

ITEM 5 MT KEIRA SUMMIT PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

On 29 October 2019, Council resolved to exhibit the draft Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management. Mt Keira Summit Park is a relatively small and discrete site on top of Mt Keira and is surrounded by steep slopes that form part of the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area. The draft Plan was exhibited from 31 October to 21 December 2018 and 563 submissions were received. Concurrently the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service exhibited the draft Illawarra Escarpment Plan of Management which included a draft Mountain Biking network proposal.

It is recommended that Council adopt the Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management incorporating the changes outlined in this report.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 The Mt Keira Plan of Management, for the Summit Park (Attachment 10) be adopted, incorporating the changes outlined in this report.
- 2 A notice be placed in the local media advising of the adoption of the amended Plan of Management.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Chris Stewart, Manager City Strategy

Authorised by: Linda Davis, Director Planning + Environment - Future City + Neighbourhoods

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Location Plan
- 2 Current Land Classification Map
- 3 Current Land Categorisation Map
- 4 Current Land Zoning Map
- 5 Draft Exhibited Community Land Category Map
- 6 Engagement Report
- 7 Public Hearing Report
- 8 Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Engagement Report
- 9 Revised Proposed Land Categorisation
- 10 Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management

BACKGROUND

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.

The Mt Keira Summit Park occupies 9.4 hectares of relatively flat land on the top of Mt Keira (Attachment 1). The Mt Keira Summit Park is owned and managed by Council and is a natural area annex of Wollongong Botanic Garden. The Park forms a small and discrete part of Mt Keira, with the surrounding steep bushland being part of the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area, managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

The boundary between the Summit Park and the NPWS land is the cliff top. This boundary has not been surveyed, and until recently was shown as straight lines between survey points. This has caused some confusion, as for example Victoria Lookout (located above cliff) was incorrectly shown in the NPWS area.

Mt Keira is very significant to the Aboriginal community. The cultural significance is summarised in the following statement from the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council (ILALC) -

The Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area is located within the Country of the Dharawal People and in the area of responsibility of ILALC. The escarpment, named Merrigong, has great symbolic and historical importance for local Aboriginal people, who have an ongoing association with the area. It remains an important site for traditional ceremonial practices as well as providing a rich source of food, medicine and other resources for Aboriginal people. Prominent on the escarpment skyline are Mt Keira Djera and Mt Kembla (Djembla), which are significant landforms with additional cultural value. Aboriginal creation stories express deep cultural and physical connections between the people and their environment. Along with the Five Islands, the creation stories associated with Djera and Djembla are fundamental to the values and beliefs of the traditional Aboriginal families living in and from this area. As custodians of these stories, we preserve the knowledge and share with all Aboriginal people residing within our boundaries. These stories are who we are. ILALC has a responsibility to ensure this connection to Country continues.

The Summit Park has two land classifications under the Local Government Act 1993 -

- The area currently housing the Communications Tower is classified as Operational land (Attachment 2) (725m²).
- The balance of the site is Community land (Attachment 2) (9.32 hectares) which is further divided into two community land categories (Attachment 3) -
 - The area where the former restaurant/café was located is categorised as “General Community Use” which is covered by a Generic Plan of Management (1,720m²).
 - The remaining Community land is categorised as an “Area of Cultural Significance” (9.15 hectares). Under the Local Government Act 1993, this categorisation requires a site specific Plan of Management to guide appropriate use of the site.

The Mt Keira Summit Park currently has two zonings under the Wollongong LEP 2009 (Attachment 4) -

- The area occupied by the Communications Tower, former restaurant/café, picnic area and northern lookout is zoned SP3 Tourist (1.31 hectares).
- The balance of the Council land is zoned E2 Environmental Conservation (8.09 hectares).

The surrounding Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area, managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, is zoned E1 National Parks.

There are significant natural, scenic, environmental and cultural heritage values of the place. Featuring unique layers of heritage and history, its natural and scenic character has been enjoyed by generations of residents and visitors.

As noted, Mt Keira is an integral part of country for the traditional Aboriginal custodians of the Illawarra with Dreamtime creation stories linked to the mountain and surrounding areas. Mt Keira remains in active use for cultural purposes.

There are significant natural constraints within and surrounding the site, including geotechnical, bushfire and high environmental sensitivity. The site is not connected to the Sydney Water drinking water or sewerage networks. Council has recently installed a permanent power supply, to replace a diesel generator.

There are significant community assets surrounding the Summit Park including the Scout Camp, Girl Guides, Archery Range, Walking trails, Rhododendron Park and links to Mt Kembla. There are numerous mountain bike trails in use below the Summit Park in the Illawarra Escarpment Conservation Area.

The Wollongong Rotary Club has an ongoing association with the site, having established the original lookouts and entry road in the 1950s, and being active in the ongoing promotion and embellishment of the facilities for the community.

The Summit Park lookout is a popular destination for tourists and residents, to enjoy the views and scenery and to picnic and bushwalk. The Summit is also a destination for road cycling and has featured several regional recreational and sporting events.

Changes within and adjacent to the Summit Park have affected public use and enjoyment and have implications for the ongoing management and use of the Park. These include landslips and slope instability which has led to the closure of the Five Islands Lookout and parts of walking tracks in the adjacent Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area. Rock climbing has also been limited to an area to the west of the Park.

In 2015, the former restaurant/function centre /caretakers cottage was demolished and was replaced in 2016 with a container kiosk and associated upgraded amenities to improve safety, visitor experience and accessibility.

In 2018, CCTV was also installed to improve safety.

It is envisaged that strong growth in Wollongong's population 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.

Mt Keira Summit Park Vision and Planning Principles

In January 2016, Council engaged specialist consultants TRC Tourism to conduct a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process and compile a draft Vision for Mt Keira. The Vision was prepared with input from the community and key stakeholders and identifies the objectives and planning principles for the site.

The draft Vision was exhibited during May 2016 and 84 submissions were received (31 written submission and 53 comments on the Have your Say exhibition webpage).

On 27 June 2016, Council endorsed a Vision for Mt Keira Summit Park. Council resolved that -

- 1 *Council adopt the Mt Keira Summit Park Vision.*
- 2 *The adopted Mt Keira Summit Park Vision be used as the basis for the development of a Plan of Management and Landscape Masterplan for the site.*
- 3 *All stakeholders and community members who have contributed to the process of formulating the Vision be formally acknowledged and invited to stay involved with the development of a Plan of Management and Landscape Masterplan for Mt Keira Summit Park.*

The adopted Vision and planning principles are provided below –

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.

<p>Planning Principles for Mt Keira Summit Park</p>	<p>INTEGRATE</p> <p>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</p>
<p>EXPERIENCE</p> <p>Provide exceptional cultural and nature based experiences that support tourism of the region and that are integrated with the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area</p>	<p>RESPECT</p> <p>Respect the wishes of the Aboriginal people to safeguard and present their culture through a variety of means they consider most appropriate</p>
<p>APPRECIATE</p> <p>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</p>	<p>CONSERVE</p> <p>Contribute to the protection and conservation of the Escarpment's natural, cultural and scenic values</p>
<p>INVOLVE</p> <p>The Aboriginal community, tourism industry, local community and NPWS will be involved in decision making</p>	<p>SUSTAINABLE</p> <p>Visitor experiences will be economically viable and financially sustainable and demonstrate social and environmental benefits to the community</p>

Draft Plan of Management

Following the endorsement of the Mt Keira Vision, a workshop was held on 13 September 2016 with the community members and representatives of all key stakeholder groups to discuss the creation of the draft Plan of Management for Mt Keira Summit Park.

The draft Plan of Management identifies the types of uses that should be permissible on the site into the future and an Implementation Plan of Council actions.

The draft document contains the following key elements -

- A list of permissible uses and developments that comply with the Vision and planning principles work, enabling flexibility for Council to consider suitable proposals by proponents; and
- A Plan of Management Action Plan which identifies that a detailed Landscape Masterplan will be completed in the future if significant changes to current uses and developments were proposed in the areas currently categorised as culturally significant beyond the improvements identified in the Landscape Concept Plan.

Table 3 in the draft Plan of Management sets out the uses and development permissible within the Summit Park. These can be summarised as -

- Protection and enhancement of the Summit Park's values
- Improvements to scenic viewing infrastructure
- Improved tracks and trails
- Sustainable access infrastructure
- Picnic facilities
- Public toilets

- Food and beverage infrastructure and services
- Improved wayfinding and interpretation
- Art, sculpture and commemorative plaques
- Aboriginal cultural activities
- Education and learning
- Group tours and activities
- Events and functions
- Site services
- Flora and fauna management.

Prohibited uses include -

- Overnight camping
- Hang gliding (not permitted in the surrounding National Park and over Mt Ousley Rd).

As required by the Local Government Act 1993, the scale and intensity of each permissible use and development is described with the aid of a draft Landscape Concept Plan. This provides a visual representation of various elements and the spatial relationship between them. It also identifies lookout and trail upgrades that Council may consider undertaking subject to funding.

To protect the natural and cultural values of the Summit Park and provide for a range of sustainable visitor uses, different types and level of use are proposed in the two Community Land categories, namely General Community Use and Area of Cultural Significance areas.

Higher intensity uses and major infrastructure and facilities were proposed to be located within the General Community Use area. The existing General Community Use area was proposed to be expanded from 1,720m² to 2ha to include the former restaurant site, kiosk, lookout and car park (Attachment 5). The balance of the Summit Park was proposed to retain the Area of Cultural Significance category, with the proposed uses being 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 would be subject to -

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

The draft Plan of Management also includes provision for agencies, commercial businesses, education institutions, not-for-profit organisations and other groups to potentially offer products or participate in the management of the Summit Park. The draft Plan of Management would permit Council to enter into casual, short, medium or long term leases or licences up to a maximum of 30 years for any permitted use or development.

To help explain what might be possible under the Plan of Management, a draft Landscape Concept Plan was prepared. The draft Landscape Concept Plan showed an improved track network and lookouts, new amenities building and a possible high ropes course.

On 29 October 2018, Council considered a report on the draft Plan of Management and resolved that -

- 1 *The draft Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management and Landscape Concept Plan be exhibited for a minimum of 42 days including an independently chaired public meeting and Information Stand on site.*

- 2 *The draft Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management include a proposal to re-categorise a portion of community land from cultural significance to general community use to enable future suitable land use activities that align with the planning principles for the site.*
- 3 *Previously engaged stakeholders involved in the Mt Keira visioning process be advised that the Draft Plan of Management has been prepared and will be placed on public exhibition.*
- 4 *Following the exhibition period and public meeting the submissions and comments be reported to Council.*
- 5 *The post exhibition report consider whether any changes to planning controls under the Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009 are required to assist with the implementation of the Plan of Management.*

The draft Plan of Management was exhibited from 31 October to 21 December 2018, the exhibition arrangements are detailed later in this report.

Councillor briefing were held on 29 July 2019 and 25 November 2019.

PROPOSAL

As a consequence of the exhibition 135 written submissions and 392 comments were received via the Have your Say webpage. The Engagement report is Attachment 6. A Public Hearing was held on 21 November 2018. The Public Hearing report is Attachment 7.

The main issues arising from the exhibition -

- Aboriginal significance
- Mountain Biking
- Categorisation of Mt Keira Summit Park
- Zoning of Mt Keira Summit Park.

Aboriginal significance

As highlighted by the statement from the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council (ILALC), Mt Keira is of great importance / significant to the Aboriginal community. Ten submissions, including ILALC acknowledged this significance. Many of the submissions in support of Mountain Biking also acknowledged the need to respect cultural values.

The submission from ILALC also proposed that –

- No change be made to the proposed categorisation of areas within the Plan of Management and that the current categorisation of land of cultural significance remain. Council work with the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council to develop appropriate objectives and performance targets to achieve a best case outcome with due consideration for the Aboriginal heritage significance of the area.
- The reference to mountain biking be removed from the Plan of Management entirely as this is viewed as incompatible development for this area of the Illawarra Escarpment.
- The proposed high ropes course be removed from the Landscape Concept Plan.
- Inclusion of the Aboriginal community, through the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council, as an explicit partner in the implementation of this Plan, especially actions 4, 5, 7, 16 and 17.

The submission also indicated that a nomination had been lodged for the declaration of the whole Mountain (excluding private property) as an Aboriginal Place under the National Parks & Wildlife Act 1974.

In view of the significance of Mt Keira to the Aboriginal community, it is recommended that -

- A new action in the Plan be included to progress the joint naming of the Summit Park as Djeera (or Geera) Mt Keira Summit Park. Consultation occur with the community about the joint naming, including the appropriate spelling. Preliminary consultation has occurred with the ILALC and is planned with the Aboriginal Reference Group.
- Following the joint naming, Summit Park signage be updated to reflect the new name.
- The ILALC be listed as a partner or consultation organization in actions 2, 5, 7, 12, 16 and 17 and Council work with the Lands Council, NPWS, Rotary and other stakeholders to implement the actions in the Plan of Management.

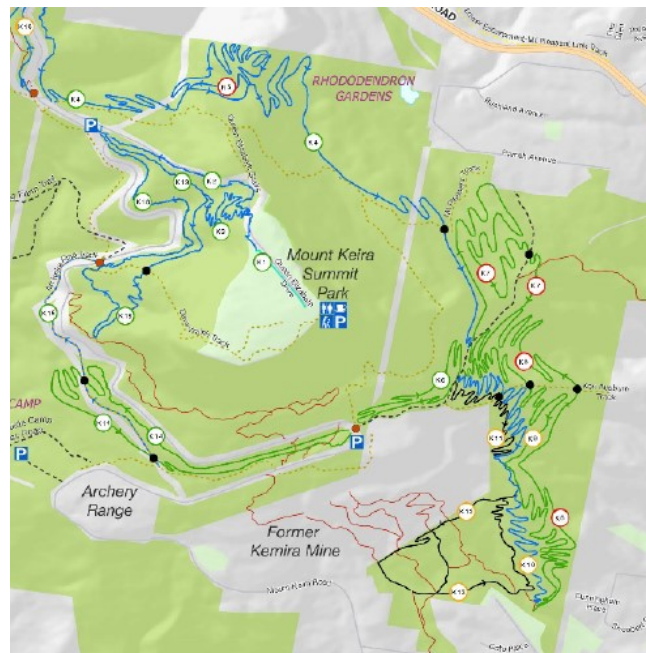
Mountain Biking

The draft Plan of Management was exhibited concurrently with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy, which caused some confusion.

Various activities including mountain biking were considered by Council staff as part of the preparation of the Vision and draft Mt Keira Plan of Management. As a consequence of pre-exhibition consultation with the ILALC, mountain biking was not included in the exhibited document.

The NPWS's draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy proposed a network of existing (30km) and new trails (52km) across the LGA, but concentrated at Mt Keira, Mt Kembla and Balgownie. The new trails would be constructed over a number of years, with 37km in stage 1. Mountain biking already occurs at Mt Keira within the State Conservation Area and across private property.

At Mt Keira, the draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy proposed tracks in the State Conservation Area, not in the Summit Park, as shown below.



The regulation of the existing informal tracks and their removal from private property was considered to be a positive environmental initiative. However, the ILALC and other submissions advised that the use was incompatible with the Aboriginal cultural values of Mt Keira.

Some 270 submissions commented on mountain biking, of which 240 supported its inclusion in the draft Mt Keira Plan of Management and 30 submissions opposed the use being permitted. A further 47 submissions commenting on the draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy were forwarded to the NPWS for their consideration (these submissions have not been counted as Plan of Management submissions).

In October 2019, the National Parks and Wildlife Service released the Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report on the outcomes of the exhibition (Attachment 8). The report indicates that they received 956 submissions, both in support and opposed. The report indicates that the NPWS will continue to engage with stakeholders to finalise the strategy and will form an Advisory Group to assist the process.

Mountain biking is an activity contrary to Aboriginal cultural values of Mt Keira, and it is recommended that off-trail riding not be permitted within the Summit Park. Riding on-road will remain permissible.

High Ropes

The draft Landscape Concept Plan showed a high ropes course, on the western side of the Summit Park as a visitor attraction. Similar courses have been provided at other locations, including Shoalhaven Zoo, where wires are connected to trees to provide an adventure course.

The submission from ILALC and others suggested that the proposal was contrary to the Aboriginal cultural values of the site. The draft Landscape Concept Plan is not proposed to be progressed. The Plan of Management includes an action to prepare a master plan, for the General Community Use area. The cultural values of Mt Keira and the input from stakeholders will be considered as part of this process.

Categorisation of Land

The draft Plan of Management proposed the expansion of the General Community Use area from 1,720m² to 2ha, which would cover the former restaurant site, kiosk, lookout and car park. The balance of the Summit Park was proposed to retain the Area of Cultural Significance category, with the proposed uses being compatible with the purpose of that land category and the protection, management, restoration and public appreciation of its cultural and natural values.

Some submissions noted that all of Mount Keira is culturally sensitive.

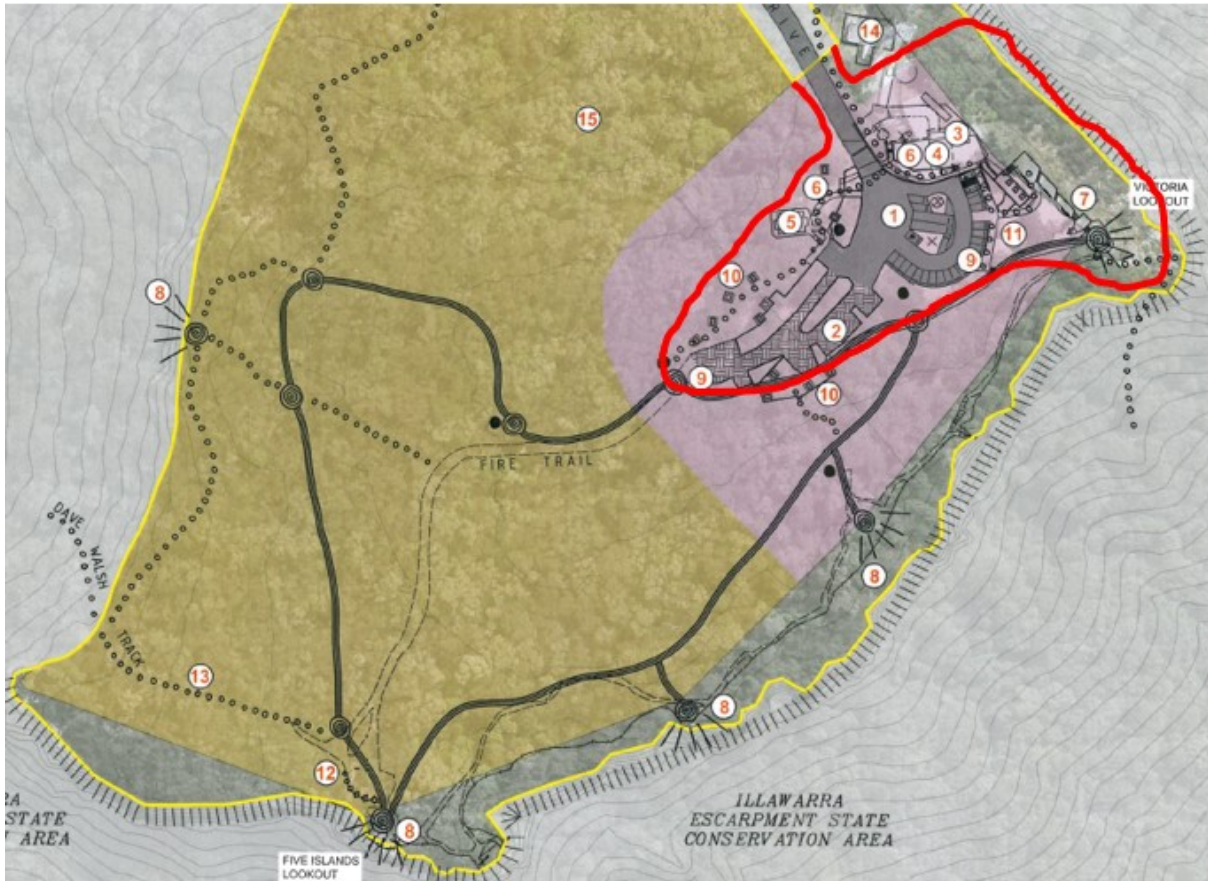
Many submissions in support of Mountain Biking supported the draft Plan of Management.

