



Submission:

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

ISSUE: Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

SUBJECT: draft plan of management for Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and Lion, Long and Spectacle Island Nature Reserves

INTRODUCTION:

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is currently exhibiting a draft plan of management for Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and Lion, Long and Spectacle Island Nature Reserves.

These parks are located on the northern edge of Sydney, adjoining the Pittwater and the lower Hawkesbury River and Broken Bay.

Key issues addressed in this plan include:

- continuing to engage with local Traditional Owner representatives to fulfil aspirations to care for Country, have input into the parks' management and protection of Aboriginal heritage
- committing to future precinct planning to improve the visitor experience at key sites and manage growing visitor numbers
- exploring new uses for historic heritage buildings
- improving the visitor experience through upgrades to tracks and trails and exploring opportunities for new multi-purpose trails.

The draft plan is at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/have-your-say

The deadline for this consultation is Tuesday 22 November 2022.

Feedback can be submitted in a variety of ways, including a Submission via email at:

npws.parkplanning@environment.nsw.gov.au

Attention: Manager, NPWS Planning and Assessment Locked Bag 5022 Parramatta NSW 2124



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SUBMISSION

We refer to the invitation to provide written submissions in response to the draft Plan of Management for Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and associated reserves. Please find hereunder our response to the draft plan.

Background

The Boating Industry Association Ltd (BIA) is the peak industry body in Australia that represents the interests of boating which includes designers, manufacturers, importers, brokers, insurers, retailers, charters, yacht and boat clubs, marinas, events, surveyors and trades from boat builders to riggers, and more. BIA is an advocate for boaters and the boating lifestyle and supports safe, responsible, and enjoyable boating.

The boating economy generates significant benefits through employment. Last year (2021) the industry reported national turnover of \$9.55 billion, directly employed more than 26,000 people with more than 8000 contractors. In NSW, the figures were \$2.83bn turnover, 8120 direct employment, 700+ active boating industry business, 542,000 boat licence holders and 241,000 registered boats.

Seventy-five per cent are in small family businesses, employing local workers and supporting local communities.

With more than 85 per cent of the population living within 50km of the coast, it is little wonder that almost 1 in 5 households have a boat or watercraft. People of all ages, gender and ability can and do participate in boating across paddle, sail and power for leisure and sport.

In the Greater Sydney Region, which encompasses Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park there are:

- approximately 4000 commercial vessels ranging from ferries that carry commuters and tourists, to working barges that support jobs
- more than 70,000 registered recreational vessels
- more than 210,000 people with a licence to drive a powerboat
- innumerable small sail and paddle craft which are not required to be registered or licensed.

Boating however is more than numbers, it is a way of life for many Australians and that is very much the case in the area around Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park where use of the waterways for transport, fishing or recreation has a long history which pre-dates European arrival. Today, boating is a vibrant and significant part of the social, economic and environmental fabric of the area.



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We also draw attention to the following NSW Government documents:

Intergenerational Report suggests the NSW population is projected to grow by around 1.0 per cent each year, to 11.2 million in 2056. It also shows we are strongly placed to face the future. As it currently stands, and not to forget those in our community who are less fortunate, we are collectively wealthier, living longer and better educated than ever before; and settling in coastal areas for the lifestyle benefits which include boating.

NSW Future Transport Strategy sets the direction for continuing to improve every part of our transport system for the benefit of its customers, the community and the economy. It puts people and places at the centre of decision making: the people who travel on traditional Songlines and walking tracks, on paths, rail, roads and waterways, and the businesses that deliver goods across NSW and around the globe.

The Strategy states: 'The NSW Government is committed under the Future Transport Strategy to improving access for all boaters on the State's waterways. NSW has an abundance of natural assets, including national parks, an extensive coastline, harbours, inland waterways and lakes. These are important cultural, environmental and recreational assets and attract a diverse group of visitors and recreational users. Many of these areas of natural amenity or environmental importance are hard to reach by public transport, walking or cycling, meaning visitors have no choice but to drive. Transport is committed to increasing the options for visitors and communities to conveniently access our parks, waterways and coastline.'

NSW Premier's Priorities:

- a strong economy
- highest quality education
- well-connected communities with quality local environments
- putting customer at the centre of everything we do
- breaking the cycle of disadvantage

These key State Government documents, along with the NSW Maritime Safety Plan and NSW Maritime Infrastructure Plan, provide guidance to NPWS which highlights the importance of a strong economy, well-connected communities and the value of our public spaces which include green and blue (waterways) spaces.

BIA believes NPWS should apply a quadruple bottom line to management of the Park by applying a genuinely balanced approach to the social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits.

A case in point is the Empire Marina Bobbin Head, previously operated by Halvorsen Boats. The Halvorsen Family had operated a Marina, boat hire and boat building, repair and maintenance



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facility on the site since 1948. The current Bobbin Head Boatshed was built in 1937 and a boatshed in some form had been on or near the site of the current facility since before 1900.

The Empire Marina Bobbin Head now operates this marina and has demonstrated a commitment to invest in order to refurbish and improve facilities. Just some of this work has included environmental containment, stormwater management to meet current Australian standards, the conversion of swing moorings to floating berths which reduced the footprint of the marina in the park from 13ha to under 5ha, and hospitality options open to the public.

The development and subsequent operation of the marina has been consistently to industry leading standards and as a result the marina has won many national and international awards including Australian Marina of the Year in 2009/10, 2011/12 and the was the first marina inducted into the Australian marina Hall of Fame in 2014. The marina also won gold in the Commercial and Industrial Category of the North Sydney Council, Willoughby Council and Ku-ring-gai Council Better Business Partnership program in 2018. Furthermore, having been rated as 5 Gold Anchors since 2010, the marina achieved a rating of 5 Gold Anchors Platinum in 2018 making it one of 3 marinas in the world rated at this highest level at that time giving it global elite status. The marina restaurant and Kiosk, Waterside Bistro won the Australian Marina Restaurant of the Year in 2021.

