



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE
PO BOX 85, HUNTERS HILL, NSW 2110

HUNTERS HILL TRUST SUBMISSION
DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT FOR CROWN RESERVES PARK AND NATURAL AREAS

14-1-2022 HHT Submission re Miscellaneous Crown Reserves Plan of Management F

Requirement for adequate funding

Hunters Hill has a relatively large per capita area of parks and reserves with no compensating source of funding. Without greater funding, little can be achieved to improve (or even maintain) the condition of these reserves.

As noted, (p75 and 87), the key problem underlying the poor maintenance of these Crown Reserves is that past Councils have not budgeted adequately to maintain the reserves in its care. To alter this tradition will require the community to better understand the benefits of our generous portion of natural area bushland and foreshore. This will need an initial investment to improve access, repair paths, install signage and publish information leaflets and on-going investment to maintain the assets and inform the community.

Inappropriate reference document (the *Draft Property Strategy*, referred to on pp11, 28, & 29)

Of the three policy documents referred to (pp 9-11), only the first two are valid sources of reference, and the third (the '*Draft Property Strategy*') must be deleted from this Plan because, as the title suggests, being still in draft form it has no standing. Moreover, the document from which it was derived is wrongly titled as the '*Community Infrastructure Plan*' when it, too, was still in draft form when received by Council on 26 April 2021. Neither the Draft Community Infrastructure Plan nor the Draft Property Strategy has been adopted by Council.

We raised our concern about relying on a draft document with the Acting General manager (in writing, on 22 July 2021, and again on 1 August) in relation to the PoM for Figtree Park, and received the following assurance, in his letter dated 2 August 2021:

'I can assure you there is no intention to imbed the Draft Community Infrastructure Plan/Property Strategy into the Plans of Management for Figtree Park and Gladesville Community Reserve as detailed above, no such changes can occur without the exhibition of revised documents.'

As with that PoM, all mention of the Draft Property Strategy must be removed from this PoM (including from pp12 & 25). Specific proposals for the future of Henley Open Space can be inserted as text, without the need to reference a draft document.

Assessment

This Plan of Management (PoM) contains the ambitious requirement that '*this PoM and its ongoing relevance will be reviewed annually*' (Section 3.5), and that '*Council should ... review of performance targets, means of achievement and method of assessment annually.*' (Section 5.1). This commitment should be omitted unless there is a realistic possibility of it being achieved.

Objectives, and the means of judging them, are itemised in three tables, as follows:

Category	Location in document	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Park	Table 6.3	Objectives and performance targets	Means of achievement of objectives	Manner of assessment of performance
Natural area - Bushland	Table 7.4	Management factor and objectives	Means/strategies for implementation	Means of assessment
Natural area - Foreshore	Table 7.8	Objectives and performance targets	Means of achievement of objectives	Manner of assessment of performance

Contained in Column 3 of each category are a great number of measurable targets, but almost no target dates or other such obligations. Indeed, the only specific target set is 'annual' for three sub-items in Table 6.3, items whose requirements for annual assessment are probably set by other legislation. As such, there is no incentive for Council to act on any but these three.

There is a need for more specific guidance for allocating resources as is done in other PoMs recently adopted by Council. For example:

- The PoM for Boronia Park specifies categories of **High, Medium** and **Low** priority and estimates relative resource requirements for each item (see p78 of that PoM), and
- The PoM for Riverglade Reserve not only gives response times for various levels of priority, but also defines the meaning of priorities, and estimates of the cost of each (see Section 6 Management Actions, p55).

It is suggested that all current draft PoMs, including the current one, adopt the system used in the Riverglade PoM (see below):

Table 1. Suggested allocation of priority actions and resource estimates (following the example of the PoM for Riverglade Reserve).

<p>Priority actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High to commence within first year of the plan for completion within 5 years ● Medium to commence within first three years of the plan for completion within 7 years ● Minor to commence within five years of the plan <p>Resource estimates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High > \$50 000 ● Moderate <\$50 000 and >\$10 000 ● Minor < \$10 000
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Leases and licences

The conditions for issuing leases and licences seem to be generic, which is probably appropriate, but allow longer tenure than has been previous practice.

