

Bushwalking NSW

Bushwalking NSW Inc.

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Bushwalking NSW Inc
Level 14, 338 Pitt Street,
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10 September 2019

Manager
Planning Evaluation and Assessment
PO Box 95
Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam

Discussion Papers - Planning for the Future – new Plan of Management for Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

Bushwalking NSW Incorporated is the peak body for bushwalkers in NSW and the ACT. It represents the interests of over 11,000 bushwalkers from 69 bushwalking clubs throughout the State, and provides a united voice to local, state and federal government agencies and other bodies on issues affecting bushwalkers.

Our mission is to support safe, active and inclusive bushwalking and related outdoor activities in wisely managed natural areas. In particular, we see bushwalking as a recreation that should be available to as many people as possible.

Members of our affiliated clubs have been undertaking walks and other activities in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park for many decades. On average our affiliated clubs would conduct bushwalking activities in this national park every week.

Our particular focus has been on the Discussion Paper on Recreational Activities. We wish to comment on three topics raised in this Discussion Paper as well as supporting the concept of a new foreshore trail.

1. Camping in the national park.

Camping opportunities are currently limited to a few sites. The site at Brooklyn Dam is showing signs of over-use and we consider the development of additional sites would help to take the pressure off Brooklyn Dam. To this end, we welcome the intention to undertake a strategic assessment of camping locations along the Great North Walk and request that Bushwalking NSW be consulted during this assessment. It is noted that this assessment will need to include the adjoining Berowra Valley National Park.

The 53 km Harbour to Hawkesbury Walking Track also crosses Ku-ring-gai Chase and since the closure of camping at St Ives Showground there are no designated camping sites along this track. This basically restricts this track to a series of day walks only and we consider that the provision of at least one designated camping site along the track would give bushwalkers

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the opportunity of completing it as a multi-day walk. To this end it is recommended that NPWS gives consideration to developing a walk-in camping site at Apple Tree Bay. There is a grassed area behind the current car park which would be suitable. The location has access to toilets and potable water so the investment needed to develop it for camping would be minimal. An on-line booking system could be introduced to manage numbers.

2. Large-scale group activities.

It is noted that NPWS intends to review the management of organised, non-commercial group activities including an assessment of the group sizes that may trigger a need for a formal consent process.

It is noted that there is currently no requirement for prior consent of non-commercial activities involving less than 20 participants. Generally, our affiliated club bushwalks in Ku-ring-gai Chase would have fewer than 20 participants. Bushwalking NSW also promotes and practises low-impact bushwalking. Because of this we consider that a consent process for our affiliated clubs would be unnecessary. Nevertheless, we request that Bushwalking NSW to be consulted during any review of non-commercial group activities.

3. Track Stewardship Program

Bushwalking NSW would welcome a program that gives volunteers an opportunity to partner with NPWS on track maintenance and upgrade activities. Some of our affiliated clubs would be interested in such activities. To this end we encourage NPWS to liaise with Bushwalking NSW and any local bushwalking clubs when this program is being developed. Bushwalking NSW can provide relevant club contacts to NPWS.

4. Garigal Pittwater Foreshore trail

We have become aware of this proposal from the local bushwalking community. Bushwalking NSW supports this new trail concept. Enormous potential exists to develop a continuous and iconic hiking track along the shoreline of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park incorporating the Pittwater foreshore and associated waterways and tributaries offering world class walking and kayaking. A Ku-ring-gai Chase Foreshore Trail could potentially extend from Brooklyn to Church Point and link to Palm Beach via ferry. At Brooklyn, the trail could link in with the Great North Walk; and at Palm Beach to Sydney's Great Coastal Walk.

This multi-day walk, conceptually in two stages of 5-6 days each, a total of 10 days (around 140km), would utilise existing tracks in places. The walk could also be done as day walk segments, incorporating the serene waterways and spectacular Hawkesbury escarpment which would rival the internationally recognised Queen Charlotte Sound track in NZ. Track infrastructure, such as backcountry campgrounds could also support multi-day kayaking trips.

Bushwalking NSW urges NPWS to consider this proposal and to undertake a feasibility study of the trail concept.

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Finally, Bushwalking NSW looks forward to the development of the draft Plan of Management and to the opportunity to provide further comments when the draft goes on public exhibition.

Yours Sincerely,



David Bell

Conservation Officer

Bushwalking NSW Inc

<https://www.bushwalkingnsw.org.au/>

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Keep exploring, be amazed!