

Minutes



Bicentennial Reserve and Flat Rock Gully Advisory Committee

**Wednesday 21 February 2024
4.00-5.30pm**

Location:	Microsoft Teams
Chair:	Councillor Anna Greco
Attendees:	Bob Taffel- Mmber Nicola Ward – Member Kristina Dodds – Member Heidi Key – Member Andrew Stone – Member Brian Norton – Member Les Tyrpenou – Member Peter Lisle – Sustainability Team Leader Stephen Alderton – Open Space and Recreation Lead Bushra Salam – Governance
Apologies/absent:	Members: Benita Dwyer; Denis Fernandez; Jenny Roxburgh
Guests	Councillor Anna Greco Simon Brown – WCC Wildlife Officer
Attachments	Public Spaces evaluation report

Agenda items

Item	Topic / Discussion	Action
1	Welcome The meeting was declared open at 4:05 pm when a quorum was reached.	
	Acknowledgement of Country Governance Administration Officer, acknowledged Country on behalf of Council.	
2	Committee Governance The committee agreed in the previous meeting that they did not	

want to appoint a permanent chair and that community members would appoint a chair at each meeting.

Appointment of Chair

In accordance with Item 5.2 of the terms of Reference, the committee appointed Councillor Anna Greco as the Chair for this meeting.

Nominations for Chair of the meeting:

- Kristina Dodds nominated Councillor Anna Greco seconded by Heidi Key.
- Against: None
- All in favour

The Committee nominated Councillor Anna Greco the Chair for the meeting. The Committee unanimously approved.

Apologies

Members: Benita Dwyer; Denis Fernandez; Jenny Roxburgh

Declarations of interest

A link to the Disclosure of interest by Committee Members form was circulated with the Agenda. No declarations of interest were received.

Confirmation of minutes – 29 November 2023

Members of the Committee were sent the draft minutes prior to the meeting and the feedback received was included in the final draft and approved electronically. The committee unanimously accepted the minutes of the 29 November 2023 meeting.

Moved by Kristina Dodds and Seconded by Les Tyrpenou

Actions arising from previous minutes

- a. Bicentennial Reserve – Public Spaces Evaluation Report by the Committee with inclusions from new committee members.***

The new members of the Committee have provided their feedback and has already been circulated (no change since it was last emailed on 18/12/2023).

Moved by Kristina Dodds and seconded by Les Tyrpenou, the Committee recommended the following:

Motion: *The Public Spaces evaluation report by the Committee to be actioned & tabled at **Attachment 1**.*

Adopted unanimously.

b. Flat Rock Gully Reserve Action Plan 2023

Peter Lisle (Sustainability Team Leader), informed the Committee that Flat Rock Gully Action Plan 2023 is on the agenda of the Council meeting going to be held on 26 February 2024.

On a query about having a separate Plan of Management request from the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations (FWPA), Councillor Greco noted that she has received a letter from FWPA and the Councillors will consider that letter at the 26 February Council meeting.

Simon Brown (Wildlife Officer) pointed out that the Council currently has a detailed Bushland Plan of Management (POM) for all reserves in the local Government Area (LGA) This document includes reserve descriptions, assets, and broader management priorities. Each reserve also has its own Reserve Action Plan (RAP) document that includes a summary of the reserve and finer details of works to be carried out over a set period. Crown Lands NSW, who own significant portions of the council-managed reserve network, has directed that there cannot be more than one POM for each reserve. So, as all bushland reserves in the LGA are already covered by the Willoughby Council Bushland POM, Flat Rock Gully Reserve cannot have

its own POM.

The committee decided to source more information and revisit this discussion at the next meeting.

c. Update on testing for Bicentennial Reserve.

Peter Lisle drew attention to Council's previous announcement on the council website about the contamination at Flat Rock Gully.

To be discussed in next meeting as Standing item

See <https://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Council/Public-notices/Former-landfill-site-at-Bicentennial-Reserve-and-Flat-Rock-Gully>

He stated that since the discovery of contaminants last year Council have been proactive in dealing with the EPA and engaged a specialist consultant to develop a draft Sampling and Quality Assurance Plan. This draft has been submitted to EPA for approval. The Committee will be updated when a reply is received though no timeline for a response has been given.

Given recent news reports about contaminated mulch being used in numerous sites around Sydney, Les Tyrpenou enquired if any mulch used around the LGA maybe be contaminated too,

Stephen Alderton stated that Council does not use the supplier used at the centre of interest, and uses our own tree mulch for the majority of our projects around the LGA.

However, there are some sites where mulch has been provided by an external supplier and these sites would be subject to testing over the next week to confirm all mulch supplies in Willoughby's public spaces are safe

Action: To make this a standing item for the next meetings.

d. *The Incinerator Update*

Stephen Alderton (Open Space and Recreation Lead), advised that an update on the Incinerator Remedial Works would be provided as part of the meeting minutes.

