

## LEICHHARDT MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

# REPORT

**DIVISION:** ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT  
**SUBJECT:** CALLAN PARK WATERFRONT OPEN SPACE  
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### DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY - ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

**Financial Implications:** Potential costs associated with the upgrade and maintenance of playing fields and foreshores

**Policy Implications:** Nil

**Strategic Plan Objective:** Community Well-being  
Place where we live and work  
A sustainable environment  
Accessibility

**Staffing Implications:** Continuing staff resources required

**Notifications:** Nil

**Other Implications:** Nil

## 1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on discussions between the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, the University of Sydney and Leichhardt Council in respect of the possible future care, control and management of the waterfront open space network within Callan Park. The discussions have been based on Council's submission in respect of the Draft Landuse Plan and relate specifically to the future care, control and management of the Iron Cove Bay Run (*within Callan Park*), Callan Point, the Waterfront Drive playing fields, the Glover Street playing fields and the Veterans site.

The report includes an "in principal" agreement which has been drafted by Sydney University and Council officers in relation to the future care, control and management of the Waterfront Open Space Network in the event that shared access, care, control and management is mandated by the State Government.

## 2.0 Recommendations

1. That in the event that Council is not granted total care, control and management of the Waterfront Open Space, Council endorses an "in principal" position with the University of Sydney on the future care control and management of the Callan Park the Waterfront Open Space Network, namely:
  - a) Subject to no reduction in the area set aside for sporting and recreational purposes on the University of Sydney Camperdown Campus
    - i. Leichhardt Council to have total care, control and management of the existing Waterfront Oval, the Glover Street Oval, Callan Point and the Bay Run in accordance with its original submission on the Land Use Plan as it relates to the Waterfront Open Space Network
    - ii. Sydney University having total care, control and management responsibility for the construction and use of the proposed Oval/s on the Veterans site together with the playing area fronting Balmain Road
  - b) Where possible both the University of Sydney and Leichhardt Council to make time available on the respective ovals for University of Sydney students and the general community. However this would be at the absolute discretion of Council (for the Waterfront/Glover Street Ovals) and the University (for the Veterans Oval/s and Balmain Road area)
  - c) The University of Sydney to consider contributing funds towards construction of the Bay Run once firmer details are available in relation to funding demands and likely student patronage.
  - d) Plans of Management will be required to determine actual future uses of the entire Waterfront Open Space Network area including the playing fields. The SHFA, as the land owner, will need to be directly involved in the development of the Plans of Management. In this regard both Council and the University of Sydney agree that parking and vehicular access will be major considerations.

2. That Council request further discussions with the SHFA on the “in principal” agreement which has been reached between Leichhardt Council and the University of Sydney.

### 3.0 Report

#### 3.1 Callan Park Act 2002

Following community opposition to NSW Health’s draft Masterplan the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act* was passed in 2002. The main elements of the *Callan Park Act* can be summarised as follows: -

- to ensure that Callan Park remains in public ownership
  - to preserve the areas of open space at Callan Park - extending to the foreshore of Iron Cove on the Parramatta River, that were in existence immediately before the commencement of this Act
  - to allow public access to active and passive open space
  - to preserve the heritage significance of Callan Park, including its historic buildings, gardens and other landscape features
  - to impose appropriate controls on the future development of Callan Park
  - to preclude the sale of Callan Park
  - to permit a lease of, or a licence of a building, part of a building or land within Callan Park
  - to permit a trust to undertake that care, control and management of Callan Park
  - to define and permit - with development consent, the use of Callan Park for the purpose of health facilities, educational or community facilities
  - to prohibit development for the purpose of a retirement village
  - to prohibit the erection of Buildings outside the footprints or building envelopes of the buildings that existed immediately before the commencement of this Act
- 
- to prohibit development on Callan Park that would result in: -
    - less open space
    - an increase in the total floor area of all buildings
    - that existed at Callan Park immediately before the commencement of this Act
    - development that adversely affects the Broughton Hall, Charles Moore or Kirkbride Gardens

#### 3.2 Recreation and Open Space Strategy

In 2004 Leichhardt Council commissioned Stratcorp Consulting to undertake a Recreation and Open Space Needs Study for the Leichhardt Local Government Area. The study adopted in December 2005 provided direction for an integrated approach to open space and recreation planning and management for the next 10 years.

The Recreation and Open Space Needs Study audited all existing open space and recreational facilities, programs and services within the

municipality, and their existing and potential capabilities in meeting current and future needs of the community.

The study also provided Council with a better understanding of the open space and recreation needs of its community and an informed ability to determine appropriate priorities for the acquisition of new and/or improved open space opportunities and the provision of future active, passive and sporting recreational facilities and programs.

