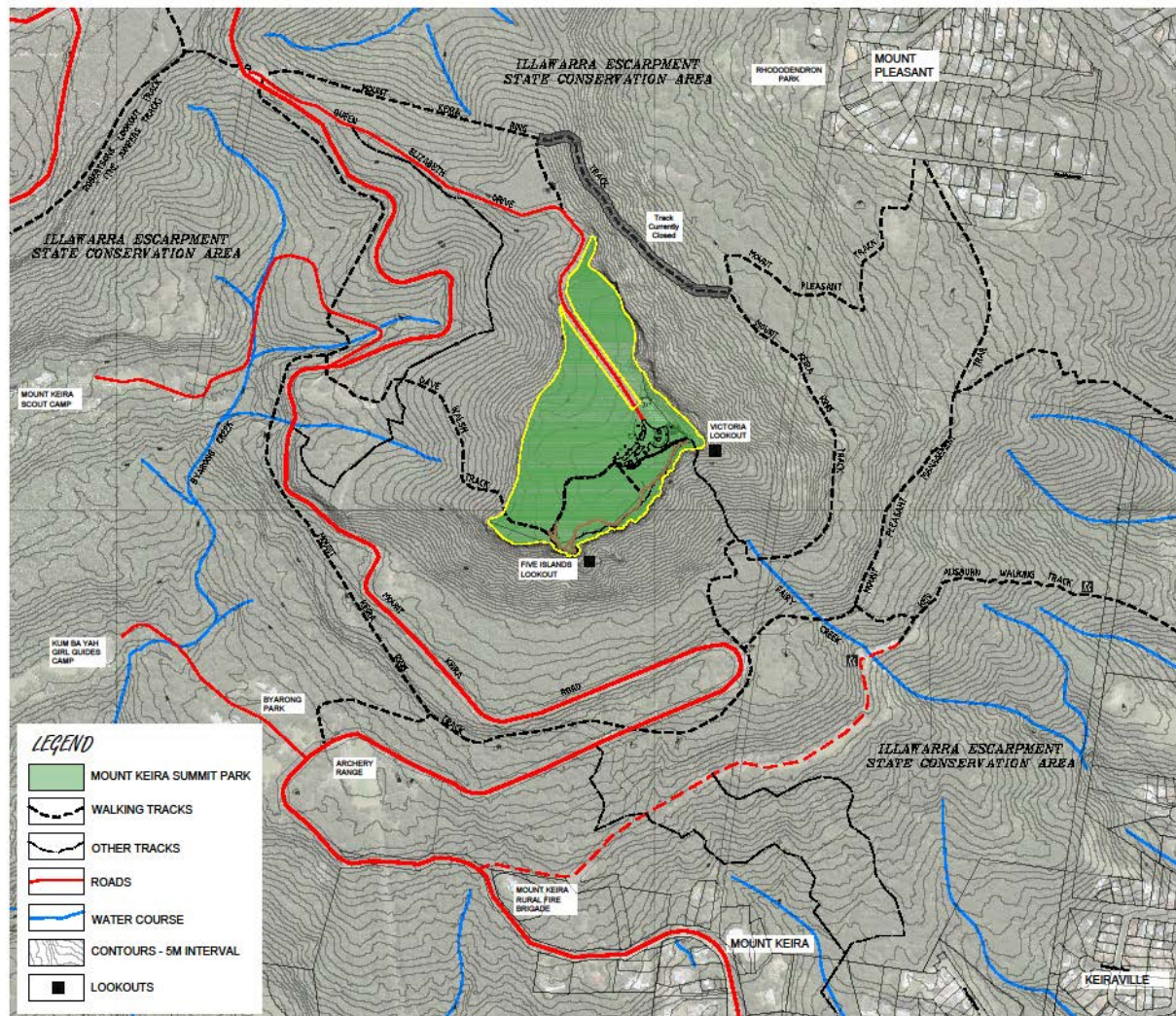
Figure 5: Existing infrastructure at Mt Keira Summit Park





The Summit Park is connected to the IESCA network of walking tracks in the Mt Keira area (see Figure 6). In the west the Dave Walsh Track leads from the track to Five Islands Lookout to the Mt Keira Ring Track which is also accessible from Mt Keira Road. The Summit Park is also connected to the Wollongong suburbs via the Mount Pleasant Track and Ken Ausburn Track which link to the Mt Keira Ring Track and stairs to Queen Elizabeth Drive to the north of the Summit Park. The section of the Ring Track between the Mt Pleasant Track and the stairs has been closed due to slope instability. The NPWS has recently restored this section of the Ring Track.

**Figure 6: Tracks connected to Mt Keira Summit Park**



## 3.2 Services

### Water supply

Due to its mountain top location there is a limited supply of water available at Mt Keira Summit Park. A water treatment plant fed by rainwater collected from the kiosk awning provides water to the kiosk and hand washing taps in the toilets. Water tanks have been installed for the storage of water for visitor and firefighting use and additional water is transported to the site as needed. A non-potable water system is used for toilet flushing.

### Toilets

The toilets are connected to a septic system. Disabled toilet facilities are provided but no longer comply with current standards.

### Electricity supply

In the past provision of electricity to the Summit Park and telecommunications tower has been through linkages to a private power supply and then via a generator. In 2019 Wollongong City Council finalised a permanent power supply connection to Mt Pleasant which services both the Communications Tower and Council infrastructure including the amenities block, water pumps, barbeques and the temporary kiosk.



Toilet block at Mt Keira

### Telecommunications

The telecommunications tower site adjacent to the Summit Park hosts facilities for emergency services communications and commercial communication providers. Mobile phone reception is available at the site. The area occupied by the telecommunications tower is classified as Operational Land

### CCTV cameras

CCTV cameras have been installed in the Summit Park and will be operated in accordance with the Council's CCTV policy.

## 3.3 Public Use

Mount Keira Summit Park is a popular destination with the local community and a favoured site to bring visiting friends and relatives. Visitor numbers are estimated at 54,600 visitors a year. The highest level of visitation occurs on weekends. Many visitors spend only a short time in the Summit Park, stopping to see the view from Victoria Lookout or use the site facilities.

Enjoyment of the spectacular views of the coast and escarpment is the central attraction of the site. Visitors also enjoy picnicking, contemplation of nature and the short walks in the Summit Park. Until it was closed the restaurant at the summit was used for dining and functions such as weddings. The Summit Park is also an established destination or stop for local residents and others bushwalking on the connecting IESCA network.



