

# Community Engagement Report

27 June 2023



## Hornsby Park Master Plan Stage 1 Review of Environmental Factors (REF)



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# Engagement Summary

Following adoption of the Hornsby Park Master Plan in July 2021, Hornsby Shire Council resolved on 8 March 2023 to undertake Stage 1 Embellishment Works for Hornsby Park. It has been determined that the Stage 1 works can be approved under Part 5 of the New South Wales *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

This report summarises feedback and provides responses to submissions received by Hornsby Shire Council during the exhibition of the Hornsby Park Master Plan Stage 1 Review of Environmental Factors (REF).

The REF was publicly exhibited from 27 April until 25 May 2023. The purpose of the exhibition was to provide the community with the opportunity to provide feedback on the REF which would then enable Council to consider any possible adjustments to the Stage 1 elements.

The Public Exhibition of the REF was advertised online via Your Say Hornsby, in the local print newspapers, eNews, and the community were invited to provide feedback via an online submission form, in writing or via email.

There were 17 submissions received in response to the exhibition. Seven of these expressed support for the proposal, two were opposed and eight submissions contained mixed views, suggestions or recommendations.

Note: two submissions received from the same person on the same day have been combined as one submission.

# Engagement approach

The Hornsby Park Master Plan Stage 1 REF was on Public Exhibition from 27 April to 25 May 2023.

Notification of the exhibition was provided through the following publications and digital communication channels:

- Your Say Hornsby website
- Council's May eNews
- May newspapers "Have Your Say" – Bush Telegraph, The Post, Galston Glenorie Community News, Dooral Roundup
- Weekly Community Engagement newsletters during the exhibition period
- Facebook post (2 May).

Submissions were received via an online submission form on Your Say Hornsby, by email to [hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au) and via written letter to the General Manager, Hornsby Shire Council.

## Results

During the Public Exhibition period, a total of 17 submissions were received. Fourteen submissions were prepared by individuals and three submissions were on behalf of community organisations.

There were several comments in the submissions which were not related to matters covered by the REF.

A summary of comments and Council's responses are detailed below.

## Summary of responses

The following presents a summary of the topics raised in the feedback and Council's response to the main concerns.

The dot points represent excerpts from the feedback and are indicative examples only of the topics raised.

Of the 17 submissions received, seven expressed overall support for the proposed work included in the REF. Examples of these comments include:

- *Cannot wait! It looks amazing and I do hope it is delivered on time*
- *We just think it will be a great feature for Hornsby*
- *A prime example of successful urban planning and community development*
- *A worthwhile investment that will provide numerous benefits for the local community, the environment, and the wider region.*

Two submissions expressed opposition to the REF based on the cost associated with the project or the current economic climate.

Council Response:

Council is using funding that has been provided specifically for the development of Hornsby Park and cannot be used for other purposes.

Eight submissions provided a mixture of views: including concerns, suggestions and recommendations on various topics. These are described below in alphabetical order.

### Bushfire Management

- *Fire management must protect the nest trees and always ensure that there are sufficient safe roosting sites and prey.*
- *Supports the statement in the Bushfire Assessment Report "The Hornsby Quarry has particularly high-value biodiversity that needs to be considered as a matter of priority in all elements of the project design. This includes the need to consider a minimal impact approach to the bushfire protection measures (notably the Asset Protection Zones), as far possible in the context of life and property protection objectives."*

Council Response:

Council will ensure that the Bushfire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan balances the requirements for public safety with the conditions of the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan.

## CEMP / Hours of Construction

- *Council must insist on a high quality CMPs, high quality implementation, constant monitoring of environmental factors and changes to CMPs when monitoring shows procedures are inadequate.*
- *The noise mitigation measures are conflicting across the REF and supporting Ecological assessment and Noise and vibration assessment*

### Council Response:

Council will ensure that selected contractors recognise the significant environmental challenges associated with delivery on this site.

Council will also ensure that the Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs), that must be approved prior to any work taking place on site, address any perceived conflicting measure and are compliant with the conditions of the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan.

## Cycling

- *Please ensure that there is cycling access between the end of Rosemead Rd and the new Hornsby Park.*

### Council Response:

Council is reviewing the options for cycling links from Hornsby Park to Rosemead Road, however, they are not part of the Stage 1 plans.