Update: Remedial works at The Incinerator are ongoing with the site clearance completed and retaining walls laid. Additional steel and columns due to be delivered in early March. Project on track to be completed around Easter.

e. *Defective Lighting under Flat Rock Gully Drive*

Peter Lisle stated that the lights were believed to be the responsibility of Roads and Maritime Services NSW and will update the next meeting.

f. *Progress report on council use of 1080 poison in fox baiting and other forms of fox control.*

Simon Brown noted that Council does not use 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate). Council has an integrated pest management approach for the control of foxes with various controls including shooting, trapping and bait when appropriate with shooting being most highly effective measure.

3 Strategic Activities

3.1 WLC update re: upgrade

Stephen Alderton advised the Committee that an update on the WLC Upgrade was being provided to Council at its February

meeting with a subsequent project update to be provided on the project webpage.

3.2 Progressing Streamwatch

Peter Lisle informed the committee that Council employs Sydney Water to conduct regular water testing all around the LGA with full reporting shown in the Waterway Health page of the Council website.

To be discussed in next meeting

See <https://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Environmental-Health/Water/Waterway-health>

The Committee will review the information and discuss in the next Committee meeting.

3.3 Cat containment

WCC Wildlife Officer noted that over the last 15 years Council has we had three rounds of letter box droppings & door knocking in all of Bushland boundaries. He suggested the Committee to use an App called Feral Scan which allows for recording sightings of foxes, rabbits and cats. Councillor Greco requested Simon Brown if he could update the Council website with this information.

Simon Brown to update the Council website.

4 Other Business

- Benita Dwyer raised (via email) the issue of water pooling at the entry gate to Bicentennial Reserve. Open Space and Recreation Lead would look into that and raise to the right team, Peter Lisle advised that often for issues like these raising a Customer Service Request (CSR) can be a good way of reporting issues such as these. Councillor Anna Greco also encouraged the Committee to utilize Council's Customer Service Request system available on Council's website to log any maintenance requests/issues.
- Kristina Dodds reported that the lights in the Flat Rock

Gully are still not working. This was first raised at the July 2023 committee meeting. Peter Lisle said he would follow up.

5 Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday 17 April 2024 (4:00-5:30pm)

Agenda Items: To be decided

6 Meeting Conclusion

Meeting concluded at 5:45 pm

Bicentennial Reserve and Flat Rock Gully Advisory Committee

2 September 2023 - Site visit to Bicentennial Reserve

11 November 2023 – additions included from Brian Norton and Les Norton

FINAL REPORT

Present: All six of the Advisory group members agreed to meet on a Saturday afternoon at Bicentennial Reserve. Benita Dwyer, Bob Taffel, Heidi Key, Jennifer Roxburgh, Kristina Dodds and Nicola Ward

Apologies: Julie Whitfield and Anna Greco were invited and gave their apologies.

Great Public Spaces evaluation tool for public space and public life

Julie sent through the Greater Public Spaces Evaluation Tool as a starting point for the BRFRG Advisory Committee to make considered contributions to the Bicentennial Reserve Placemaking Plan. The Committee used this tool as a guide. It was noted that the tool was designed for individuals to use, however it had some applicable suggestions for contributions by the committee.

We didn't do a snapshot of people using the Reserve (as noted on page 2 of the tool), however we did note at our meeting place at the Rotunda in Hallstrom play area, that there was a birthday party, a child on a scooter, people sitting on seats and that the playground area was in full use. Dogs were being walked on the oval, people were walking the paths – no one was on the junior bike track, however it was noted by committee members that they had brought their children down to learn to ride when they were younger.

It was noted by Nicola Ward that the space for Hallstrom Park was at one stage planned to be a training facility and seating for the Gordon Rugby Club. Nicola was very involved at the time, with the Willoughby South Progress Association, to ensure that didn't happen and the area remained an open space for the community. We all agreed that this was a good thing and felt that the Council had done a great job in making it a community space for organised sport, recreation (for young and old) and playground area for small children and a bike path for juniors. We also observed that the trees around the bike park were native and provided good shade (as well as habitat for local wildlife).

The committee noted the questions asked on the evaluation tool on pages 3 and 4 and took these into consideration when touring the site.

SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The Committee took inspiration from the 230516_Willoughby Public Spaces Evaluation Report.pdf on Warners Park (also supplied by Julie Whitfield). On page 5 there was a summary with completed columns for strengths, opportunities and challenges.

Our report includes photographs and comments on each section of Bicentennial Reserve and draws on the experience of the 6 committee members that when combined have 100 years of experience and community participation in relation to Bicentennial reserve.