The Park is actively used by the Aboriginal community for cultural purposes. The Aboriginal community was also involved in the development of the sculptures at Five Island Lookout.

Rock climbing and abseiling has been conducted on cliffs on the boundary between the Summit Park and the IESCA. The NPWS permits rock climbing on the west side of Mount Keira Summit Park but has prohibited the activity on the other cliffs adjacent to the Summit Park due to rockfall hazards. It is understood that unauthorised climbing and abseiling occurs in the area. The Mount Keira cliffs are also used by the police and State Emergency Services for rescue training purposes.

Hang gliding was previously conducted from a summit platform which was removed following a fire. Hang gliding is not permitted in IESCA.

Some unauthorised camping is known to occur in the Summit Park. Artefacts such as 'love locks' (which have become popular throughout the world in recent years) are also occasionally left in the Park by visitors. A chain has been provided for love locks in order to encourage visitors not to place love locks on fencing and other infrastructure.

The Mount Keira Road is among the most popular road cycling routes in the Wollongong area. Some cyclists travel to the summit on Queen Elizabeth Drive, which is popular for 'everesting' challenges.

The roads and tracks on and near Mt Keira Summit Park are being increasingly used for competitive or participatory sporting events associated with Wollongong's development as an event destination such as the Mountain to Mountain Challenge (a run or walk between Mt Keira and Mt Kembla). A leg of the International Downhill Federation Skateboarding World Cup was held on the road in 2012 and 2016. A new adventure sport event, the BRAVO Team Challenge, has been held on tracks in the Summit Park and surrounding areas.



A chain has been provided for love locks

## 4 Values of the Summit Park

The values of Mt Keira Summit Park are the features the community considers to be significant and wishes to protect and enhance for the appreciation and enjoyment of the community, visitors and future generations.

### Aboriginal cultural heritage

The Illawarra Escarpment (including Mt Keira) was once extensively used by Aboriginal people who occupied and actively managed the landscape of the region for more than 25,000 years prior to European settlement through traditional burning and other sustainable land management practices. The region's Aboriginal people continue to feel a deep responsibility to preserve the spirit and stories of their ancestors and culture embedded throughout the landscape today.

Mt Keira and its summit is important to the Aboriginal community who use the mountain for cultural purposes including teaching and story telling to groups of children and young people. The mountain is associated with numerous storylines and the summit was used for ceremonies and includes a significant women's site. The creation story of Mount Keira and Five Islands off the coast is commemorated by the sculpture at Five Islands Lookout.

#### *The Mt Keira Creation Story*

*The west wind Oolaboolawoo lived on top of Merrigong (Illawarra Range) and had six daughters, Mimosa, Wilga, Lilli Pilli, Wattle, Clematis and Geera. Mimosa would scratch and fight when the girls were playing and to punish her, the west wind blew her and the rock she sat on out to sea. She landed away from the land and became an island, which none of her sisters could swim to. Mimosa's fate should have been a lesson to her sisters, who were also cast out to sea by their father.*

*Because Oolaboolawoo was always busy out west, the last sister Geera sat lonely on the escarpment looking out at her sisters, the Five Islands, eventually allowing the animals and trees to grow on her. She turned to stone and became the mountain known as Mt Keira (Geera).*

Plaque at the sculptures near Five Islands Lookout

**Note:** Council has recently been advised that the name Geera also has the alternate spelling of Djeera

The Illawarra Regional Aboriginal Heritage Study (conducted for the NPWS in 2004) attributes Mount Keira with exceptional to high local historic and social significance to Aboriginal people.

There are a range of Aboriginal heritage sites of cultural and archaeological significance scattered throughout the Illawarra Escarpment. These sites are managed and protected under the NSW *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* in consultation with traditional custodial groups. Archaeological sites on the Illawarra escarpment include rock shelters, grinding grooves, open campsites, scarred trees, engravings and middens. While currently there are no known archaeological sites in the Summit Park there is potential for more sites to be discovered in the future.

## Historic heritage

The summit of Mt Keira has been valued and used as a recreation destination from the early days of European settlement of the Wollongong area and building of Mt Keira Road in 1835 and 1836. The summit of Mt Keira could be accessed from the Mt Keira Road and there are records of 19th century visitors expressing their appreciation of the beauty and scenery of the mountain. These records include appreciation of the beauty and scenery of Mt Keira expressed by Sir Roger Therry (a NSW Supreme Court Judge) and letters by Rachel Henning (who lived on a farm near Wollongong from 1872 to 1896) recording horseback expeditions to Mount Keira to enjoy the views from 'Victoria Rock'.

*The traveller is ..... repaid at the end of this toilsome journey on reaching the top of Mount Keira (sic). There a view suddenly bursts upon the sight of unsurpassed magnificence. Before him is spread the Pacific Ocean in all its expansive grandeur.*

*... if the visitor should arrive at the top of the mountain in time to see a sunset there, he will behold a golden halo shedding a mild lustre over the numberless tiny islets of the lake, and the graceful group of the five islands scattered close to and decorating the Illawarra shore. The whole assemblage of the most attractive objects in Nature are here combined in one view — ocean and lake, mountain and forest scenery — the perfumed acacia, the majestic cedar, the tall fern, and the tangled vine interlacing the trees. As far as the eye can reach this scene of diversified beauty extends until it closes in a soft mist where sky and water seem to meet and mingle, and become blent (sic) together in the distant horizon.*

*Sir Roger Therry (1863), Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria*

Mt Keira Summit Park also demonstrates a tradition of voluntary community efforts to open the area for community enjoyment. A lookout and associated coach road was first established on the summit in 1908 on land owned by Ebenezer Vickery the owner of the Mt Keira coal mine. A new lookout was opened in 1917 and there was some community lobbying for resumption of land on the summit for a public park. In 1925 Messers Vickery and Sons gifted an area on the summit to the Municipality of North Illawarra. By that time the lookout on Mt Keira was a relatively well-known destination for visitors to the Illawarra area and for scouting activities.

The Rotary Club of Wollongong has played a significant role in the development and management of Mt Keira Summit Park since the 1950s. The Rotary Club adopted the construction of the road to the summit as a community service project commemorating the 50th anniversary of Rotary International. The Club generated support from the Wollongong community and businesses for equipment and voluntary labour to build the road in 1954-55. Volunteers also constructed Victoria Lookout, Five Islands Lookout and the connecting walking trail. The Rotary Club and volunteers maintain an ongoing connection to the Summit Park through volunteer maintenance activities.

