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1. Introduction

1.1 Title and Background

This plan is titled Cooks River Natural Area (Bushland) Plan of Management. This plan covers the land categorised as natural area (bushland) that are located in the Cooks River (including Cox Creek) corridor in the Strathfield LGA. This plan applies only to the land categorised as natural area (bushland) areas. Most natural areas are located within a larger park or reserve and this plan should be read in combination with the associated plans of management which is set out in Table 1.

Strathfield LGA's Biodiversity (or Wildlife) Corridors are identified and mapped in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019. These corridors are also identified as Priority Biodiversity Areas and a Priority Green Grid Project in Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) 2020. Most of these areas are located in parks and reserves on the foreshores of the Cooks River and Coxs Creek Corridor. Under section 36 of the Local Government Act Areas community land with significant natural features such as Wildlife Corridors are categorised as Natural Areas (bushland).

The current plan was exhibited from 30 September to 11 December 2020. A public hearing was held on 15 October 2020 concerning land categorisations. The plan was adopted by Council resolution at the meeting of 1 December 2020

1.2 Purpose, coverage and inclusions

The *Local Government Act 1993* and amendments to the *Crown Land Management Act 2016* require all public land including Crown Reserves, owned or managed by Council, to be classified as either 'community' land or 'operational' land. Land classified as 'community' land must be managed and used in accordance with an adopted Plan of Management.

Plans of Management are developed by Council in consultation with the community. A Plan of Management describes the features of the community land and outlines how the land may be managed and used, consistent with land categorisations, core objectives and zoning, to provide a transparent and co-ordinated approach to public land management.

The purpose of this Plan of Management is to:

- contribute to the strategic goals and vision as set out in the Strathfield Community Strategic Plan
- ensure compliance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and relevant legislation and guidelines
- provide clarity regarding use and access to the community land as described in this plan.

This plan of management relates only to community land categorised as natural area (bushland). The table below sets out the locations of Natural Area (Bushland) and the associated plan of management.

Table 1 Natural Area locations, property information and associated plans of management

Natural Area (Bushland) locations	Associated Plan of Management
Maria Reserve, Elliott St, Belfield	-
Land located in Prentice Reserve, off Prentice Ln, Strathfield	Local Parks Plan of Management (2020)
St Anne's Reserve Strathfield South	-
South Cooks Land, off Water St, Strathfield South	-
Land located in Chain of Ponds Reserve Strathfield	Local Parks Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in Begnell Field, Madeline St, Belfield	Begnell Field Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in Cooke Park, Madeline St, Belfield	Cooke Park Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in Elliott Reserve, Elliott St, Belfield	Elliott Reserve Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in Freshwater Reserve, Augusta St, Strathfield	Freshwater Park Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in 'Chiswick Reserve', off Chiswick St, Strathfield South	Local Parks Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in Ford Park, James St, Strathfield South	Local Parks Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in Palmer Reserve, Strathfield	Local Parks Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in Thew Reserve, Augusta St, Strathfield	Local Parks Plan of Management (2020); Community Facilities Plan of Management (2020)
Land located in Southend Tennis Centre, Chiswick St, Strathfield South	Southend Tennis Centre Plan of Management (2020)

1.3 About this Plan

This plan only applies to land that is categorised as natural area (bushland) areas and sets out requirements that are specific to the management of this land only.

1.4 Legislative and Policy Framework

The following legislation and policies provide a framework for the preparation of this Plan of Management. A more detailed list is outlined in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy (pages 62-66).

Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (LG Act) requires Council to classify public land, to categorise and prepare Plans of Management (POMs) for community land which set out how the land is to be managed. In respect of significant natural areas such as habitat or wildlife corridors, the plan set s out reasons for the categorisation of land, the area which is categorised and identification of objectives and performance targets to protect the area.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW) (EP&A Act) is the principal planning legislation for NSW, that provides a framework for the environmental planning and assessment of development proposals and preparation of environmental planning instruments (including the Local Environmental Plan or LEP).

Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW) (BC Act) requires that Councils consider the impact on threatened species, populations and communities in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities under the EP&A Act for development approvals. It also covers management of threatened species and communities on Council owned lands.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth) (EPBC Act) provides a national scheme for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, and incorporates referral mechanisms and environmental impact assessment processes for projects of national significance.

Companion Animal Act 1998 (NSW) requires the identification and registration of companion animals (e.g. cats and dogs) and sets out the duties and responsibilities in relation to management of animals and specific areas of land.

Local Land Services Act 2013 (NSW) provides a framework to ensure the proper management of natural resources in the social, economic and environmental interests of the State. Strathfield is part of the Greater Sydney Local Land Services (GSLLS), which provides guidance on matters such as community engagement, biosecurity and weeds.

Also relevant are:

- Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (NSW)
- Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (NSW) and Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)
- Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)
- Fisheries Management Act 1994 (NSW)
- Rural Fires Act 1997 (NSW)
- State Environmental Planning Policy 19 – Bushland in Urban Areas.
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)

Local plans and studies

Strathfield Council adopted a vision in its community strategic plan that describes the community's aspirations for the future of the Strathfield Local Government Area by 2030:

“Strathfield is a culturally diverse and socially cohesive community with respect for its heritage and environment and proud of its well-connected transport, business and educational institutions”.

This vision was supported by the Community Strategic Plan, which contains goals and objectives related to the biodiversity and natural environment in Theme 4 Liveable Neighbourhoods, which includes a 'Thriving and Resilient Environment' as a goal and 'conserve, restore and enhance Strathfield's biodiversity and ecological health and resiliency' as a strategy.

Council adopted the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2030 in December 2019, which sets out the management of the LGA's natural environment until 2030. This strategy is supported by previous studies including the Strathfield Fauna Studies in 2016-2017 and 2008. Community consultation including surveys and workshops were held in 2019 and informed the preparation of the strategy and action plan.

Council adopted its Local Strategic Planning Statement in 2020, which includes a thematic direction of Sustainability with five main planning priorities, which support a range of actions to address biodiversity and ecological health, and thriving green corridors. The LSPS identifies as an opportunity the development of a masterplan for the Green Grid Priority Cooks River Open Space Corridor, which broadly covers the community land of the Cooks River and Coxs Creek Corridor which is address in this Plan of Management.

1.5 Change and Review of Plan of Management

This Plan of Management will require regular review in order to align with community values and changing community needs, and to reflect changes in Council priorities. The performance of this Plan of Management will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the use of land and structures is well maintained and consistent with Council's strategic objectives and community values.

Strategic reviews of this Plan of Management will be required where there is significant change to legislation, land ownership/management or proposed land use. Regular reviews should occur at five (5) year intervals.

1.6 References

Ambrose Ecological Services Pty Ltd, 2009, Vertebrae Fauna Study

Eco Logical Australia and Strathfield Council, 2019, *Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2030*, viewed at <https://www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au/live/biodiversity/>

Insight Ecology, 2017, *The Fauna of Strathfield (Local Government Area)*, viewed at <https://www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au/live/biodiversity/>

Jones, Cathy, 2019, *Parks and Reserves*, Strathfield Heritage website at <https://strathfieldheritage.org/parks-and-reserves>

Near Maps – Strathfield LGA, 2019 at <https://www.nearmap.com/au/en>

NSW Department Planning, 2019, *Strathfield LGA Population Projections 2016-2041*, viewed at <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Factsheets-and-faqs/Research-and-demography/Population-projections/2019-Strathfield.pdf>

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion profile, updated 2019, viewed at <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=10789>

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, *P. prunifolia* in the Parramatta, Auburn, Strathfield and Bankstown Local Government Areas – profile, updated 2019, viewed at <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedSpeciesApp/profile.aspx?id=10655>

Strathfield Council, *Strathfield Local Environmental Plan 2012*, viewed at <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/EPL/2013/115>

Strathfield Council, Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020, viewed at <https://www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Strathfield-2040-LSPS-v10.pdf>

Strathfield Council, 2018, *Community Strategic Plan – Strathfield 2030* viewed at <https://www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au/council/policies-plans-and-regulations/community-strategic-plan/>

Strathfield Council, 2019, Geographical Information System (GIS) Data

1.7 Categories and classifications of Community Land

The management of community land is governed by the categorisation of the land, and the core objectives of the relevant category of community land. The core objectives for the category are set out in the *Local Government Act 1993*. The guidelines and core objectives for relevant categories are set out in the table below.

Table: Guidelines for and core objectives of community land

Category	Guidelines ¹	Core objectives ²
Natural Area	<i>Regulation cl.102</i> Natural areas are where land, whether or not in an undisturbed state, possesses a significant geological feature, geomorphological feature, landform, representative system or other natural feature or attribute that would be sufficient to further categorise the land as bushland, wetland, escarpment, watercourse or foreshore	<i>Natural Area - (Section 36E)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to conserve biodiversity and maintain ecosystem function in respect of the land, or the feature or habitat in respect of which the land is categorised to a natural area; and to maintain the land, or that feature or habitat, in its natural state and setting, and to provide for the restoration and regeneration of the land, and to provide for community use of and access to the land in such a manner as will minimise and mitigate any disturbance caused by human intrusion, and to assist in and facilitate the implement of any provisions restricting the use and management of the land that are set out in a recovery plan or threat abatement plan prepared under the <i>Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995</i> or the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i>
Natural Area – bushland	<i>Regulation cl.107</i> Land that contains primarily native vegetation that is the natural vegetation or a remainder of the natural vegetation of the land, or although not the natural vegetation, is still representative of the structure or floristics of the natural vegetation in the locality.	<i>Natural Area - Bushland (Section 36J)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to ensure the ongoing ecological viability of the land by protecting the ecological biodiversity and habitat values of the land, the flora and fauna (including invertebrates, fungi and micro-organisms) of the land and other ecological values of the land, and to protect the aesthetic, heritage, recreational, educational and scientific values of the land, and to promote the management of the land in a manner that protects and enhances the values and quality of the land and facilitates public enjoyment of the land, and to implement measures directed to minimising or mitigating any disturbance caused by human intrusion, and to restore degraded bushland, and to protect existing landforms such as natural drainage lines, watercourses and foreshores, and

¹ *Local Government General Regulation 2005*

² *Local Government Act 1993*

Category	Guidelines ¹	Core objectives ²
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to retain bushland in parcels of a size and configuration that will enable the existing plant and animal communities to survive in the long term, and • to protect bushland as a natural stabiliser of the soil surface.