Ten submissions opposed the change to the category boundaries.

At one of the onsite meetings, the option of reducing the proposed extent of General Community Use category, and introducing an additional category of Natural Area bushland was discussed.

From a management view it is important to clarify what uses can occur in what location. If the entire Summit Park was one category, then all uses listed as permitted could occur in any location. Table 3 in the Plan of Management has been updated in response to the community input.

As a consequence of the consultation it is proposed that the extent of the General Community use area be reduced to one (1) hectare, as shown outlined in red below and in Attachment 9.



Annex of Wollongong Botanic Garden

Mt Keira Summit Park is managed as an annex of the Wollongong Botanic Garden, protecting escarpment vegetation communities. One submission objected to the Summit Park being an annex of the Garden, as Mt Keira is a natural area and should not be managed as a Garden.

The Wollongong Botanic Garden is a collection of sites and vegetation communities that reflect the differing landscapes in the LGA. The main Garden at Keiraville has collections of endangered communities, and the nursery promulgates endangered plants. The annexes at Puckeys Estate, Korrongulla and Mt Keira protect different plant remnant communities.

It remains appropriate for the Mt Keira Summit Park to remain an annex of the Garden.

Zoning

Under the Wollongong LEP 2009, Mt Keira Summit Park is zoned SP3 Tourism and E2 Environmental Conservation. The draft Plan of Management did not propose an amendment to the zone boundaries.

On 29 October 2018, Council resolved (in part) that -

- 5 *The post exhibition report considers whether any changes to planning controls under the Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009 are required to assist with the implementation of the Plan of Management.*

Some 22 submissions supported tourism uses, including submissions proposing the installation of a "Hollywood" style sign, and a Christ statue. Two submission supported and one submission opposed a gondola / cable car.

Two submissions proposed a reduction in the extent of the SP3 Tourism zone.

For Council land, the Plan of Management provides an additional layer of land use control. Proposed development needs to be permitted by both the LEP and the Plan of Management. Additionally, Council as land owner also needs to provide owners consent to any development proposal.

No amendment to the SP3 Tourism zone is required to implement the recommendations of the Plan of Management and no amendment is proposed at this time.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Draft Vision

In 2016, Council undertook community consultation prior to adopting a Vision and a set of Planning Principles for Mt Keira Summit Park. This work was used to develop a draft Plan of Management for the site which is required to be placed on public exhibition and involve further community engagement.

Given the special significance of the site to Aboriginal people, pre-exhibition consultation of the draft Plan of Management has occurred. As part of this, a range of Aboriginal people stressed the importance and significance of Mount Keira to the Aboriginal Community. The Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council advised that they have commenced work on nominating Mount Keira (including the Summit Park) as an Aboriginal Place. The following feedback has been provided by members of the Aboriginal community -

- a desire to rephrase wording in the Vision to reflect Aboriginal cultural sensitivities
- only allow activities that show respect for the site (this is our Uluru)
- no mountain bike activity or activities that generate a lot of noise should be allowed
- opportunity to make the Summit Park a showpiece for cultural learning and interpretation
- would like the opportunity for further facilitated engagement during the exhibition process and to meet with Councillors and State members to voice their concerns

The Aboriginal community feedback highlights an opportunity for residents and visitors to learn and share a deeper insight and appreciation of our indigenous heritage through a cultural experience on the Summit Park.

Draft Plan of Management

The draft Plan of Management was exhibited from 31 October to 21 December 2018. As part of the exhibition the following occurred -

- Letters to key stakeholders
- Council's "Have your Say" website and social media
- Media briefing and advertisements
- On-site signage
- 2 drop-in information sessions, including on-site
- 5 group discussions, including on-site
- An independently chaired public meeting held on 21 November 2018 (33 attendees)

Previously engaged stakeholders involved in the Mt Keira visioning process were advised that the draft Plan of Management had been prepared and placed on public exhibition.

The draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy was exhibited concurrently by the Office of Environment and Heritage / NPWS.

As a consequence of the exhibition 135 written submissions were received, and a further 392 comments were received via the Have your Say webpage, and many additional conversations held. The engagement report is Attachment 6. The Public Hearing report is Attachment 7.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2028 goal “We are a healthy community in a liveable city”. It specifically delivers on the following -

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2018-2021	Operational Plan 2019-20
Strategy	3 Year Action	Operational Plan Actions
5.2.1 Provide a variety of quality public spaces and opportunities for sport, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community.	5.2.1.5 Provide statutory services to appropriately manage and maintain our public spaces.	Finalise the Mt Keira Plan of Management

Local Government Act 1993 – Adoption Requirements

The Local Government Act 1993 sets out how Plans of Management are prepared, exhibited, adopted and amended. Section 40 of the Act requires Council to consider submissions received during an exhibition, and then adopted and or amend the draft Plan of Management. This report recommends that the exhibited draft Plan of Management be amended and adopted. The Act enables Council to either re-exhibit an amended draft Plan of Management, or adopt the amended Plan of Management if it is of the opinion that the amendments are not substantial. Council is required to publish notice that it has adopted an amended Plan of Management and the terms of the amendments.

In this instance, it is considered that the proposed amendments are not substantial as they refer to issues raised during the exhibition and remove or reduce the extent of proposals, namely –

- Including an action to renaming the Plan to include the Aboriginal name of “Djeera”
- The extent of land being categorized as General Community Use is proposed to be reduced from that exhibited
- The Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council is being acknowledged as a stakeholder/partner.
- The action of updating the Park boundaries be deleted as it has been completed
- Other minor changes to correct typographical errors, grammar or to improve the clarity of the Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At this time there are no financial implications other than already accounted for in preparing the draft Plan of Management and its exhibition. Future Council investments will be resourced via approved Delivery and Resource Plans and/or future grant funds.

It should be noted that there exists scope for private investments or public/private partnerships into the future.

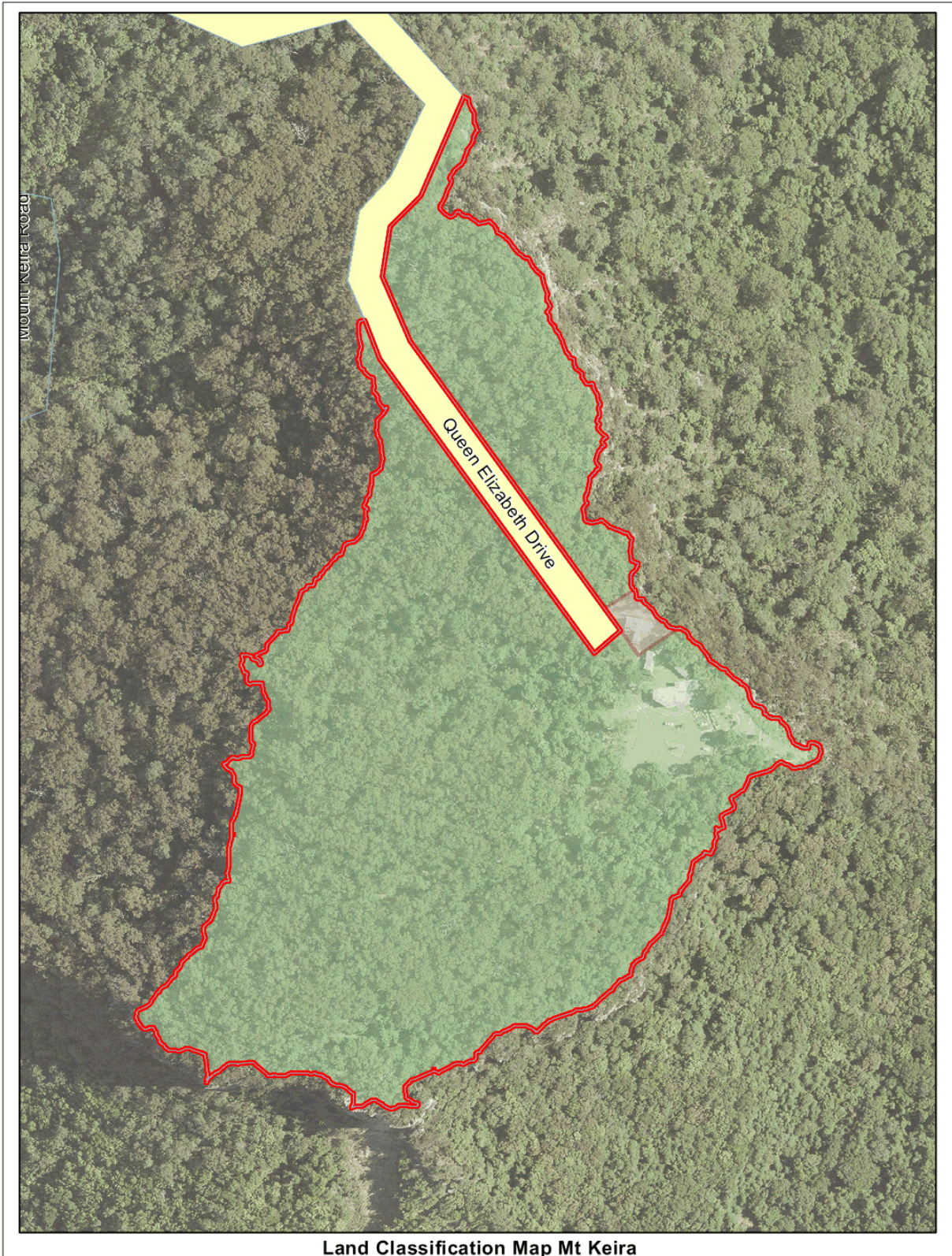
CONCLUSION

The draft Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management was exhibited from 31 October to 21 December 2018 and 563 submissions were received.

As a consequence of the exhibition, 135 written submissions were received, a further 392 comments were received via the Have your Say webpage, and many additional conversations held.

The issues raised in the submissions have been reviewed. It is recommended that Council adopt the amended Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management (Attachment 10) incorporating the changes outlined in this report.





Land Classification Map Mt Keira

**Mount Keira
Summit Park Land Classification**

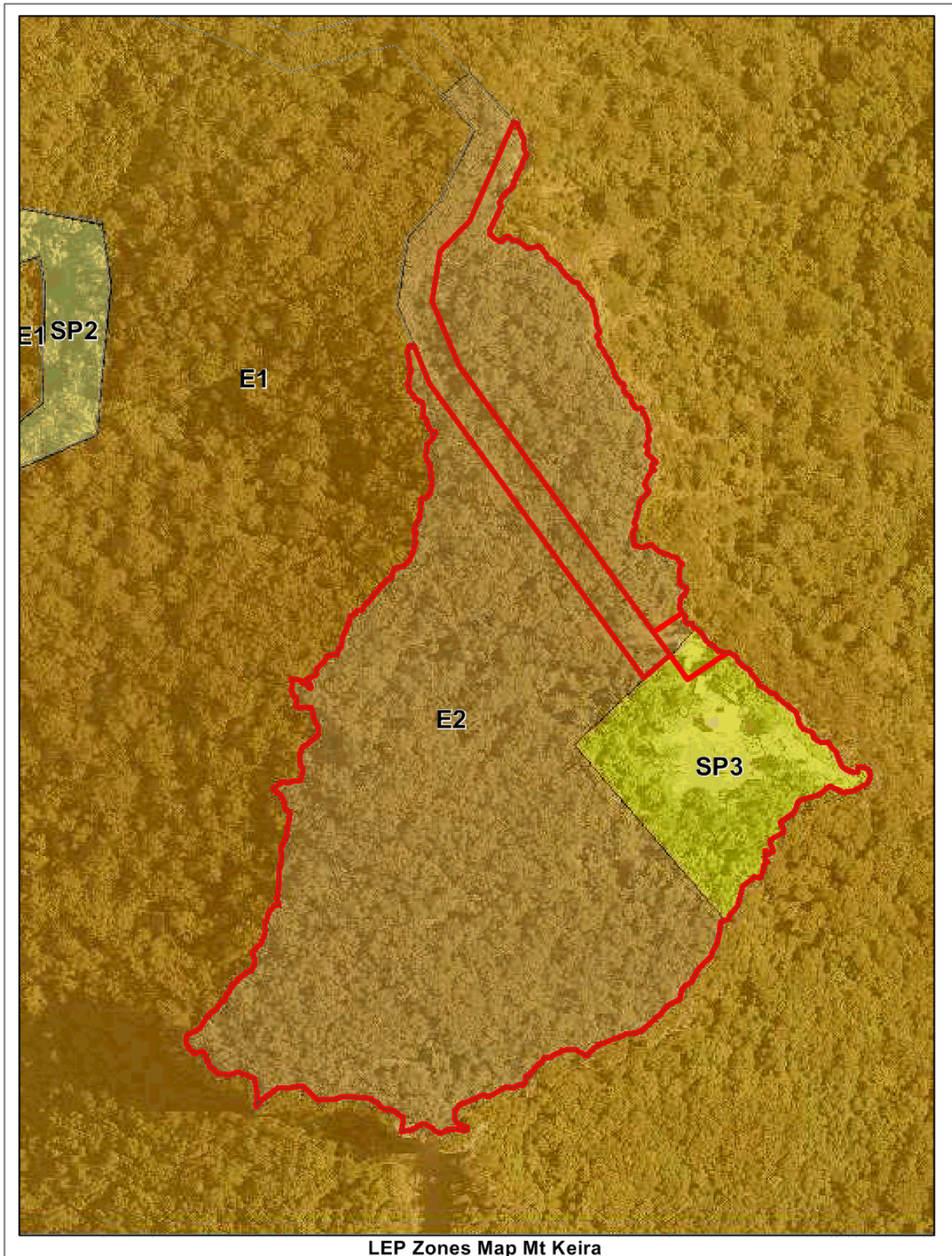
- Subject_Site
- Mount_Keira_Road_Reserve
- Operational
- Mount_Keira_Community_Land

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Date: 19/09/2016	
Date of Aerial Photography: 2018	
Mount Keira Summit Land Class.mxd	



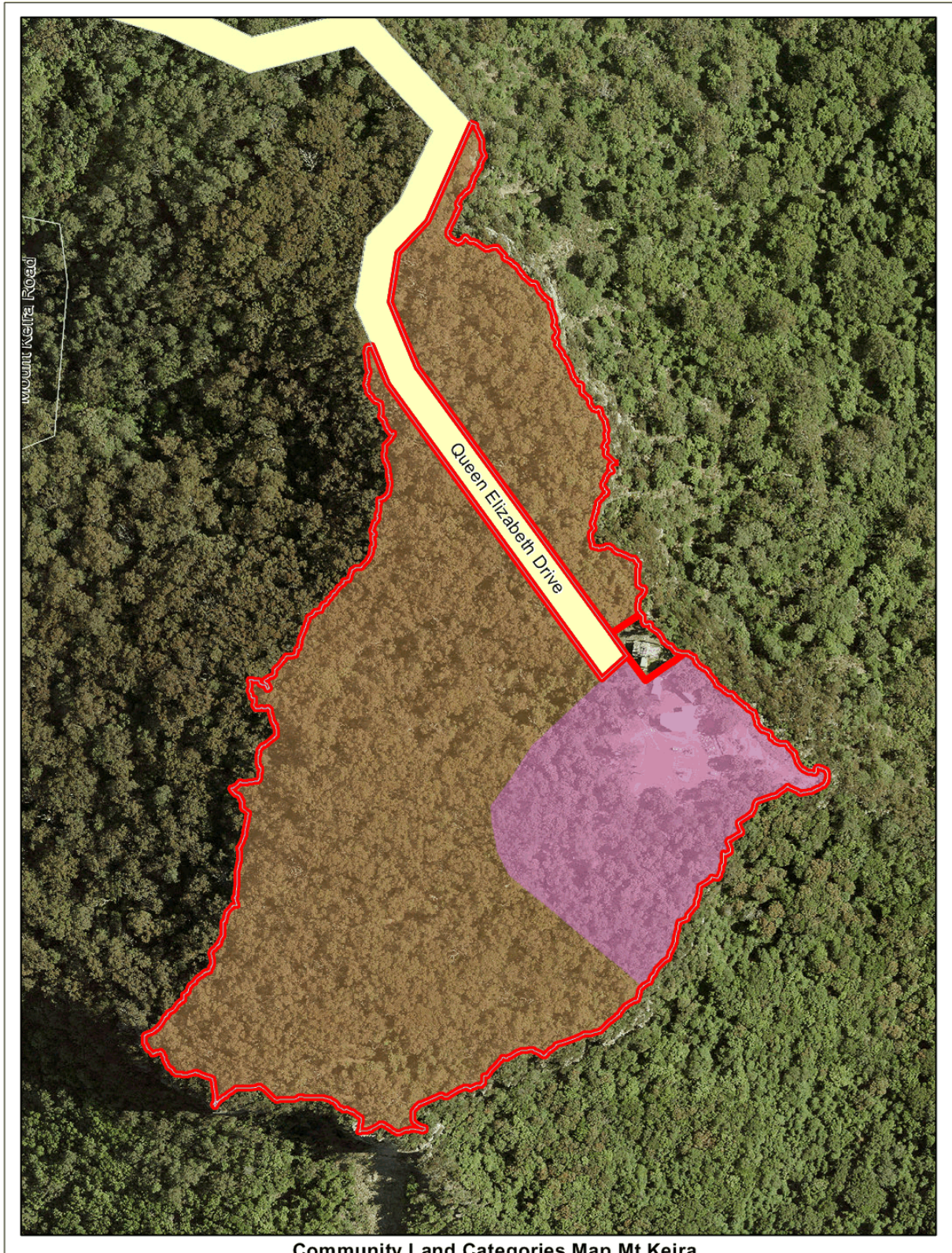
Community Land Categories Map Mt Keira

	<p>Mount Keira Summit Park POM Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject_Site General_Community_Use_05-09-19 Mount_Keira_Road_Reserve Area of Cultural Significance 	<p>Drawn By: H Jones</p> <p>Date: 17-10-2016</p>	
		<p>Date of Aerial Photography: 2018</p> <p>Mount Keira Summit Pk POM & Community Land 05-09-19.mxd</p> <p>0 80 Meters</p>	



LEP Zones Map Mt Keira

	Mount Keira Summit Park LEP2009		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Drawn By: H Jones</td> <td rowspan="2" style="text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date: 17/10/2018</td> </tr> </table>	Drawn By: H Jones		Date: 17/10/2018								
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<table border="0"> <tr> <td> Subject_Site</td> <td> Infrastructure</td> </tr> <tr> <td> National Parks and Nature Reserves</td> <td> Tourist</td> </tr> <tr> <td> Environmental Conservation</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Subject_Site	Infrastructure	National Parks and Nature Reserves	Tourist	Environmental Conservation		<table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Date of Aerial Photography: 2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Mount Keira Summit Pk Zone Map.mxd</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> </table>		Date of Aerial Photography: 2018		Mount Keira Summit Pk Zone Map.mxd			
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Community Land Categories Map Mt Keira

	Mount Keira Summit Park POM Area		
	Subject_Site	Area of Cultural Significance	
General Community Use	Mount_Keira_Road_Reserve	Date of Aerial Photography: 2018	
		Mount Keira Summit Pk POM & Community Land.mxd	

OUR PLACE
our voice
OUR FUTURE



MT KEIRA SUMMIT PARK DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT
REPORT

February 2019

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The information in this report is based on data collected from community members who chose to be involved in engagement activities and therefore should not be considered representative.