Such a facility resonates well with State Government priorities that include well-connected communities with quality environments and making the state of NSW an excellent place to live, work and recreate.

We believe well designed, built and maintained infrastructure at the land-water interface, such as marinas, have a unique opportunity to enable people from all backgrounds to access and appreciate our diverse natural and cultural environment through safe, responsible and convenient access to some of the best waterways in the state.

The social benefits of boating certainly came into focus during the COVID-19 pandemic where it was demonstrated time and again that spending time on the water can make a positive contribution to people's quality of life by reducing stress and improving mental health.

Supporting Actions

BIA is generally supportive of the draft Plan and have the following suggestions to further enhance to delivery of the objectives of the plan:

- Re-establishing a public bus service from Hornsby station to the Bobbin Head Precinct improving access and reducing the reliance on cars.



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- Support Park & Ride services from the Mt Colah side where additional carparking may be possible near the current Works Depot.
- Introduce timed pay & display parking in the Bobbin Head (by the hour) instead of the flat \$12 rate for the whole day to encourage more shorter term affordable visits and turnover of cars in the carpark instead of visitors feeling they need to stay all day to get value from their day pass. The timed parking should eliminate the need for the manned gates at the entrances which are a source of delay and congestion on busy days.
- Alleviate the volume of trailer boats on the roads to Bobbin Head and at Apple Tree Bay
 - This could be achieved with the provision of Dry Boat Storage for trailerable boats at the marinas within the existing Lease Area. This will also assist in addressing increased future demand for boat storage and access within the Park over the life of the Plan.
- Infrastructure and Services – Powerlines
 - Support the two overhead powerlines servicing Apple Tree Bay and Bobbin Head being replaced with an underground service from the Mt Colah side.
- Decarbonisation
 - Support for the availability of green power and competition for providers to improve the viability of electrical power as part of a decarbonisation strategy.
 - Support for improved capacity of any new supply to allow for the provision of charging stations for electric vehicles and the transition to electric powered boats and plug-in hybrid powered vessels.
 - Support for the use of PV panels and appropriate storage batteries within the Bobbin Head precinct to reduce reliance on grid-power where possible.
 - To note the boating industry continues to move with the times and powerboats have increasingly lower emissions and improved fuel efficiency. In fact, there is an increase in the availability of electric-powered boats which produce zero emissions and virtually zero noise. In September 2022, the boating industry launched a ground-breaking Life Cycle Analysis and Decarbonisation study. This landmark project will present marine industry evidence and analysis on the future of boats and propulsion in the global discussion on this issue of Climate Change.
- Green Blue
 - Support development of a Green Blue approach which values 'blue space' (waterways) as well as 'green space' in a connected approach. This blue space is often directly connected to green space providing an undeniable link between the two for purposes ranging from public access to commercial land use. This is true in

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the Park. An integrated approach for the Green Blue would further support the quadruple bottom line.

- Consider how to be best value 'blue space' as well as 'green space'. We recommend adopting an overall 'green/blue' approach so that we work to build not just Green Spaces, which gives a sense that they are land based and independent from one another, but to consider a "Green Blue Grid" where the aim is to connect, integrate, enable and care for these natural spaces irrespective of whether they are on dry or over wet lands.
- Strengthen and support evolving community connections - and also draw attention to Professor Ralf Buckley of Griffith University and the International Chair in Ecotourism Research and his work to put a public health value on open spaces. His work published in 2019 revealed Australia's national parks are worth \$145 billion to the economy from the improved mental health of people who visit them, according to peer-reviewed research. This highlights the need for urgent consideration as to how we can provide safe integrated and well-planned access to both the outdoor 'green' and 'blue' spaces for our collective physical and mental health.
- Consider development of a Green Blue economic benefit study and consider engaging Prof Buckley to quantify these outcomes and assist in shaping priorities, policy and strategies re., social benefit. This would be of considerable value to the wider issue of strategic planning for opportunities around the land-water interface across NSW.
- Consider how to sustain the places where people come together – Destinations. This should factor facilities at the land-water interface by encouraging increased public use/ access via rent reduction incentives to encourage greater public access and benefit. Encouraging tenants to offer greater public access and services (eg., refill of fuel or water, access to toilets, waste collection, café/ kiosk etc) would support the overall public good.
- Customers
 - Support improved hospitality facilities at the land-water interface eg at marinas.
 - Support "short stay visitor accommodation" on water within appropriate locations (eg marinas) subject to relevant approvals to add a unique experience for visitors to the Park.
 - Address siltation in the Park to ensure public use and access via the waterways is maintained at key locations such as marinas.



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- Support the creation of destinations at the land-water interface that provide the public with safe and convenient access.
- Acknowledge boats can provide a relatively low-impact opportunity to access and explore the marine environment when compared with the significantly higher impact (eg., roads and pathways) necessitated by the use of other modes of transport such as motor vehicles and bikes, bicycles and even foot traffic in popular areas.
- Acknowledge and support responsible use of paddle, power and sail boats to access the marine environment can provide a unique opportunity to visit an area and to leave no visible signs when compared with virtually any land-based mode of transport.

We commend NPWS for this work to review the Plan of Management and providing this opportunity for input. The BIA would welcome the opportunity to partner with NPWS in promotion of safe and responsible boating as a significant means by which the public can experience, value and enjoy the wonderful waterways across the Park areas.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Neil Patchett, General Manager Government and Public Relations, e. neil@bia.org.au or m. 0418 279 465 on this matter.

Issue date: 22 November 2022