Council must manage community land in according to these core objectives. Any activities or uses of the land should be consistent with the core objectives for that category of land. Additional objectives which support the above core objectives are included in the Action Plan.

1.8 Natural Area (Bushland) in Cooks River/Coxs Creek Corridors

The Cooks River/Coxs Creek Open Space Corridor runs at the east from the junction of Punchbowl Road and Coronation Parade (bounding City of Canterbury-Bankstown Council) to Freshwater Park Strathfield. Coxs Creek Corridor meets Cooks River at Water Street Belfield. Along these waterways are parks and open spaces, which contain a natural area bushland corridor, which is mostly indigenous revegetation typical of Cooks River and its tributaries.

'Bushland' is defined in State Environmental Planning Policy 19 – Bushland in Urban Area (SEPP 19) as:

“...land on which there is vegetation which is either a remainder of the natural vegetation of the land, or if altered, is still representative of the structure and floristics of the natural vegetation”

The Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy 2019 (page 16) identified various areas of community land in the Strathfield Local Government Area as biodiversity corridors (also known as wildlife corridors or ecological corridors), which are areas of connected habitat across the landscape that:

- allows the movement of animals and the dispersal of plants
- ensures genetic exchange of flora and fauna population that may otherwise become extinct in the long-term
- allows recolonisation of habitat areas by fauna and flora that have become locally extinct from events such as land clearing, fire, disease, fluctuating food supply and extreme weather.
- provides a relatively safe route for the movement of animals across the landscape.

The figure below maps the biodiversity corridors, which follow the Cooks River and Coxs Creek corridor and the east-west Green and Golden Bellfrog (GGBF) linkage area.

1.8.1 Biodiversity Corridors and Priority Areas

The Priority Biodiversity Corridor in the Strathfield LGA is located along Cooks River and Coxs Creek and is mapped in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy 2019

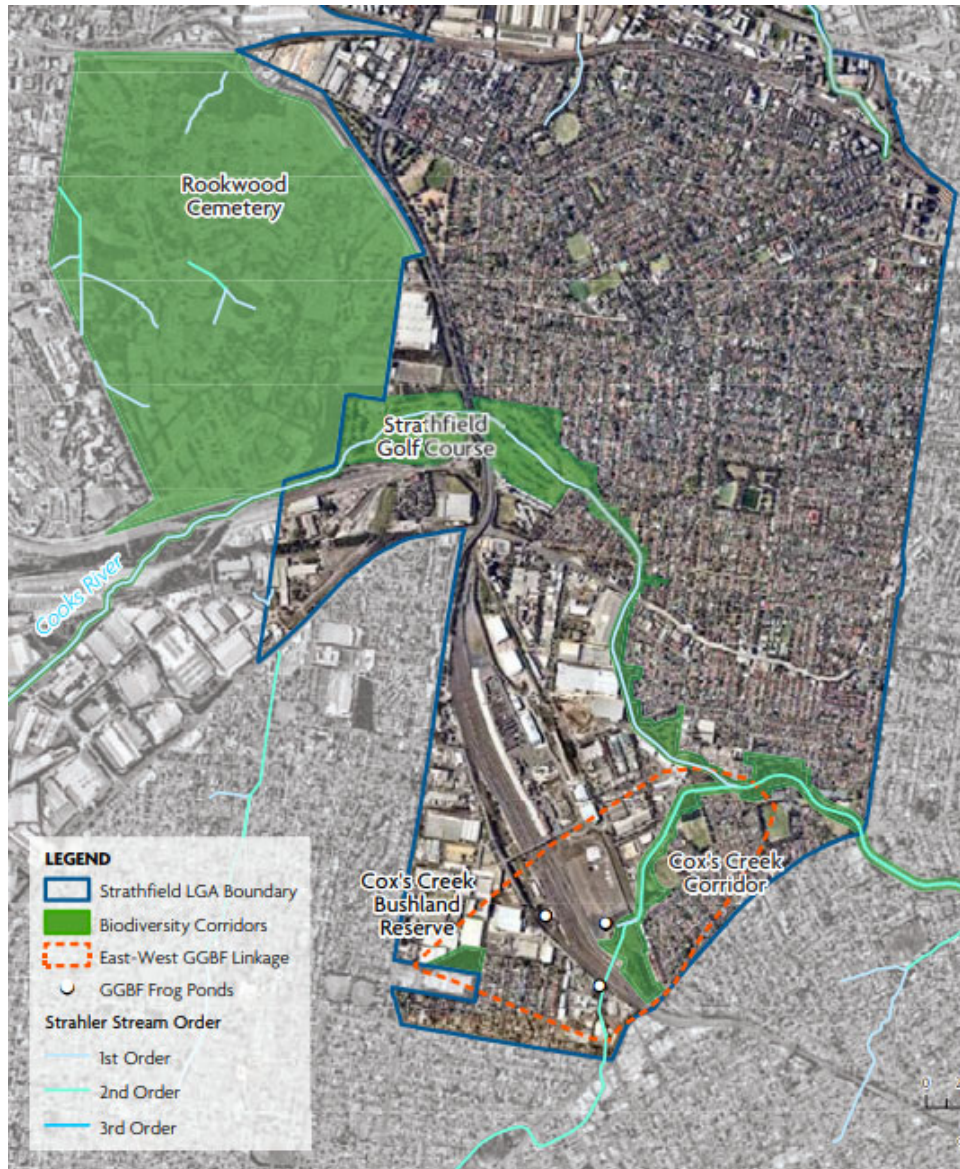


Figure 1 Biodiversity Corridors as mapped in Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy (2019: 16)

The Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy 2019 further identifies various priority areas. Both Connectivity Priority areas and Community Engagement Priority Areas are located in the Cooks River/Coxs Creek Corridor.

Connectivity Priority Areas contain core native habitat that supports locally important fauna and flora. Acts as a 'stepping stone' and corridors that provide dispersal pathways for fauna to move through the landscape.

Community engagement priority areas – areas that are easily accessible by community members for activities including Bushcare and planting days. These areas have biodiversity and connectivity potential.

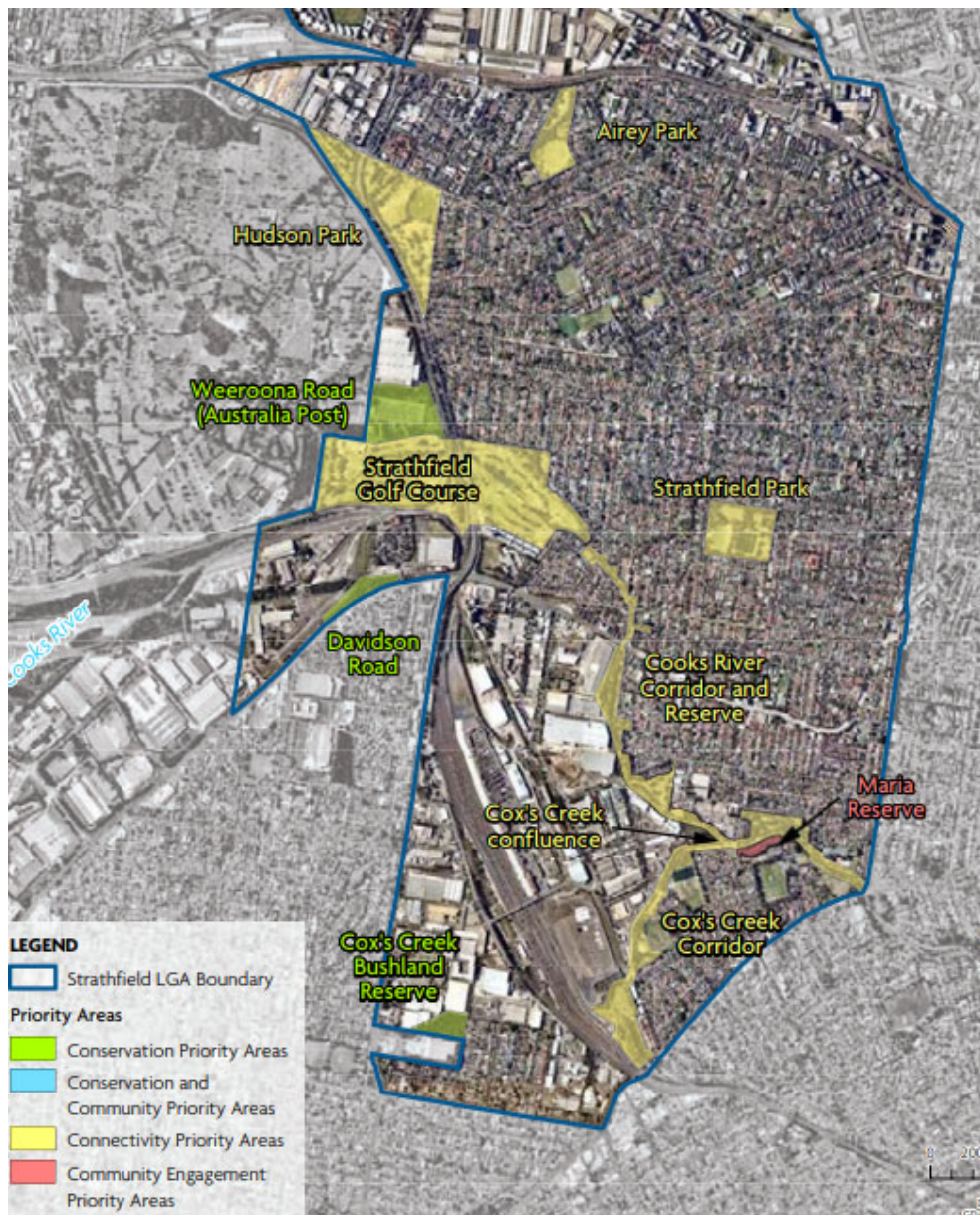


Figure 2 Conservation, Community and Connectivity Priority Areas as mapped in Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy (2019: 16)

The Strathfield Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) 2020 identifies and maps the locations of biodiversity priority areas and Priority Green Grid Project areas, which align with the Cooks/Coxs Corridor.