## Landscape

Mount Keira is one of the most prominent features rising from the Illawarra Escarpment. The Summit Park contributes to the protection of the dramatic scenic values of the Illawarra Escarpment as viewed from the coast and as a viewpoint on the escarpment.

An assessment of escarpment visual precincts conducted by HLA-Envirosciences in 2007 and incorporated into the Illawarra Escarpment Strategic Management Plan categorises the visual value of Mount Keira as high and indicates that its scenic integrity had high dependence on the quality of vegetation and management of the visual impacts of built features.



## Natural significance

The Illawarra Escarpment as a whole is a biodiversity hotspot which has high diversity and numerous significant plant and animal species and ecological communities. Mt Keira is located in an ecological transition zone where many northern and southern vegetation communities overlap. There are high levels of vegetation connectivity and landscape contiguity between the Summit Park and the wider Illawarra Escarpment area. The Park is in the central part of the Escarpment Moist Forests Corridor identified in the Illawarra Biodiversity Strategy as important for biodiversity conservation, protection and improvement of habitat connections through the landscape, and provision of dispersal corridors for fauna. In this context the area of native vegetation in the Summit Park is important for retaining the high biodiversity and conservation connectivity of the Illawarra Escarpment.

Outside the area cleared for infrastructure, the Summit Park is covered by the Escarpment Edge Silver-top Ash Forest vegetation community. That community is a moderately tall forest dominated Silver-top Ash (*Eucalyptus sieberi*), Sydney Peppermint (*Eucalyptus piperita*) and Turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) with an open mid storey, shrubby understorey and shrubby/sedgely groundlayer. Rainforest species occur in natural drainage lines and areas affected by runoff. A preliminary biodiversity assessment of the Summit Park in 2017 identified 90 locally indigenous plant species. No threatened plant species or endangered ecological communities listed under NSW or Commonwealth biodiversity legislation were found in this preliminary survey. However, due to the presence of suitable habitat, it is possible that some threatened plant species occurring in the surrounding area may also occur within the Summit Park. One regionally rare species, Bangalow Palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) has been found in the Park.

The area is rich in birdlife and Superb Lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*) are frequently heard and seen in the area. Anecdotally mammals such as wallabies, Bush Tailed Possum, Long Nosed Bandicoot, Yellow-footed Antechinus and Bush Rat have been observed in the area. A White-bellied Sea-Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*), which is listed as Vulnerable under NSW legislation, and a regionally rare Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) were observed in flying near the Summit Park during the 2017 preliminary biodiversity assessment. Due to its variety of fauna habitat it is possible that the Summit Park supports a range of common and threatened species not yet recorded within the Park boundaries. The 2017 preliminary biodiversity assessment indicated the Park's fauna habitat resources as:

- broad areas of vegetation suitable for foraging, nesting, roosting and sheltering for birds, reptiles, amphibians, arboreal and terrestrial mammals and bats, and also suitable for species with large home ranges such as owls and quolls
- hollow bearing trees suitable for nesting, roosting and sheltering habitat for birds, arboreal mammals and microbats
- hilltop areas providing potential mating habitat for invertebrates such as butterflies, moths and dragonflies
- shrubby mid storey and dense understory layers suitable for foraging, nesting, roosting and sheltering habitat for small and medium-sized birds, reptiles, arboreal and terrestrial mammals and arboreal frogs
- intermittent creeks and soaks suitable for roosting habitat for large forest owls; foraging habitat for small and medium-sized birds, reptiles and amphibians; and amphibian breeding habitat

- fallen tree trunks, woody debris and deep leaf litter providing sheltering habitat for small terrestrial mammals, amphibians and reptiles
- access road and paths suitable for foraging and flyways for microbats
- termite mounds which provide suitable breeding habitat for goanna and foraging habitat for echidna
- tree stags and the radio tower provide nesting, roosting and sheltering habitat for birds, arboreal mammals and microbats and perches for predatory birds.

The Summit Park has some occurrences of exotic species including some areas of potentially invasive weed species such as African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*). The main pest animals known to frequent the area are goat and deer.

Potential threats to the condition and integrity for the Summit Park's biodiversity include:

- clearing of native vegetation
- the spread of weeds and pathogens
- pest animals disturbing soil, vegetation and habitat and possibly preying on native animals
- disturbance to animal sheltering or nesting due to noise, vibration and light
- removal of dead wood and trees and loss of hollow-bearing trees.

The environmental condition and integrity of vegetation and soils in the Summit Park are also important for protecting the quality of water flowing from the summit of Mount Keira and protecting against surface erosion. Streams flow from the Summit Park into Byarong Creek, which flows through Wollongong.

## Social significance

Mt Keira Summit Park is valued by the local community as an important asset that encapsulates the special qualities of living in Wollongong. Strong community associations with the Summit Park are shown in the donation of land for development of the Park, development of the road and lookouts by the Rotary Club of Wollongong and ongoing public concern for retaining the facilities and public access on the summit.

As part of the Illawarra escarpment the Summit Park contributes to local communities' sense of place and amenity. A heritage study conducted for the Wollongong City Council in 2007 indicated that the escarpment was highly valued as an iconic feature of the Illawarra region.

Improvements in the quality of public infrastructure and the natural and cultural environment of the Summit Park will demonstrate the respect that the local community has for Mt Keira as a symbol of Wollongong.

## Recreation and tourism

The Summit Park is an important and accessible recreation asset for Wollongong providing enjoyment of the views of the city, coastline and escarpment and appreciation of the region's natural and cultural values. The connecting Illawarra Escarpment Walking Trail means that the Summit Park and surrounding area provides opportunities for bushwalking and nature appreciation on the city's doorstep. The population of Wollongong is forecast to increase to over 250,000 people by 2036. With these population increases the advantages to the community of having an accessible escarpment park close to the city will become increasingly evident.



The Summit Park is already established as a place where Wollongong residents bring their visiting friends and relatives to appreciate the views of the region. With the diversification of Wollongong's economy including measures to increase tourism (such as events and cruise ship visits), there is strong potential to include Mt Keira in the city's visitor destinations.

### Part of the Illawarra Escarpment

Mt Keira Summit Park is significant as part of the Illawarra Escarpment which is an important natural, cultural, scenic and recreation asset for the Wollongong community and the region. The Summit Park is included in the Illawarra Escarpment Landscape Conservation Area which is listed as having local heritage significance under the Wollongong Local Environment Plan. The local heritage status of the Summit Park (as part of the escarpment) must be taken into account in the assessment and approval of future developments in the Park under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

## 5 Vision

The Vision for Mt Keira Summit Park describes how the community and Council aim to revitalise and showcase the Summit Park's exceptional assemblage of Aboriginal culture, natural values, historic heritage and outstanding scenery.