## Fauna

- *The EIS report methodology is insufficient to determine the fauna on site.*

### Council Response:

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) completed for the REF was supplemental to all previous EIAs completed to support the Earthworks Development Application. Council will be combining all of these under the conditions of the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan.

## Heritage

- *The Higgins Cemetery, the Heritage Steps, the diatrema face, areas of Aboriginal significance, and the natural values are all important to the community. The diatrema face has global significance.*

### Council Response:

All Heritage items on site will be maintained in line with relevant legislation and site-specific requirements.

## Hours of Operation

- *It is not clear whether the noise assessment considered pedestrian noise was potential at night (when lower temperatures and noise will travel further) or only considered daytime noise.*

- *I have not found information about the intended opening hours of Hornsby Park and I am hoping it would not be open 24 hours per day.*
- *Council must ensure that an excellent operational plan is implemented to reduce environmental harm.*

Council Response:

The noise assessment was completed with the knowledge that there was the potential for noise at night.

At this stage, Council is looking to provide the opportunity for some or all of Hornsby Park to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so that it can support the broad demands of the community, increasing numbers of whom choose to (or have to due to work commitments) exercise or relax at different times of the day and night.

The Operational Plan for Hornsby Park will balance these broad community needs with the conditions of the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan.

## Lighting

- *Thanks Council for the sensitive lighting design on the connecting elements, particularly on the skywalk.*
- *We congratulate Council in ensuring that lighting is designed in a manner, or by restriction of location, that sensitive nocturnal fauna are not disturbed, or as advised by a project ecologist (sensitive internal lighting plan to avoid throwing excessive light onto adjacent bushland areas).*
- *When it is not open it should not be lit by artificial light. Motion sensor equipment that has sensitivity to the sizes of objects should be widely integrated into the lighting design.*
- *I urge Hornsby Shire Council to take the lighting of Hornsby Park, by artificial means, very seriously, to improve the environmental conditions for fauna, flora and humans alike. The best artificial lighting is lighting that is not noticeable, but totally adequate. It would be wonderful if the Council took a lead in innovative design and solutions for minimum-necessary public and environmental lighting as an exemplar for all.*
- *Happy with the low-level lighting proposed on the connecting elements on the skywalk and to the Quarry void.*

Council Response:

The lighting design and specification have been compiled to recognise that lighting at Hornsby Park will need to be controllable with light temperatures suitable for the environment.

The Operational Plan for Hornsby Park will include details as to how the lighting will be managed to balance safety requirements for park visitors with the conditions of the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan including, for example, how there will be restricted access to the Northern and Western mounds during breeding season.

## Mountain Bike Tracks

- *Mountain bike people who currently use this area will intensify their illegal track construction work in the National Park.*
- *The impacts to the Old Man Valley MTB Network have already been significant and the REF should consider the cumulative impacts to what is a regional asset.*



- *Reduction of mountain bike trails through out, especially in dense understory.*

Council Response:

The mountain bike network at Hornsby Park has been well managed by Council and the local mountain bike groups to ensure there is minimal damage to the local environment. The Operational Plan for Hornsby Park will address non-compliance protocols for illegal track construction to confirm a clear message.

Council is working to continue this as Stage 1 is constructed and operational and as the current earthworks are completed.

### National Park

- *An 'open space strategy' needs to be balanced by the notion of a 'conservation space strategy' and via Hornsby Park the Council must support the conservation endeavours of its neighbour, the NSW NPWS, from all perspectives.*

Council Response:

Delivery of the elements contained within the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan will continue Council's work to support NSW NPWS.

### Natural Resources

- *Please ensure that minimal tree loss occurs and the opportunity for the growth of invasive species is not increased.*
- *discrepancies between reports should be rectified and ensure that the ecologist is aware of the impacts to vegetation that the arborist has 'agreed' to in their report including references to removing dead trees which the Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan (HSC, 2020) stated should remain where possible.*
- *regrets the loss of 1.15ha of vegetation, particularly the 0.29 ha of Blue Gum Diatreme Forest and 0.67 of Blackbutt Gully Forest. The Biodiversity Offsets Strategy can only partly compensate for this loss as the years of growth cannot be replaced.*

Council Response:

The existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan and the associated Biodiversity Conservation Trust Agreement, which Council will be enacting, ensure that all environmental impacts are minimised and offset appropriately.

### Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment

- *Figure 3 says it shows the extents of the NCAs, however Figure 3 is only showing the residential receiver area blocks and doesn't mention the NCAs used in the report at all.*
- *The Noise and Vibration Report methodology did not consider fauna.*

Council Response:

Figure 3 includes reference to other non-residential receivers in different colours in the key. Impacts to fauna are considered by delivery needing to be governed by the requirements of the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan.



## Overall Project

- *We provide support for the project including the addition of a potential playground and future mountain bike paths.*
- *The overall quality of the REF and documentation provided is lacking.*
- *The REF is not suitable for a construction project as the boundaries the contractor need to work within are not well defined.*
- *This REF has reemphasised that Hornsby Council is ill-equipped and does not have the necessary experience to deliver a project of this scale and importance.*

### Council Response:

Council recognises that the Hornsby Park project is the largest single project it has ever delivered. Suitably skilled resources have and will continue to be engaged to ensure delivery can be completed. Likewise, contractors will only be selected to construct and maintain any elements of the embellishments when they can demonstrate that they have suitable previous experience and qualified staff to deliver.

## Parking

- *Section 6 Operational impact assessment – the report refers to “The proposal would instate a gravel parking area however the parking provision would be no different to the existing situation.” However the existing situation is not a car park used for recreational purposes. I assume it is a car park used by the quarry construction workers and should be clarified as such in the report.*
- *The REF comment on potential need to introduce parking restrictions at end of Rosemead road is noted. Please also consider the parking issues that this may create in Lockinvar Place.*

### Council Response:

The reference to “parking provision would be no different to the existing situation” refers to the situation modelled in the referenced Traffic Impact Assessment, which is not changing through the delivery of Stage 1. Considerations for parking restrictions on Rosemead Road will also consider requirements for Lockinvar Place

## Pedestrian Access

- *The multiple pedestrian access points will make the park very attractive to walkers as it can be combined with a number of longer walks in the area.*
- *Please also ensure that pedestrian access between the top of the Heritage Steps and Hornsby CBD is not disrupted during the proposed works.*

### Council Response:

Council will work to minimise disruptions during construction whilst ensuring the works can be completed safely.

## Play Space

- *There needs to be adequate play equipment and tables/seating.*
- *We like to emphasise the importance of including a toddler-friendly area within the playground which is lacking in the new parks Hornsby Council has constructed including Hunt Reserve*

### Council Response:

Council will consider these requirements as the plans for playspaces across Hornsby Park are further developed, including the potential at the Crusher Plant Platform

## Powerful Owls

- *Birdlife Australia, Powerful Owl Project must be consulted at all stages.*
- *The tracks on the northern and western mounds are too close to the Powerful Owls.*

### Council Response:

Council has an active working relationship with Birdlife Australia which will continue through the ongoing development and management of Hornsby Park. There will be restricted access as per the Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan and compliance measures will be established through the Operational Plan especially during breeding season, should an active breeding pair be reported by Birdlife Australia.

## Scenic Appeal

- *the scenic appeal of the Quarry development seems very attractive and will be enjoyed by the many residents who have contributed financially to the cost and waited patiently for many years.*

### Council Response:

Council's designs are focussed on enhancing the unique elements of Hornsby Park.

## Sky Walk

- *Please choose a colour which blends into the bush... green or grey. Not white as in the artist's impression.*
- *More information on the construction materials for the skywalk are required.*
- *Regrets the decision to install the skywalk as it will have a multitude of indirect impacts on the bushland.*
- *Absence of information on the construction materials for the skyway and their potential impact on the environment.*
- *The colour must blend with the local trees, not white as illustrated in the Arboriculture Report. The tread must let sufficient light through to enable a healthy understorey to flourish.*

### Council Response:

The current concept design for the Sky Walk evolved to reduce indirect impacts based on environmental constraints and designing with country concepts. Council plans to enter into a Design and Construct contract for the Sky Walk which will further refine the design to reduce indirect impacts as well as to confirm the final material choices and colours that support the concept whilst ensuring constructability.