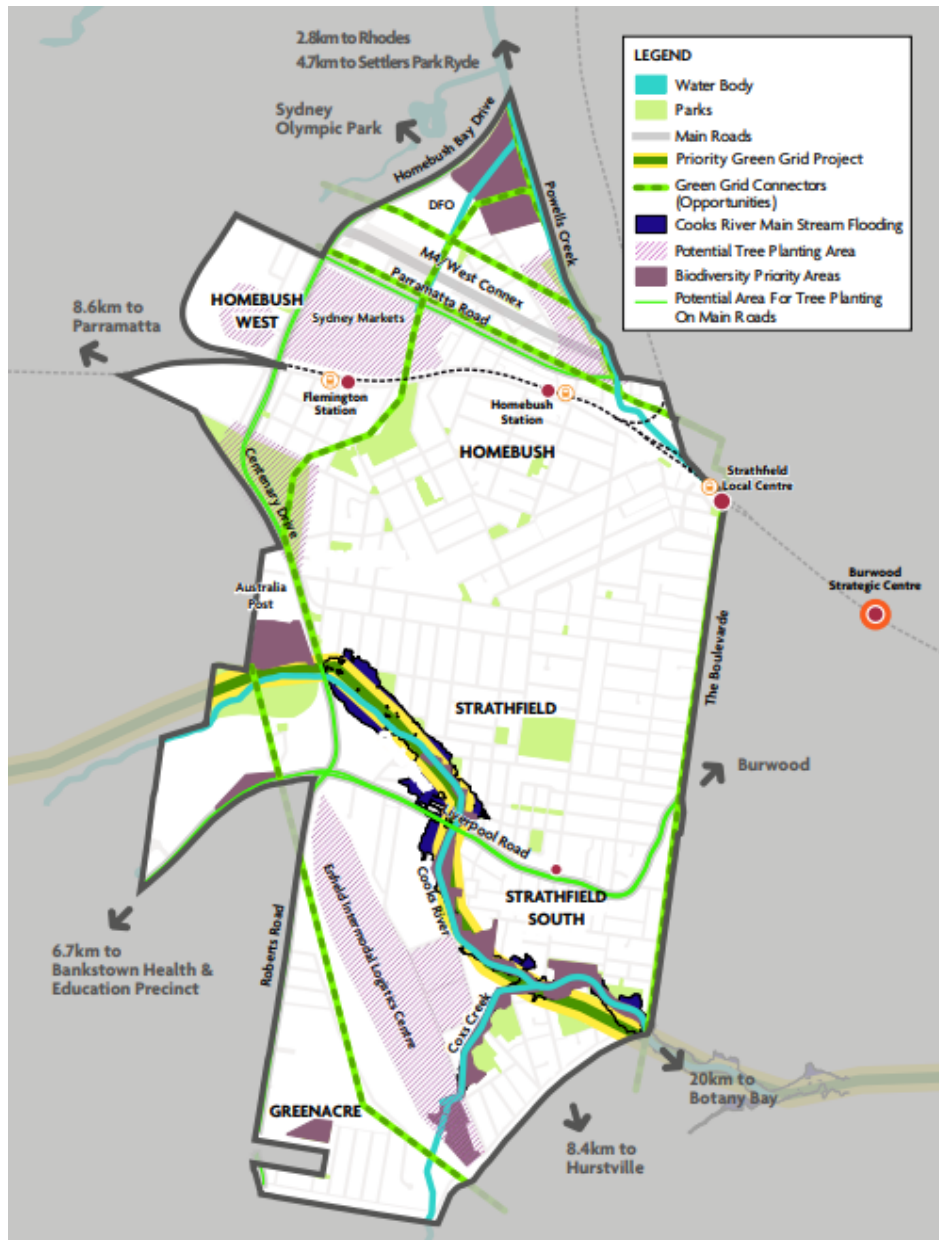


Figure 3 Priority Green Grid Cooks River Open Space Corridor – Strathfield LSPS 2020 (p69).

1.8.2 Pipeline

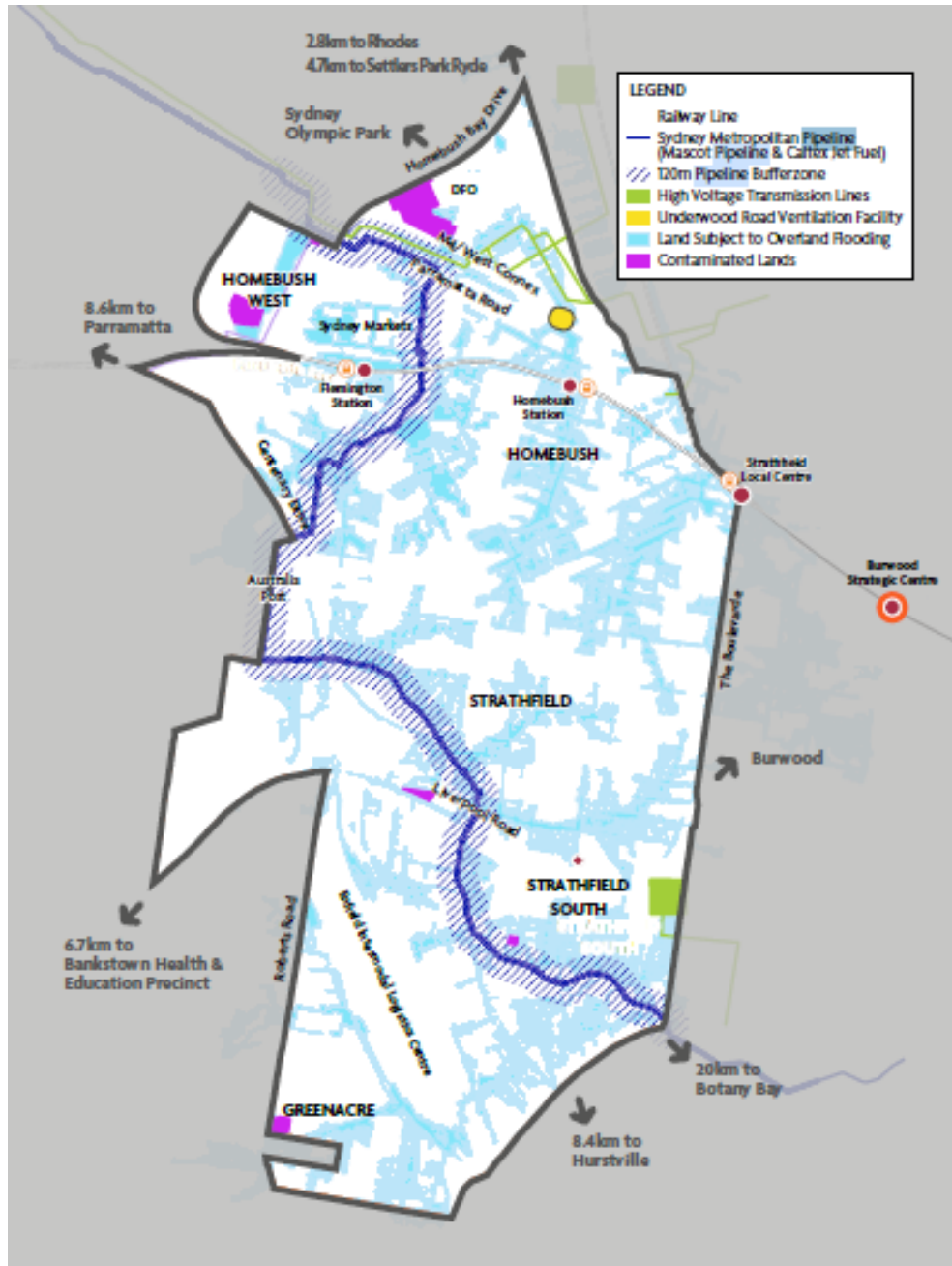


Figure 4 Hazards including Pipeline as mapped in Strathfield Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020: 83)

The mapping above indicates the location of the pipeline and associated buffer zone on affected lands. Approval is required for all works including minor works. The parks affected in this Plan of Management are located on the north side of the Cooks River.

The affected sites include: Chiswick Reserve, Southend Tennis Centre, Ford Park, South Cooks Land, Freshwater Reserve, Palmer Reserve, Chain of Ponds Reserve and Thew Reserve.



Figure 5 Location of Pipeline in Parks in Cooks River Corridor



Figure 6 Location of Pipeline in Parks close to Cooks River

1.9 About the Cooks River/Coxs Creek Corridor

1.9.1 Historical development

The Strathfield LGA is divided into two distinct catchment areas, the original creek systems drained into either Cooks River/Coxs Creek in the south and Powells Creek/Parramatta River in the north. It is known that these local waterways provided camping, fishing and hunting grounds for the Aboriginal Wangal clan of the Darug Tribe. Following land grants to European settlers from the late 18th and early 19th century, small farms developed along the Cooks River, followed by larger scale residential and industrial development.

By 1899, large brickworks were established in Water Street and Dean Street Strathfield South near the Cooks River foreshore. Development required clearing of land. This had a devastating impact on the natural landscape, causing reduction in size and fragmenting and isolating natural vegetation communities. Increased pressure from further sub-division of land, urban development and land-fill coupled with the invasion of exotic weeds from new cultural plantings resulted in further reduction and alienation of remnant native plant communities.