### 3.2.1 Priorities issues identified by the study include: -

A) **Open Space Deficiency.** Leichhardt has significant deficiencies in open space provision. Leichhardt has an open space ratio of 1.65 ha /1,000 people. The national standard is benchmarked at 2.8 /1,000 people. Compared to other Local authorities open space provision within Leichhardt is low: -

Marrickville at 1.5 ha/1000 people  
**Leichhardt at 1.65 ha /1,000 people**  
 Waverley at 1.80 ha / 1,000 people  
 Sydney City 2.36 ha / 1,000 people  
 North Sydney at 2.60 ha / 1,000 people  
 Strathfield at 3.8 ha / 1,000 people  
 Canada Bay at 3.87 ha / 1,000 people  
 Lane Cove at 4.64 ha / 1,000 people  
 Ryde at 6.70 ha / 1,000 people

B) **Recreation Facilities.** A key requirement of Council is to provide a range of open space settings, recreational facilities and opportunities.

Current deficiencies include shortages in provision for:

- Rugby Fields - 1 additional field required (benchmark Target 7 Fields)
- Soccer Fields - 9 Additional fields required (benchmark Target 16 Fields)
- Tennis courts - 21 Additional courts required (benchmark Target 32 Courts)

C. **School Facilities.** There is low provision of sports and recreation facilities at education facilities. Schools within the LGA rely largely on the provision of open space for the conduct of their active recreational programmes from Council.

D. **Strategic Alliances.** Council needs to work with the State Government and other managers/owners of Publicly owned land (e.g. Callan Park, the Rail Corridor and the

Harbour Foreshore) will be important to help resolve current and likely future shortages in open space for both passive recreational pursuits and sporting activities.

E. **Linear Links.** Council needs to continue its work in the establishment of strategic linear links, a critical element in ensuring that the community is mobile, well connected and safe.

F. **Health and Fitness.** There is demand within the LGA for a new public health and fitness gymnasium and associated facilities which should be included as part of a future new indoor sports and recreation centre within the LGA. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of a new multi court indoor sport and recreation centre in the Leichhardt LGA.

G. **Hockey.** Develop a new wet hockey pitch on Leichhardt Number 2 (This comes with provisions).

### 3.2.2 Community Consultation

The Recreation and Needs Study completed in (2005) included public consultation and broad community input into the strategy planning process. A comprehensive approach was adopted for the consultation process, which was designed to ensure that a wide cross section of people and interested parties were given the opportunity to provide input into the future planning and development of recreation services for the Leichhardt LGA. The consultation phase incorporated a number of different techniques to interact with residents, clubs, other organised groups, and Council personnel.

This work was facilitated through the following consultative processes:

- Household Telephone Survey
- Resident Infield Surveys.
- Community Submissions
- Councillor Forum
- Community Forums with identified target groups including, older adults, young people, people with a disability and their carers, Council planning staff, Council park maintenance staff, the Manager of the Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre. Youth Service Providers.

### 3.3 University of Sydney Memorandum of Understanding

In June 2007, a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the Minister for Planning, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and the University of Sydney in relation to the future care and control of a large area of the site. The main elements of the MoU can be summarised as follows: -

- The parties acknowledge the provisions of the *Callan Park Act*.

- The parties acknowledge the current tenancies and lessees at Callan Park
- Subject to agreement being reached with the University, the Minister would procure a grant of a 99 year lease to the University for a substantial and coherent part of Callan Park.
- Rights to the public for pedestrian access through the site similar to Camperdown campus
- The University would have control of the sporting fields, but subject always to the University's reasonable requirements for use of the playing fields, would permit Leichhardt Council and the public the use of the fields.
- SHFA to be responsible for the preparation of a Masterplan for the site
- A building audit and an audit of public infrastructure and public open space to be undertaken in undertaking the Masterplan

### 3.4 Callan Park draft Land Use Plan (SHFA)

Under the MoU, SHFA was given the responsibility of preparing a master plan for the site which is in accordance with the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*. SHFA commissioned private consultants Hassell to produce the Masterplan. The Masterplan has since evolved into a Land Use Plan

The Land Use Plan aims to provide a framework to guide future uses, development and management of Callan Park. The Land Use Plan proposes retention of open space, additional playing fields, the expansion of University of Sydney's presence on the site and a continuing health presence through the creation of a non-government organisation precinct and the retention of the NSW Ambulance Service headquarters.