### VISION

A trip to Mt Keira Summit Park will change the way people see and experience Wollongong. It will be a place to enjoy the beautiful views of the city, mountains and the sea and to appreciate the cultural and environmental landscape of the Illawarra Escarpment through a range of exceptional visitor experiences

The following Planning Principles will be applied in achieving the Vision.

### Planning Principles for Mt Keira Summit Park

#### INTEGRATE

Ensure visitor infrastructure and services are integrated and connected with the surrounding Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area so that visitors are offered outstanding, high quality visitor experiences

#### EXPERIENCE

Provide exceptional cultural and nature based experiences that support tourism to the region and that are integrated with the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area

#### RESPECT

Respect the wishes of the Aboriginal people to safeguard and present their culture through a variety of means they consider most appropriate

#### APPRECIATE

Present information and experiences in a way that will enhance appreciation and understanding of the cultural and natural values of Mt Keira and the Illawarra Escarpment

#### CONSERVE

Contribute to the protection and conservation of the Escarpment's natural, cultural and scenic values

#### INVOLVE

The Aboriginal community, tourism industry, local community and NPWS will be involved in decision making

#### SUSTAINABLE

Visitor experiences will be economically viable and financially sustainable and demonstrate social and environmental benefits to the community



## 6 Achieving the Vision

This section of the Plan of Management sets out the key elements that will be used by Council to achieve the Vision for Mt Keira Summit Park.

- Section 6.1 indicates the types of uses and developments that are permissible within the Summit Park, consistent with the Vision and the protection of Park values. It provides for the management of existing uses and developments and provides a guide for decisions on future uses and developments.
- Section 6.2 indicates management objectives and actions which Council will use to address management issues and achieve the Vision.

### 6.1 Permissible Uses and Developments

Table 3 sets out the uses and development permissible within the Summit Park. As required by section 36(3A)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1993* the scale and intensity of each permissible use and development is described.

To protect the natural and cultural values of the Summit Park and provide for a range of sustainable visitor uses different types and levels of use will be provided in the two Community Land categories General Community Use and Area of Cultural Significance areas (see Figure 3).

- A. In general higher intensity uses and major infrastructure and facilities will be located within the **General Community Use** area
- B. Uses and developments within the **Area of Cultural Significance** will be compatible with the purpose of that land category and the protection, management, restoration and public appreciation of its cultural and natural values.

Specific infrastructure and facility developments in the Summit Park will be subject to:

- community consultation; appropriate investigation of biodiversity, cultural and social impacts; relevant development applications and environmental assessment processes; and the provisions of other applicable plans, the Local Environment Plan and State Environmental Planning Policies
- financial feasibility assessment.

Provision is made for other agencies, commercial businesses, education institutions, not-for-profit organisations and other groups potentially to offer products or participate in management of the Summit Park. This Plan of Management permits Council to enter into casual, short, medium or long term leases or licenses up to a maximum of 30 years for any permitted use or development under the Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

**Table 3: Permissible Uses and Developments in Mt Keira Summit Park**

Permissible Uses and Developments	Description	Scale and Intensity
1. Protection and enhancement of the Summit Park's values	Management, maintenance and upgrades of infrastructure, services and natural and cultural attributes.	Activities and upgrades will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be compatible with the Council-adopted Park Vision and Planning Principles and facilitate protection of the Summit Park's values</li> <li>provide a high level of protection, conservation and management fitting to the area's significance to the community.</li> </ul>
2. Improvements to scenic viewing infrastructure	<b>Victoria Lookout</b> Maintenance and upgrading of Victoria Lookout as a major lookout in the Summit Park.	Any upgrades of Victoria Lookout must be on the current footprint and must be designed to be compatible with the Lookout's significance to the community, the Park Vision and Planning Principles and the Summit Park's values.
	<b>Five Islands Lookout</b> Reinstatement of Five Islands Lookout as a major lookout in the general proximity of the current (closed) lookout may occur subject to investigation of geological stability and feasibility assessment.	Reinstatement of Five Islands Lookout must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.  There must be minimal impact of lookout infrastructure on the natural visual landscape as viewed from other places in and outside of the Summit Park.
	<b>Other infrastructure</b> Additional minor lookouts and associated access trails in suitable, safe locations.	Any additional small lookouts must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.  There must be minimal impact of lookout infrastructure on natural and cultural values and the natural visual landscape as viewed from other places in and outside of the Summit Park.
3. Improved walking tracks and trails  A small number of high quality trails compatible with the Vision and the protection and enhancement of Park values.	<b>Cliff Top Walk</b> This trail currently connects Victoria Lookout, Five Islands Lookout and the Dave Walsh Track in the IESCA. This trail's future alignment, design and scenic viewing opportunities will be reviewed to improve the quality of the visitor experience and interpretation.	The trail may be realigned and upgraded to All Accessibility standard compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.
	<b>Trail from carpark to Five Islands Lookout</b> This trail, currently on a fire trail, may be realigned and improved to link with the Cliff Top Walk to provide a Summit Park circuit track.	The trail may be realigned and upgraded to All Accessibility standard compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.
	<b>New trails and trail sections</b> New trails/trail sections may be developed to provide links to trails in the IESCA. This may	New trails and trail sections should be of a design standard suitable for the proposed type and level of visitor use.