Aerial photographs dated 1943 shows that many of the foreshore corridor areas were cleared of vegetation and much of the river had been concreted. By 1943, construction and concreting of Coxs Creek from Water Street to Greenacre and the Cooks River in the Strathfield LGA had been completed from Punchbowl Road Belfield to Water Street, Strathfield South. Construction of the canals altered the natural form of the river.



1943 photograph of the area now occupied by Elliott Reserve (south of river) and Southend Tennis Centre and 'Chiswick Reserve' (north of river). Source: Six Maps



2020 photograph showing Elliott Reserve (south of river) and Southend Tennis Centre and 'Chiswick Reserve' (north of river). © Near Maps 2020



1943 photograph of the area now occupied by Maria Reserve (south of river) and Ford Park (north of river). Source: SIX Maps



2020 photograph of Maria Reserve (south of river) and Ford Park (north of river). © Near Maps 2020



1943 photo of the area now occupied by South Cocks Land and Dean Reserve, which was formerly a brickpit. Source: SIX Maps



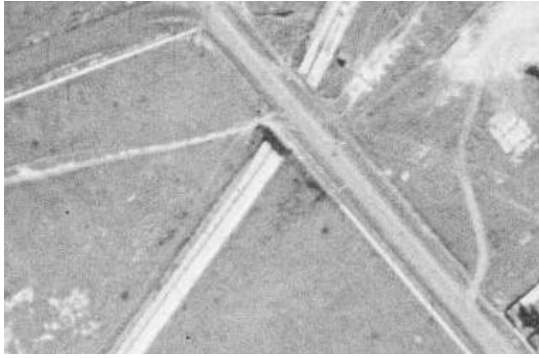
2020 photo of the area now occupied by South Cocks Land (near the river) and Dean Reserve. @ Near Maps 2020



1943 Water Street diversion and concreting of Cooks River (top) and Cocks Creek (bottom). Source: SIX Maps



2020 photo of diversion of the Cooks River and Cocks Creek. @ Near Maps 2020



1943 photo showing Madeline Street and top section of Cooke Park (at right) and Begnell Field (at left). Source: SIX Maps



2020 photo showing Madeline Street with Cooke Park (at right) and Begnell Field (at left). @ Near Maps 2020



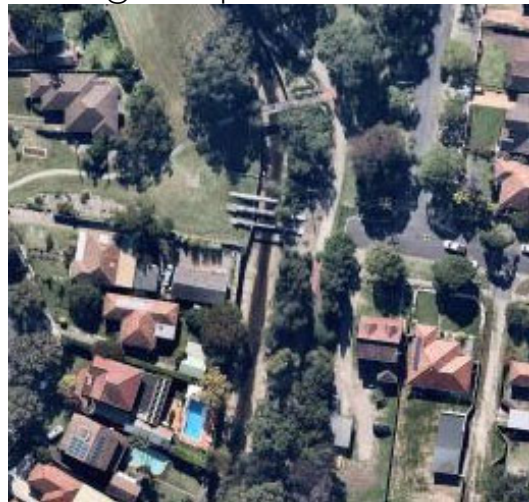
1943 photograph of the area occupied by St Anne's Reserve. Source: SIX Maps



2020 photograph of the area occupied by St Anne's Reserve. @ Near Maps 2020



1943 photograph of Cooks River near Palmer Ave. Source: SIX Maps



2020 photograph of Cooks River and Palmer Reserve. @ Near Maps 2020



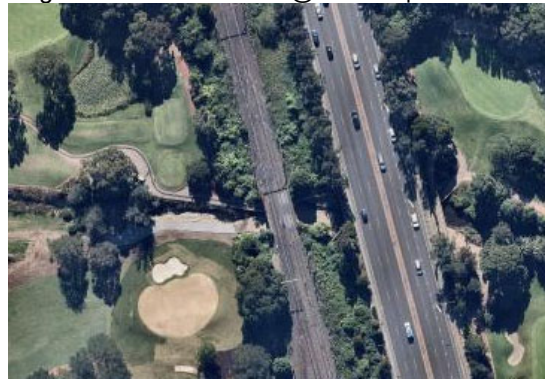
1943 Cooks River featuring Augusta St, now Chain of Ponds and Freshwater Park. Source: SIX Maps



2020 Chain of Ponds Reserve and Freshwater park to the left. Cave Road has been added, Augusta St is still visible. @ Near Maps 2020



1943 Cooks River Freshwater Park and S Strathfield Golf Course (east) bisected by the railway. Source: SIX Maps



2020 Freshwater Park and Strathfield Golf Course (west) bisected by the railway and Centenary Drive. @ Near Maps 2020

Further concreting of the river continued in the 1960s from Water Street to Augusta Street Strathfield (Chain of Ponds Reserve). This has resulted in both the Cooks River and Cocks Creek been fully concreted except for the sections of the river near Freshwater Park and running through the Strathfield Golf Course.

Since the 1970s, Strathfield Council has taken actions, particularly on the foreshore land adjacent to local waterways, to address the degraded natural environment of the foreshore parks. Council, with the assistance of local volunteer groups including Men of Trees and Bushcare, commenced establishing vegetation corridors along the Cooks River and on land near the Cocks Creek foreshore that was owned by Council. This occurred in tandem with the building of the new pedestrian/cycleway from Botany Bay to Homebush Bay. Most of the foreshore land was devoid of any vegetation. The open space corridors along the Cooks River and Cox Creek managed by Council now contains established plantings, mainly revegetation. In 1995, Council established a Bushland Reserve at Maria Reserve Belfield.



Maria Reserve 2001 before revegetation



Maria Reserve 2007 after revegetation



Dean Reserve planting 2006



Dean Reserve 1998



Freshwater Park prior to works 2003



Freshwater Post post-2007

1.9.2 Riverbank Stabilisation and Naturalisation

Between 2003 and 2008, works were undertaken on the Cooks River and adjacent Strathfield Golf Course (Freshwater Park) to stabilise the riverbank, which had been eroding. This project also involved revegetation of the corridor and naturalisation of parts of the river in Freshwater Park.

From 2003 to 2007, Stage 1 of partial restoration of Freshwater Park and Cooks River Restoration works were completed. These works accounted for of half the length of the river within Freshwater Park. The Cooks River Restoration Project, Area B, Freshwater Park forms part of the ongoing rehabilitation program to re-establish an valuable green corridor.

Action was taken to restore approximately 400 m of the upper Cooks River through ecologically sensitive bank modification and revegetation works.

Sandstone rock walling, extensive weed control and the installation of approximately 22,000 plants from 42 different locally indigenous species has reduced erosion and contributed to the re-establishment of native vegetation along this important section of the Cooks River.

The project aimed at restoring the waterway to be self-sustaining, rich in biodiversity and demonstrating an efficient use of open space in a highly urbanised area. Several engineering and landscaping measures were adopted to arrest the erosion that was destabilising the riverbanks and bed of the Cooks River within Freshwater Park (leased to Strathfield Golf Club). These included:

- Battering of riverbanks to reduce steep bank slope
- Stabilisation with appropriate materials, including appropriate local provenance native vegetation, geotextiles and natural rock
- Ongoing monitoring and maintenance



1.9.3 Bay to Bay Shared Pathway

A large portion of the Cooks River corridor contains the Bay to Bay, a regional cycle and walking shared pathway which runs from Settlers Park in Ryde to Botany Bay. Much of the pathway travels through the foreshore parks along the Cooks River. The pathway provides easy access to a variety of places in the Strathfield Local Government Area.

1.9.4 Environmental Considerations

Cooks and Coxs Creek's foreshore open space forms a biodiversity corridor. As noted by the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy, the key considerations to protect and promote Strathfield's natural environment include:

Native planting

Planting regimes should aim to be diverse and replicate the composition of the ecological community that would naturally occur in an area. Different plant species and forms contribute to the ecosystems through the habitat they provide. For instance, small native birds need dense shrubs to protect from larger, more aggressive species. Vegetation communities are mapped in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy (p24). Appendix E of the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy lists species associated with each of the ecological communities that occur in the LGA and should be used to select species for revegetation projects in the Cooks River Corridor.

Foraging – creating environment

Introducing breeding, roosting and foraging habitat to the landscape to supplement plantings. This can include logs, nest boxes (different configuration for different target species) and water features with features with fringing vegetation. Highly sensitive areas should be fenced with signage outlining the purpose of fencing.

Weeds

Weeds are prevalent across the Strathfield LGA which can include Weeds of National Significance (WONS). Landowners, including Council, have legal obligations to control certain weeds. This can include preventing new weeds establishing in an area, treating them so they do not spread to other areas, or removing them. The Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022 priorities weeds for management purposes and provides details that should be considered in any weed control program. Best practice weed control techniques are described in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy Appendix F.

Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

Many of Strathfield's plants and animals are threatened with extinction and are listed under the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and/or the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. Threatened native plants occurring in the Cooks River/Coxs Creek Corridor include Pomaderris Prunifolia and Acacia Pubescens (Downy Wattle); the Castlereagh Ironbark Forest and native fauna such as Green and Golden Bell Frog (GGBF) and Grey-headed Flying Fox.

Green Golden Bell Frog (GGBF)

GGBF are usually located in and around water bodies such as wetlands and lakes or on sites which humans have disturbed such as abandoned quarries or brickpits. In the Strathfield LGA, the GGBF core habitat area is located in Greenacre such as Coxs Creek Reserve and Greenacre Frog Ponds. An east-west GGBF linkage area is mapped in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy, which covers parks such as Begnell Field, Cooke Park, and parts of Ford Park and Maria Reserve. However, with dispersal and movement of frogs, infrequent sightings have been reported in parks further along the Cooks River such as Elliott Reserve, Southend Tennis Centre and 'Chiswick Reserve'. However, these sightings were infrequent and became increasingly rare. Council has received no reported sightings of GGBF in the LGA since 2012.