This report is intended to provide a high-level analysis of the most prominent themes and issues. While it's not possible to include all the details feedback we received, feedback that was relevant to the project has been provided to technical experts for review and consideration.

Executive Summary

A draft Plan of Management (PoM) has been developed to guide the revitalisation and sustainable management of Mt Keira Summit Park in a way that showcases its special scenic, natural and cultural values. The community were asked to comment on the draft Plan from 30 October 2018 to 21 December 2018. The draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy (IEMBS) was also exhibited during this time allowing the community to comment on the documents concurrently. The draft IEMBS was developed as a joint project between National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Council to address the adverse safety, environmental and cultural impacts of illegal use and ad-hoc trail development in the Illawarra escarpment.

In recognition of the cultural significance of Mt Keira, specific Aboriginal engagement activities were held prior to exhibition including face to face meetings and information sessions between. These activities informed the draft PoM and engagement strategy.

The communication process for the exhibition included a media briefing, social media posts, Council's Community Update in the Advertiser and signage onsite. Information was distributed to key stakeholders, and the Register of Interest participants. A project page on Council's Engagement HQ website provided copies of the draft PoM, draft Mt Keira Summit Park Concept Plan, frequently asked questions and links to an online survey. These documents as well as a feedback form were made available at Council libraries and the Customer Service Centre.

During the exhibition targeted Aboriginal engagement activities were held including an Aboriginal Community Information Session, an Aboriginal Women's Circle and an Aboriginal Men's Discussion Circle. Community engagement activities for the broader community included a Public Hearing with an independent facilitator, presentations at the Aboriginal and Wollongong Heritage Reference Groups, an onsite Information Stand and an onsite discussion regarding the proposed changes to the general community land category.

563 submissions were received from 19 groups/organisations and 543 individuals. An analysis of the feedback received provides an insight into the varied views the community has regarding the content of draft PoM. Comments received have been themed with the structure of the draft PoM. An overview of feedback is as follows:

Section 1: Introduction: The history of the site was presented and it was suggested historical details about Rotary and Vickery and Sons connection to Mt Keira should be added to the introduction.

Section 2: Planning Requirements: Comments concentrated on the proposed increase in the General Community Use category, with 66 rejecting the increase and three supporting it. It was suggested there was no clear justification for the increase and the relevance of Aboriginal significance in that location could be diminished if the category was changed. It was also suggested the increase would result in further degradation of the summit. Those in support of the increase suggested an expanded community use footprint would accommodate a broader range of activities.

Section 3: Existing Uses and Structures:

Concerns exist about the stability of Queen Elizabeth Drive and the ability for Mt Keira Road to cope with increased traffic was questioned suggesting a series of safety measures could be implemented if needed.

The cultural significance of infrastructure on the land was presented and alternatives suggested. It was suggested that the current name 'Queen Elizabeth Drive' was culturally insensitive and should be renamed considering the Aboriginal significance of the site.

Section 4: Values of the Summit Park: Feedback highlighted the importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage, natural significance and historical heritage. There is desire to preserve and protect these aspects of the Summit. The value and impact of recreation and tourism was also recognised.

Section 5: Vision: Support for respecting the wishes of the Aboriginal community were presented and it was suggested that Council "seek the permission" of the Aboriginal community before any changes are made to the draft PoM. The conditional donation of land to Council for the purpose of environmental protection in perpetuity was presented as well as the desire to conserve the area rather than develop.

Section 6: Achieving the Vision: The draft PoM lists 17 permissible uses and developments. The value of the natural beauty, flora and fauna was evident in feedback. The need to consider parking and public transport services and connections was presented. Suggestions were made to provide more toilets and change tables in both and it was also posed that the current septic system is inappropriate, negatively impacts the environment and composting toilets suggested as an alternative. It was suggested the current container café should be removed and a permanent restaurant be built. There was both support and opposition to a gondola and a high ropes course. Feedback included the importance of working with the Aboriginal community when making decisions about the Summit.

Permissible Use 3 refers to new trails/trail sections for beginner mountain bike opportunities as part of a broader Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy. 270 submissions referred to mountain biking with 240 supporting mountain biking and 30 opposed to mountain biking on Mt Keira. Those in support of mountain biking suggested the tracks would be beneficial for healthy lifestyles and tourism and would increase safety for riders. It was also suggested that a strong connection to mountain biking be including in the PoM. The submissions against mountain bikes cited reasons including the cultural significance of the site, the negative environmental impact, issues with safety and the impact on parking.

It was evident that exhibiting the draft PoM and IEMBS at the same time as the draft PoM created some confusion. The feedback suggests that responses were submitted regarding the draft PoM which were intended for the IEMBS. Of the 563 responses received, feedback from 95 community members was not associated with the draft PoM due to the language used, for example, the submission referred to the 'Mt Keira Mountain Bike Park' or made comments such as 'the proposed mountain biking plan is a great initiative'.

Background



Image: Mt Keira Summit Park Lookout

The Illawarra Regional Aboriginal Heritage Study (conducted for NPWS in 2004) attributes Mount Keira with exceptional to high local historic and social significance to Aboriginal people. The mountain is part of the creation of storylines from the dreaming. The summit was used for ceremonies, sourcing medicine and food, exchange of gifts and trade. Mt Keira is a significant women's place and the Aboriginal community continues to connect to the mountain for ceremonies, storytelling and teaching.

Vision and Planning Principles

In 2016 community and stakeholder input was sought to develop a Vision to set out the community's aspirations for the protection, use and sustainable management of Mt Keira Summit Park. The Vision for the Summit Park was adopted by Council in June 2016. The Vision and Planning Principles are as follows:

Vision Statement

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.

Planning Principles

- 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 interpretation 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 through sustainable design and practice.
- 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.

Draft Mt Keira Summit Park Plan of Management



The Vision and Planning Principles were used to develop the draft Plan of Management (PoM). Several background studies were also conducted to inform the development of the draft Plan and assess the feasibility of future options for the Summit Park. The Draft PoM is presented in six sections:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Planning Requirements
- Section 3: Existing Uses and Structures
- Section 4: Values of the Summit Park
- Section 5: Vision
- Section 6: Achieving the Vision

Draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy



A draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy (IEMBS) has been developed as a joint project between National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Council. The adverse safety, environmental and cultural impacts of illegal use and ad-hoc trail development need to be addressed to ensure the activity is sustainable into the future. The draft Strategy aims to ensure that future track construction is undertaken in a way that is sensitive to the environmental and cultural heritage of the area. The draft Strategy was exhibited at the same time as the draft PoM, providing the opportunity to discuss both documents with the community concurrently.

Methodology

The following section outlines the various activities undertaken during the engagement period. This included pre exhibition from July to September 2018 and during the exhibition period from 30 October – 21 December 2018.

Pre-Exhibition – July to September 2018

The site has significant Aboriginal cultural heritage therefore engagement with members of the Aboriginal community was undertaken prior to the general exhibition period.

Table 1: Details of Pre-Exhibition Communication and Engagement Methods

Method	Details of Methods
Communication Methods	
Letter to key stakeholders	A letter was sent to key members of the Aboriginal community inviting them to participate in the activities and encourage them to share the information available to others.
Face to face visits	Staff visited key services and stakeholders to introduce the PoM and invite them to participate.
Engagement Methods	
Initial drop in sessions	Informal drop in sessions were held aimed at giving participants the opportunity to talk with staff from Council and NPWS about the draft documents and the consultation process before the documents went on exhibition. Sessions were held on 31 July 4pm – 6pm in Council Administration building and 3 August 9.30am – 11.30am at Dapto Ribbonwood Centre.
On site information session	An onsite session was held including an issues mapping activity, options for brainstorming and a 'Walk and Talk' session on 26 September 1-3pm at Mt Keira Summit Park. NPWS attended this activity.
Individual meetings	Individual meetings were offered to any interested parties at a time and location suitable to them.

Exhibition Period – 30 October to 21 December 2018

Table: Details of Communication and Engagement Methods

Methods	Details of Methods
Communication Methods	
The Advertiser	Details of the public hearing, onsite information stand and Engagement HQ webpage were included in Council's Community Update pages.
Media briefing	An onsite briefing was held on 9 October to launch the engagement with Council technical, engagement and communication staff attending.
Signage	Signage was installed onsite to promote the project, opportunities to get involved.

Letter to key stakeholders	A letter and FAQ were sent to all stakeholders who participated in engagement to date.
Register of Interest	An email was sent to all participants with registered interest in 'Environment'.
Info packs	FAQ's and hardcopy surveys were sent to key stakeholders and made available at libraries and customer service.
Social Media	Information about the exhibition were promoted through Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts.
Engagement Methods	
Engagement HQ Website	An online survey tool was used to capture participant's feedback. The page also hosted background info, supporting documents and a link to NPWS IEMBS online engagement page.
Feedback Form	A hard copy feedback form was made available at libraries and engagement activities.
Women's discussion circle	A discussion circle was held at Mt Keira Scout Camp on 14 November 10-2pm. NPWS also attended this event to discuss the IEMBS.
Men's Group discussion circle	A discussion circle was held at an Aboriginal Men's Group meeting on 22 November at 10-12noon. NPWS also attended this event to discuss the IEMBS.
Information session – Aboriginal community	An opportunity to discuss the draft PoM and get community feedback was held at Council Administration building 14 November 4-5.30pm. The activity location was informed by the Aboriginal community. NPWS also attend this event to discuss the IEMBS.
Presentation	A presentation was made to the Aboriginal Reference Group and the Wollongong Heritage Reference Group
Public hearing	A public hearing, chaired by an independent chairperson, was held at the Council Administration building on 21 November at 6pm.
Onsite information stand	An opportunity to provide information about the PoM and get community feedback was held at Mt Keira Summit Park on 24 November 10-12pm. NPWS also attended this event to discuss the IEMBS.
Onsite meeting - general community land category	An onsite meeting was held with key stakeholders to discuss concerns about the proposed changes to the general community land category. The area was physically mapped out to show the boundary and issues discussed. NOTE: this meeting was not part of the original strategy, however was held in response to community concerns.

Results

This section provides details on the participation at engagement activities (Table 3), and the feedback received during the exhibition period.

Engagement Participation

Details of the number of participants for each engagement activity are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Engagement participation results

Engagement Activities	Participation
Pre-exhibition - initial drop in sessions with Aboriginal Community	8
Pre-exhibition - on site information session with Aboriginal Community	3
Pre-exhibition - Individual meetings with Aboriginal Community	3
Women's Discussion Group	10
Aboriginal Information Session	1
Men's Discussion Circle	17
Onsite Information Stand	80
Onsite meeting - proposed changes to the general community land category	6
Aboriginal Reference Group meeting	7
Wollongong Heritage Reference Group meeting	6
Public Hearing	33
Online Participation	
Aware – Total number of users who viewed the project page	1702
Informed - Total number of users who opened a hyperlink or read a document	1107
Engaged –Total number of users who have actively contributed to the project	392

Submission Results

The community were asked to provide feedback on the draft PoM. Feedback came from 563 submissions, which included 19 groups/organisations and 543 individuals.

The groups/organisations include:

Aboriginal Men's Discussion Circle	Mountain Bike Australia
Aboriginal Reference Group	National Parks Association of NSW
Aboriginal Women's Discussion Circle	National Trust of Australia
Appin House Team	Neighbourhood Forum 5
Destination Sydney Surrounds South	Northern Illawarra Resident's Action Group
Destination Wollongong	Regional Development Australia Illawarra
Heritage Reference Group	The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd
Illawarra Birds Observers Club	Wilderness Society Illawarra
Illawarra Historical Society	Wollondilly Macarthur Mountain Bike Club
Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council	

Submissions were made online (392), emails (135), oral feedback from Aboriginal discussion circles (2) and verbal submissions from the Public Hearing (33) and letter (1). The feedback received is now presented based on the six sections of the draft PoM.

Section 1: Introduction

Four submissions from 1 group/organisation and 3 individuals related to Section 1- Introduction. The history of the site was presented including the contribution of the Rotary Club and the need to honour the intent of the Vickery family dedication of land in perpetuity. It was suggested that these contributions be added to the introduction. It was also suggested that Mt Keira Summit Park should no longer be an annexe of the Botanic Gardens as it is a natural area and the current vegetation management is not appropriate for the area.

Section 2: Planning Requirements

Comments were received from 10 groups/organisations and 59 individuals relating to the proposal to increase the general community use area of the Summit Park, with 66 rejecting the increase

'The draft Plan needs to contain justification for this expansion and evidence it is a culturally and ecologically sound decision'.

and three supporting it. Those who rejected the increase highlighted the Aboriginal significance and the importance of respecting Aboriginal culture. It was suggested there was no clear justification for the increase and it that the relevance of Aboriginal significance in that location would be diminished if the

community land category was changed. At an onsite meeting held with key Aboriginal stakeholders to discuss the proposed changes, a smaller area was presented by some participants as an indication of what may be supported for categorisation. It was also suggested there has been a decline in the density of natural vegetation around the carpark and the proposed

increase would result in further degradation of the summit. Those in support of the increase suggested an expanded general community use footprint would accommodate a broader range of activities.

The relationship of the Summit Park with the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area (IESCA) was recognised and it was suggested that the Summit Park should be incorporated into the IESCA. It was also suggested that maps in this section are inadequate stating a single map displaying the E2 and SP3 zones with the existing area of General Community Use and the proposed area would be beneficial.

Section 3: Existing Uses and Structures

Feedback relating to Section 3 - Existing Uses and Structures was provided by 4 groups/organisations and 11 individuals.

Aboriginal groups and representatives suggested that infrastructure built with concrete did not support the cultural significance of the land suggesting concrete does not allow 'Mother Earth to breathe'. Alternative methods for building infrastructure with reduced impact was presented such as constructing buildings on piers and using gravel in a carpark. It was suggested that the current name 'Queen Elizabeth Drive' was culturally insensitive and should be renamed considering the Aboriginal significance of the site.

The ability for Mt Keira Road to cope with increased traffic was questioned, including emergency vehicles if mountain biking is permitted, and it was suggested that a traffic study be conducted. It was recommended that a series of safety measures are needed such as convex mirrors, unbroken double line, guard rails and 'beware of cyclists' signage. Concerns exist about the stability of Queen Elizabeth Drive with a request for the road to undergo a complete reconstruction to ensure safe vehicular passage.

Section 4: Value of the Summit Park

15 submissions made comments related to the values listed in Section 4 including 8 groups/organisations. The value associated with Aboriginal cultural heritage was presented citing that Mt Keira and Mt Kembla are sacred sites and should be protected. It was suggested Council should work with the Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council to manage and protect the cultural, scenic and environmental heritage values of Mt Keira.

The natural significance of the Summit Park was presented and that 'this must be the key factor in the management of the site and outweigh the temptation to incorporate high impact adventure seeking activities'. Quotes were provided from the Atlas of Living Australia data on number of life forms and plant species on Mt Keira coupled with the concern that increased visitation will have negative impacts for the sensitive locations. It was also suggested that the values in the draft PoM made it easy for Council to introduce the ropes course and mountain biking activities.

The potential recreation and tourism value of the site was also recognised. Feedback focussed on the perceived benefits of the Plan including tourism, economic benefits, regional opportunities and creation of an asset for the community. It was suggested the draft PoM provides an opportunity to create the Summit Park as valuable to our community, visitors, events and jobs

Wollongong has always been a manufacturing city. We need look forward and see new opportunities for employment and tourism'.

while building on the economic impact for the Illawarra. The opportunities presented in the draft PoM were seen as an opportunity for the region to 'embrace another means of tourism dollars and another outlet for the community to enjoy'.

A request was made that when assessing development applications for investment at Mt Keira Summit Park Council should carefully consider the economic benefits of growing the tourism sector. Further, assessments of DA's should occur in a timely manner and within the vision and planning principles of the plan.

Section 5: Vision

Submissions were received from 6 groups/organisations and 54 individuals commenting on the planning principles presented in Section 5 of the draft PoM.

In relation to the principle 'Respect', submissions stated their support towards respecting the wishes of the Aboriginal community. The majority of these submissions were respondents who attached a copy of the Mountain Bike Alliance letter with their comments which stated:

"I acknowledge that Aboriginal people are the original custodians of the Illawarra area, including Mt Keira and the surrounding escarpment. Any development needs to respect their wishes and cultural connection to the country where the Summit Park is located"

Other submissions requested Council work with the Aboriginal community regarding any changes to the draft PoM.

A comparison was drawn between Mt Keira and Uluru presenting

"as of 2019, tourists will no longer be permitted to climb Uluru. Mt Keira has been described by local Traditional Owners as the Uluru of the Illawarra escarpment. It seems disrespectful, that WCC would want to encourage intensification on Mt Keira, without the permission and inclusion of Traditional Owners".

Comments from five respondents aligned with the planning principle 'Conserve'. The conditional donation of land to Council for the purpose of environmental protection in perpetuity was presented as well as the desire to conserve the area rather than develop.

Section 6: Achieving the Vision

Section 6 of the draft PoM includes three areas: Permissible Uses and Developments; Prohibited Uses and Development and Management Strategies.

Permissible Uses and Developments

The draft PoM lists 17 permissible uses and developments. Comments were received regarding 14 of these uses.