The Land Use Plan establishes eight precincts within Callan Park and identifies a variety of design guidelines that will guide future development and land uses for each. *Figures 5.1* and *5.2* have been extracted from the Land Use Plan and illustrate the various precinct areas included within the Land Use Plan.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 Land Use Plan- Precincts within Callan Park



**Precincts**

1. Waterfront
2. Kirkbride Curtilage
3. Parkland Campus
4. Non-Government Organisation
5. Church/Glover Street
6. Wharf Road
7. NSW Ambulance
8. Nurses

**Figure 5.1**



**Figure 5.2**

5. Church/Glover Street Precinct	—	Indicative build-to Line (80%)		Indicative Build Max. 3 Storey
6. Wharf Road Precinct	- - -	Indicative build-to Line (50%)		Indicative Build Max. 4 Storey
7. NSW Ambulance Precinct	—	Indicative Heritage Curtilage		Indicative Pub
Precinct 8. Nurses' Precinct				

(Source –Callan Park Land Use Plan)

**3.5 Extraordinary Council Meeting February 2008**

At its Extraordinary Meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2008 Council considered a report in relation to the Draft Landuse Plan for Callan Park and resolved in part as follows:

“2c) Council rejects the Callan Park Land use Plan for the following reasons:

- i. The implementation of the plan is predicated upon the relocation of public services for the mentally ill away from the current Callan Park location
- ii. The bulk of the site would be used by the University of Sydney, rather than as a psychiatric hospital
- iii. The Land Use Plan proposes a substantial increase in floor space which is opposed by Leichhardt Council. This will result in unacceptable overdevelopment of Callan Park and will require amendments to the Callan Park Act, a bill that was enacted in 2002 and the culmination of significant community consultation process.
- iv. The draft plan contains no provision for a Trust with strong local representation to manage Callan Park
- v. The lack of detail provided in respect of key issues such as Integrated and Long Term Management of the Entire Site; The Restoration and/or on going Maintenance of Critical Heritage Items; Transport, Traffic & Parking; Built Form and the site’s capacity to absorb development of the level proposed
- vi. The lack of detailed information about the proposed University of Sydney campus, including the proposed faculties and demographic profiles of students.
- vii. The consultation undertaken did not allow meaningful input into the process or the following reasons:
  - A) The brief to Consultants for the Land Use Plan was to allow the University to expand its current activities on the Callan Park site” and therefore did not allow other proposals, including the retention and upgrade of the psychiatric hospital to be considered.
  - B) The “Community” Reference Panel was predominately composed of state bureaucrats and not of community members. Many key community stakeholders were excluded from panel membership.
  - C) The little consultation that did occur was rushed and dismissive of those who objected to the consultant’s proposals.
- viii. The draft plan fails to ensure Council care, control and management of the foreshores and sporting fields, thereby potentially restricting public access to much needed open space
- ix. The draft plan will result in adverse impacts on site in terms of pedestrian permeability, views, vegetation, heritage buildings and gardens
- x. Traffic and parking increases will impact upon nearby residential areas
- xi. It is premature to include the Glover and Church Street Precinct (Precinct 5) in a long term lease to the University of Sydney due to the uncertainty of plans for the university and the current and future need for public mental health facilities.



- xii. The Land Use Plan carves up Callan Park into 8 Precincts each of which it is proposed will be leased. Callan Park should not be carved up. It is and should remain one integrated site. Callan Park needs one management structure for the whole site and a guarantee of public ownership in perpetuity.
- xiii. Council calls on the Government to continue the public consultation process until there is sufficient information available for an informed decision to be made on the proposal.

(d) notwithstanding point 2(c) above

- i. there are considerable community, social and recreational benefits – supported by relevant research, to be derived from the transfer of the waterfront open space to Leichhardt Council for future care, control and management
- ii. the proposed mix of community, cultural, health and education uses in the Land Use Plan, is consistent with the provisions of the Callan Park Act 2002
- iii. the re-location University of Sydney faculties to the site could introduce a number of social, cultural and economic benefits to the area and could reinforce the current cultural and arts focus of the Rozelle/Lilyfield area, however the draft Land Use Plan does not provide sufficient information to enable a fully informed assessment of the merits or otherwise of the proposal
- iv. Council Officers are on call to meet with representatives of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority to address the issues identified in Council’s report and submission”

### **3.6 Callan Park Open Space Network**

The SHFA was presented with two proposals in respect of the future care, control and management of the Waterfront Open Space Network. One from Leichhardt Council for care, control and management of the sports playing fields along the waterfront zone, the bay run and Callan Point. Council’s proposal also included redevelopment of the Veteran’s housing site as open space and linking this to the Waterfront Drive and Glover Street open space areas, once it became available – ie consistent with Councils adopted position in February.

A second proposal, submitted by the University of Sydney requested that the University is granted care control and management of the playing field areas including Balmain Road and that times are set aside outside of University use for community use and access.

The open space network, its access, management, care and control is a primary concern to Council. Council’s Recreation and Needs Study 2005 identifies significant deficiencies in recreation provision and access to sporting facilities with in the Leichhardt LGA.