## Surveillance & Privacy

- *Should HSC implement surveillance cameras they must advise the public. The public must be able to make an informed choice about whether they will enter Hornsby Park or not, and if they do they must be able to believe there is digital protection in place*

Council Response:

Council will follow all appropriate legislation prior to deploying any surveillance cameras.

## Timeframe

- *Unclear what work would happen from July and how it will fit into the timeframe given in the REF.*

Council Response:

Council expects that the first several months from contract award in July will be focussed on design evolution / refinement, with minimal site works. Site works are then expected later in the calendar year and into the first half of 2024.

Council will also ensure that the Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs), that must be approved prior to any work taking place on site, are compliant with the conditions of the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan.

## Traffic

- *The specialist traffic impact report is for operational impacts. The REF relies on this document and does not clearly consider/describe construction impacts.*

Council Response:

Traffic Impact Reports are specifically constructed to assess how the proposed activities will impact the peak hours of the existing network. The construction activity is not expected to generate additional peak hour traffic.

## Walking Tracks / Lookouts

- *We oppose the trails and lookout / bird hides on the northern and western mounds as they are too closed to the nesting trees and major roosting sites.*
- *Reduction of the number of trails on the Northern Mound.*
- *No link trail from the Northern Mound around through Rosemead to Westleigh, the Rosemead trail link.*
- *Advocates for the closure of the trails to the Northern and Western Mounds at night to protect the Powerful Owls on the site.*

Council Response:

Council is looking to provide as much access to the site as possible while the current earthworks activities are ongoing, which are preventing access for a large part of the site.

Council will ensure that access to the proposed tracks is compliant with the conditions of the existing Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan. Access protocols will be included in the Operational Plan for Hornsby Park. That is, there will be restricted access as per the Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan during breeding season, should an active breeding pair of Powerful Owls be reported by Birdlife Australia.

# Out of scope submissions

Several submissions included comments relating to items that are not included in the Stage 1 REF. These may need to be considered ahead of any future stages and include items relating to:

## Adventure Recreation

- *No canopy activities/disturbance from zip lines.*

## Diatreme face and zig zag track

- *Concerned about the proposal for a stairway and path route from Higgins Cemetery to the Quarry Void down the eastern edge of the Quarry Void. The diatreme face must be protected.*

## Parking

- *Number of car parking spaces provided is inadequate.*
- *When the sportsfield is in use.... They will be driving around the streets looking for a parking spot when they find that the picnicking families took all the parking spaces in the morning.*

## Synthetic sports field

- *The possible use of synthetic turf on the sporting fields.*
- *The only type of synthetic turf that should ever be used is fully biodegradable synthetic turf. That is, a synthetic turf that leaves no residual nasties and particulates in the environment over a specified time, or, that which can be removed and composted/biodegraded and replaced with the same – and perhaps a replacement schedule would be budgetarily advantageous. It's also a turf that does not toxically pollute if burnt. When this scientific marvel is invented, I will support the use of 'synthetic turf.'*

## Traffic

- *Could the traffic lights between Bridge Road and William Street be adjusted so that they are timed to be in sync with each other.*

# Recommendations

## No REF Adjustments

The vast majority of topics raised in the submissions do not require specific adjustments to the REF itself as they generally relate to the construction and subsequent operation of Hornsby Park Master Plan Stage 1 and will be considered at that later stage.

## Request for Tender (RFT) Evaluation

During the upcoming RFT Evaluation process, the submissions will be assessed against the non-pricing criteria which have been specifically set to ensure that the selected tenderers are aware of the unique challenges of the Hornsby Park site and that they can demonstrate that they are suitably skilled and qualified to deliver accordingly.

## Design and Construct Contracts

All of the Stage 1 work is to be delivered under Design and Construct contracts.

As such, the selected contractors will be instructed to ensure that the final designs that they provide to Council take into consideration the topics identified in this report.

## Operational Plan

An Operational Plan should be created and approved to ensure that the ongoing access and management of the site adequately balances the user experience with the requirements of the Vegetation Management Plan and Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan.

# Conclusion

The public exhibition has provided feedback to enable Council to proceed with Hornsby Park Master Plan Stage 1 without adjusting the REF, provided that the above recommendations are adopted.

# Responses

It is recommended that each submitter receive an individual response, providing a copy of this report.