270 comments were received about mountain bikes which are referred to in Permissible Use 3 – Improved track and trails. 240 (including 4 groups/organisations) provided positive comments on mountain bikes and 30 (including 10 groups/organisations) provided negative comments about mountain bikes on Mt Keira. Those in support of mountain biking suggested the tracks would be beneficial to promote healthy lifestyles and tourism and would increase safety for those currently using the site for mountain biking activities. It was also suggested that a clear connection and support of mountain biking should be made in the PoM. The submissions against mountain bikes cited reasons including the cultural significance of the site, the environmental impact the bikes would have and the impact on safety and parking. Submissions were received that presented concerns around the timing of the release of the POM and IEMBS and a lack of clarity about bikes on the Summit.

Mountain bike provides opportunities for social engagement, has health, well-being and economic benefits'

The biodiversity of the area is both precious and fragile. It must be prioritised and protected'

The value of the natural beauty, flora and fauna was also evident in feedback. It was suggested to identify the presence of threatened species and better define potential threats and that animals and environment should be the primary focus and recreation and increasing visitor numbers second. Indigenous education opportunities were supported with suggestions to include a facility for indigenous education and

to make Mt Keira into a storytelling cultural hub. There was both support and opposition to a gondola. Those in support suggested it would provide a great adventure tourism attraction. The need to consider parking and public transport services and connections was presented. Suggestions were made to about the toilets including provision of more toilets and change tables in both male and female toilets. It was also presented that the current septic system creates high-nutrient effluent which alters the surrounding forest and has a degenerative effect on native species. It was suggested that the toilets be pumped-out or composting toilets introduced. It was suggested that the current container café should be removed and that a permanent restaurant be built with consideration to making it eco-friendly. Signage was discussed including installation of a large 'Hollywood' style billboard and the need for wayfinding and informative signage. A high ropes course was included in the draft Concept Plan that accompanied the draft PoM. Ten submissions mentioned high ropes, including 7 groups/organisations. The majority did not support high ropes on culturally significant land, with some suggesting Mt Keira was a biodiversity hotspot and this, rather than high ropes, should be a priority. One organisation supported high ropes. Two submissions suggested more should be included to entice visitors to the Summit including guided tours that focus on the history of the mountain and on the flora & fauna, while two suggested large events are not suitable.

Feedback included the importance of working with the Aboriginal community when making decisions about the Summit Park.

Prohibited Uses and Development

Four submissions mention the prohibited uses listed in the draft PoM. One group submission agreed with the three activities listed as prohibited in the draft PoM. One respondent wanted dogs on leads to be permitted in the Summit Park and two submissions thought large scale gatherings in a bushland setting should be added to the prohibited uses. These two submissions thought the prohibited uses should be more robust.

Management Strategies

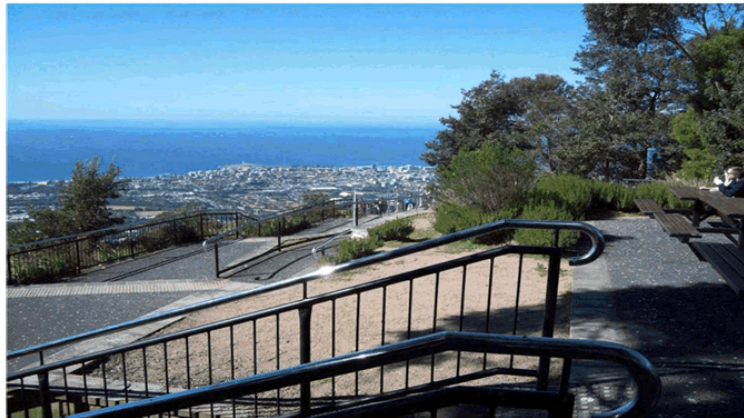
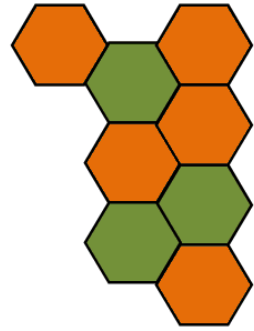
Submissions were received requesting the action “continue to contribute to the investigation on the feasibility of, and development of a consistent approach to, mountain biking across the Illawarra Escarpment” be removed. It was recommended that if this section was to remain, the Aboriginal Community should be added for consultation.

It was requested that Council jointly manage Mt Keira Summit Park with members of the Aboriginal Community, involving traditional owners in decision making rather than as a stakeholder group. It was also suggested that the site be solely managed by Aboriginal community. It was suggested Council to manage Mt Keira in accordance with the Burra Charter, a set of principles that have been adopted to create a nationally accepted standard for heritage conservation practice, rather than to “seek to avoid those obligations by re-categorising the status of the land in the way proposed in the draft PoM”. It was suggested that a proper assessment of cultural sites to be undertaken prior to any development and that all sacred and cultural sites be avoided in all developments.

Comments on extending the exhibition period

The original exhibition period ran from 30 October to 10 December 2018. The closing date for submissions was extended to 21 December 2018 following requests from the community.

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Report on Public Hearing

Draft Plan of Management for Mt Keira Summit Park.

Prepared by Martin Bass, Independent Chair. November, 2018.

Martin Bass Consulting

Background and Context

Mt Keira Summit Park occupies 9.4 hectares at the top of Mt Keira about 10 kilometres north-west of 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 a line of steep slopes and cliffs bordering the Wollongong coastal plain.

Mt Keira Summit Park is owned and managed by Council and is a natural area annex of Wollongong Botanic Garden. The surrounding slopes are managed by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and form part of the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area.

The boundary between the Council Summit Park and the NPWS land is the cliff top. The Council-owned Summit Park has two land classifications under the *Local Government Act 1993*:

1. The area currently housing the Communications Tower is classified as Operational land; and
2. The balance of the site is Community land which is further divided into two community land categories:
 - I. The area where the former restaurant/café was located is currently categorised as “General Community Use” which is covered by a Generic Plan of Management.
 - II. The remaining community land is currently categorised as an “Area of Cultural Significance”. Under the Local Government Act 1993, this categorisation requires a site specific Plan of Management to guide appropriate use of the site.

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 the 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. 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.

The Mt Keira Summit Park currently has two zonings under the Wollongong LEP 2009:

1. The area occupied by the Communications Tower, former restaurant/café, picnic area and northern lookout is zoned SP3 Tourist
2. The balance of the Council land is zoned E2 Environmental Conservation.

The surrounding Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area, managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, is zoned E1 National Parks.

The Plan of Management is a statutory document which outlines how Wollongong City Council will manage Mt Keira Summit Park into the future. The draft Plan will guide revitalisation and sustainable management of the 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.

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Public Hearing Process

The public hearing was held at 6.00pm on 21 November 2018 to provide communities of Wollongong with an opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification and provide comments regarding the draft Plan of Management for the park.

The hearing was held at Wollongong Council's Administration Building, 41 Burelli Street, Wollongong, and was organised in accord with relevant provisions within the Local Government Act (1993) and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979).

The public hearing commenced with a brief presentation by the Chair, providing an outline of the conduct of the hearing process. This was followed by briefings by the two Council representatives to provide additional background and context regarding the draft Plan of Management (ref Appendix 1). These presentations were followed by verbal submissions from community members present at the hearing. A record of these submissions form the latter part of this report.

Attendance

The public hearing was attended by 29 members of the community. Wollongong City Council was represented at the hearing by Vanni De Luca, Manager Environment and Conservation Services Wollongong City Council, and Alistair Henchman from TRC Tourism, a consultant who developed the draft Plan of Management in collaboration with the Council. Martin Bass acted as Independent Chair of the hearing.

Public Hearing Submissions

The following is a record of all verbal submissions presented by community members in attendance at the hearing. Where appropriate, Council staff provided responses and clarifications to points raised in verbal submissions.

NOTE: At the commencement of the meeting the Chair clarified that, despite the likely level of interest amongst participants in mountain biking activities on land managed by Council and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) on Mt Keira, Council representatives would be unable to speak on behalf of NPWS in regard to any questions relating to mountain bike activities on NPWS land.

Submission 1: What is Council's policy on the use of drones in the area?

Council response to Submission 1: Unsure of Council's approach to drones – this question will need to be taken on notice

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Submission 2: Looking at the Plan of Management, there is a lot of jargon but not much detail. What is Council's approach to mountain biking on the summit?

Council response to Submission 2: The Plan of Management is effectively a rule book that tries to draw a balance between flexibility for future suitable uses and regulation. Only uses that are permitted uses identified in the Plan of Management can be considered

Submission 3: NPWS maps show mountain biking trails on land within the Summit Park. Why is this?

Council response to Submissions 3: Council has conducted extensive consultation with Aboriginal communities in the process of developing the PoM. Those communities have highlighted that Mt Keira is part of a network of local sites with great cultural and historic significance – Mt Keira and other sites within this network are referred to Grandmother Mountain, Grandfather Mountain and the Five Islands. Local Aboriginal communities expressed their strong concerns about mountain biking activities on such sacred land. In acknowledgement of this, Council has removed the beginners trail from the Summit Park in the Landscape Concept Plan. NPWS has removed this trail from its maps also, but text remains in the written documentation pending finalisation of the draft exhibition.

Submission 4: If Council proposes any particular uses in the park, are these uses included in the Concept Plan?

Council response to Submission 4: Council lists all permitted uses in the Plan of Management. The next step for each permitted use is the development of detailed designs and consultation/approval processes should they progress.

Submission 5: If a commercial operator approaches Council with an idea for an activity in the park, will Council give the idea consideration?

Council response to Submission 5: Yes, however any commercial activities proposed by operators need to demonstrate compatibility with the PoM and be subject to further community consultation including a Development Application if required.

Submission 6: Has Council considered the placement of any medical equipment within the park? The site is quite isolated and equipment such as a defibrillator may be good to have in the park.

Council response to Submission 6: This is a good suggestion and Council will give it consideration.

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Submission 7: A great concern to communities in the vicinity of Mt Keira is what is or isn't being done to reserve the vision for the park. There is constant antisocial behaviour in the area such as burnt out cars, vandalism and dangerous driving.

Submission 8: Council has done a safety audit of the area with Police and other services. One recommendation was the installation of CCTV to deter anti-social behaviour and assist with Police investigations. There is currently a CCTV operating proposal open for public comment which can be viewed on Council's website.

Submission 9: Is there any provision for volunteers in the Plan of Management? The local community has been active in clean-ups of the park and surrounding areas.

Council response to Submission 9: Yes – volunteers are acknowledged and included in the Plan.

Submission 10: What is the 'change of tenure' referred to in the Plan of Management?

Council response to Submission 10: Tenure refers to management of the land. Some land on Mt Keira is managed by Council and some by NPWS. Any change of tenure in relation to a piece of land means a change in responsibility for management of that land.

Submission 11: What is the meaning of 'economic sustainability' in the Plan?

Council response to Submission 11: Any commercial activities proposed for the site need to be assessed for their economic viability in the long term, so that any outlay by Council for infrastructure is based on knowledge of the ongoing costs and benefits for the community.

Submission 12: The area should be left undeveloped for walking and other similar activities. We should all respect the significance of the land to Aboriginal communities. A letter written by Keith Muir (see Appendix 2) in relation to an earlier proposal expresses these concerns well.

Submission 13: Mountain biking has totally degraded parts of the park – it should be restored and left undisturbed.

Submission 14: Are there any current proposals for third party commercial uses in Summit Park?

Council response to Submission 14: There has been a recent proposal for a mobile zoo. The proposer has been advised to lodge the idea as a submission in response to the Plan of Management as a starting point.

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Submission 15: The Plan of Management is quite a high-level document. It may be useful to inform the community of what it costs to maintain the park – outline what is the current funding for the park, any current commercial uses proposed, current and potential new funding sources and what plans there may be for addition of power, water, sewer and similar things.

Council response to Submission 15: The Plan of Management clearly lists all permitted uses and Council has processes to consider all proposals for commercial and other uses in the future. Council worked for many years to get the kiosk established in the park and there is now potable drinking water. A permanent power supply is currently under construction. Funding models do not form part of the PoM. Proposals are received and reviewed individually on merit. The Plan of Management provides a vision for the area and a rule book for uses of the land, by which proposals can be assessed for suitability.

Submission 16: It would be good to include details in the Plan of Management about the cultural significance of the site to Aboriginal communities to facilitate a better understanding of this.

Council response to Submission 16: It is difficult for Council to appropriately articulate the deep cultural significance of the land to Aboriginal communities. There is some information about this in the PoM and at the park that visitors can refer to. It is an area with vast potential to improve understanding, and is something the PoM seeks to improve.

Submission 17: Mountain bike groups are not trying to ruin the park. There are plenty of good examples around in Victoria and Tasmania, of mountain biking activities that are well managed in sensitive locations. The presence of mountain bikers may also deter any antisocial behaviour by others.

Submission 18: It is difficult to truly understand the cultural significance of a site to other groups or communities – there is a need for communities to just accept that some areas have this significance.

Submission 19: Many others also have a strong connection with this land.

Submission 20: The NPWS management plan for the area proposes 82 km of mountain bike trails along the Illawarra escarpment.

Submission 21: Does the Plan of Management allow for abseiling?

Council response to Submission 21: All abseiling activities beyond the cliff edge would occur on NPWS land. There needs to be some consideration given to unstable cliff faces. Access through the Park to abseiling areas is permitted.

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Submission 22: Is the Botanic Gardens annex identified in the Plan of Management?

Council response to Submission 22: Yes.

Submission 23: How do we integrate surrounding attractions with Summit Park? While mountain biking happens on NPWS land, access is via Council land. Don't we need to integrate these aspects?

Council response to Submission 23: Cyclists can use the Public Road. Links to walking and off road tracks through the broader escarpment would be permissible but needs more detailed resolution.

Submission 24: If you can't drive up and park, you can't mountain bike, get coffee, etc.

Council response to Submission 24: The Plan of Management does acknowledge the linkages between mountain bike trails and broader networks – access roads.

Submission 25: Is the beginners trail in or out of Summit Park?

Council response to Submission 25: As mentioned earlier due to the cultural sensitivity of the site to Aboriginal communities, it has been removed from the concept plan. The plan of Management acknowledges the use of the existing road by mountain bikers for access to NPWS land and trails.

Submission 26: It seems that the beginners trail has been taken out of the maps but is still being considered.

Council response to Submission 26: Based on recent Aboriginal consultation, it is not proposed within the Summit Park but consideration will be given to integration between the park and surrounding trail network to enable access. This amendment has been made to maps, but not yet in the written documents.

Submission 27: In management of its land, NPWS focuses on more intensively used areas. It's hard to manage land in isolation of all other activities. How can Council manage Summit Park properly when 99 percent of activities are out of your control? The Plan of Management falls short as it doesn't address this. Summit Park is the access point for many uses that Council prohibits on its land.

Submission 28: Council is walking away from the difficult issues. Summit Park is a crucial part of mountain biking and other activities on NPWS land.

Submission 29: NPWS already has a Plan of Management for their land on Mt Keira, as part of the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area.

Martin Bass Consulting

Submission 30: Who is running the meeting on November 24?

Council response to Submission 30: The meeting is an information session and Council and NPWS will be there. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information so that people can make submissions with a greater understanding of plans for the area.

Submission 31: Consideration has to be more than just the summit. It is all connected – Mt Keira, Mt Kembla, etc.

Submission 32: There are good examples around of good land use integration to refer to – Mt Wellington in Hobart is a great example. There is untapped potential here.

Submission 33: There was a very successful café/kiosk previously in Summit Park that was removed. It needs to be restored to provide food and dining facilities for visitors.

End of verbal submissions and discussion.

NOTE - One written submission was presented to the Chair at the close of the meeting. This submission is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

The Chair thanked all present for their submissions and the hearing closed at 7.20pm.

End of report

Appendix 1.



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Mt. Keira Summit Park Draft Plan of Management

Public Meeting

**Independent Chairperson:
Martin Bass**

**Wednesday 21 November
2018**



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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Public Meeting Process
- Presentation of Draft PoM
- Participation Guidelines
- General discussion/Comments/Questions
- Summary of Issues raised
- Meeting Close



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The Public Meeting Process

- Sign In at the door - All present
- Presentation on the Draft Plan of Management for Mt Keira Summit Park - Wollongong City Council and Consultant
- Ask questions for clarity – all present
- General discussion to hear points of view and provide clarification on relevant issues – all present
- Summary of issues raised in general discussion - Chairperson
- Report on the issues raised at the Public meeting by the Chairperson included in a future report to Council on the results of the exhibition and community feedback of the draft Plans for Mt Keira Summit Park PoM - Chairperson



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Draft PoM Presentation

Vanni De Luca
Alistair Henschman

- Outline the background and process for development of a Plan of Management and Landscape Concept Plan for Mt Keira Summit Park
- Discuss key aspects of the proposed draft Plan of Management
- Timeframes



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What's happened so far?

- Council endorsed a Vision for Mt Keira Summit Park back in June 2016
- Extensive community and stakeholder consultation was undertaken at that time
- Formed the basis upon which the Plan of Management and Landscape Concept Plan has been drafted



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Council adopted Vision:



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



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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



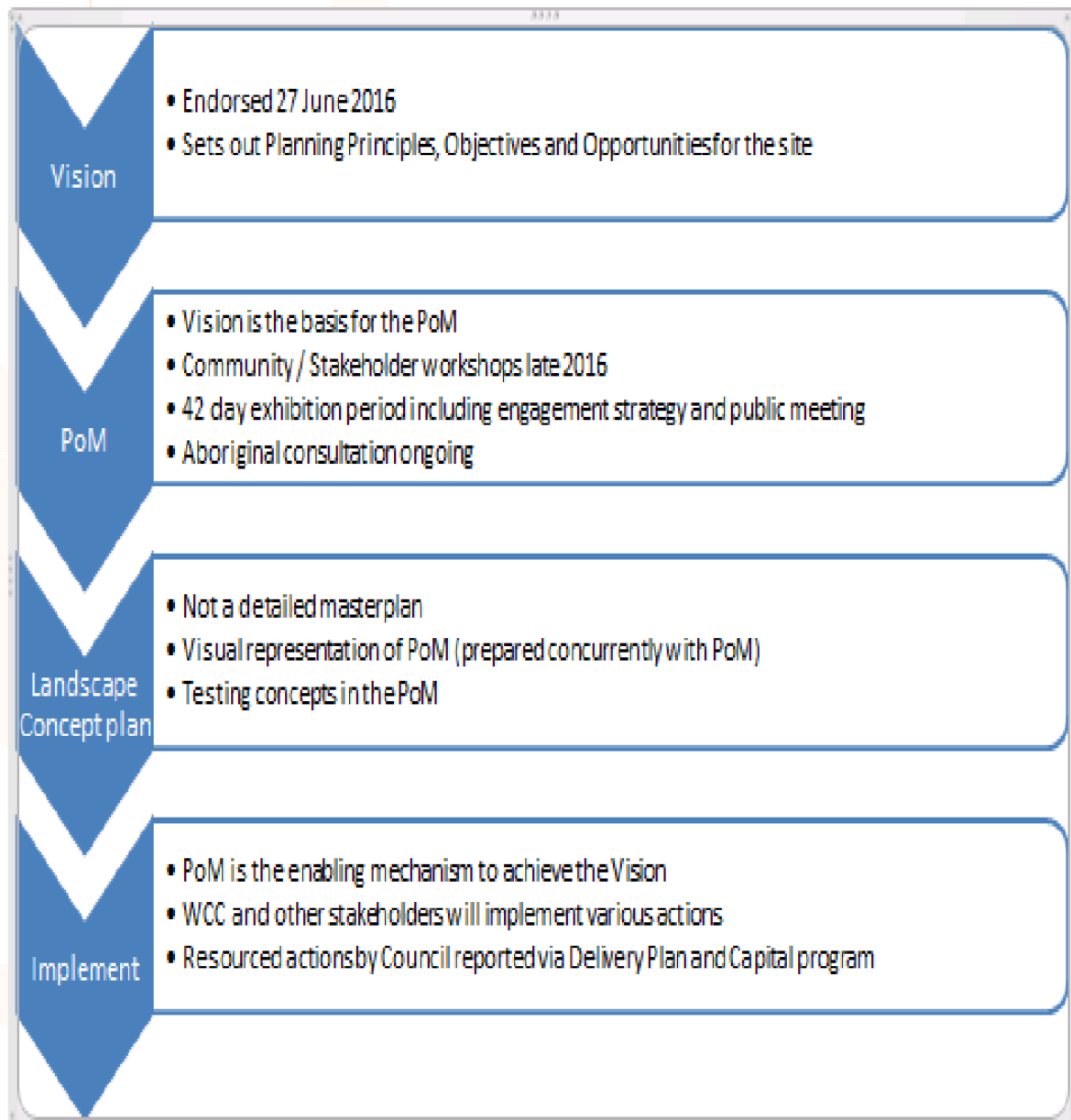
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What is a Plan of Management?