Figure 6 – Categories of the community land in Bicentennial Reserve – from the Bicentennial_Reserve_POM_adopted_8_Feb_2021.pdf



Area	Comments
<p>Hallstrom Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children's playground ● Rotunda ● Bike track ● Wirianda ● Trees 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Well utilised and designed playground area for young children ● Rotunda well used by all ages. Jenny said they have had Probus meetings there ● Excellent junior bike track ● Wirianda (dry water course) next to bike path – a sanctuary for wildlife as it is a creek bed - would be good to have a sign explaining this. ● Good use of native trees to shade the bike track ● Good to have toilet facilities and undercover area <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provision of more bins, here and in other high traffic areas ● Gas BBQs didn't seem to be working <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nicola was saying that original plans for the area included an extension of the bike track around the oval for older children. We walked around the oval and felt this could be done – similar to Artarmon reserve ● BBQs electrified ● We did feel that native animals, First Nations recognition, as a possibility as well, rather than African animals. Definitely not urgent but a consideration in the future. Good fun to have the animal sounds though

Sportsground

Soccer goal not being used impeding access



Path around sportsground, could be a bike path.



Rock seating at one corner of oval (not a great photo)



Strengths

- Natural grass oval that can be used for a variety of summer and winter organised sport. We saw dogs being walked, kids and parents utilising the green space
- Very nice arrangements of rocks adjacent to the NE corner of the oval. Great for sitting on. One of the group referred to it as Dad's corner as during a soccer match dads were all there together
- Good access steps leading from the track below at the eastern end up to the oval
- A bench and log bench for spectators
- Portable Football Goals, which are roll-on/roll-off when used. Portable goals minimise wear and tear on heavily used grass areas (ie goalmouths), thus grassed areas retain coverage and annual re-sowing/maintenance (as at other ovals) is minimised/eradicated.
- No cricket wicket, absence of a concrete cricket wicket in the middle of the park mean this sportsground is more usable for other sports.

Weaknesses

- Not enough seating around the oval
- One of the members noted that the drainage was poor after rain from the path leading to the oval from the playground area



Threats

- Possibility of artificial turf with the reason to 'extend' playing time. This is a threat as the oval is in the Flat Rock Gully water catchment, next to the creek which flows down into Middle Harbour. Uncontained plastic crumb getting into waterways, high chemical content of artificial grass crumb and blades and microplastic. One of the committee also said it can burn when someone slides on it and can get very hot.
- Light spill from the oval lights. This is part of a wildlife corridor. Nicola said previously installed lights were badly installed and spilled light over areas outside the park. These were eventually removed. Some members of the community asked for the current lights not to be installed, but others were in favour. Following due-process Council decided that they should be installed with the most up to date technology meaning minima light spill. As a committee we would like to know hours of use of the lights, current lux settings and whether they have been erected to minimise any light spill

Opportunities

- We felt there could be some signs indicating the steps from the oval down to the path below (a couple of us

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could extend the rock 'seating' around the oval in places. Definitely needs more benches and log benches around the perimeter of the oval ● The sportsground site is a large area and should be reviewed from time to time to ensure it continues to meet the demands of its users. ● Lighting not sufficient on one corner of Bicentennial oval for baseball to be played on a Friday evening. Opportunity to provide lighting for this corner using the latest technology to minimise light spill to adjacent trees and bushland.
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<p>Path leading from Hallstrom Park downhill to shared path</p> <p>Stairs leading to oval</p>  <p>Semi circular seating areas</p> 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shaded path ● Plenty of areas to sit ● Good to have stairs leading up to the oval further down the hill <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was noted that the semi-circular sandstone seating was not used – and not that attractive or comfortable <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bench might be nicer to sit on than small sandstone seats as part of the semi-circle ● Would be good to have QR codes at strategic places across the reserve giving information about place an history – they were once there but not anymore. Was there a reason as to why they were removed?
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<p>Area of cultural significance – Incinerator and surrounds</p> <p>Artificial grass at Incinerator Café;</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wonderful to have a café and Artspace in the incinerator and the building heritage listed ● lovely stretch of grassland behind the incinerator ● grass behind incinerator is mowed and maintained in the main
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Unsightly rubble, weeds, fence at back of incinerator (see over page)



View looking north to the incinerator



Weaknesses

- artificial turf placed under outside café tables. Artificial turf is toxic and a 'deadzone' for birds and wildlife. Could there be another surface?
- Fenced area behind the incinerator. Rubble and rubbish inside an ugly temporary steel fence
- Underutilized 'field' of greenspace behind the incinerator
- Seems like a marsh at the southern end of the greenspace behind the incinerator and not maintained and not easy access from the shared track that is adjacent to it



Threats

- Unsure of why the section directly behind the incinerator is fenced. Is there a sinkhole or contamination from the old tip site?