2. Natural Area (Bushland) descriptions

Begnell Field

Address

Madeline Street Belfield

Lot details

Lot 1-2 DP 1164778, Lot 1 DP 201778, Lot 1 DP 212699, Lot 4-6 DP 1130051, Lot 5 DP 512216

Ownership

Strathfield Council

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Begnell Field Plan of Management (land categorised as sportsground, park and general community use)

Descriptions

The natural area (bushland) in Begnell Field is mainly indigenous revegetation, on the northern and western edges abutting Coxs Creek, which has important habitat linkages with other corridor parks. Pre-1990s plantings are largely single specimens of trees such as *Casuarina glauca* (Swamp Oak) which have subsequently formed copses that support open nesting and/or cover-dependent birds of the understorey such as Superb Fairy-wren, Red-whiskered Bulbul and Willie Wagtail.

Begnell Field also contains open parkland areas containing established eucalypt, she-oak and melaleuca plantings and individual planted trees and shrubs that are planted along the boundaries of the open parkland and playing fields. Much of the planting was undertaken by the volunteer group Men of the Trees during the late 1990s and early 2000s and subsequently by community based Bushcare programs.

In the Strathfield LGA, the GGBF core habitat area is located in Greenacre such as Coxs Creek Reserve and Greenacre Frog Ponds. Begnell Field is contained within the east-west Green and Golden Bellfrog (GGBF) linkage area as mapped in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy (p17), which also covers parks such as Cooke Park, and parts of Ford Park and Maria Reserve. However, with dispersal and movement of frogs, infrequent sightings have been reported in parks further along the Cooks River such as Elliott Reserve, Southend Tennis Centre and 'Chiswick Reserve'. However, these sightings were infrequent and have become increasingly rare. Since 2012, Council has received no reported sightings of GGBF in the Strathfield LGA.



Figure 7 Begnell Field Land Categorisation Map

“Chiswick” Reserve

Address

22A Chiswick Street Strathfield South

Lot details

Lot 2 DP 842991

Ownership

Strathfield Council

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Local Parks Plan of Management (land categorised as park)

Descriptions

Land located in ‘Chiswick Reserve’, mainly on the foreshore of Cooks River, was identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area. This area has been categorised as Natural Area (Bushland).

Chiswick Reserve is open space and provides a revegetated link along Cooks River which form a habitat corridor. Elliott Reserve is located on the opposite side of Cooks River and the two area of parkland enable bird species such as Yellow Thornbill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Superb Fairy-wren to access Maria and Dean Reserves, Ford Park and other reserves along Cooks River.

In the Strathfield LGA, the GGBF core habitat area is located in Greenacre such as Coxs Creek Reserve and Greenacre Frog Ponds. However, with dispersal and movement of frogs, infrequent sightings have been reported in parks further along the Cooks River such as ‘Chiswick Reserve’. However, GGBF sightings have become increasingly rare and since 2012, Council has received no reported sightings of GGBF in the Strathfield LGA.

A Pipeline is located near the southern boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.

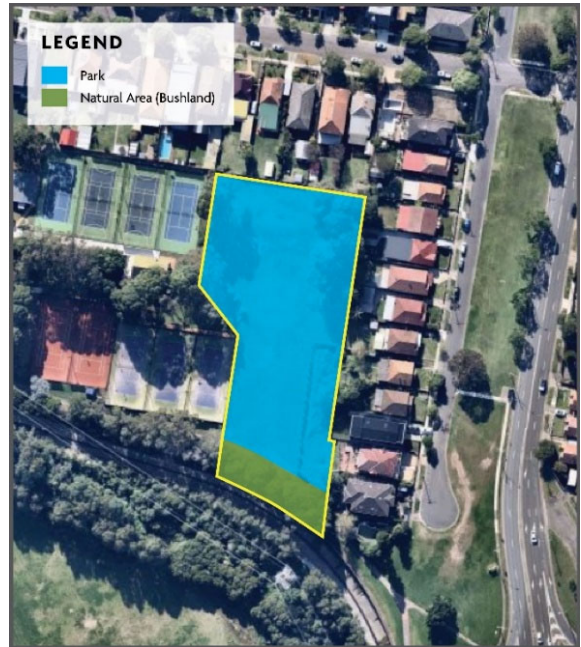


Figure 8 Chiswick Reserve Land Categorisation Map

Cooke Park

Address

22 Chiswick Street Strathfield South

Lot details

Lot 26 DP 8960, Lot A DP 357501, Lots 1-27 DP 18185, Lot 1 & 2, DP 107494 (Council)

Ownership

Strathfield Council

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Cooke Park Plan of Management (land categorised as park and sportsground)

Descriptions

Land located in Cooke Park, mainly on the foreshore of Coxs Creek, was identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area and GGBF linkage area. This area has been categorised as Natural Area (Bushland).

Cooke Park has a mixture of revegetated parkland and open playing fields. The revegetated parkland is mainly in the northern section abutting Coxs Creek Channel and contains mostly indigenous vegetation planted as strips and/or blocks. Eucalypts, acacia, paperbark and she-oak are planted along its northern edge adjoining Cox's Creek Channel and fringed by some woody weeds. These provide a narrow but thick movement corridor to Cooks River supporting the Superb Fairy-wren, Red-whiskered Bulbul and Silvereye. There are individual planted trees and shrubs planted along the boundaries of the open parkland and playing fields. Community volunteers have assisted in plantings in this park through National Tree Day events run in Cooke Park in 2014 and 2008. At the most recent event, over 300 community members planted 2500 native plants from 50 different species.

In the Strathfield LGA, the GGBF core habitat area is located in Greenacre such as Coxs Creek Reserve and Greenacre Frog Ponds. Begnell Field is contained within the east-west Green and Golden Bellfrog (GGBF) linkage area as mapped in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy (p17), which includes Cooke Park. However, these sightings have become increasingly rare and since 2012, Council has received no reported sightings of GGBF in the Strathfield LGA.



Figure 9 Cooke Park Land Categorisation Map

Chain of Ponds Reserve

Address

Augusta Street and Cave Road Strathfield

Lot details

Lot 3 DP 243041, Lot 1 224899, Lot 3 DP 854298, Lot 19 DP 243041 (Council); Lot 1 DP 243041, Lot 9 DP 243041 and Lot 18 DP 243041 (Sydney Water); Lot 61 DP 570036 (DPIE)

Ownership

Strathfield Council, Sydney Water & Department of Planning, Industry & Environment

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area – Bushland

Associated Plans

Local Parks Plan of Management (land categorised as park)

Descriptions

Land located in Chain of Ponds Reserve, on the foreshore of the Cooks River, was identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area. This area has been categorised as Natural Area (Bushland).

Chain of Ponds Reserve contains revegetated parkland that is mostly indigenous vegetation typical of Cooks River and its tributaries which forms a connected habitat corridor with the other foreshore Cooks River parks. The Reserve is located on both sides of the Cooks River. This land has been categorised as Natural Area (Bushland).

A pedestrian bridge links the north and south sides of the park. The park was recently upgraded and is in good condition. The Bay to Bay cycleway runs through the park near Augusta Street.

A Pipeline is located near the southern boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.



Figure 10 Chain of Ponds Reserve Land Categorisation Map

Elliott Reserve

Address

Elliott Street Belfield

Lot details

Lot 3 DP 132222 (Council); Lot A DP 349975 (RMS); Lot 4 DP 132222 (Sydney Water)

Ownership

Strathfield Council, Roads & Maritime Services and Sydney Water

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation; SP2 Stormwater Management

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Elliott Reserve Plan of Management (land categorised as park)

Descriptions

Elliott Reserve comprises a mixture of open grassed areas and revegetated parkland. The revegetated parkland is mainly in the northern section abutting the Cooks River and contains mostly indigenous vegetation planted as strips and/or blocks such as she-oak, eucalyptus, paperbark and lomandra plantings along the west bank of Cooks River. The Reserve provides an important habitat linkage and corridor along Cooks River that supports various bird species.

Much of the plantings at Elliott Reserve have been undertaken by community volunteers through the Bushcare programs. This program worked to achieve the following: strategically remove weeds, add groundcover and understorey vegetation, improve diversity of tree, shrub and grass species and improve linkages to other habitat. Bushcare at Elliott reserve ran for 12 months during 2018, with volunteers from the Hwa Tsang Monastery. The program used plants from the Strathfield Nursery to strengthen the habitat in Elliott Reserve, furthering the local genetic provenance and enhancing the Cooks River Green Corridor.

In the Strathfield LGA, the GGBF core habitat area is located in Greenacre such as Coxs Creek Reserve and Greenacre Frog Ponds. However, with dispersal and movement of frogs, infrequent sightings have been reported in parks further along the Cooks River such as Elliott Reserve, however sightings have become increasingly rare and since 2012, Council has received no reported sightings of GGBF in the Strathfield LGA.



Figure 11 Elliott Reserve Land Categorisation Map

Ford Park

Address

James Street Strathfield South

Lot details

Lot 1 & 2 132222, Lot 1-3 DP 450118, Lot G DP 345800, Lot 13-25 DP 15647 (Council)

Ownership

Strathfield Council

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Local Parks Plan of Management (area of land categorised as Park)



Descriptions

Land located in Ford Park adjacent to the Cooks River is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area and Green and Golden Bellfrog (GGBF) linkage area. This area is categorised as natural area (bushland).

Ford Park contains revegetated parkland that is mostly indigenous vegetation typical of Cooks River and its tributaries. The land abutting Cooks River contains a habitat corridor which connects with the other Cooks River/Coxs Creek foreshore parks.

Community volunteers through Bushcare programs and those participating in National Tree Day have assisted with much of the planting as well as weed removal. National Tree Days were held in Ford Park in 2012 and 2013 resulting in 7500 new plantings.