- Sets out the objectives and permissible uses for Council managed lands.
- Defines the category of community land
- Site objectives
- Description of current condition and use of the land
- Future permissible uses / developments for the site
- Scale and intensity of future permissible uses
- The means by which Council proposes to achieve objectives and assess performance
- Not all permissible uses will occur and not all will be undertaken by Council



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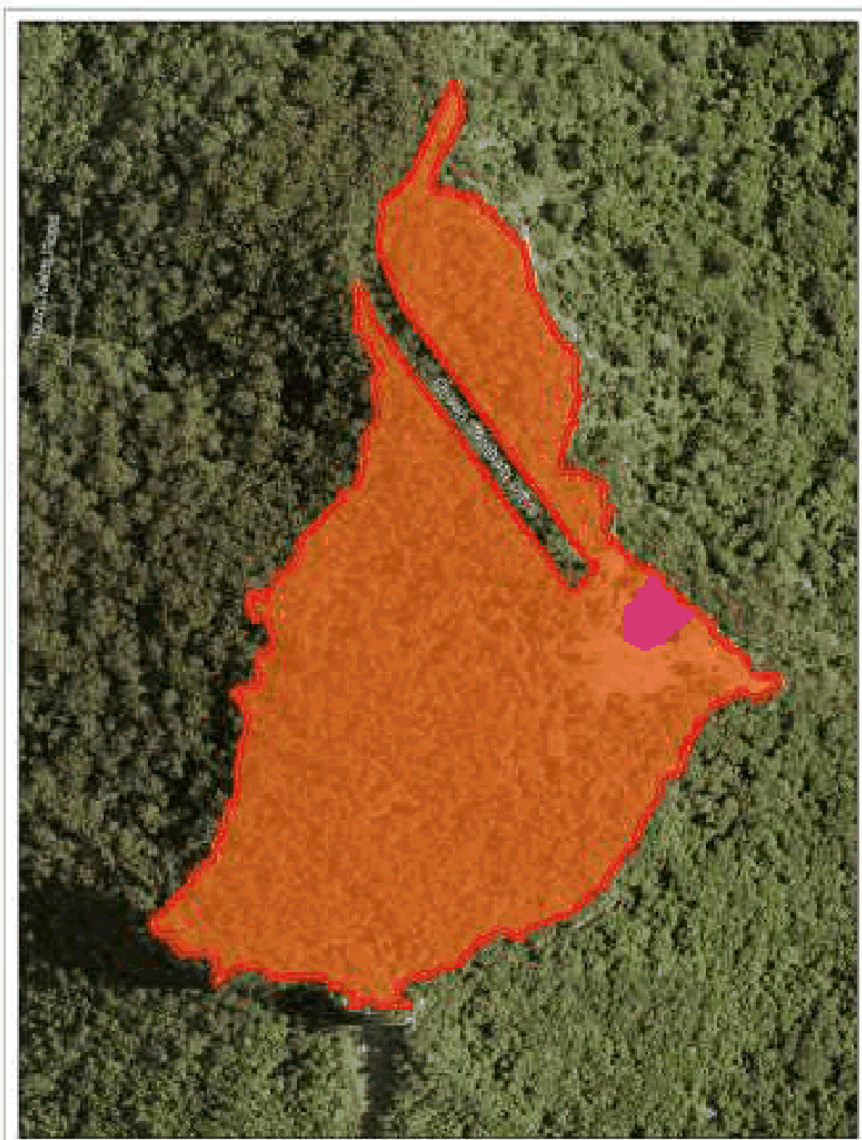


Site Locality

	<p>Land Use Zone - Mount Keira Summit Park Operational & Community Land</p>	<p>Drawn By: H 2049 Date: 17-10-2018</p>
	<p> Mount Keira Summit Park Operational & Community Land Open Space Boundary </p>	<p> Elected Areas Photography: 20-18 Mount Keira Council, FA Dept & Kool Landline </p>






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PGM Area Map Mt Keira



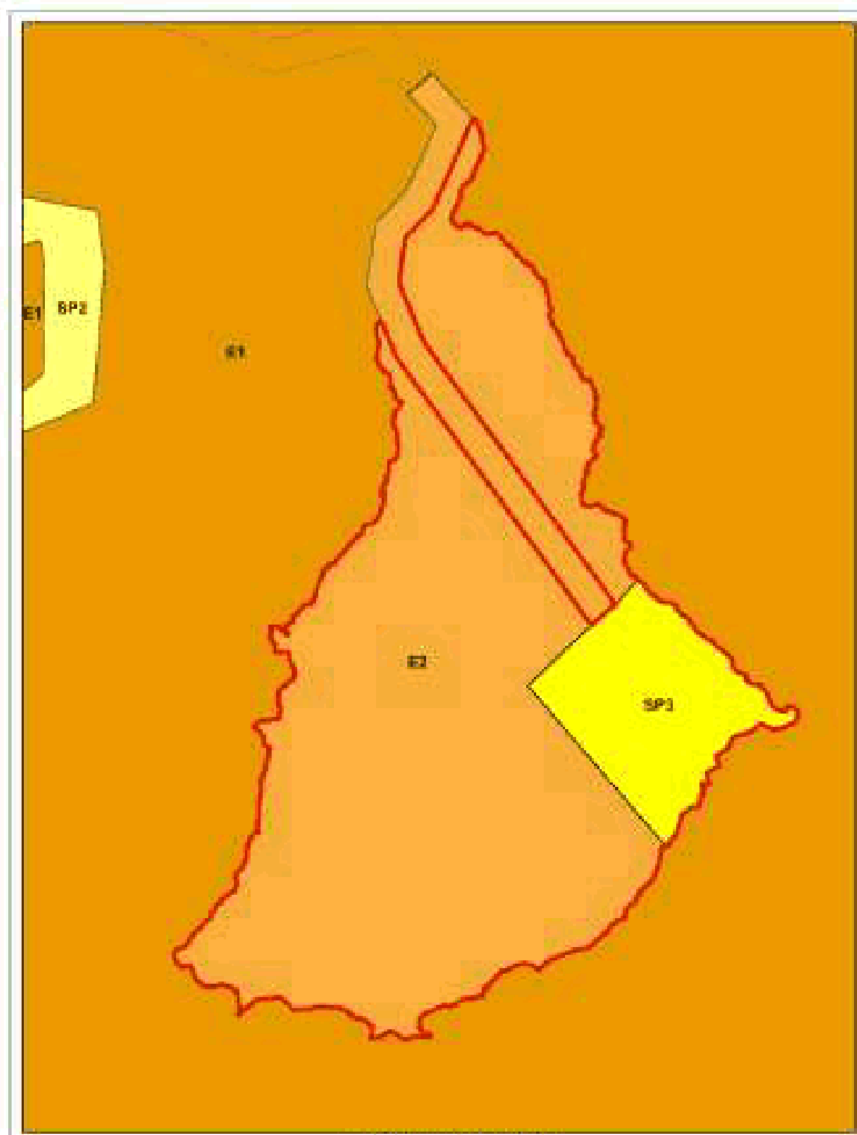
Mount Keira Summit Park

-  Subject Site
-  General Community Use
-  Cultural Significance

Drawn By: M. Jones	
Date: 17.09.2019	
Date of Aerial Photography: 02/18	
Mount Keira Summit Park PGM Area	
	



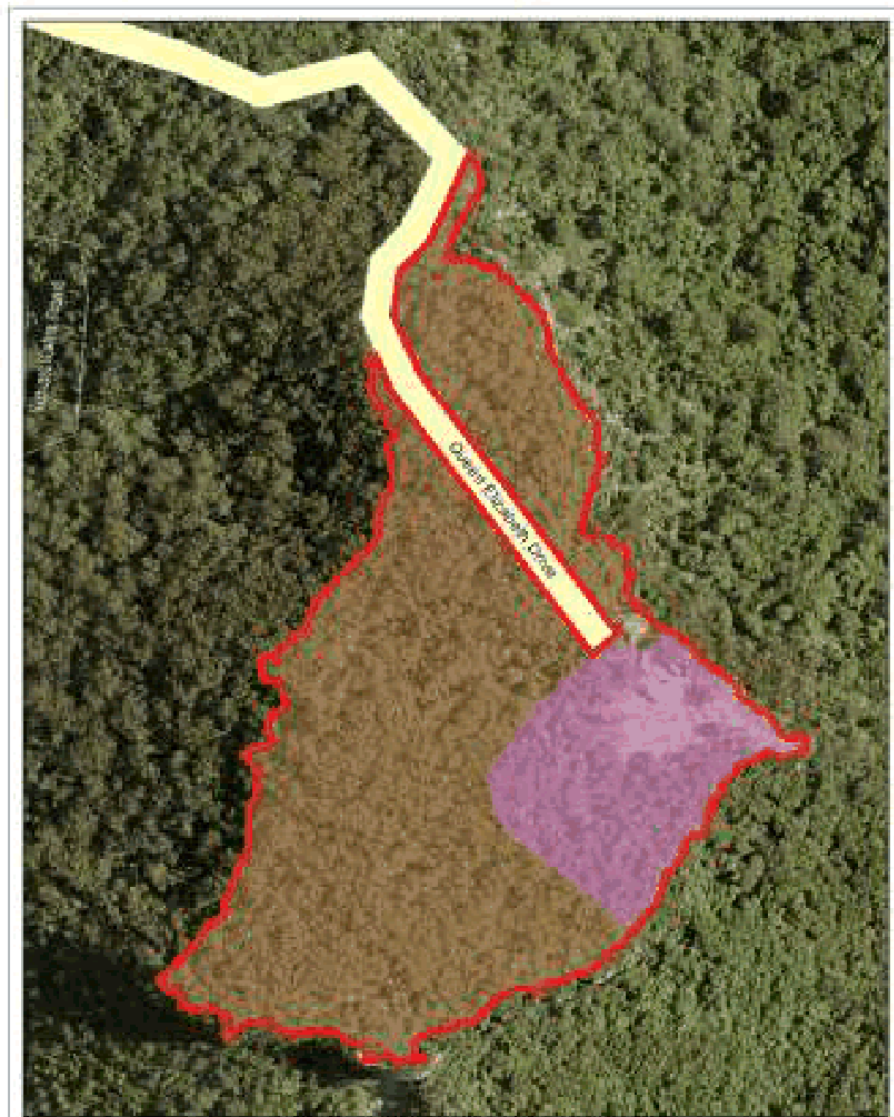
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	Mount Keira Summit Park LEP2009		Drafted By: N Jones Date: 07/08/13
	E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves E2 Environmental Conservation	SP1 Infrastructure SP2 Special Purpose	 Date of Aerial Photography: 2018 Mount Keira Summit Park (2018) Map 002
			Subject Site



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Community Land Categories Map Mt Keira

	Mount Keira Summit Park POM Area		Draft: By: M Jones Date: 17-12-2019
	Edge of Site	Area of Cultural Significance	
General Community Use	Mount Keira Road Reserve	Date of Last Printing: 19-12-19 Mount Keira Summit Park POM & Community Land Use	



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- In general higher intensity uses and major infrastructure and facilities will be located within the **General Community Use** area (pink area)
- 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 (brown area)



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Specific infrastructure and developments will be subject to:

- Community consultation; appropriate investigation of biodiversity; cultural and social impacts; relevant development applications and environmental assessments; the LEP and SEPP's
- Financial feasibility assessment
- Provision is made for other agencies, commercial businesses, education institutions, not-for-profit organisations and other groups to participate in the activation of the Park
- It permits Council to enter into casual, short, medium or long term leases or licences up to a maximum of 30 years for any permitted use or development



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What does the Plan allow for?

- ✓ Protection and enhancement of the Summit Park's values
- ✓ Improvements to scenic viewing infrastructure
- ✓ Improved tracks and trails (including high ropes course)
- ✓ Sustainable access infrastructure
- ✓ Picnic facilities
- ✓ Public toilets
- ✓ Food and beverage infrastructure and services





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What does the Plan allow for (cont'd)?

- ✓ Improved wayfinding and interpretation
- ✓ Art, sculpture and commemorative plaques
- ✓ Aboriginal cultural activities
- ✓ Education and learning
- ✓ Group tours and activities
- ✓ Events and functions
- ✓ Site services
- ✓ Flora and fauna management





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What does the Plan prohibit?

- Overnight camping
- Dog walking
- Hang gliding





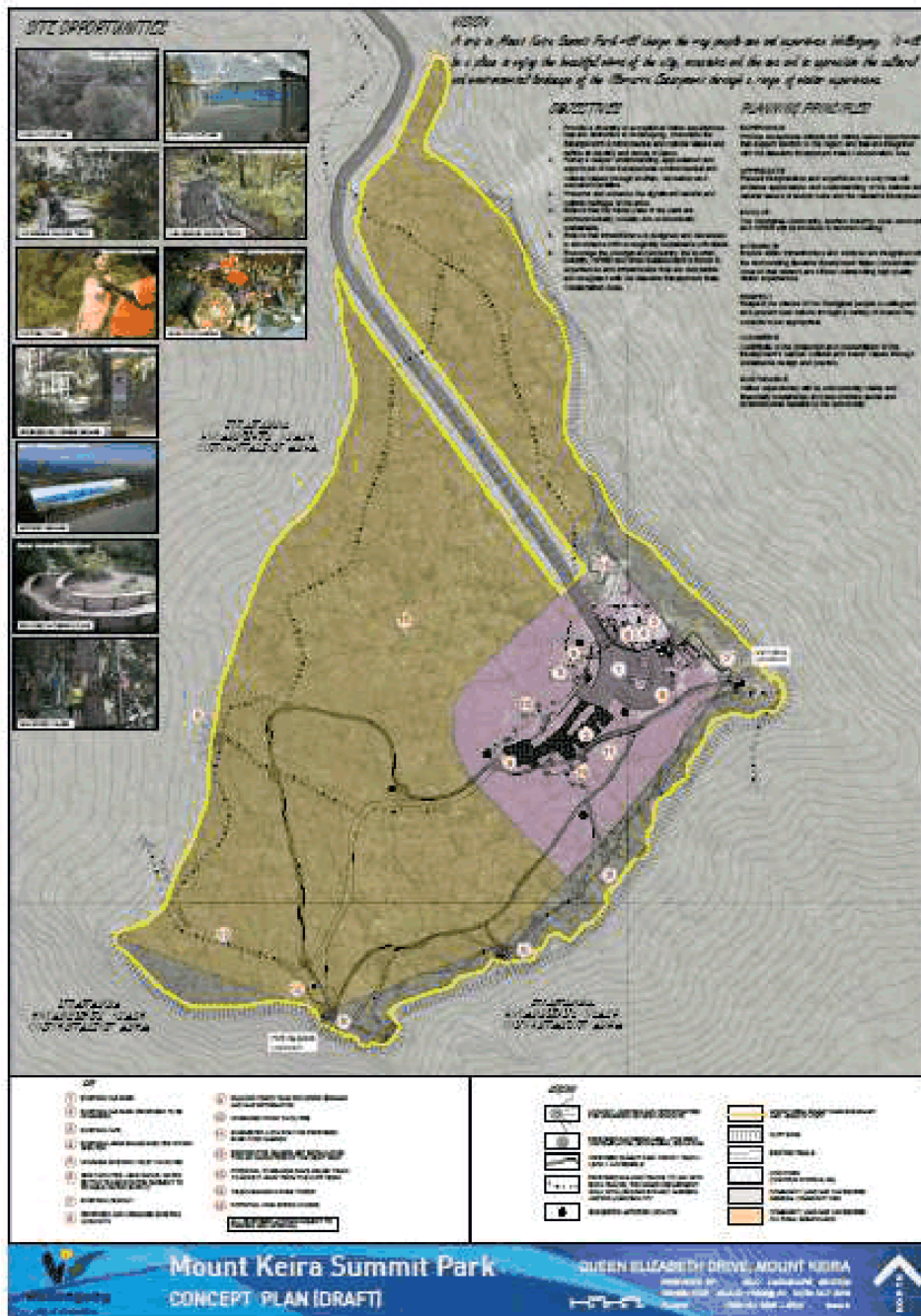
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Landscape Concept Plan

- Prepared concurrently with Plan of Management
- Not a detailed masterplan
- Visual representation of Plan of Management to test ideas and concepts
- On exhibition with the draft Plan of Management

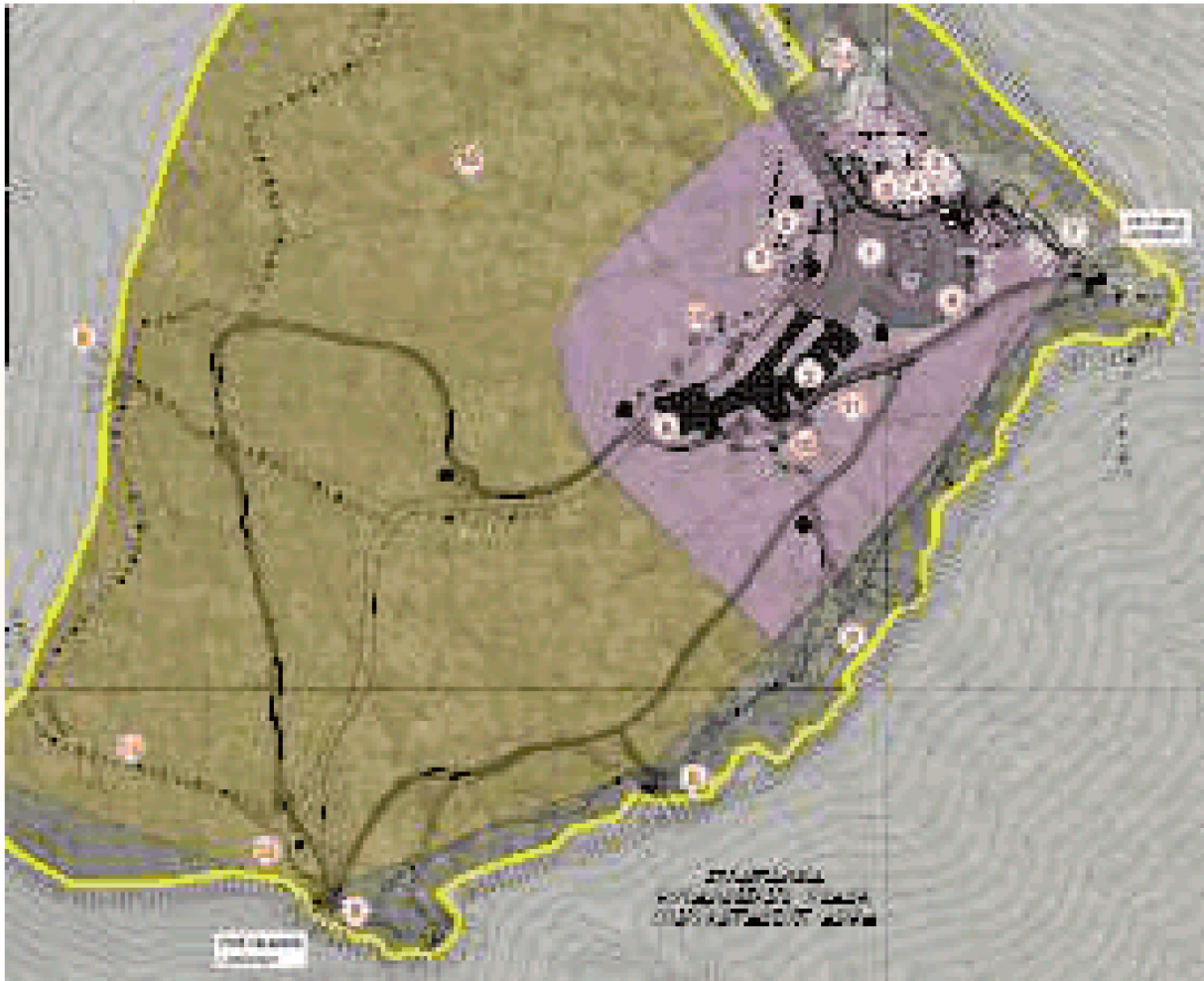


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When will the Plan be finalised?