The Recreation and Open Space Needs Study advocates working with the State Government and other government organisations to identify opportunities for new community open space. This includes advocating for community sporting access to the playing fields at Callan Park. The Recreation and Open Spaces Need Study (2005) states:

*“Whilst some opportunities exist to increase the total area of public open space through Council’s continued program of strategic land acquisition and the development of new open space areas in residential subdivisions, it is unlikely that the ratio of available open space per 1,000 people will increase significantly in the short to medium term. This is one reason why Council should continue to advocate for the retention of the open space areas within Callan Park, and for the responsibility for their management to be transferred to Council, subject to suitable financial arrangements being negotiated between Council and the State Government prior to any transfer”*

Sydney University also has genuine and specified needs in relation to the provision of outdoor sporting facilities for future students on a developed University campus at Callan Park. This need includes the provision of soccer, rugby, athletics, hockey and other sports facilities.

### **3.7 Discussions with the University of Sydney**

In the last three months SHFA, in discussions with both Council officers and the University of Sydney has requested that discussions be held between the two parties to discuss common needs and work towards compromises (where possible) in relation to the long term access, care, control and management of the open space network at Callan Park.

Formal discussions between Council officers and the University of Sydney were commenced in late February 2008. Initial discussions focussed on both parties core needs and the submissions which had been lodged with SHFA in relation to the Landuse Plan.

From the initial discussions the University of Sydney engaged Glen Scott of BVN consultancy to assess the various proposals prepared by Council and assist the parties in developing options for the open space precinct. The consultant produced a number of options for consideration which included a mix of playing fields to meet differing user needs. This included a synthetic hockey field being developed on the Veterans site (rather than on Leichhardt no 2 field). Council officers analysed this work and held further meetings with the University and their consultants to discuss various other options, time shared arrangements in relation to playing field access and further specified details on community recreational needs. This included the issue of Glebe hockey and their need for development space for a water based all weather synthetic surface.

### **3.8 In Principal Position**

Council’s adopted position for total care, control and management of the Waterfront Open Space was consistently maintained as the starting point in all discussions. However in order to address SHFA’s request to consider options for shared access arrangements and following a number of meetings, an "in principle" position was recently reached by both Council staff and representatives of the University of Sydney whereby:

1. Subject to no reduction in the area set aside for sporting and recreational purposes on the University of Sydney Camperdown Campus, Leichhardt Council would have total control of the existing Waterfront Oval, the Glover Street Oval , Callan Point and the Bay Run in accordance with its original submission on the Land Use Plan for the waterfront recreational area including the sporting fields
2. Sydney University would have total control and responsibility for the construction and use of the proposed Oval/s on the Veterans site together with the playing area fronting Balmain Road
3. Where possible both the University of Sydney and Leichhardt Council would make available time on the respective ovals for University of Sydney students and the general community but this would be at the absolute discretion of Council (for the Waterfront/Glover Street Ovals) and the University (for the Veterans Oval/s and Balmain Road area
4. Sydney University to consider contributing funds towards construction of the Bay Run.
5. Plans of Management will be required to determine actual future uses of the entire foreshore area including the playing fields and SHFA, as the land owner, would need to be directly involved in the development of these documents. In this regard both Council and the University of Sydney agree that parking and vehicular access will be major considerations.

In discussions with the University of Sydney, Council officers stressed that all of the above proposals were subject to confirmation or otherwise by Council.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008 Council staff were informed that the above position was acceptable to Sydney University and that formal correspondence (refer to appendix 1) had been submitted to SHFA from the University of Sydney. Council officers have also requested that Council be fully engaged on all future discussions on this issue. To date no formal response has been received from SHFA on the “in principal” position.

#### **4.0 Conclusions**

The “in principal” position and agreement provides for Council care, control and management of the waterfront open space network within Callan Park. The “in principal” position also assists in addressing a number of strategic objectives outlined in the Council’s adopted Recreation and Open Spaces Needs Study 2005. In particular

- Additional sporting fields
- Additional sport and recreation facilities for LGA schools
- Additional linear links
- Strategic alliances other stakeholders
- Additional facilities for passive recreation and the promotion of health, fitness and community well being.

Environmentally, new open space will also benefit the community by providing further opportunities not only for a wide range of recreational opportunities but also for biodiversity improvements and environmental education. Council's care, control and management of this area would be beneficial to the community at large and in this respect the "in principal agreement" can be viewed as a positive outcome for Council.

The future development of the veterans site as open space area would be an expensive undertaking and while principally benefiting the University of Sydney this would also provide the community with potential access to new recreational facilities in the form of an all weather artificial surface. Options for further investigation in this area including the provision of a second synthetic hockey pitch which could have regional sporting benefits is worthy of further investigation.