Opportunities

- Clean up the area inside the fenced area behind incinerator, take out rubbish, remove weeds, put in new plantings (even if temporary). What are the plans for this area? If it is to be permanently fenced then the fence needs to look good and be in keeping with the incinerator.
- Discussion around using the area as an outside stage, have a soundshell there. The area of grassland is a natural amphitheatre. No one was using this space when we were there and most commented that people only use it to cross from the WLC area/carpark to Hallstrom Park
- Could be a space for summer concerts, markets, an art space, a picnic area
- Seating and a plan developed to utilise this beautiful space
- Bob mentioned that it would be good to have a series of permanent outside artworks at points throughout Bicentennial reserve
- Provide more information about the history of the site and the stone area being preserved and protected by fencing

	<p>said they never knew they were there, and one said she uses them all the time when walking her dog). One sign at the top and one at the bottom on the track (there are some tracks that have been made were people have scrambled up the embankment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Could extend the rock 'seating' around the oval in places. Definitely needs more benches and log benches around the perimeter of the oval ● The sportsground site is a large area and should be reviewed from time to time to ensure it continues to meet the demands of its users. ● Lighting not sufficient on one corner of Bicentennial oval for baseball to be played on a Friday evening. Opportunity to provide lighting for this corner using the latest technology to minimise light spill to adjacent trees and bushland.
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Faded line marking on shared path



Access trail next to Henry Lawson Cave – underutilised area



Blue pipe leading from houses to drain and FR Creek next to shared path



Weaknesses

- Marking on shared path wearing away
- Metal plates describing the area are aged and hard to read
- Noticed a blue soft tube leading from buildings above the path and into the culvert (is this legal? Or is it for drainage – has been there for some time). See photo
- Next to Lawsons Cave, on the south side there appears to be an access trail. This is an area that could be utilised, at the moment a track leading to a dead end?

Threats

- Bikes travelling too quickly
- Noted some food couriers using the path who didn't need to pedal, which can lead to excessive speed
- Motorised scooters – as WCC is doing a trial. Dangerous for walkers
- Construction contamination runoff from sites on the southern side of the reserve

Opportunities

- Is there a possibility for the existing shared path be somehow redesigned to include a lane reserved only for walkers? Without taking any surrounding trees? This area will get more bike traffic as cycling is becoming more popular and the population increases in surrounding areas
- Reduce run off contamination from building sites on the southern end. Is this a waterboard issue that needs to be rectified?
- Access trail next to Lawsons cave could be planned as a useable greenspace

Baseball diamond

Strengths

- Natural turf field well maintained
- Used by the community

Currently on leash – could be off leash



Lovely trees southside baseball diamond



- Lovely group of trees on the southern side of the diamond

Opportunities

- As it is a fenced area this oval could be a designated off leash area
- Provision of doggie bag dispensers and bins. As in Naremburn park

Underpass Flat Rock Drive and mural

Non operational lights in underpass



deterioration of mural (see over page)

Strengths

- Magnificent Aboriginal mural
- Excellent to have a mural showing where we are and a surrounding map of the area

Weaknesses

- Underpass needs to have low level lighting at night. Currently there are lights but they haven't been operational for some time
- The mural is deteriorating

Threats

- Underpass feels unsafe at night, but there needs to be a balance with the lights as it transitions to a wildlife corridor and protection zone in Flat Rock Gully

Opportunities

- Continue to maintain the mural on a regular basis
- Would be good to have further signs in the area pointing out where people are and how to access surrounding areas



WLC and netball courts



Pool hall under construction



Strengths

- Well used on a Saturday. Parking is being managed with a lot of resources

Weaknesses

- Cancellation of bus services to Willoughby across zones, such as the bus from Balmoral to Willoughby. Increased car reliance as no direct transport links to Neutral Bay and Mosman. Pressure on existing parking

Threats

- Pressure to increase the parking as there are fewer public transport options. Flat Rock Gully and bushland could be encroached
- Continued pressure from sporting associations to increase number of courts which would lead to encroaching on greenspace and bushland
- Construction of new pool area over a contaminated site where not all dangerous chemicals were tested for

Opportunities

- Lobby to reinstate cancelled bus routes
- Maintain shared paths and encourage active transport. More bike racks installed in car park
- As the Sports hall is not part of the current building works, planning for the upgrade of the sports hall should include roof top courts and additional parking within the facility could be considered. Refer to previous plans drawn up for the WLC in 2012 where indoor courts and a two-story car park were originally included within the scope of the project (the pool and sports hall were both included in this). Where land is at a premium there are opportunities to develop the WLC on the exiting footprint

It was agreed by the Advisory members that this was a very worthwhile exercise.

Original Report compiled by Benita Dwyer, Bob Taffel, Heidi Key, Jennifer Roxburgh, Kristina Dodds and Nicola Ward (committee as at 2/9/2023). This final version agreed unanimously by all committee members 21/02/2024).