Permissible Uses and Developments	Description	Scale and Intensity
	<p>include a new trail linking the Mt Keira Ring Track (in the IESCA) with the summit area in the vicinity of Queen Elizabeth Drive.</p> <p>New trails/trail sections may be developed to provide access to new lookouts and other visitor infrastructure.</p> <p>New trails/trail sections may be developed to provide beginner mountain bike opportunities as part of a broader Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy.</p>	Trail types and alignments must be compatible the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.
	<p><b>Trail facilities</b></p> <p>Improved and new trail facilities, including signage, interpretation, shelter and seating.</p>	Trail facilities must be of a type, design and scale that is compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values and the type and level of use of the relevant trails.
4. Sustainable access infrastructure	<p><b>Parking</b></p> <p>Maintenance and upgrading of <b>parking facilities</b> in the Summit Park may be carried out on the General Community use land.</p> <p><b>Drop off and pick up areas</b> for buses, coaches, taxis and commercial operators may be provided on the General Community use land.</p>	Upgrading of parking facilities must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values (including its natural setting) and the safety of Park visitors.
	<p><b>Other access</b></p> <p>Other infrastructure to support sustainable transport to the Summit Park may be developed subject to feasibility and environmental assessments and the relevant planning approvals.</p>	Development of facilities to support sustainable transport to the Park must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values (including its natural setting) and the safety of Park visitors.
5. Picnic facilities	Upgrading of the picnic area and associated facilities may be carried out.	Any upgrading of the picnic area must be at a standard compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values, including its natural setting.
6. Public toilets	Upgrading or development of new toilet facilities may be carried out on the General Community use land.	The toilet facilities should be at a standard compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values and the level of visitation.
7. Food and beverage infrastructure and services	<p><b>Café/restaurant</b></p> <p>A demountable or permanent structure may be erected within the General Community Use area for operation of a café/restaurant approved by Council and including facilities for dining, take away food and small functions.</p> <p>The design of the structure should be appropriate to the natural character of the Summit Park, minimise impacts on the scenic</p>	The size, capacity and design of the structure should be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values (including its natural setting) and include provision for sustainable water and energy use.



Permissible Uses and Developments	Description	Scale and Intensity
	landscape and other Park values and include provision for sustainable water and energy use.	
	<b>Food vans/pop-up food services</b> Council-approved food vans and other temporary food services may be provided in the General Community Use area.	Temporary food services should be located and managed in a way that minimises impacts on the environment, Park values and visitor access to the Summit Park.
8. Other visitor facilities and activities	<b>Spaces and facilities for education, interpretation and visitor enjoyment, recreation and appreciation of natural and cultural values</b> may be provided in the Summit Park.	Facilities must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values and facilitate protection of the Summit Park's values.  The facility must be at a scale that is compatible with the scenic, and natural and cultural values of the Summit Park and its development and use must not detract from the enjoyment of the Summit Park by other visitors.
9. Improved wayfinding and interpretation	Signage may be provided for wayfinding, public safety, to identify visitor facilities and for interpretation.	Signage must be of a consistent, high quality design that is compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values, the Park's natural character its significance to the community.  Temporary signage may be provided to warn of hazards and events.
10. Art, sculpture and commemorative plaques	<b>Temporary or permanent art and sculpture and commemorative plaques</b> may be installed in the Summit Park.  The installation of 'love locks' by the public is permissible in the Summit Park in places designated for this purpose by Council.  The 'Six Daughters of the West Wind' sculpture at Five Islands Lookout will be protected in recognition of its significance to the Aboriginal community and its depiction of Aboriginal ancestral stories. If necessary, the sculptures may be relocated in consultation with the Aboriginal custodians.	Temporary or permanent art and sculpture and commemorative plaques must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.
11. Public day recreation activities	<b>Scenic viewing</b>   <b>Nature viewing</b>	Scenic viewing may occur in association with lookouts and other infrastructure, compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.  Enjoying nature and activities such as bird watching may occur throughout the Park, compatible with Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.

Permissible Uses and Developments	Description	Scale and Intensity
	<b>Picnicking</b>	Small group picnicking will be permitted in designated picnic areas, compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.
	<b>Walking and Running</b>	Walking and running may occur on designated trails within the Park and connecting to the IESCA, compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.
	<b>Cycling</b>	Cycling may occur on Queen Elizabeth Drive and the roads and parking area in the Park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No off-trail cycling may occur in the Park.</li> </ul>
	<b>Rock climbing and abseiling</b> Areas used for rock climbing are on the boundary of the Summit Park and the IESCA.	Access will be permitted through the Summit Park to areas where climbing is permitted by NPWS in the IESCA, subject to compatibility with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.
12. Aboriginal cultural activities	The relevant Aboriginal people will continue to use the Summit Park for cultural activities such as ceremonies, teaching young people and caring for country.	The relevant Aboriginal people will be consulted on management of cultural activities and significant places to meet their aspirations for the area.
13. Education and learning	Education and learning activities may be conducted in the Summit Park by organisations including schools, environmental education and outdoor education providers, youth groups, tertiary and research institutions, community organisations and the Aboriginal community.	Education and learning activities must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values and must not adversely impact on use of the area by other Park users.
14. Group tours and activities	<b>Tour groups</b> Commercial and non-commercial group tours (such as coach tours) may visit the Summit Park.	Initially there will be no limit set on casual group tour visits. Over time, depending on the level of visitation and impacts, group visitation may need to be managed.
	<b>Commercial products and activities focused on Mt Keira Summit Park</b> Council approval will be required for commercial guided products and activities (such as interpretation, guided walks, fitness training) that occur wholly or to a significant extent within the Summit Park.	Approved Mt Keira Summit Park commercial products must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values and must not adversely impact on use of the area by other Park users.  There will be consultation and collaboration with NPWS on approval of products and activities that cross between the Summit Park and the IESCA.
15. Events and functions	Council-approved events, functions and sporting events may be conducted in the Summit Park.  There will be consultation and collaboration with NPWS on approval of events that cross between the Summit Park and the IESCA.	The events, functions or sporting events must be of a scale and type that is compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values, and must not adversely impact on the use of the area by other Park users.

Permissible Uses and Developments	Description	Scale and Intensity
		Social functions and exhibitions must be conducted with the General Community Use area. Most functions must be conducted during Park opening hours. A small number of night time functions associated with any future café/restaurant may be permitted.
16. Site services	<p>Areas in Mt Keira Summit Park may be used in relation to the provision of services such as electricity, water supply and stormwater services subject to consent from Council and other relevant consent authorities.</p> <p>Access may be provided to the telecommunications tower.</p>	Site services should be necessary for visitor use of the Park and/or the protection of the Park's environment and values. The services should be of a scale and type compatible with Park Vision, Planning Principles and values and minimise impacts on the environment.
17. Flora and fauna management	The biodiversity of the Summit Park will be managed in accordance with a Vegetation Management Plan and the relevant legislation.	<p>Flora and fauna will be managed to protect natural values, the quality of the environment and visitor enjoyment with the aim of maintaining and enhancing the Park's natural vegetation, biodiversity and habitats.</p> <p>Management may include pruning, planting and weed control. Pruning of trees may be carried out to maintain viewing corridors from the Summit Park.</p> <p>Fauna management may include measures to protect and provide for native species and their habitat and measures to control introduced species and their impacts.</p>

## 6.2 Prohibited Uses and Development

For clarification the following prohibited activities are indicated below:

- Overnight camping will not be permitted due to the small size of the Park and the need to protect its significance to the community.
- Access for hang gliding will not be permitted in the Summit Park. Hang gliding is not permitted over the surrounding areas of the IESCA.
-



## 6.3 Management Strategies

Section 36(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires plans of management for Community Land to include objectives for management; performance targets; means by which the council proposes to achieve the objectives and performance targets; and the manner in which the council proposes to assess its performance.

