

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The preparation of this generic plan of management for community land is part of an ongoing process in developing a comprehensive management framework for Warringah Council's public open space. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, all land vested in a council (except a road or land to which the Crown Lands Act 1989 applies) must be classified as either community land or operational land.

Plans of management must be prepared and adopted for all community land (i.e. public land vested in or under the control of Council and classified as community land). The use and management of community land must also be consistent with its designated categories and their respective core objectives. These categories include natural area (i.e. bushland, wetland, escarpment, watercourse and foreshore), sportsground, park, area of cultural significance and general community use. **This plan of management focuses on land parcels categorised as general community use.**

The parcels investigated during the development of this plan of management have a wide variety of characteristics and associated values and issues. These parcels have been grouped according to their core characteristics in order to provide consistent decision-making and guide ongoing management for existing, and subsequently acquired, parcels of community land.

Many of the parcels investigated satisfy the objectives for community land categorised as general community use and will continue to be managed under this as roadside buffers, drainage reserves and for public access and recreation. The plan of management has also identified some parcels which have values that could be better served by other plans of management particularly areas of bushland and parks and a range of parcels that should be reclassified as operational land.

Roadside Buffers

Council owns fifty-seven parcels of community land located alongside the major arterial roads of Warringah Road, Forest Way and Mona Vale Road. Many of these parcels form a contiguous buffer between the road and residential properties and are valued by local residents not only for their visual amenity in screening the road, but also as a noise barrier, a pleasant place to walk and as a wildlife corridor.

Council aims to protect the character of the areas through which the arterial roads pass by providing a wide vegetated strip which prevents development right up to the roadside. Therefore, the management actions recommended for these parcels relate primarily to the protection, management and enhancement of remnant habitat values and the maintenance and enhancement of public access, linkages and passive recreation (refer to *5.0 Management Strategies – 5.1 Action Plan, items MG1-7 and MH1-7*).

Drainage Reserves

Fourteen parcels fulfil an important drainage function. They range in size and contain natural watercourses and stormwater infrastructure, both above and below-ground. The management actions recommended for these parcels aim to enhance drainage functions, water quality and stream flows, whilst improving the community's use and enjoyment of the reserves where possible (refer to *5.0 Management Strategies – 5.1 Action Plan, items MF1-7*).

Public Access and Recreation

The Plan contains twenty parcels which are important for public access, linkages and passive recreation. These pathways, steps and small reserves form part of a valued pedestrian network through neighbourhoods, linking residential areas with services such as shops, schools and public transport. Management actions have been recommended to ensure that these parcels are safe, accessible and appealing to use (refer to *5.0 Management Strategies – 5.1 Action Plan, items MH1-7*).

Encroachments

A number of parcels are affected by encroachments from neighbouring private properties which threaten or reduce the value of the land to the wider community. This Plan recommends that Council instigate compliance procedures with respect to encroachments (refer to *5.0 Management Strategies – 5.1 Action Plan, items ME1*). Council's approach to encroachments is also briefly discussed in *3.3 Community Issues*.

Natural Area - Bushland

Six parcels of land investigated during preparation of this plan of management contain remnant and vestigial components of natural bushland. In accordance with the guidelines for categorisation of community land, many of these areas should be categorised as Natural Area – Bushland, or other Natural Area category.

Significantly, some parcels investigated in the Belrose – Terrey Hills area retain “Duffy's Forest”, a scheduled endangered ecological community and one site in particular contains specimens of Caley's Grevillea (*Grevillea caleyi*), an endangered shrub.

Land parcels containing remnant natural bushland, including all sites with existing or possible threatened species, have been referred for consideration under the Bushland Plans of Management (refer to *5.0 Management Strategies – 5.1 Action Plan, item MB1*).

Parks

Six parcels have been identified as having recreational values that would be more adequately promoted and managed with a categorisation of Park. These have been referred for consideration under the Neighbourhood Parks Plan of Management (refer to *5.0 Management Strategies – 5.1 Action Plan, item MB2*).

Road reserves

Fifty-three parcels recorded on the Warringah Land Register (WLR) as community land have been constructed and are maintained public roads or provide access to private properties. They include right-of-ways, lane ways, road extensions, road widening and portions of roadway such as splay corners and roundabouts. These are not permissible uses of community land under the *Local Government Act 1993* (refer to *2.2 Community land and community land categories*).

It is likely that these parcels of land were classified as community land when the Local Government Act 1993 came into effect. Provisions in the Act meant that many Council owned lands were automatically classified as community land without assessment. A number of parcels have retained their original, yet inappropriate, classification and have been identified for reclassification through this plan of management process.

This plan of management recommends that these community land parcels be reclassified to operational land and dedicated as “road reserve” in accordance with the *Roads Act 1993* or dedicated as “road” under the *Local Government Act 1993* (refer to *5.0 Management Strategies – 5.1 Action Plan, item MA1*).

In all these cases, it is not anticipated that the change of classification will result in any alteration in the way the community uses the land.

Miscellaneous reclassifications

Initiation of investigations towards reclassification has been recommended for twenty-six parcels to reflect the future intended use of the land as a result of issues and values identified during the development of this Plan.

Of these, thirteen parcels are narrow strips of land (less than 1 metre wide) that are located behind residential properties bordering the area known as the Belrose Road Corridor. The corridor, owned by the RTA, was reserved for future construction of a major arterial road. It is understood that this narrow strip of community land was established to provide a buffer between the road and existing residential properties.

Road construction is no longer planned and the area is now subject to a Master Plan to subdivide the land for residential development and public open space.

It is recommended that, subject to recommendations of the Belrose Road Corridor Master Plan, Council investigate and reclassify if appropriate the narrow strips of community land. Council will consider incorporation of the parcels into the Belrose open space corridor or equitable disposal to adjoining owners.

The remaining thirteen parcels which have been recommended for reclassification or further investigation are either currently inaccessible to the community or not of a sufficient area to provide for future community use.