The proposal to allow leases and licences of up to 30 years is excessive considering that no improvement consequential to the granting of a lease could conceivably have a pay-back period of more than 10-15 years. Even the PoM for the recently adopted Riverglade Reserve specifies a maximum of only 20 years. If there is to be a maximum tenure it should be reduced to 10 years to allow competing uses of a scarce resource to be considered.

Simple actions which could be initiated without delay

Using its existing powers, and at relatively little expense, Council could take action now on the minor items identified in the draft PoM, including:

Require adjoining properties to rectify unauthorised actions affecting reserve land:

- Encroachments on public land (see p 58)
- Unauthorised trails (p73 & 74) by improving the maintenance and signage of authorised trails)
- Stormwater and sewage discharge onto public space: encourage the community to report such problems either directly to Council's website, or by email.
- Unauthorised clearing and mowing within bushland areas (e.g. Murray Prior Reserve and Wharf Reserve (p74)
- Unauthorised water hoses and electrical extension cords (e.g. across Mornington Reserve pp54 & 74)
- Unauthorised activities (p79)
- Unauthorised storage of dinghies and kayaks (p82)
- Unauthorised clearing (e.g. Wharf Reserve, p83)

Install signage for people visiting these reserves, both for:

- Way-finding
- Interpretation of heritage (Indigenous and European)

Items specific to particular reserves

The two major reserves

Two of the reserves are large enough to justify their own Plans of Management (consistent with requirements for a PoM explained in Section 1.1):

1. Mornington Reserve

This is a large and attractive reserve along the South bank of the Lane Cove River with attractive views to the North and along the river. It is separated from the adjacent residential properties by a steep, wooded slope and access is by a steep and hazardous path, however it is frequently the venue for picnics and walkers. This reserve deserves to have a specific PoM addressing all 3 categories.

2. Murray Prior Reserve

This reserve is also waterfront and has a good stand of mangrove which needs to be preserved. There is an area along the street which can be managed as a park. This reserve also deserves a specific PoM addressing all 3 categories.

The tables provided in the HHC Draft PoM set out the applicable legislation, policies and procedures, heritage considerations, key management issues, permitted development and use, and core objectives and more. The Plan also needs to explain how these requirements and objectives can be met within each reserve, regarding possible developments permitted under the category of 'Park', such as:

- Play equipment
- Picnic tables, BBQs, sheltered seating
- Café or refreshment areas
- Storage sheds
- Car parks

All of these involve potentially permanent buildings and use of space, a site-specific PoM should state in some detail what will be allowed, or not allowed, as well as the process to implement such developments including approval. The recent experience with Figtree Park should be enough to alert Council to the requirement for detailed planning, beginning with community consultation.

The other, smaller reserves

- **St Johns Park.**

This tiny park, across Ryde Rd from Boronia Park, consists of remnant bush, The current (2020) PoM for Boronia Park states that the constituent parcels of land forming St Johns Park will '*... be included in a separate plan of management to be prepared for St Johns Park*'. This doesn't appear to have been done.

- **Wharf Reserve**

This small rectangular reserve is bounded by Kelly's Bush to the East, residential development to the North and west and Parramatta River (below a sandstone cliff) to the South. It is marked as 1A Nelson Parade on Google Maps; functionally it forms part of Kelly's Bush and perhaps could be incorporated into Kelly's Bush

- **Collingwood St Reserve, and Woolwich Baths and Boat shed**

We support the proposal for these two reserves, together with Devolved Crown Reserves on each side (see p39) to be managed as one.

- **Villa Maria Reserve**

This small, waterfront reserve in a residential street is the size of housing block. The southern part appears to have been reclaimed from Tarban Creek. The reserve provides a meeting place for the local residents and a quiet, waterside picnic area, and would be enhanced by the addition of picnic facilities (seats, table(s), and a bin), but could also accommodate a launching pontoon for kayaks.

- **Valentia Street Reserves**

These two reserves, adjacent to the ferry wharf, function as one, although they are separated by the road, with bus stop and toilets, and carpark. They are well maintained by Council and do not require further development.

- **Gale Street Reserve**

Gale St provides access to Lane Cove River for kayaks and other small craft. This remnant reserve is split by the sewage pumping station and together with the Council-owned property on the eastern side of Gale Street provides public space near the water. Both sides of Gale Street should be managed as one with only light maintenance (mowing) required.