The following management objectives will guide achievement of the Vision for Mt Keira Summit Park.

1. Provide a diversity of exceptional visitor experiences that are distinctive to Wollongong, showcase the Escarpment's environmental and cultural values and define its identity and sense of place while supporting tourism to the region
2. Foster deeper understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the Escarpment's environmental and cultural values through tourism, recreation and education opportunities.
3. Preserve and enhance the significant natural and cultural heritage of the area.
4. Ensure that the future uses of the park are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.
5. Ensure that infrastructure is designed and developed in accordance with ecologically sustainable principles.
6. Encourage the Aboriginal community, the tourism industry, NPWS and other stakeholders to invest in experiences and infrastructure that are compatible and integrated with experiences available within the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area.

The Implementation Plan in Table 4 sets out:

- **Council Actions** – the means by which Council proposes to achieve the objectives
- **Partners & Consultation** – other agencies, organisations, groups and the community who will be involved in the actions as partners or through consultation by Council
- **Performance Targets** for each action
- **Manner of Assessment** – the way Council will assess implementation of the actions and achievement of the performance targets.

The following manners of assessment (see last column of Table 4) will be used, depending on the type of action involved.

- A. **Annual reporting of resourced actions implemented and reporting to Council on progress as per adopted Delivery Plans.** This will include to actions that involve studies, plans and arrangements.
- B. **Reporting of capital projects as per adopted Capital program.** This will apply to actions that involve capital investment, such as in Park infrastructure
- C. **Reporting on feedback from the Aboriginal community** at meetings and discussions on park matters affecting them. There will be discussions with Council's Aboriginal Reference Group to seek their guidance on developing an appropriate Aboriginal consultation plan/strategy for the Aboriginal community.

Council will take an adaptive management approach by periodically assessing the effectiveness of actions in the Plan of Management and adapting management approaches where necessary to address new evidence and changed circumstances. The effectiveness of this Plan of Management will be reviewed every 5 years and, where necessary, amendments to the Plan will be made in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

**Table 4: Implementation Plan for Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management**

N o.	Council Actions	Partners & Consultation	Performance Targets	Manner of Assessment
1	Progress the joint naming of the summit park as “Djeera Mt Keira Summit Park” through community consultation	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal Reference Group</li> <li>ILALC</li> <li>NPWS</li> <li>Wollongong Community</li> <li>User groups</li> </ul>	Joint naming	A
2	Develop a landscape masterplan for the Summit Park General Community Use Area covering infrastructure development and Park uses.	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wollongong community</li> <li>User groups</li> <li>Aboriginal community</li> <li>NPWS</li> </ul>	Landscape masterplan completed.	A
4	Continue cooperation between Council and NPWS officers to consider and guide implementation of <b>cooperative and integrated approaches to Summit Park and IESCA</b> planning and management including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>trail development and use</li> <li>visitor signage and interpretation</li> <li>provision of visitor infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>provision of improved, interconnected visitor experiences across the two parks.</li> </ul>	NPWS	Achievement of integrated management and visitor experiences.	A
5	Continue cooperation between Council and community groups to guide implementation of <b>cooperative and integrated approaches to Summit Park and IESCA</b> planning and management including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>trail development and use</li> <li>visitor signage and interpretation</li> <li>provision of visitor infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>provision of improved, interconnected visitor experiences across the two parks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ILALC</li> <li>Rotary</li> <li>Other user groups</li> </ul>	Achievement of integrated management and visitor experiences.	A
6	Develop and implement a <b>Design Guide</b> for signage and interpretation in the Summit Park.	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal community</li> <li>Wollongong community</li> <li>NPWS</li> </ul>	Signage and interpretation design that reflects the Summit Park’s natural and cultural values of the Summit Park and the Escarpment and its Aboriginal and historic stories.	A



N o.	Council Actions	Partners & Consultation	Performance Targets	Manner of Assessment
7	Partner with NPWS to develop an <b>integrated approach</b> to management and signage at Summit Park/IESCA boundaries and the intersection of Mt Keira Road and Queen Elizabeth Drive.	NPWS as a partner in consultation with ILALC	Improved and consistent signage and management at Park entry points.	A
8	Upgrade the Mt Keira Summit Park <b>gateway structures</b> at Queen Elizabeth Drive.	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPWS</li> <li>Aboriginal community</li> <li>Wollongong community and stakeholders</li> </ul>	Improved sense of arrival at the Summit Park.	B
9	Improve <b>information and wayfinding signage</b> within the Summit Park in line with the Design Guide and the needs of visitors.	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal community</li> <li>Wollongong community and stakeholders</li> </ul>	Visitors have improved information and wayfinding.	A Results of periodic visitor surveys.
10	Prepare and implement an <b>Interpretation Plan</b> for Mt Keira Summit Park that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>themes and storylines that express the Summit Park's significance and values</li> <li>linkages to the Illawarra Escarpment</li> <li>improved links to Wollongong Botanic Garden</li> </ul> a range of delivery methods to encourage visitor interest and appreciation - including digital media and apps, tours, art and sculpture, exhibitions and events.	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPWS</li> <li>Destination Wollongong</li> <li>Aboriginal community</li> <li>Wollongong community and stakeholders</li> </ul>	Visitors are offered interpretation that improves their enjoyment and appreciation of the Summit Park.	A Results of periodic visitor surveys.
12	Continue to <b>consult with the Aboriginal community</b> on protection and management of the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the Summit Park.	Aboriginal community ILALC	The Aboriginal community is involved in protection and management of their cultural heritage.	C
13	Facilitate use of the Summit Park for <b>Aboriginal cultural purposes</b> .	Aboriginal community	The Aboriginal community is easily able to utilise the Summit Park for cultural purposes.	C
14	Facilitate <b>consideration of proposals</b> from the Aboriginal community, tourism and recreation operators and education providers and community groups for development of visitor products in the Summit Park.	As relevant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal community</li> <li>Tourism operators</li> <li>Private sector</li> <li>Community groups</li> </ul>	Sustainable products that enhance visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the Summit Park.	A Results of periodic visitor surveys.