A Pipeline is located near the southern boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.

Freshwater Park

Address

Augusta Street and Cave Road Strathfield

Lot details

Lot 3 DP 854298 & Lot 176 DP 15955

Ownership

Strathfield Council

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Freshwater Park Plan of Management (land categorised as park, sportsground and natural area (wetland))

Descriptions

Land located in Freshwater Park is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area. The Reserve contains Natural Area (Bushland) and Natural Area (Wetlands). Freshwater Park contains riparian vegetation and aquatic habitats and their associated vegetation.

Acacia pubescens (Downy Wattle) is present at Freshwater Park. While there are historic records of *Acacia pubescens* in Freshwater Park, the current plants are revegetated and planted during the river restoration works which occurred around 2010. This flora is also located in other areas of the Golf Course, around Weeroona Road, on land owned by the Golf Course.

This flora is listed as Vulnerable under the Biodiversity Act (NSW) and Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Comm.). The habitat for this flora is open woodland and forest, including Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest. It occurs on alluviums, shales and at the intergrade between shales and sandstones³. *Acacia pubescens* flowers from August to October. Pollination of *Acacia* flowers is usually by insects and birds, rather than from seedlings. The pods mature in October to December. The percentage of pod production and seed fall for this species appears to be low.

The threats to *Acacia pubescens* include habitat degradation (through mechanical damage, rubbish dumping, and illegal track creation), disease, hybridisation, illegal and accidental clearing, and impacts of invasive grasses including African Lovegrass, *Paspalum* and *Briza* species or canopy species including African Olive, Privet and Cootamundra Wattle⁴.



Figure 13 Freshwater Reserve Land Categorisation Map

³ NSW Planning Industry & Environment, Downy Wattle Profile

⁴ NSW Planning, Industry & Environment, Downy Wattle Profile

A Pipeline is located near the southern boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.

Yarrowee Wetlands is an artificial wetland and located in Freshwater Park, in the upper reaches of the Cooks River. This land where Yarrowee Wetland is located has been categorised as Natural Area (Wetland). The wetland was restored in 2010, providing an aquatic habitat feeding habitat and breeding site for a variety of native wildlife including frogs, skinks and small birds. The wetland was constructed to treat stormwater flowing from a local catchment and features over 2000 locally native shrubs, grasses and groundcovers. Though the wetland could provide habitat for frogs, including the Green and Golden Bellfrog, an endangered ecological community, there have been no recorded sightings by Strathfield Council of the Green and Golden Bellfrog at Freshwater Park or the nearby Chain of Ponds Reserve.

María Reserve

Address

Elliott Street Belfield

Lot details

Lot 2 & 3 DP 1034484, Lot 2 DP 1079450, Lot 231 DP 131941, Lot 11 DP 131946 (Council); Lot 4 & 5 DP 1034484 (Planning Ministerial Corporation)

Ownership

Strathfield Council & Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (DPIE)

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Descriptions

María Reserve is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a Community Engagement Priority Area and Green and Golden Bellfrog (GGBF) linkage area. María Reserve contains remnant individual trees Turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) and Grey Myrtle (*Backhousia myrtifolia*).

María Reserve was developed on land reserved in 1951 by NSW Government for a proposed roadway along the Cooks River travelling from Botany Bay to Chullora. However, this proposal was abandoned in favour of the construction of the M5 Motorway. María Reserve contained isolated individual remnant trees (mostly Turpentine and Ironbark) of the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest Endangered Ecological Community. In 1995, the land was established as a bushland reserve and was extensively landscaped with revegetated native species. The Reserve supports a community of mature eucalypts and a variety of shrubs. Bush regeneration regularly takes place in the Reserve to maintain the bushland.

María Reserve measures approximately 1.7 hectares in area and is a strip of open space along the banks of the Cooks River from Water St to Elliot St Belfield. The Reserve is a green link in a chain of reserves and open space along the Cooks River and Coxs Creek in the Belfield area. The reserve provides important habitat connectivity for birds, possums and fish along the upper Cooks River.

María Reserve contains a dry 'creek bed' that runs through the Reserve and a small bridge over the 'bed'. The Reserve also contains a walkways and open grassed areas, seating, and footpaths.

Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest in the Strathfield LGA is listed as an Critically Endangered Ecological Community (CEEC) under the Biodiversity Act 2016 (NSW) and Critically Endangered under the Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Protection Act 1999 (Comm.).



Figure 14 María Reserve Land Categorisation Map

Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest occurs in Sydney and is heavily fragmented with only 0,5 percent of its original extant remaining intact⁵. The habitat occurs close to the shale/sandstone boundary on the more fertile shale influenced soils, in higher rainfall areas on the higher altitude margins of the Cumberland Plain, on the shale ridge caps of sandstone plateaus.

Threats include clearing and loss of vegetation and fragmentation, weeds and inappropriate treatment including over spraying of herbicides and inappropriate use of herbicides, illegal dumping of hazardous, household and green garden waste into reserves and remnants, loss of key fauna habitat resources for associated species (native and threatened) including but not restricted to loss of hollows⁶.

To protect and promote the Turpentine-Ironbark Forest in Inveresk Park, actions support a range of actions that include:

- Promote public involvement in restoration activities.
- Protect habitat by minimising further clearing of the community.
- Promote regrowth by avoiding unnecessary mowing.
- Control weeds.
- Undertake restoration including bush regeneration and revegetation.

Pomaderris Prunifolia was identified in the Biodiversity Strategy 2019 as also present at Maria Reserve. This flora is listed as Endangered under the Biodiversity Act (NSW). The shrub is 1 - 3 metres high, stems with rusty stellate hairs. Leaves ovate to oblong to more or less elliptic, 2 - 4cm long, 8 - 15mm wide, apex broadly acute; margins more or less toothed, upper surface very wrinkled; lower surface more or less rusty with stellate hairs. Flowers yellow, on a short pedicel, in short panicles. Petals absent. Hypanthium (cup-like structure above the ovary) with long whitish hairs, capsule with long rusty hairs⁷.

It does not appear to spread vegetatively and its longevity is thought to be 10-25 years. Buds are present for many months before flowers open and probably killed by fire⁸. The main threats include unsympathetic landscaping and landscape maintenance and pressure from residents and nearby businesses to "tidy up" the plants and their habitat or weed invasion.

Activities to assist this species include:

- Continue propagation attempts
- Education campaigns for council staff, local business and residents
- Weed control at all sites.
- Conduct bush regeneration and rehabilitation activities

In the Strathfield LGA, the GGBF core habitat area is located in Greenacre such as Coxs Creek Reserve and Greenacre Frog Ponds. Begnell Field is contained within the east-west Green and Golden Bellfrog (GGBF) linkage area as mapped in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy (p17), which also covers parks such as Cooke Park, and parts of Ford Park and Maria Reserve. However, with dispersal and movement of frogs, infrequent sightings have been reported in parks further along the Cooks River such as Elliott Reserve, Southend Tennis Centre and 'Chiswick Reserve'. However, these sightings were infrequent and have become increasingly rare. Since 2012, Council has received no reported sightings of GGBF in the Strathfield LGA.

⁵ Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest profile, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

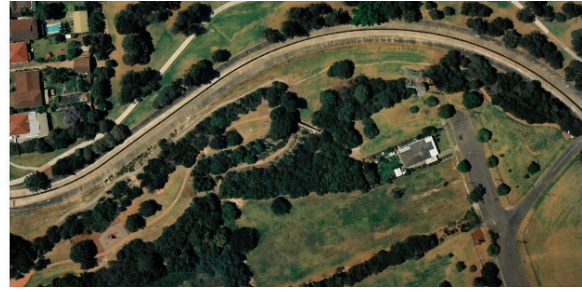
⁶ Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest profile, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

⁷ NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, *P. prunifolia* in the Parramatta, Auburn, Strathfield and Bankstown Local Government Areas – profile

⁸ NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, *P. prunifolia* in the Parramatta, Auburn, Strathfield and Bankstown Local Government Areas – profile



Maria Reserve aerial photograph (1947)



Maria Reserve aerial photograph (1997)



Maria Reserve aerial 2009 © Near Maps



Maria Reserve aerial 2020 © Near Maps



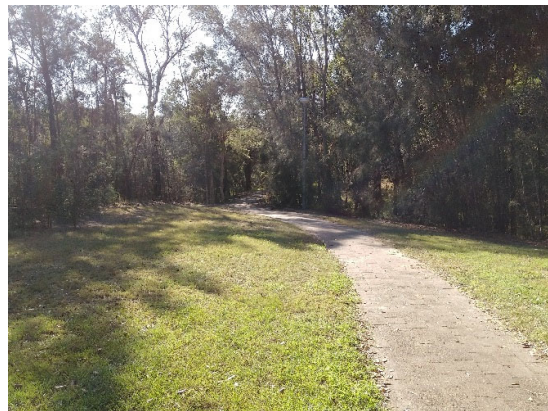
Entrance – Water Street



Pathway, cluster of trees



Pathway, cluster of trees



Pathway, cluster of trees

Prentice Reserve

Address

Prentice Lane, Strathfield

Lot details

Lot 1 & 2, DP 571633, Lot 37 DP 243941, Lot A DP 435103, Lot C DP415702

Ownership

Strathfield Council

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Local Parks Plan of Management (land categorised as park)

Descriptions

Land located in Prentice Reserve is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area. The Strathfield Fauna Study 2017 describes this Reserve as containing mainly revegetated parkland that is mostly indigenous vegetation typical of Cooks River and its tributaries. The revegetated parkland forms a habitat corridor with other Cooks River foreshore parks. This area is categorised as natural area (bushland).

A Pipeline is located near the southern boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.

The Reserve is adjacent to the Cooks River and the Bay to Bay Cycle/Walkway.