- 42 day Plan of Management exhibition period closes 10 December 2018 written submissions via 'Have Your Say' website or hard copy to Council.
- Public hearing (tonight) 21 November 2018. All comments recorded.
- On-site information session this Saturday 24 November 2018, **10am-12pm**. Verbal and written comments received.
- Submissions report and final Plan of Management to Council early 2019.



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Participation Guidelines

- We will act together to ensure the forum is as constructive and informative as possible for all parties present
- We acknowledge at the outset that there is a range of differing views and opinions aired during this public meeting/hearing
- We respect the rights of others to voice opinions, ask questions and hear responses without interruption
- We will be clear and concise in asking questions and/or expressing our opinions and will give others equal time to ask their questions and express their points of view



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Questions and discussion



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Summary of Issues Raised

Brief overview of the meeting's
discussion points



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Meeting Close

Thank you for your interest and contributions!



Appendix 2.

1

Thursday 21st April, 2016
Mr David Farmer
General Manager
Wollongong City Council
Locked Bag 8821
Wollongong DC NSW 2500

Dear Mr Farmer

**RE: MT KEIRA ADVENTURE
PLAYGROUND “A MOUNTAIN OF
POSSIBILITIES ” 2016 UPDATE**

The Colong Foundation object to the vision document by Cardno (NSW/ACT) Pty Ltd that inappropriately spruiks a broad range proposed tourist infrastructure that might possibly be established on Mount Keira Summit Park without consideration of its environmental impacts.

These speculative proposals do not relate to or consider the ecological carrying capacity of the 9.5 hectare Mt Keira Summit Park. Cardno’s ideas are incompatible with the

reserve's primary purpose to protect flora and fauna. The vision report does not adequately consider the Illawarra Escarpment Strategic Management Plan, the objects of the E2 zone, the requirements for community land and the visitor management specified in the draft plan of management for the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area.

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness requests that Wollongong City Council gift the Summit Park to the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife for which the City may gain a tax-deduction. This reserve of community land was gifted to Council by Messrs E. Vickery and Son in 1925. The reserve must to be held in trust for conservation of flora and fauna in perpetuity. It is now appropriate that this land be added to the state conservation area to ensure the area's heritage and scenic values are not compromised by tourism developments envisioned by Cardno.

The Cardno report presents a dozen tourist development proposalsⁱ (perhaps seeking to maximise notional community support) with no real thought given to whether they are appropriate or viable.

These proposals might be appropriate for a Disneyland-style adventure park on privately owned farmland, but not for an **E2 zoned** community reserve surrounded by a State Conservation Area.

As you know, the **E2** zone prohibits major recreational facilities. The objects of the **E2** zone also require that the high ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic values of the Summit Park be protected, managed and restored. Further, the proposal for a chairlift would cause visual **blight** and is incompatible with the E2 and E1 zoned land on the Illawarra Escarpment.

Remarks by some political leaders that the Summit Park is a blank canvas or a derelict site have further **distorted** public discourse on

the future visitor use management for this public reserve. This Park is well loved and cared for, except by those who constructed very steep and illegal bike trails within it.

The Colong Foundation agrees with concerned local conservationists who have made media statements and representations to Council opposing Cardno's vision statement for Mt Keira. These objections are an appropriate response to Cardno's **speculative bid for tourism investment that would exploit the community's public land and degrade its heritage.**

Your Council must oppose commercial tourism proposals on community's public reserve. **Public reserves are not for major commercial purposes, as your recently adopted Local Environmental Plan states. Instead commercial tourism operators and investment speculators must be required to**

buy appropriately zoned private land on which to undertake development.

The proposals for the Summit Park should be **compatible** with the visitor management of the surrounding Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area. For example, **any proposal for mountain bikes should be on approved roads, including management roads.** It would **completely invert planning on the Illawarra Escarpment if Council lobbied the NSW Government for a change in management of the state conservation area to permit damaging commercial tourism development that is also partly on your Councils public reserve.**

The future visitor management of the **Summit Park should cater primarily for walkers and picnickers who are and will continue to be the primary users of the public reserve.** The encouragement of additional adventure-type uses onto this reserve will almost certainly **generate**

additional visitor conflicts. It is poor management to encourage cyclists if doing so results in greater walker-cyclist and picnic-cyclist **conflicts.** Further, the **illegal construction of bike** tracks in Summit Park and the State Conservation Area should lead decision makers to reject any proposal that benefit this interest group. Council must **stand up for nature**, not for those who construct illegal tracks in public reserves.

For the above reasons the Colong Foundation supports Friends of the Wollongong Botanic Garden and National Parks Association (Illawarra Branch) requests that Mt Keira Summit Park be protected from commercial tourism and any facilities that would have adverse environmental impacts.

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness requests to be informed of your Council's actions in relation to the Mt Keira Summit Park, any changes to this reserve's

management and any development applications in relation to it.

Yours sincerely,
Keith Muir
Director
The Colong Foundation for Wilderness Ltd

¹ The dozen development in the vision are

1. Zip line
2. \$25 million chairlift for bike riders
3. 25 kilometres of bike trails in the

Illawarra Escarpment SCA and Summit Park

4. A bike park
5. A café and function centre

6. A treetop adventure park
7. Segaway tours
8. A heritage mine
9. An indigenous village
10. Nature bird sanctuary
11. Ecolodge
12. Bobsled ride



NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report



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Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

Introduction

Period of exhibition



The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Wollongong City Council (Council) prepared the Draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy (Strategy) in recognition of the demand for a sustainable approach to mountain bike recreation on the Illawarra escarpment.

The primary emphasis of the Strategy is to deliver safe, sustainable recreation for a broad range of mountain bike riders consistent with the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area (IESCA) Plan of Management. It identifies a potential mountain bike trail network of 82.2 kilometres on the escarpment, notwithstanding the final design of the network, including detailed planning, economic and environmental assessments and management reviews.

Number of submissions



This public exhibition report summarises public feedback on the key themes raised in the public exhibition period, and outlines NPWS and Council's joint response to submissions.



Photo Mount Keira, Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area. Dan Irwin

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

Background

The demand for mountain bike riding and the construction of the illegal tracks on the Illawarra Escarpment has rapidly increased over recent years. The Illawarra escarpment presents a complex range of issues such as steep slopes, instability of soils, sensitive rainforest vegetation, Aboriginal cultural heritage values, complex land tenure boundaries and a history of community interest in conservation and recreation use.

In July 2015, in recognition of these issues, the then Minister for Environment endorsed a multi-agency stakeholder working group to develop a mountain bike strategy to identify sustainable mountain bike opportunities across the Illawarra Escarpment. The Working Group was appointed in 2015 and consisted of representation from Wollongong City Council, Destination Wollongong, Illawarra Mountain Bike Alliance, University of Wollongong and National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The Working Group engaged a consultant, Dirt Art who specialises in mountain bike track design and development. In 2018 a Feasibility Study was produced that included a mountain bike network across all land tenure of the Illawarra Escarpment. The report is commercial in confidence and was not released to the public.

The next stage of the project was to produce a Concept Plan that could be shared with the public for feedback. Dirt Art produced the Concept Plan with input from the Working Group. Based on the plans, Wollongong City Council and National Parks and Wildlife Service developed the Draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy which included information from the feasibility study and concept plan, environmental assessment and preliminary cultural heritage assessment.



Figure 1 Stages of the project

Consultation process

The Strategy was on public exhibition from 30 October 2018 to 21 December 2018. The original closing date of 10 December 2018 was extended by 10 days due to a high level of public interest.

The Strategy was available on the former Office of Environment and Heritage website and at multiple locations in hard copy.

Submissions

A total of 956 submissions were received.

A broad range of stakeholders provided feedback, including NSW Government, non-government organisations (e.g. Aboriginal stakeholders and environmental groups) and private individuals. The majority of submissions were made via the website. A large proportion of submissions were pro forma responses.

The high volume and varied sources of the submissions confirm a high level of interest in the proposal.

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

Overview of public exhibition responses

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Wollongong City Council (Council) reviewed all submissions. The submissions addressed a wide range of issues that have been summarised under six key themes for this report.

1. Trail network and scale of proposal
2. Infrastructure and services
3. Development of the Strategy
4. Impact on the community
5. Environmental and cultural heritage impacts
6. Future management

The summary is not intended to be exhaustive, however, all major comments and issues have been analysed and included.

Trail network and scale of proposal

Submissions from riders broadly supported the proposed network's ratio of beginner, intermediate and advanced trails. Advanced riders requested a higher volume of black trails, particularly in Stage 1, to address demand and deter the development of illegal trails. They also sought further information on whether the Mount Keira Summit Park would form part of the network. The large volume of supportive rider submissions suggests a high demand for mountain bike facilities for riders of all styles and abilities.

The safety, environmental and community benefits of well-designed and built trails was widely acknowledged and supported in feedback, to protect the environment, ensure the safety of riders and support competitive events. Rider feedback also encouraged trail design and standards that would accommodate large competitive events and withstand wet-weather use. Some submissions suggested linking Balgownie with Mount Keira and encouraged planning beyond Stage 3 of construction.

Most rider submissions accepted that some existing trails would be closed for safety or environmental reasons. More information was sought about how track closures and rehabilitation would occur.

Submissions opposing the Strategy objected to the scale of mountain bike tracks proposed. Some consider trails on steep slopes, rainforest, important wildlife habitat, remote areas or near walking tracks as unsustainable or unsuitable. Others suggested that mountain bike trails should be restricted to existing NPWS management trails in the reserve, including fire trails.

Feedback from walkers contend that the planned volume of bike trails far exceeds walking tracks. Some submissions objected to the density of trails at Mount Keira and suggest the scale should be reduced. Concerns were also raised as to whether illegal trail development would continue despite the investment in a formal riding network. Some submissions also suggested that alternative sites outside the state conservation area should be investigated.

Infrastructure and services

Submissions that both supported and opposed the Strategy raised concerns about access and amenities. This feedback highlighted gaps in the infrastructure and services required to support the proposed mountain bike network.

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

Access was raised as a major issue. Supportive submissions sought further information about public transport links, shuttle uplift services, and cycle lanes to alleviate demand for parking. Riders also requested ongoing use of public roads and fire trails for uplift, and suitable access for spectators. Emergency access must be considered in any proposal. Opposing submissions highlighted tensions in relation to parking, traffic and general congestion. This feedback suggested a lack of detail about how to manage these issues undermined the Strategy.

Submissions additionally flagged the need for amenities such as toilets, litter bins and visitor information at access nodes. Opportunities for camping and the development of a smartphone application, including trails maps and other information, were also suggested.

Development of the Strategy

Submissions that opposed the Strategy raised issues around the consultation process and its consistency with legislation and other NSW Government strategies. These submissions stated the Strategy is a product of mountain bike and commercial interests, with little input from other interest groups such as park users, neighbours, environmental groups and the Aboriginal community.

Some responses perceived the Strategy as inconsistent with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, the aims of the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area Plan of Management and Council's Mount Keira Feasibility Study. A few respondents raised concern about a potential conflict of interest on the part of Dirt Art, who were engaged by NPWS and Council to design the mountain bike concept plan and helped to develop the Strategy. Further information was sought on economic and environmental assessments to confirm the feasibility of the Strategy.

Impact on the community

There was significant support for the proposal given the social and economic benefits a mountain bike network would bring to the region. The most commonly cited benefit was the potential regional economic opportunities for tourism and associated businesses, including the creation of local jobs. Many submissions cited international and interstate examples of sustainable mountain bike networks and their positive impact in reviving local economies.

The health and recreation benefits were strongly advocated. A number presented anecdotes of significant personal gains in health and wellbeing due to mountain bike recreation. Supporting young people to engage in physical activity was also seen as a significant benefit, notably in submissions from parents and children who ride as a family activity.

Criticism focused on adverse impacts on, and potential conflict with, other park visitors and neighbours due to the locations and intensity of the proposed development. Respondents contend that the proposal would deter or displace visitors, such as walkers and fauna enthusiasts, and that mountain biking is unsuited to areas used for passive recreation and the appreciation of nature.

Feedback inferred that existing conflict between users would be exacerbated by the Strategy. Many objected to intersections with walking tracks and the proposed proximity of mountain biking and walking tracks. They argued that the final trail network should ensure the separation of walkers and cyclists. Issues such as noise, privacy, security, rider conduct and numbers, property values and enjoyment featured prominently. This feedback suggested a lack of detail about how to manage these issues undermined the Strategy's feasibility.

More consultation was requested to develop a more inclusive plan.

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

Environmental and cultural heritage impacts

Submissions supporting the Strategy maintained that formal mountain bike trails would produce better environmental outcomes, by deterring the proliferation and use of illegal trails. Some feedback also argued that the impact of mountain biking is low compared to other activities on the escarpment, for example, mining. Involving riders in the development and management of trails, thereby fostering pride and ownership, was seen as a positive way to boost compliance and protection of the environment.

Submissions opposing the Strategy cited the proposal's impact on plants, animals, ecosystems and ecological sustainability of the reserve. This feedback argued the Strategy itself creates an unrealistic expectation that mountain bike use is ecologically sustainable. They argued the Strategy does not account for the long-term impact of the proposed network (during the construction phase and ongoing) on the natural values of the reserve including wildlife and their habitats, vegetation, rainforest, bushfires, weeds, soils and slope stability. A few respondents noted that, in comparison with technical trails, climbing and flow trails have a high environmental impact.

Opposing submissions argued that the proposed trails rewards unauthorised mountain bike developments and the environmental damage caused at the expense of low-impact users. Justification was sought for the nature, scale and intensity of the proposal, given the small size and important natural and cultural values of the reserve. Public exhibition of relevant cultural and environmental assessments was requested.

Submissions that did oppose the Strategy identified potential impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage values. Responses from the Aboriginal community stated that adequate consultation did not occur and that the cultural significance of Mount Keira (Djera) and Mount Kembla (Djembla) was overlooked. A number of respondents, including Aboriginal groups, oppose any mountain biking on Mount Keira. This feedback sought increased compliance action against existing trails. More consultation was requested to ensure the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Submissions suggested that alternative sites outside the state conservation area should be investigated to mitigate environmental and cultural heritage concerns.

Some submissions also noted the existence and importance of mining heritage on the escarpment.

Future management

Submissions on the management of the proposed network sought clarity around governance, resourcing, compliance, delivery timeframes, management and maintenance costs.

Supportive submissions suggested that involving riders and local businesses in trail management would be necessary to manage trails and ensure compliance. Some cited intrastate examples where this approach operates successfully. Opposing submissions argued that self-regulation would not ensure compliance and that active policing and auditing of trails would be required, possibly including fines. Further information was requested about how the network will be managed and the roles of NPWS and Council.

A large proportion of submissions questioned the resourcing available to construct and maintain the tracks. Supportive submissions suggested potential funding sources, including user-pays arrangements, a non-profit partnership between NPWS, Council and users or via club events and competitions. Some submissions feared commercial management of the trail network would have negative outcomes for other users and the environment. Submissions from walkers argued that funding for the Strategy should be contingent on equal resources being allocated to walking tracks and other visitor facilities.

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

Opposing submissions viewed the Strategy as diverting resources away from other management activities and facilities. Others maintained that the upgrade, closure or rehabilitation of illegal trails should be costed first. The view that management resources need to be guaranteed up-front was expressed in many submissions. Many submissions held that mountain bike trails should not be funded until the NPWS is sufficiently resourced to locally manage its primary functions.

Submissions sought further information on the management of overcrowding, safety, incidents and liability, given the growing demand for mountain bike recreation in the region, high risk ranking of mountain biking and the safety risk to walkers and others.

Some questioned whether cessation of all mountain bike use on the escarpment was considered.

Management response

Trail network and scale of proposal

Delivering sustainable trails and servicing riders of all abilities are key goals of the Strategy. The final design of the network, including the scale, location and ratio of trails, is subject to detailed planning, economic and environmental assessments and management reviews. The aim of staged implementation is to allow potential impacts to be monitored and amended if needed. Capacity for events and the feasibility of all-weather trails will be addressed during the detailed planning and design stage.

NPWS and Council will continue to explore alternative trail locations, providing they meet sustainability, access and land ownership criteria. Existing vehicle access routes and NPWS management trails will also be considered. Cycling on fire trails is already permitted under the IESCA Plan of Management.

