

**9.5 Draft Mountain Biking in Warringah: Research and Directions**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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**Purpose**

To approve for exhibition the draft document, *Mountain Biking in Warringah: Research and Directions*. The purpose of this document is to assess the demand for mountain biking in Warringah and to provide a policy context for future targeted facility planning.

**Summary**

The results of an online survey illustrate a strong demand for more facilities, however, the constraints include the complexity of land tenure and the need for Council to be careful when committing resources to regional facilities. This research outlines moderate opportunities to increase the provision of mountain bike facilities in Warringah and improve the connectivity of existing trails. Any significant increase in provision would require cooperation between Warringah Council and one or more other land managers, such as National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and/or the Crown Lands Division.

**Financial Impact**

Nil impact at this stage. Further research into the feasibility of the opportunities identified in the document will fall within the budgets of the relevant business units of Council. Any future development of mountain bike tracks will need to be identified, programmed and budgeted for in future business planning.

**Policy Impact**

Nil.

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**RECOMMENDATION OF ACTING DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER  
STRATEGIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

That Council approve the Draft Mountain Biking in Warringah: Research and Directions document for public exhibition for a period of 21 days.

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## REPORT

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### Background

Council's Recreation Strategy 2009 identified the need for Council to investigate the provision of facilities for off-road cycling as a growing recreational activity in Warringah. The attached document is a key response to this Action. For the purpose of this research the term mountain biking refers to all styles of off-road cycling that does not occur on roads or formal bike paths. These forms of mountain biking include: cross country; downhill; free riding; and dirt jumping.

Objectives of the project are to:

- Identify the current and future mountain biking opportunities in Warringah, both authorised and unauthorised
- Identify the demographics of people who ride mountain bikes in Warringah, including how many there are, where they ride and how often
- Identify the constraints to increasing the provision of mountain bike trails in Warringah
- Identify the issues relating to planning, constructing, managing and maintaining mountain bike tracks, including cost, environmental impacts and other trails users

### Consultation

Two phases of community consultation were scheduled for this research project. Phase one involved an online survey of people who ride mountain bikes in Warringah, which was held between 30 June and 31 July 2011. The aim was to collect demographic and participation rate data. The survey was advertised via the Warringah Update (Manly Daily), the Manly Dam mountain bike email list, online forums, posters and Council's youth contacts. A strong response was received with 1647 surveys completed. Phase two involved a follow up meeting which was held on 21 September 2011 with members of mountain bike clubs and some randomly selected survey respondents who had indicated an interest in being involved in future consultation. The draft survey results were presented at the meeting and some of the research findings were discussed.

Consultation was also undertaken with National Parks and Wildlife Service, neighbouring councils, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and managers of other mountain bike facilities from around Australia.

### Findings

This research has identified there are modest opportunities to increase the provision of mountain biking facilities in Warringah. Consideration has been given to existing Warringah strategies (e.g. Multi-Use Trails Strategy) and plans of management as well as opportunities for cross-tenure trails requiring partnerships with other land managers. The locations of future trails have not been presented in this document as this is dependent on further feasibility research. Some of the key findings are:

- Survey respondents were primarily male (92%, n=1,497). The largest proportion were from the 35-49 age group (57%, n=1,504) and there were also large numbers of 25-24 year olds (29%, n=1,504). Forty three percent (n=1,422) reported being in the top Australian Bureau of Statistics category of earning \$104,000 gross annually or more.
- Cross country is the most popular mountain biking discipline in Warringah, followed by free riding and downhill respectively.
- NPWS are proposing to develop new mountain bike trails in Garigal National Park in the vicinity of Bantry Bay. Warringah Council has provided in principle support to provide a link into the national park via Council managed land at Forestville Park. There may also be an

opportunity to encourage safe linkages between the Manly Dam loop and the proposed trail at Garigal National Park.

- The gazettal of the Oxford Falls Regional Crown Reserve Plan of Management will enable a strategic review of lands to be undertaken, which will include considering the suitability of mountain bike activities.
- There may be a potential opportunity to relocate the now closed Freedom dirt jumps at Manly Vale to nearby Condoover Reserve. This would be contingent upon further feasibility investigations and resource allocation.
- There is an opportunity to enhance the riding experience at Manly Dam.
- Waste Asset Management Corporation is currently investigating the feasibility of developing a mountain bike facility at the Belrose Waste and Recycling Centre post landfill in November 2014.

### **Timing**

Public exhibition is planned for 21 days via similar media and communications methods as used in the phase 1 consultation. A summary of submissions and the amended document will be reported back to Council in early 2012.

### **Policy Impact**

Nil

### **Financial Impact**

Nil impact at this stage. Further research into the feasibility of the opportunities identified in the document will fall within the budgets of the relevant business units of Council. Any future development of mountain bike tracks will need to be identified, programmed and budgeted for in future business planning.

**Acting Group Manager Strategic Planning**

***Attachment Booklet*** – Draft Mountain Biking Warringah: Research and Directions