N o.	Council Actions	Partners & Consultation	Performance Targets	Manner of Assessment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NPWS</li> </ul>		
15	Encourage <b>volunteers and community service groups</b> to participate in Summit Park maintenance and management and development of visitor activities.	Community groups Volunteers	Community groups and volunteers are effectively involved in the Park.	A
16	Prepare a <b>Vegetation Management Plan</b> for the Summit Park that includes measures for biodiversity and habitat protection, revegetation, landscaping, weed and pest control and monitoring of vegetation condition.	Consultation with NPWS & ILALC	Park biodiversity is protected and maintained sustainably.	A Monitoring of biodiversity and vegetation condition.
17	Control the <b>impacts of pest animals</b> in the Summit Park.	Consultation with NPWS & ILALC	Reduction in pest animal impacts on the Park environment.	A Monitoring of biodiversity and vegetation condition and pest animal impacts.
18	Develop and implement <b>Construction Environmental Management Plans</b> (CEMPs) to ensure there is adequate control of runoff and erosion and protection of vegetation, biodiversity and habitat, and natural and cultural heritage during construction activities in the Summit Park.	Construction companies	CEMPs are in place for all construction activities.	B
19	Manage <b>litter and vandalism</b> in a timely manner.		The park infrastructure and environs is well-kept in a condition commensurate with its significant values.	A Visual monitoring by staff.
20	Continue to <b>monitor visitor numbers</b> at Mt Keira Summit Park.		Up-to-date information on visitor numbers.	A Outcomes of visitor numbers monitoring.
21	Conduct <b>periodic visitor surveys</b> at Mt Keira Summit Park to provide information on visitor demographics, activities and satisfaction.		Up-to-date information on visitors and their satisfaction with experiences in the Summit Park.	A Visitor survey results.

## APPENDIX A – RELEVANT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT PROVISIONS

This appendix provides extracts from the *Local Government Act 1993* that are relevant to the preparation, contents and adoption of this Plan of Management for Mt Keira Summit Park.

### Requirements for Plans of Management for Community Land

#### 35 What governs the use and management of community land?

Community land is required to be used and managed in accordance with the following:

- the plan of management applying to the land
- any law permitting the use of the land for a specified purpose or otherwise regulating the use of the land
- this Division.

#### 36 Preparation of draft plans of management for community land

(1) A council must prepare a draft plan of management for community land.

(2) A draft plan of management may apply to one or more areas of community land, except as provided by this Division.

(3) A plan of management for community land must identify the following:

- (a) the category of the land,
- (b) the objectives and performance targets of the plan with respect to the land,
- (c) the means by which the council proposes to achieve the plan's objectives and performance targets,
- (d) the manner in which the council proposes to assess its performance with respect to the plan's objectives and performance targets,

and may require the prior approval of the council to the carrying out of any specified activity on the land.

(3A) A plan of management that applies to just one area of community land:

(a) must include a description of:

(i) the condition of the land, and of any buildings or other improvements on the land, as at the date of adoption of the plan of management, and

(ii) the use of the land and any such buildings or improvements as at that date, and

(b) must:

(i) specify the purposes for which the land, and any such buildings or improvements, will be permitted to be used, and

(ii) specify the purposes for which any further development of the land will be permitted, whether under lease or licence or otherwise, and

(iii) describe the scale and intensity of any such permitted use or development.

(4) For the purposes of this section, land is to be categorised as one or more of the following:

- (a) a natural area,
- (b) a sportsground,
- (c) a park,



- (d) an area of cultural significance,
- (e) general community use.

## **Plans of Management for Areas of Cultural Significance**

### **36D Community land comprising area of cultural significance**

(1) This section applies to community land that is the subject of a resolution by the council that declares that, because of the presence on the land of any item that the council considers to be of Aboriginal, historical or cultural significance, the land is an area of cultural significance for the purposes of this Part.

(2) A plan of management adopted in respect of an area of land, all or part of which is land to which this section applies, is to apply to that land only, and not to other areas.

(3) A plan of management to be adopted for an area of community land, all or part of which consists of land to which this section applies:

- (a) must state that the land, or the relevant part, is an area of cultural significance, and
- (b) must, in complying with section 36 (3) (a), categorise the land, or the relevant part, as an area of cultural significance, and
- (c) must, in complying with section 36 (3) (b), (c) and (d), identify objectives, performance targets and other matters that:
  - (i) are designed to protect the area, and
  - (ii) take account of the existence of the features of the site identified by the council's resolution, and
  - (iii) incorporate the core objectives prescribed under section 36 in respect of community land categorised as an area of cultural significance, and
- (d) must:
  - (i) when public notice is given of it under section 38, be sent (or a copy must be sent) by the council to the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage, and
  - (ii) incorporate any matter specified by the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage in relation to the land, or the relevant part.

(4) If, after the adoption of a plan of management applying to just one area of community land, all or part of that area becomes the subject of a resolution of the kind described in subsection (1):

- (a) the plan of management is taken to be amended, as from the date the declaration took effect, to categorise the land or the relevant part as an area of cultural significance, and
- (b) the council must amend the plan of management (and in doing so, the provisions of subsection (3) (a), (c) and (d) apply to the amendment of the plan of management in the same way as they apply to the adoption of a plan of management), and
- (c) until the plan of management has been amended as required by paragraph (b):
  - (i) the use of the land must not be varied, except to the extent necessary to protect any item identified in the council's resolution or in order to give effect to the core objectives

prescribed under section 36 in respect of community land categorised as an area of cultural significance, or to terminate the use, and

(ii) no lease, licence or other estate may be granted in respect of the land.

(5) If, after the adoption of a plan of management applying to several areas of community land, all or part of one of those areas becomes the subject of a resolution of the kind described in subsection (1):

(a) the plan of management ceases, as from the date the declaration took effect, to apply to that area, and

(b) a plan of management must be prepared and adopted by the council for that area, and

(c) the plan of management so prepared and adopted must comply with subsection (3).

### **36DA Location of places and items of Aboriginal significance may be kept confidential**

(1) This section applies to draft and adopted plans of management for areas of community land, all or part of which consist of land to which section 36D applies.

(2) A council may resolve (at the request of any Aboriginal person traditionally associated with the land concerned or on the council's own initiative) to keep confidential such parts of a draft or adopted plan of management to which this section applies as would disclose the nature and location of a place or an item of Aboriginal significance.