NPWS and Council consider that well-designed and built trails will deter continued illegal trail development and use. Trails that do not meet acceptable safety or environmental standards need to be closed noting closure and rehabilitation of trails is subject to funding availability. The identified network aims to avoid sensitive areas and walking tracks.

A walking track network of equal volume is proposed in the Illawarra Escarpment Walking Tracks Master Plan (NPWS 2006). Implementation of the Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy and the Walking Tracks Master plan is subject to funding and must satisfy cultural and environmental assessments.

Infrastructure and services

Council exhibited a Draft Plan of Management for Mount Keira Summit Park concurrently with the Draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy. Maintenance and upgrade of parking facilities (including drop off and pick up areas for buses and coaches, taxis and commercial operators), improved or new toilets, a demountable or permanent café or restaurant and food vans or pop-up food services were included items. The community feedback on the exhibition period will be reported back to Council.

Opportunities for improving cycle infrastructure links to train stations and nearby major attractors are being considered as part of Council's review and update of its Bike Plan. Mount Keira Road will continue to be maintained as a public road and is recognised as a popular cycling route. Cycling on fire trails is permitted under the IESCA Plan of Management.

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

Rider, spectator and emergency access will be provided for in the final network design.

Pending finalisation of the network design, NPWS, Council will develop visitor information and install relevant signage.

Development of the Strategy

The Strategy was developed by NPWS and Council. Input was provided through Governance and Working Groups consisting of NSW Government agencies, tourism bodies, mountain bike groups and landowners. Environmental consultants had also guided the development of the draft Strategy.

NPWS and Council developed a constraints map to inform mountain bike trail alignment (trail routes). The constraints maps drew on data from environmental and other studies on biodiversity, conservation assessments, environmental disturbance, soils and slope stability. The Strategy prioritises alignments that utilise disturbed areas and avoid known constraints. Steep terrain, areas with extreme soil erosion potential, lands prone to landslides, rockfalls or flooding, and areas of high conservation importance were avoided.

The Strategy was also informed by preliminary environmental studies, Council's mountain bike feasibility study and Dirt Art's concept plan. Dirt Art is a company that specialises in mountain bike trail design. Dirt Art was engaged by NPWS in accordance with NSW Government procurement guidelines.

The IESCA Plan of Management was approved in September 2018. It is a statutory document that provides for the development and implementation of a mountain bike strategy, subject to public exhibition of the Strategy and an environmental impact assessment.

The Strategy is consistent with the NSW *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

Impact on the community

The aim of staged implementation is to allow the impacts of the proposal, including conflicts with other park users and the community, to be monitored. Mountain bike use will not be formalised where conflicts with other values cannot be managed. Safety of visitors will be managed through physical separation of cycling and walking trails, maps and signposting, and design of trails, exits and intersections.

The final network design will provide for beginner and family trails up to intermediate and advanced trails. Strategies to manage visitor numbers, including parking controls, will be determined during the detailed planning and design stage. NPWS and Council consider that attracting a broad range of riders and involving riders in trail management will deter poor conduct by the minority.

The Strategy aims to minimise impacts on nearby residential areas. NPWS and Council will liaise with nearby residents if projects are developed in nearby areas.

Environmental and cultural heritage impacts

There is existing and growing demand for mountain bike recreation in the Illawarra. This is evidenced by the large number of supportive submissions and the proliferation of illegal trails. Prohibiting mountain bike recreation on the escarpment is not considered by NPWS and Council to be feasible. The primary emphasis of the Strategy is to deliver safe, sustainable recreation on the Illawarra escarpment. NPWS and Council consider that sustainable mountain bike recreation can occur on the escarpment and that sustainably-designed and built trails will provide better environmental outcomes than illegal trails.

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

The final design of the trail network will be subject to comprehensive environment assessment under Part 5 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (also known as a Review of Environmental Factors or REF). This assessment will assess the impact on community, cultural heritage, biodiversity, economic, slope stability and other impacts.

For environmental reasons, some types of trail and the use of machinery might not be acceptable in some parts of the state conservation area.

NPWS and Council acknowledge the cultural significance of Mount Keira (Djera) and Mount Kembla (Djembla) to Aboriginal people. NPWS will continue to explore possible partnerships with the Aboriginal community and alternative trail locations, providing they meet capacity, access and land ownership criteria.

Future management

The governance arrangements and roles of NPWS and Council in managing the trail network have not been determined. NPWS and Council are exploring all options, including ways to involve mountain bike organisations, local businesses and riders in trail management and compliance. Penalties for offences identified within national parks legislation and regulations apply to activities within the state conservation area.

The implementation of the Strategy and timing of the closure and rehabilitation of illegal trails is subject to funding.

NPWS and emergency response organisations manage emergencies and other incidents in accordance with established procedures, including Local Emergency Management Plans and NPWS guidelines.

Next steps

Stakeholder consultation

NPWS will continue to engage with affected stakeholders to finalise the Strategy. Once approved, the Strategy will be implemented in stages to allow the impacts of the proposal to be monitored. Implementation of the final Strategy is subject to available funding.

The Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Governance Group will continue, with membership to include NPWS, Council and Regional NSW.

An Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Advisory Group will also be established. Membership will reflect a broad range of business, risk and technical skills to provide advice on Strategy development and management approaches. Aboriginal stakeholders will be represented on this group. The Advisory Group will report into the Governance Group.

National Parks and Wildlife Service, Council and Regions NSW will invite representatives from Destination Wollongong, Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council, Illawarra Mountain Bike Alliance, Illawarra Escarpment Alliance, Illawarra Wingecarribee Alliance Aboriginal Corporation, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, National Parks Association, South 32, WaterNSW, Office of Sport and University of Wollongong.

Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy Public Exhibition Report

Assessment process and final Strategy

Before the strategy is finalised and works start, NPWS and Council must have completed:

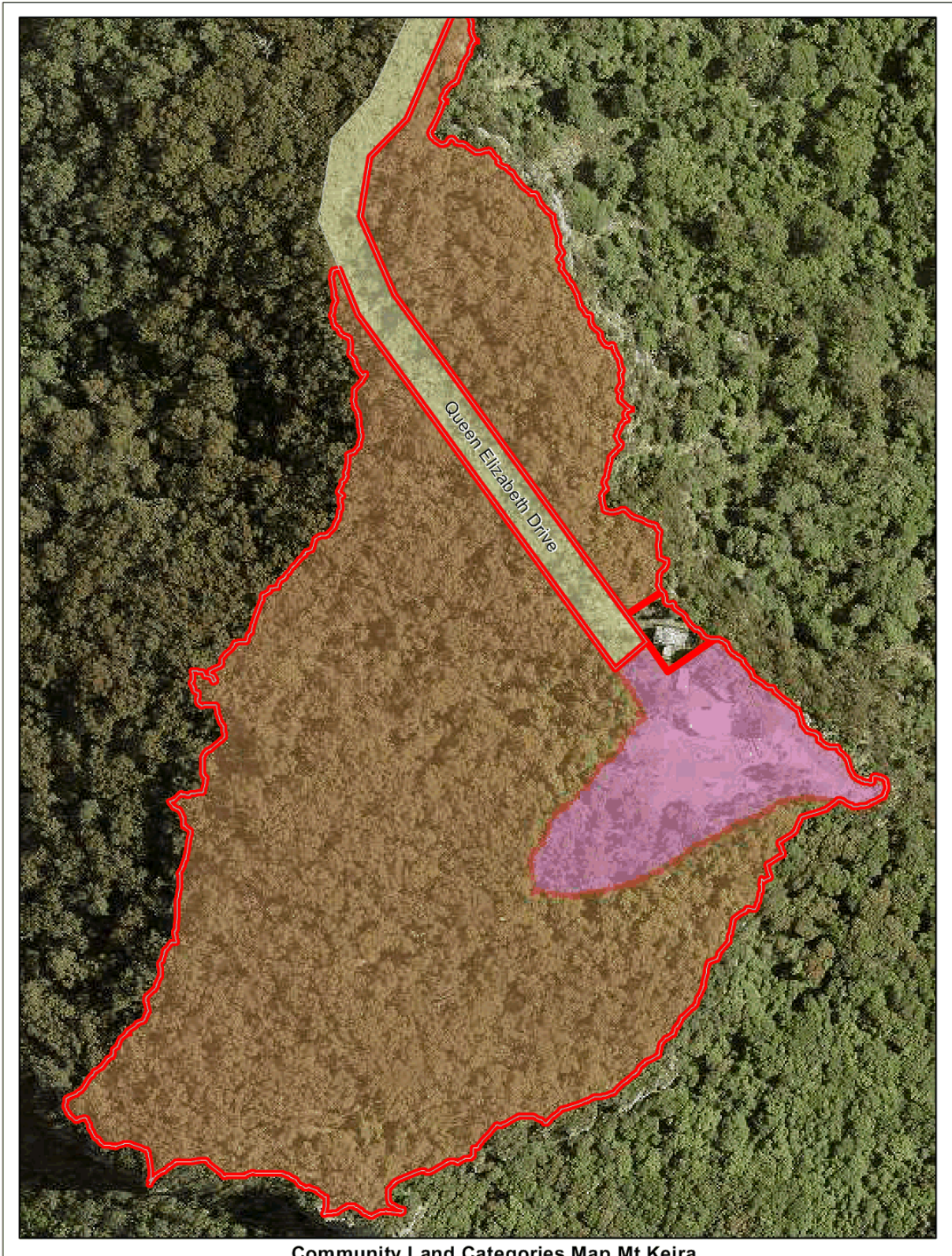
1. A comprehensive and detailed environmental assessment to determine the impact of the proposal when the proposed trail network is finalised. Activities within NPWS reserves are assessed under Part 5 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. The final design of the trail network is subject to this assessment and may be refined or changed to reduce the environmental impacts.
2. NPWS and Council need to determine the best operating model, given the trail network goes across both NPWS and Council land. The arrangements must properly address risk and maintenance of the trails and facilities.

Planning assessments of the final Strategy is subject to available funding.

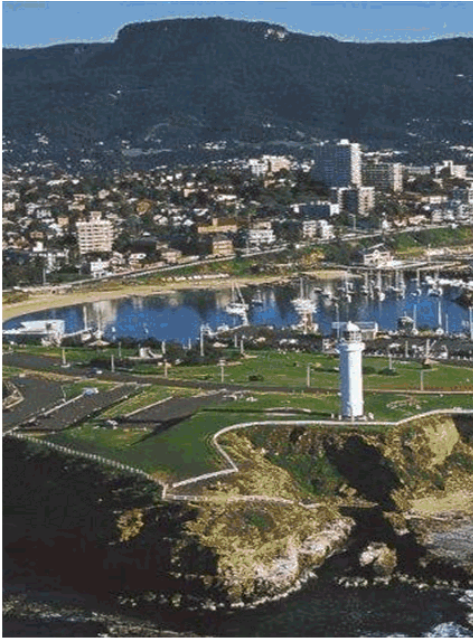
Work that is undertaken for the project will be accordance with NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework to ensure an equitable process is followed that guarantees the best outcomes for the community.



Figure 2 Assessment process



Community Land Categories Map Mt Keira



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

Images used in this Plan are courtesy of Wollongong City Council, Destination Wollongong and TRC Tourism except where otherwise indicated.

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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.

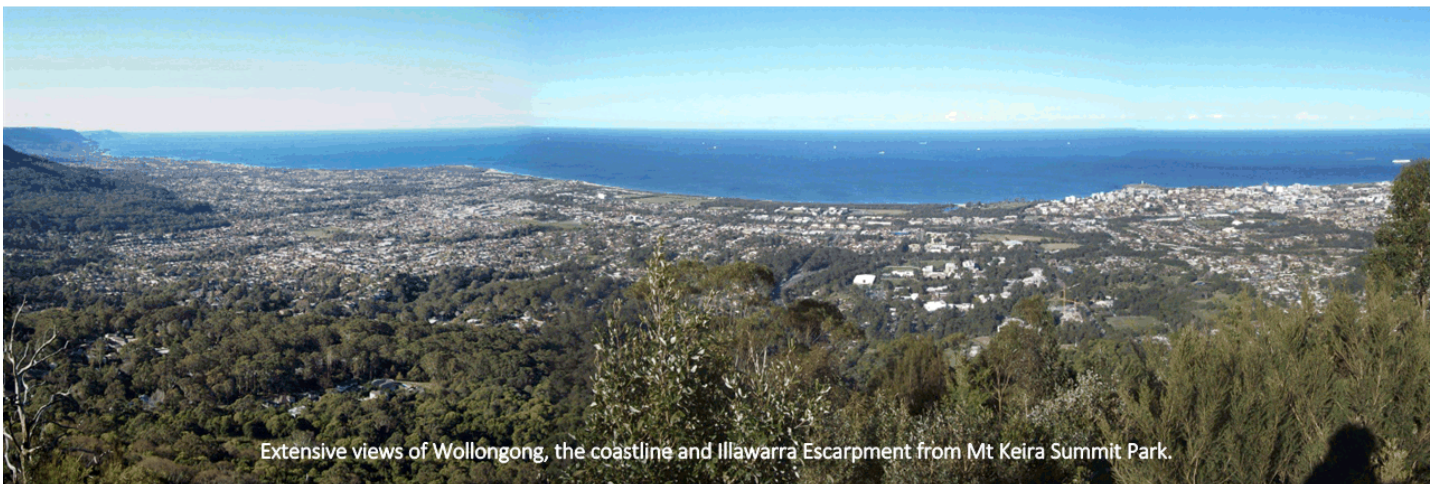
Mt Keira Summit Park, managed by Wollongong City Council as an annex to the Wollongong Botanic Garden, is Community Land under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

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
S. 36(2)(a) – identification of the category of community land. S. 36D(3)(a) – statement that the land is an area of cultural significance.	Section 2.1.
S. 36(2)(b) – identification of objectives with respect to the land 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	Section 6.2 sets out management objectives.
S. 36(2)(b) – identification of performance targets with respect to the land 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	Performance targets are identified for each action in the Implementation Plan in Table 4, section 6.2.
S. 36(2)(c) – identification of the means by which the council proposes to achieve the plan’s objectives and performance targets.	The Implementation Plan in Table 4, section 6.2.
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.	The Implementation Plan in Table 4, section 6.2.
S. 36(3A)(a) – description of the condition and use of the land and any buildings and improvements.	Chapter 3.
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.	Section 6.1, Table 3.

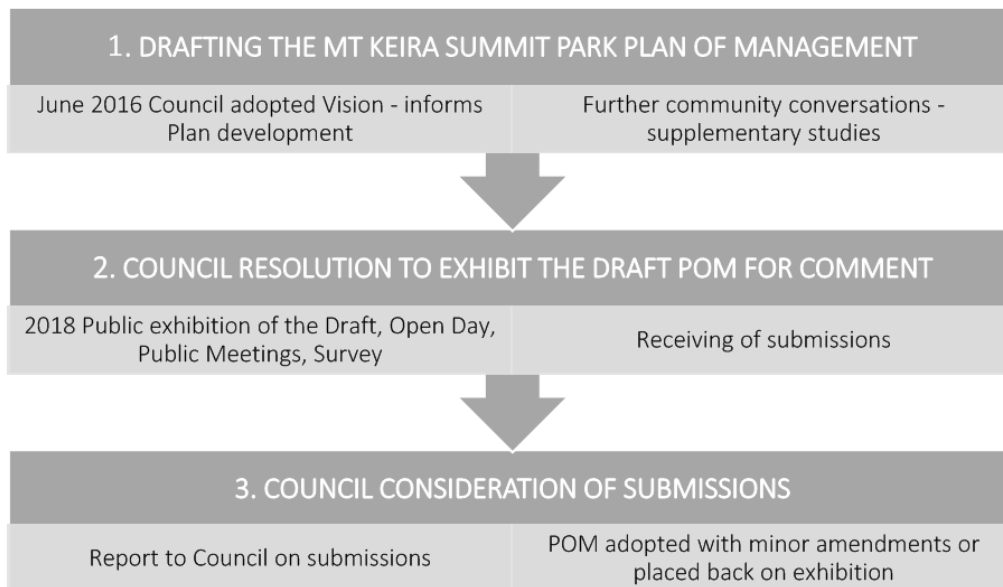
1.3 Making of the Plan of Management

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.