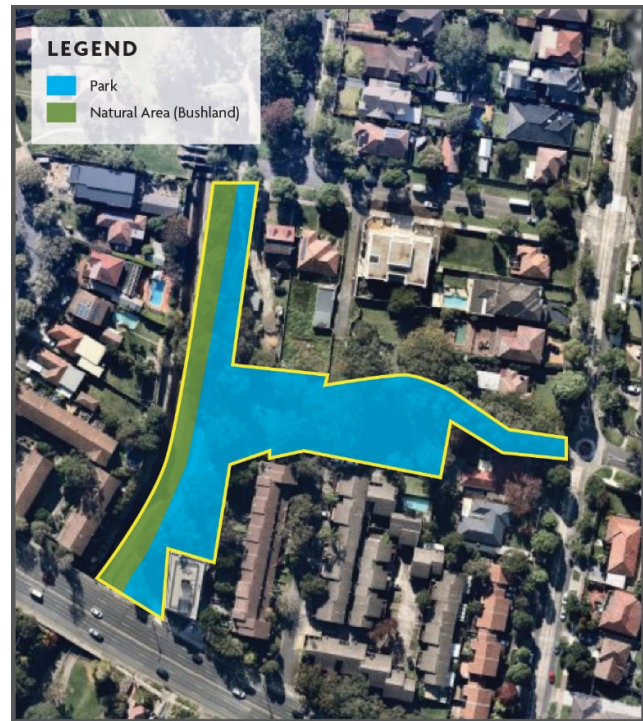


Figure 15 Prentice Reserve Land Categorisation

St Anne's Reserve

Address

Therry Street, Strathfield South

Lot details

Lot 5,6, 11 & 12 DP 243042 (Council); Lot 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 14, 14, 17, 18 DP 243042 (Sydney Water); Lot 2 DP 687630 & Lot 101 DP 862278 (DPIE)

Ownership

Strathfield Council

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation; SP2 Stormwater Management

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Descriptions

St Anne's Reserve is located next to the Cooks River and connects with Dean Reserve and with the other parks north of Liverpool Road. The Reserve contains mature plantings, open grassed areas and Bay to Bay shared pathway. This reserve contains revegetated plantings which form a habitat corridor with the other Cooks foreshore parks and is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy as a habitat connectivity priority area. This area is categorised as natural area (bushland).

The site facing Therry St West owned by Sydney Water is exempt from this listing and contains water infrastructure.

Land located in St Anne's Reserve is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area. St Anne's Reserve contains revegetated parkland that is mostly indigenous vegetation typical of Cooks River and its tributaries, which forms a habitat corridor with the other Cooks River foreshore parks. The Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy 2019 identified the presence of flora species in this Reserve including Blue-Flax Lily (*Dianella caerulea*), Silky Hakea (*Hakea sericea*), Bladey grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Spiny-headed Mat Rush (*Lomandra longifolia*) and Prickly paperbark (*Melalucua stypheloides*).

A Pipeline is located near the western boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.

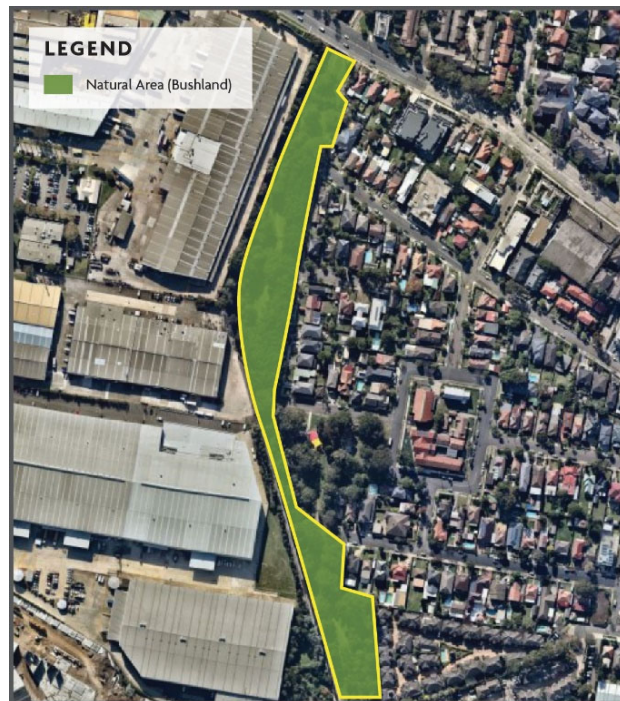


Figure 16 St Anne's Reserve Land Categorisation

South Cooks River Land

Address

West of Water Street abutting Cooks River,
Strathfield South

Lot details

Lot: 2 & 9 DP: 243043 & Lot 31 DP 2433042
(Council); Lot 25 DP 243042 (Planning
Ministerial Corporation), Lot 24 & 27 DP 243042
(Sydney Water)

Ownership

Strathfield Council & Sydney Water

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Descriptions

Land located in South Cooks Land is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area and GGBF linkage area. This area is categorised as natural area (bushland).

The land at South Cooks Land contains a section of the Bay to Bay Walk/Cycleway which provides pathway linkage to other Cooks River/Coxs Creek foreshore parks as well as regional connections beyond the LGA. This area contains a revegetated habitat corridor that is mostly mature and recently planted indigenous vegetation typical of Cooks River and its tributaries which connects via plantings and pathways with St Anne's Reserve, Dean Reserve and Ford Park. Landscaping provides sheltered and visually separated park spaces. A Pipeline is located near the southern boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.

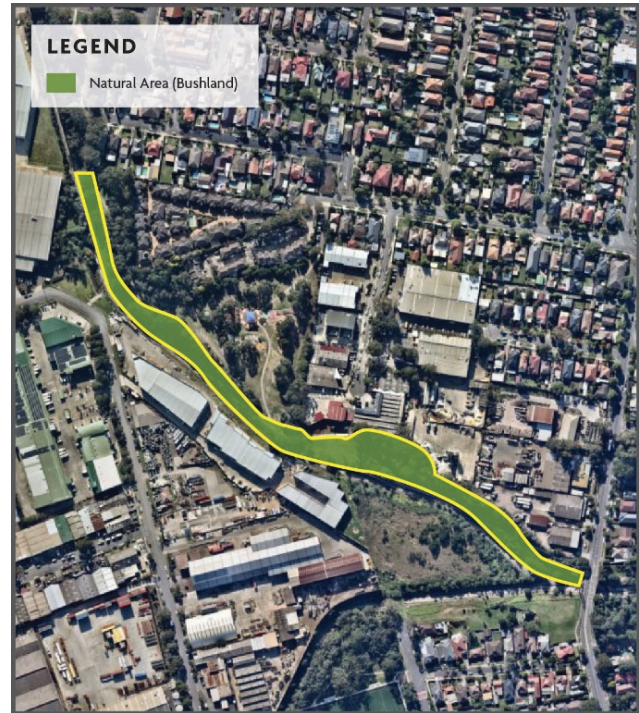
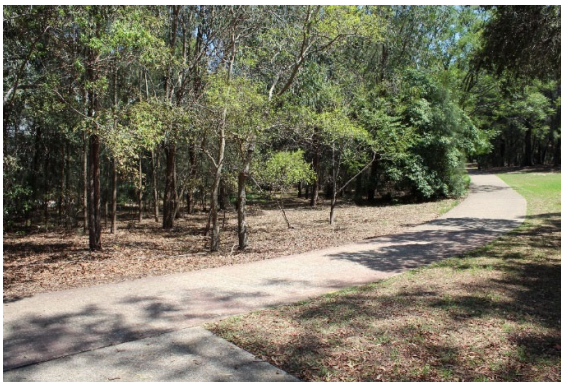


Figure 17 South Cooks Land categorisation



Southend Tennis Centre

Address

22 Chiswick Street Strathfield South

Lot details

Lot 1 DP 842991

Ownership

Strathfield Council

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Southend Tennis Centre Plan of Management
(land categorised as sportsground)

Descriptions

Land located in the Southend Tennis Centre aside the Cooks River on its southern boundary is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area. This area is categorised as natural area (bushland).

The land provides a revegetated link along Cooks River with habitat connections with nearby Ford Park, Elliott Reserve and Maria Reserves. The Strathfield Fauna Study 2017 identifies the presence on this land of She-Oak, Eucalyptus, Paperbark and Callistemon planted in a thin strip along Cooks River at the southern boundary of the site. Bird species such as Yellow Thornbill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Superb Fairy-wren access this and other nearby parks. The Bay to Bay shared pathway runs along the river at the southern boundary of the land.

A Pipeline is located near the southern boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.



Figure 18 Southend Tennis Centre Land Categorisation Map

Thew Reserve

Address

Augusta Street Strathfield

Lot details

Lot 82 DP 14865, Lot 7 DP 243041, Lot A DP 407917, Lot A DP 402961 (Council); Lot 271 DP 572906 (DPIE)

Ownership

Strathfield Council and Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Zoning

RE1 Public Recreation

Categorisation

Natural Area (Bushland)

Associated Plans

Local Parks Plan of Management (land categorised as park and general community use)

Descriptions

Land located in Thew Reserve near the Cooks River is identified in the Strathfield Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2019 as a biodiversity connectivity priority area. The natural area (bushland) is on and near the foreshore of the Cooks River.

Thew Reserve contains mainly revegetated parkland that is mostly indigenous vegetation typical of Cooks River and its tributaries. The revegetated parkland forms a habitat corridor with other Cooks River foreshore parks. The Bay to Bay shared pathway runs along the river at the southern boundary of the Reserve.

A Pipeline is located near the southern boundary of this land, which restricts works in the buffer zone of the pipeline. Refer to pages 12 and 13 for related maps.



Figure 19 Thew Reserve Land Categorisation

3. Land Uses

3.1 Permissible uses and developments

The permissible types of uses which may occur and the forms of development generally associated with those uses, are set out in Table 2.

