



Dear Resident,

## **Boronia Park needs our help - Now!**

Hunters Hill Council is revising the 2015 Boronia Park Plan of Management due to changes in the Crown Land Management Act 2016 and subsequent Regulation. All NSW local governments are obliged to review their Crown land reserve Plans by June 2021 to align with legislation. The draft Plan of Management is on **public exhibition until 14 February 2020**.

The **Boronia Park Alliance** has many concerns as to the Plan's direction and intent.

Hunters Hill Council has taken the opportunity to allocate expenditure from two grants totalling \$1.5 million received from State & Commonwealth governments for a 'Sports Precinct Upgrade Project', towards a **new over-sized clubhouse**, long desired by the Rugby Club. There is no proven need or demand for this proposed 'sport/community facility' from local residents. It is disappointing that Council has actively promoted use of these funds for such a purpose, primarily for use by the Rugby & Cricket Clubs.

If the draft Plan is adopted without amendment, construction is automatically authorised for a **2-storey building with a footprint of up to 525 square metres** - around 25% larger than the Hunters Hill Sailing Club. The character and inherent natural and cultural values of this historic Park will be permanently altered by such a large construction. The building appears pre-determined by Council as there is **no option provided for not building it** and four sites have been included in the draft Plan as the options for its location!

The obvious location is next to the **grandstand alongside Ryde Road (Site 1** in the draft Plan and as proposed in the 2015 Plan). The grandstand pavilion can be retrofitted (and even slightly enlarged to accommodate the storage, change rooms and other needs of the sporting interests. This would allow for a building with a much smaller footprint adjoining it to cater for other functions, with easy level access from the carpark. The integrity of the open playing fields and green space should not be alienated or marred visually and physically by large structures mainly benefitting organised team sport.

Adoption of the draft Plan would also authorise a **20 year lease** (with 10 year extension) for the facility. A lease to any organisation of longer than a year should be opposed. Currently the Club has an annual roll-over licence. Demographics and sporting needs are changing (such as the rise of women's sport, and drift from rugby to soccer and AFL). A long lease may lock others out. The announcement of the government **grants for the upgrades did not specify that they were for rugby or cricket use only**. A lease or licence should be primarily concerned with appropriate use of space by **all** users and remain operated and controlled by Hunters Hill Council.

Council also wishes to place a **new playground of 2,000 square metres** within Boronia Park using a grant of \$200,000. The grant application was for Riverglade Reserve, where it is needed and envisaged in the current Plan for that reserve. Boronia Park already has two playgrounds which can easily be improved to suit a range of ages. Council is actively promoting this playground within Boronia Park with little consultation or consideration of genuine need, environmental impacts or long term maintenance costs to residents.

A **BMX circuit track of up to 4,500 square metres** is now also proposed - added to the draft Plan at the very last minute. Once again there was no consultation for placing this major undertaking in a heritage-listed Park in close proximity to significant bushland and within the 'passive recreation' zone.

There is no need to **add floodlights to Oval 3**, as proposed. Ovals 1 & 2 already have lighting for evening training. Floodlighting is currently not permitted on Oval 3 in order to protect both the amenity of local residents and our vulnerable **nocturnal wildlife**.

The formation of a Community Advisory Group for reviewing the Boronia Park Plan of Management was welcomed by community members and they engaged in good faith. However, the process was poorly managed by Council with a lack of equity and transparency. Overall, consultation has been inadequate but **we still have time to make our voices heard**.

The mismanaged re-construction of Oval 3 some years ago by the Rugby Club left an environmental legacy of dead trees, polluting sediment run-off into the wetlands and ongoing impact on the E2 conservation zone and the overall integrity of the Park. The failure of that project to install drainage, rendering Oval 3 often too wet for use, has transferred the considerable costs for remediation to the ratepayers.

Public confidence in Council's stated commitment to maintaining the balance between general public access and intensity of sporting use, as well as fully protecting the Park's natural areas, is undermined by the clear intent of the draft Plan **to accommodate the demands of the two sporting clubs** as well as the past history of infrastructure built on Boronia Park.

Boronia Park is highly valued community land - proclaimed a Public Park on 16 December 1887 - which needs our support to preserve its special character, its endangered native species and shared open spaces for both passive enjoyment and active recreation for generations to come. It deserves thoughtful and equitable management. This is our last chance to put our views forward.

**If you want a Plan of Management that provides for all user groups and protects our magnificent bushland, our native wildlife and open spaces into the future, consider the points below in your submission.** To be valid this must include your name, residential address and daytime 'phone no. Email to **Council's consultant** Alan Ginns **at** [gwanacon@tpg.com.au](mailto:gwanacon@tpg.com.au) – *not* direct to HH Council.

1. NO new THIRD playground in Boronia Park – upgrade the existing playgrounds and build a new playground at Riverglade Reserve where it is needed and was intended.
2. NO massive Sport / Community Facility – Support OPTION 1 (alongside the Grandstand). This is the most accessible and least intrusive site option.
3. NO LONG TERM leases over any new and existing buildings at Boronia Park.
4. NO BMX track in North Boronia Park - the community has not been consulted on this facility.
5. NO floodlights on Oval 3 as Ovals 1 & 2 have lights and can be easily accessed from the main car park, so this would be an unnecessary disturbance and intrusion into the core natural habitat areas of the Park.