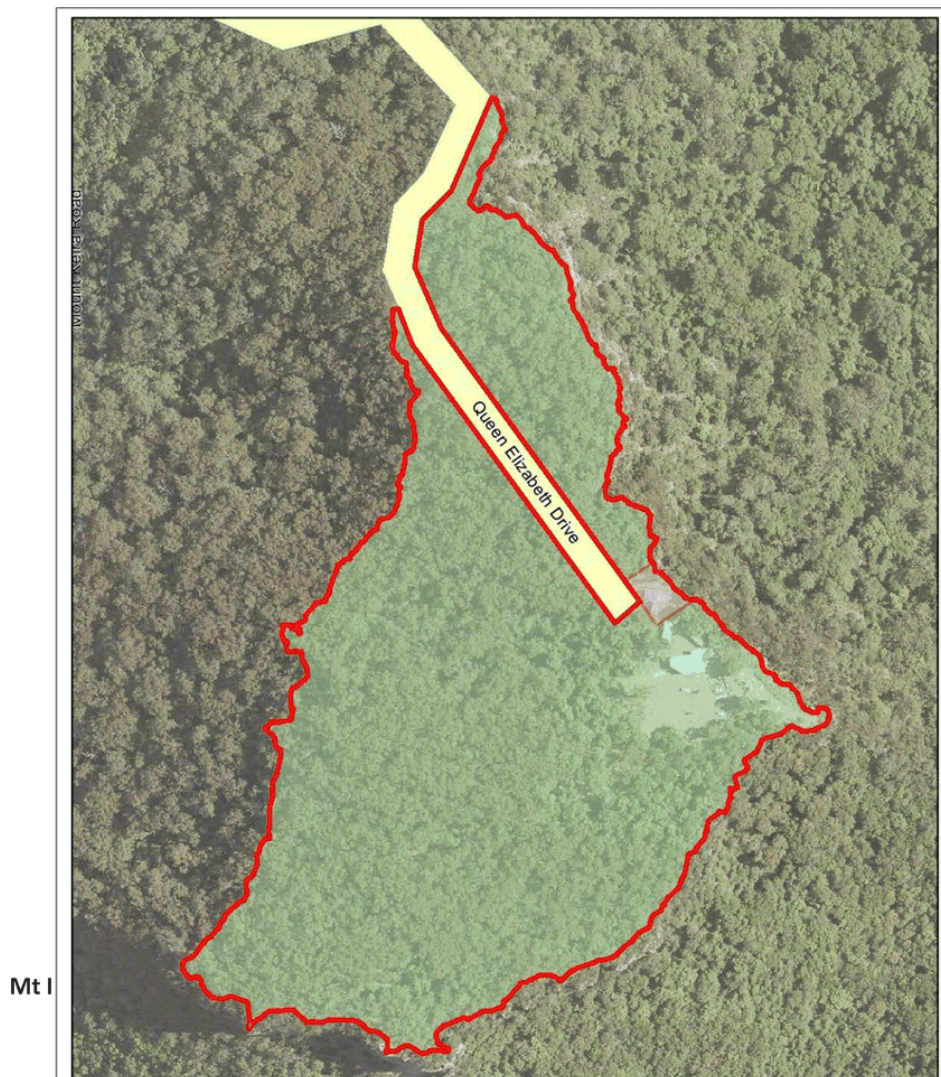
2 Planning Requirements

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:

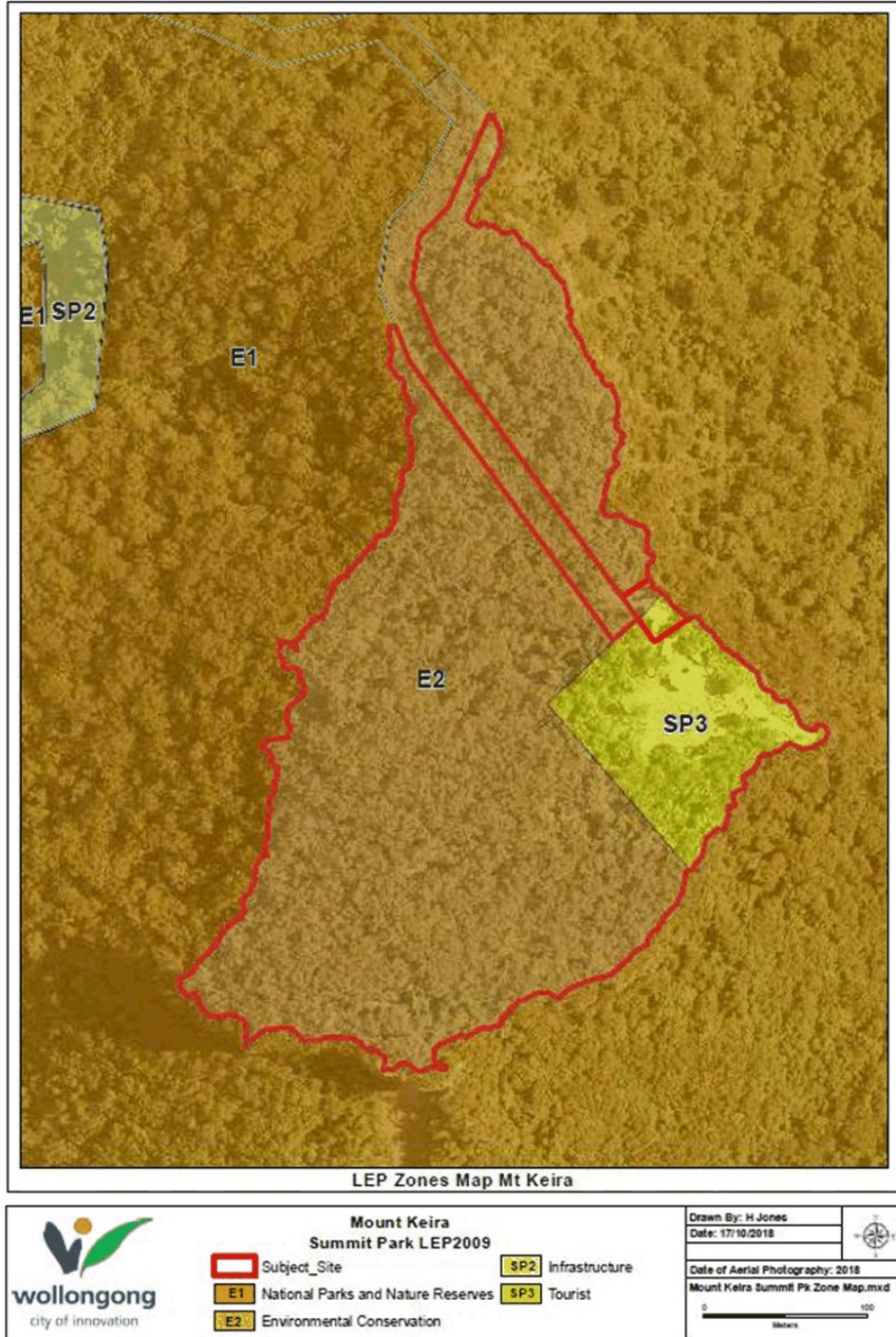
- land use which protects and enhances escarpment lands which have special conservation, cultural and historical, aesthetic or scenic qualities
- active management to enhance watercourses and their riparian buffer areas
- active management to conserve areas that contain high biodiversity values
- conservation 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 by specific uses that are permissible.

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.

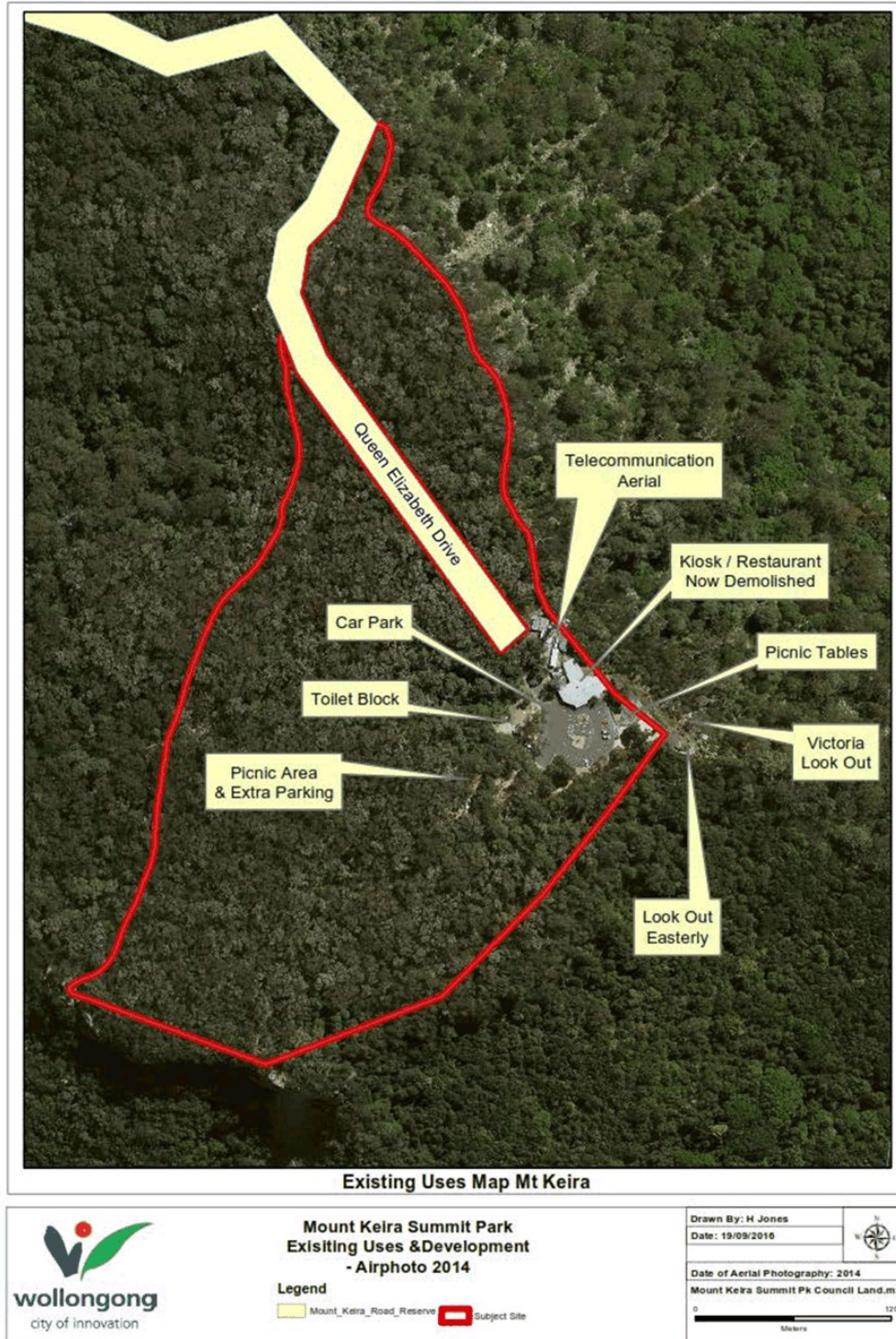


'Six Daughters of the West Wind' sculptures commemorating Mt Keira's Aboriginal significance



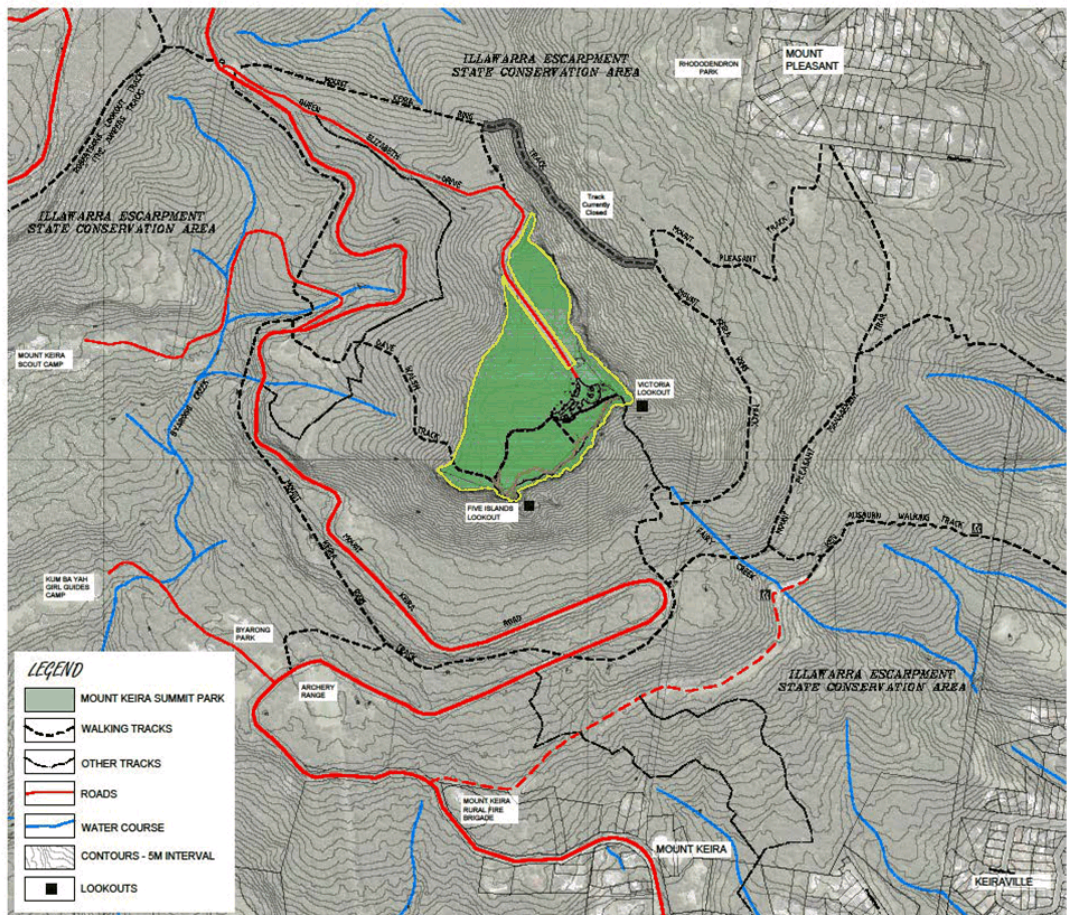
Access to Five Islands Lookout is fenced off due to cliff instability

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.



Toilet block at Mt Keira

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.

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/sedge 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

<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>RESPECT Respect the wishes of the Aboriginal people to safeguard and present their culture through a variety of means they consider most appropriate</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>CONSERVE Contribute to the protection and conservation of the Escarpment's natural, cultural and scenic values</p>	<p>INVOLVE The Aboriginal community, tourism industry, local community and NPWS will be involved in decision making</p>
<p>SUSTAINABLE Visitor experiences will be economically viable and financially sustainable and demonstrate social and environmental benefits to the community</p>		

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"> be compatible with the Council-adopted Park Vision and Planning Principles and facilitate protection of the Summit Park's values provide a high level of protection, conservation and management fitting to the area's significance to the community.
2. Improvements to scenic viewing infrastructure	Victoria Lookout 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.
	Five Islands Lookout 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.
	Other infrastructure 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.	Cliff Top Walk 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.
	Trail from carpark to Five Islands Lookout 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.
	New trails and trail sections 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>	<p>Trail types and alignments must be compatible the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.</p>
<p>4. Sustainable access infrastructure</p>	<p>Trail facilities</p> <p>Improved and new trail facilities, including signage, interpretation, shelter and seating.</p>	<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.</p>
	<p>Parking</p> <p>Maintenance and upgrading of parking facilities in the Summit Park may be carried out on the General Community use land.</p> <p>Drop off and pick up areas for buses, coaches, taxis and commercial operators may be provided on the General Community use land.</p>	<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>
	<p>Other access</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>	<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.</p>
<p>5. Picnic facilities</p>	<p>Upgrading of the picnic area and associated facilities may be carried out.</p>	<p>Any upgrading of the picnic area must be at a standard compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values, including its natural setting.</p>
<p>6. Public toilets</p>	<p>Upgrading or development of new toilet facilities may be carried out on the General Community use land.</p>	<p>The toilet facilities should be at a standard compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values and the level of visitation.</p>
<p>7. Food and beverage infrastructure and services</p>	<p>Café/restaurant</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>	<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.</p>

Permissible Uses and Developments	Description	Scale and Intensity
	<p>landscape and other Park values and include provision for sustainable water and energy use.</p> <p>Food vans/pop-up food services Council-approved food vans and other temporary food services may be provided in the General Community Use area.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>8. Other visitor facilities and activities</p>	<p>Spaces and facilities for education, interpretation and visitor enjoyment, recreation and appreciation of natural and cultural values may be provided in the Summit Park.</p>	<p>Facilities must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values and facilitate protection of the Summit Park's values.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>9. Improved wayfinding and interpretation</p>	<p>Signage may be provided for wayfinding, public safety, to identify visitor facilities and for interpretation.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Temporary signage may be provided to warn of hazards and events.</p>
<p>10. Art, sculpture and commemorative plaques</p>	<p>Temporary or permanent art and sculpture and commemorative plaques may be installed in the Summit Park.</p> <p>The installation of 'love locks' by the public is permissible in the Summit Park in places designated for this purpose by Council.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Temporary or permanent art and sculpture and commemorative plaques must be compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.</p>
<p>11. Public day recreation activities</p>	<p>Scenic viewing</p> <p>Nature viewing</p>	<p>Scenic viewing may occur in association with lookouts and other infrastructure, compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.</p> <p>Enjoying nature and activities such as bird watching may occur throughout the Park, compatible with Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.</p>

Permissible Uses and Developments	Description	Scale and Intensity
	Picnicking	Small group picnicking will be permitted in designated picnic areas, compatible with the Park Vision, Planning Principles and values.
	Walking and Running	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.
	Cycling	Cycling may occur on Queen Elizabeth Drive and the roads and parking area in the Park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No off-trail cycling may occur in the Park.
	Rock climbing and abseiling 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	Tour groups 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.
	Commercial products and activities focused on Mt Keira Summit Park 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	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. Access may be provided to the telecommunications tower.	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.	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. Management may include pruning, planting and weed control. Pruning of trees may be carried out to maintain viewing corridors from the Summit Park. Fauna management may include measures to protect and provide for native species and their habitat and measures to control introduced species and their impacts.

6.2 Prohibited Uses and Development

While only uses and development indicated in Table 3 in section 6.1 are permitted in Mt Keira Summit Park, 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

No.	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"> Aboriginal Reference Group ILALC NPWS Wollongong Community User groups 	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"> Wollongong community User groups Aboriginal community NPWS 	Landscape masterplan completed.	A
3	Continue cooperation between Council and NPWS officers to consider and guide implementation of cooperative and integrated approaches to Summit Park and IESCA planning and management including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trail development and use visitor signage and interpretation provision of visitor infrastructure and facilities provision of improved, interconnected visitor experiences across the two parks. 	NPWS	Achievement of integrated management and visitor experiences.	A
4	Continue cooperation between Council and community groups to guide implementation of cooperative and integrated approaches to Summit Park and IESCA planning and management including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trail development and use visitor signage and interpretation provision of visitor infrastructure and facilities provision of improved, interconnected visitor experiences across the two parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILALC Rotary Other user groups 	Achievement of integrated management and visitor experiences.	A
5	Develop and implement a Design Guide for signage and interpretation in the Summit Park.	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal community Wollongong community 	Signage and interpretation design that reflects the Summit Park’s	A

No.	Council Actions	Partners & Consultation	Performance Targets	Manner of Assessment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPWS 	natural and cultural values of the Summit Park and the Escarpment and its Aboriginal and historic stories.	
6	Partner with NPWS to develop an integrated approach to management and signage at Summit Park/IESCA boundaries and the intersection of Mt Keira Road and Queen Elizabeth Drive.	NPWS ILALC	Improved and consistent signage and management at Park entry points.	A
7	Upgrade the Mt Keira Summit Park gateway structures at Queen Elizabeth Drive.	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPWS Aboriginal community Wollongong community and stakeholders 	Improved sense of arrival at the Summit Park.	B
8	Improve information and wayfinding signage within the Summit Park in line with the Design Guide and the needs of visitors.	Consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal community Wollongong community and stakeholders 	Visitors have improved information and wayfinding.	A Results of periodic visitor surveys.
9	Prepare and implement an Interpretation Plan for Mt Keira Summit Park that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> themes and storylines that express the Summit Park's significance and values linkages to the Illawarra Escarpment improved links to Wollongong Botanic Garden 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"> NPWS Destination Wollongong Aboriginal community Wollongong community and stakeholders 	Visitors are offered interpretation that improves their enjoyment and appreciation of the Summit Park.	A Results of periodic visitor surveys.
10	Continue to consult with the Aboriginal community 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
11	Facilitate use of the Summit Park for Aboriginal cultural purposes .	Aboriginal community	The Aboriginal community is easily able to utilise the	C

No.	Council Actions	Partners & Consultation	Performance Targets	Manner of Assessment
			Summit Park for cultural purposes.	
12	Facilitate consideration of proposals 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"> Aboriginal community Tourism operators Private sector Community groups NPWS 	Sustainable products that enhance visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the Summit Park.	A Results of periodic visitor surveys.
13	Encourage volunteers and community service groups 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
14	Prepare a Vegetation Management Plan 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.
15	Control the impacts of pest animals 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.
16	Develop and implement Construction Environmental Management Plans (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
17	Manage litter and vandalism 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.

No.	Council Actions	Partners & Consultation	Performance Targets	Manner of Assessment
18	Continue to monitor visitor numbers at Mt Keira Summit Park.		Up-to-date information on visitor numbers.	A Outcomes of visitor numbers monitoring.
19	Conduct periodic visitor surveys 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 - REFERENCES

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