Table 2 Permissible uses of land categories – Natural Area (Bushland)

Purpose/Use	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bush regeneration and revegetation works• Environmental programs and scientific study• Guided bushwalks and bird watching• Preservation of biodiversity and habitat• Relaxation and passive informal recreation• Walking and cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpretative, regulatory and directional signage• Low impact lighting• Low impact car parks• Low impact pathways• Seating• Small ancillary building eg storage and amenities for site maintenance• Water saving initiatives eg swales, sediment traps, rainwater gardens

3.2 Use of community land

Minor changes to community land are regularly made on a routine basis, such as weeding and replanting, and damaged play equipment is replaced.

In the event of potential future development other than that listed, proposed changes of use of community land will:

1. Meet legislative requirements – land use tables (zoning) in the Strathfield Council Local Environmental Plan specifies the range of uses and activities that may be permitted on the land with and without permission. A number of uses are also set out in the Regulations to the *Local Government Act 1993*.

2. Be consistent with the guidelines and core objectives of the community land category - under the *Local Government Act 1993* uses and development of community land must be consistent with the guidelines for categorisation and the core objectives of each category, and any other additional objectives the Council proposes to place on the community land categories.

3. Be consistent with relevant Council policies - substantial upgrades and proposed new development will take into account a range of factors, including:

- this Plan of Management and the core objectives for the land
- the planning controls for the land
- Council's adopted policies
- the characteristics of the land affected, including existing and future use patterns
- any landscape masterplan for the land.

3.3 Scale and intensity of land use

The scale and intensity of use and development associated with community land in the Strathfield LGA is generally dependent on:

- the nature of the approved uses and developments
- approved Development Applications and any conditions
- an approved masterplan
- the physical constraints of the land
- the carrying capacity of the land
- relevant government legislation
- permissible times of use
- proximity of neighbours

The scale and intensity of use of land should be monitored by regular inspections and consideration of reports regarding any conflicts between land use and adjoining neighbours

3.4 Authorisation of leases, licences or other estates over community land

The Act requires that any lease or licence of community land must be authorised by a Plan of Management. The lease or licence must be for purposes consistent with the categorisation and zoning of the land.

The maximum period for leases or licences on community land permitted under the Act is 21 years. If a lease or licence is anticipated, then public notice should be given in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Where a lease arrangement has been entered into with Council for community land, subleasing the land may only occur with specific permission of Council and in accordance with the requirements of Section 47C of the Act, Clause 119 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and conditions set out in agreements.

This Plan of Management authorises existing leases and licence agreements until the end of their current term. The leased or licensed areas may be renewed or changed in future. The leased or licensed areas may be reconfigured in the future to reflect changes in community needs.

This Plan of Management authorises Council to grant leases, licences or any other estates for community land covered in this Plan of Management for purposes and uses which are identified or consistent with those in Table 3. Some examples of longer-term arrangements are outlined in the following Table 4.

Calculations for fees and charges for leases and licences will be based on independent market rental valuations that are based on comparisons to similar services and facilities with similar locations, building and land conditions. As a minimum standard, the financial return from licence fees should offset asset maintenance, renewal and any operational costs. Council may also apply subsidies to not for profit organisations where there are demonstrated community benefits or financial hardship. Subsidies are generally not applied to commercial or residential leases or licences.

Table 3 Leases, Licences and other estates

Type of Arrangement Authorised	Land and Facilities covered	Purposes for which long term leasing/licensing will be granted
Licence or lease	Natural Area (Bushland)	<p>Any lease or licence proposal will be individually assessed and considered, including community benefit, compatibility with this Plan of Management and Council's goals and objectives in its Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program and the capacity of the area to support the activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educational or environmental programs, scientific studies and surveys or similar • temporary erection or use of structures to enable a filming project to be carried out
Other Estates	Natural Area (Bushland)	<p>This Plan of Management allows Council to grant 'an estate' over community land for the provision of public utilities and works associated with or ancillary to public utilities in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>.</p> <p>Estates may also be granted across community land that is not affected by endangered communities for the provision of pipes, conduits, or other connections under the surface of the ground for the connection of premises adjoining the community land to a facility of the Council or other public utility provider that is situated on community land.</p>

The grant of a lease or licence is an important step in using community land, but there may be other requirements relevant to any proposed use such as development consent under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Any interested person should check carefully to make sure they are aware of all relevant requirements.

3.5 Short Term Uses

Agreements for use of community land may be granted for short duration which may be anything from a few hours to a few days. These short term arrangements should be for the types of uses identified in Table 4.

Table 4 Seasonal, regular and casual use agreements

Community land category	Purposes for which short term uses may be granted subject to council approval	Requirements
Natural Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • educational or environmental programs, scientific studies and surveys or similar, recreational activities • temporary erection or use of structures to enable a filming project to be carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • filming projects must comply with special provisions in s.47AA of the Local Government Act and must notify or advertise the proposal as prescribed by the regulations. • the proposed use must comply with terms and conditions for event approval e.g. SafeWork NSW regulations, insurance, waste management etc. • the use should not result in physical damage to the natural area • the use should not result in a significant adverse impact on adjoining residents or disturbance to nearby residents • organisers of the site should be responsible for cleaning up the site and notify authorities and Council of any damage or incidents that may occur

In assessing applications for use of this community land, Council applies the following minimum criteria:

- Council reserves the right to refuse bookings based on previous unsatisfactory payment or performance history or where proposed use would damage the facility or cause significant disruption to other regular users.
- Fees for short-term casual bookings will be charged in accordance with Council's adopted Fees and Charges at the time.

4. Actions

4.1 Objectives and management of community land

The land is managed in accordance to the objectives and methods set out below:

Table 5 Objectives, means and performance measures

Objectives and performance targets of the plan with respect to the land s.36E & 36H Local Government Act 1993	Performance targets and means by which Council proposes to achieve the plan's objectives and performance targets	Manner in which Council proposes to assess its performance with respect to the plan's objectives and performance targets
<p>To conserve biodiversity and maintain ecosystem functions in respect of the land or the feature or habitat in respect of which the land is categorised natural area; and</p> <p>To ensure the ongoing ecological viability of the land; by protecting the ecological biodiversity and habitat values of the land, the flora and fauna (including invertebrates, fungi and micro organisms) of the land and other ecological values of the land.</p>	<p>Ensure that Threatened Ecological Communities (TECS) are actively restored through bush regeneration.</p> <p>Ensure revegetation in reserves and parks is undertaken using locally sourced stock from agreed planting lists (refer Appendix E Strathfield Biodiversity Strategy)</p> <p>Retain dead timber in reserves as habitat for fauna and to create a more complex understory structure and shelter sites from predators.</p> <p>Prepare weed management plans in consideration of the Greater Sydney Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022</p>	<p>Increase the number of plants planted and surviving in reserves and parks that are indigenous to the local area</p> <p>Monitor, map and assess changes to vegetation and tree canopies.</p> <p>Incorporate routine weeding in maintenance and volunteer activities</p> <p>Reduce or eliminate use of herbicides, pesticides or chemicals near waterways and natural areas</p>
<p>To maintain the land, or that feature or habitat, in its natural state and setting; and</p> <p>To protect the aesthetic, heritage, recreational, educational and scientific values of the land; and</p> <p>To protect existing landforms such as natural drainage lines, watercourses and foreshores; and</p> <p>To protect bushland as a natural stabiliser of the soil surface; and</p> <p>To provide for the restoration and regeneration of the land; and</p>	<p>Coordinate and manage Bushcare and National Tree Day Programs (CSP)</p> <p>Identify new sites of conservation value/priority that would benefit from establishment of new Bushcare group or volunteer program.</p> <p>Increase the number of community planting days to 4 per annum. Identify and prioritise sites suitable for community planting events/activities based on</p>	<p>Inspect and observe health of native vegetation, weed species and increased biodiversity in bushland areas.</p> <p>No of plantings from events and community planting days</p>

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<p>To restore degraded bushland</p>	<p>priority areas identified in Map 6 Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>Support natural regeneration where there is resilience and revegetate with indigenous locally source stock</p>	
<p>To provide for community use of and access to the land in such a manner as will minimise and mitigate any disturbance caused by human intrusion; and</p> <p>To promote the management of the land in a manner that protects and enhance the values and quality of the land and facilities public enjoyment of the land, and to implement measures directed to minimising or mitigating any disturbance caused by human intrusion</p>	<p>Maintain and improve existing bushland pathways to protect, conserve and enhance natural landforms.</p> <p>Install interpretative and information signage to protect and educate about bushland areas. Should highly sensitive areas be fenced, signage should be erected to specifying the purpose of fencing.</p> <p>Install wayfaring signage along corridor for areas of interest, directions etc (CSP)</p> <p>Protect foraging habitat in the Cooks River/Coxs Creek parks</p>	<p>Improve access to natural areas and Cooks/Coxs Corridor</p> <p>Monitor and review natural area signage</p> <p>Review Plans of Management on regular basis</p>
<p>To assist in and facilitate the implementation of any provisions restricting the use and management of the land that are set in a recovery plan or threat abatement plan</p>	<p>Determine the presence/absence, abundance and condition of threatened species (eg Acacia pubescens)</p> <p>Conduct a targeted field survey of mapped Cooks River/Castlereagh Ironbark Forest (CRCIF) TEC's to determine whether they meet the criteria for listing under the EPBC Act 1999</p> <p>Review internal Council planning processes including processes for providing and retaining habitat (eg tree hollows), review assessment practices in regard to threatened species, consideration of biodiversity in development assessment procedures</p>	<p>Undertake periodic flora and fauna reviews</p> <p>Complete and update mapping vegetation CRCIF TECS</p> <p>Completion of field survey of TEC's and assessment</p> <p>Implement actions required under a recovery plan or threat abatement plan</p>

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	Comply with any related a recovery plan, threat abatement plan or priority under Save Our Species Program within specified period	