(3) Despite any other provision of this Act (including sections 38, 39 and 43) or any other law, councillors and council employees are not to disclose that part of a draft or adopted plan of management that is the subject of a resolution of confidentiality under subsection (2), except with the consent of the council.

(4) A draft or adopted plan of management that is the subject of a resolution of confidentiality under subsection (2) must contain a note stating that the whole of the plan is affected by the resolution or identifying the parts that are so affected.

(5) A council proposing to prepare a draft plan of management to which this section applies must (in accordance with the regulations) consult with the appropriate Aboriginal communities regarding public access to, and use of, information concerning any places or items of Aboriginal significance on the land concerned.

## **Core Objectives for Community Land**

### **36H Core objectives for management of community land categorised as an area of cultural significance**

(1) The core objectives for management of community land categorised as an area of cultural significance are to retain and enhance the cultural significance of the area (namely its Aboriginal, aesthetic, archaeological, historical, technical or research or social significance) for past, present or future generations by the active use of conservation methods.

(2) Those conservation methods may include any or all of the following methods:

(a) the continuous protective care and maintenance of the physical material of the land or of the context and setting of the area of cultural significance,

(b) the restoration of the land, that is, the returning of the existing physical material of the land to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material,

(c) the reconstruction of the land, that is, the returning of the land as nearly as possible to a known earlier state,

(d) the adaptive reuse of the land, that is, the enhancement or reinforcement of the cultural significance of the land by the introduction of sympathetic alterations or additions to allow compatible uses (that is, uses that involve no changes to the cultural significance of the physical material of the area, or uses that involve changes that are substantially reversible or changes that require a minimum impact),

(e) the preservation of the land, that is, the maintenance of the physical material of the land in its existing state and the retardation of deterioration of the land.

(3) A reference in subsection (2) to land includes a reference to any buildings erected on the land.

#### **36I Core objectives for management of community land categorised as general community use**

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as general community use are to promote, encourage and provide for the use of the land, and to provide facilities on the land, to meet the current and future needs of the local community and of the wider public:

(a) in relation to public recreation and the physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare or development of individual members of the public, and

(b) in relation to purposes for which a lease, licence or other estate may be granted in respect of the land (other than the provision of public utilities and works associated with or ancillary to public utilities).

### **Process for adoption of a Plan of Management**

#### **38 Public notice of draft plans of management**

(1) A council must give public notice of a draft plan of management.

(2) The period of public exhibition of the draft plan must be not less than 28 days.

(3) The public notice must also specify a period of not less than 42 days after the date on which the draft plan is placed on public exhibition during which submissions may be made to the council.

(4) The council must, in accordance with its notice, publicly exhibit the draft plan together with any other matter which it considers appropriate or necessary to better enable the draft plan and its implications to be understood.

#### **40 Adoption of plans of management**

(1) After considering all submissions received by it concerning the draft plan of management, the council may decide to amend the draft plan or to adopt it without amendment as the plan of management for the community land concerned.

(2) If the council decides to amend the draft plan it must either:

(a) publicly exhibit the amended draft plan in accordance with the provisions of this Division relating to the public exhibition of draft plans, or

(b) if it is of the opinion that the amendments are not substantial, adopt the amended draft plan without public exhibition as the plan of management for the community land concerned.

(2A) If a council adopts an amended plan without public exhibition of the amended draft plan, it must give public notice of that adoption, and of the terms of the amended plan of management, as soon as practicable after the adoption.

(3) The council may not, however, proceed to adopt the plan until any public hearing required under section 40A has been held in accordance with section 40A.

#### **40A Public hearing in relation to proposed plans of management**

(1) The council must hold a public hearing in respect of a proposed plan of management (including a plan of management that amends another plan of management) if the proposed plan would have the effect of categorising, or altering the categorisation of, community land under section 36 (4).

(2) However, a public hearing is not required if the proposed plan would merely have the effect of altering the categorisation of the land under section 36 (5).

(3) A council must hold a further public hearing in respect of the proposed plan of management if:

(a) the council decides to amend the proposed plan after a public hearing has been held in accordance with this section, and

(b) the amendment of the plan would have the effect of altering the categorisation of community land under section 36 (4) from the categorisation of that land in the proposed plan that was considered at the previous public hearing.

#### **41 Amendment of plans of management**

A council may amend a plan of management adopted under this Division by means only of a plan of management so adopted.

#### **42 Revocation and cessation of plans of management**

(1) A plan of management for community land may be revoked by a plan of management adopted under this Division by the council.

(2) A plan of management ceases to apply to land if:

(a) the land is reclassified as operational land, or

(b) in the case of land that is not owned by the council—the land ceases to be controlled by the council.

#### **43 Public availability of plans of management**

A plan of management must be available for public inspection at, and purchase from, the office of the council during ordinary office hours.



## APPENDIX B - COUNCIL MINUTES RESOLUTION

This appendix includes Wollongong City Council Minutes from meeting held 9 December 2019.



Ordinary Meeting of Council

9 December 2019

5

### DEPARTURE OF COUNCILLOR

During debate and prior to voting on Item 5, Councillor Walters departed and returned to the meeting, the time being from 7:48pm to 7:50pm.

### ITEM 5 - MT KEIRA SUMMIT PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

**329 COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION** - RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY on the motion of Councillor T Brown seconded Councillor Colacino that -

- 1 The Mt Keira Plan of Management, for the Summit Park (Attachment 10) be adopted, incorporating the changes outlined in this report, and include measures to ensure that there are no impediments to providing increased access along Queen Elizabeth Drive to enable safe access to the Summit amenities for bushwalkers and cyclists.
- 2 The Plan of Management be reviewed, if needed, following finalisation of the NSW Government's Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy, to assess whether any additional infrastructure will be required.
- 3 A notice be placed in the local media advising of the adoption of the amended Plan of Management.

### DEPARTURE OF COUNCILLOR

During debate and prior to voting on Item 6, Councillor T Brown departed and returned to the meeting, the time being from 8:02 pm to 8:04 pm.

## APPENDIX C - REFERENCES

Australian Museum Business Services (September 2008), *Aboriginal Heritage Study: Illawarra Escarpment*. Prepared for Wollongong City Council.

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Wollongong City Council (2015), *Illawarra Escarpment Strategic Management Plan 2015*.

Wollongong Library online information related to Mt Keira, [www.wollongong.nsw.au/library/onlineresources/suburbprofiles/pages/mountkeira](http://www.wollongong.nsw.au/library/onlineresources/suburbprofiles/pages/mountkeira).

