

Answer to question on notice – Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

Ms DONNA DAVIS: That's okay. If there's something else that you'd like to add, I'm sure we'd be happy to have that after. Earlier this morning, we were also talking about, particularly in Parramatta, the significance of the river. We know how significant Parramatta River is to First Nations and the importance of preserving that. Management of the river is divided into different agencies at different points, even in the areas on either side of Parramatta Park. Do you have any thoughts about the management of Parramatta River in terms of First Nations as well? **It may be a question you might like to take on notice.**

CHRISTINE HAY: Thank you for the question. I have looked at the draft CMP plan of management for Parramatta Park, and it does identify eight precincts, which includes the river. I can't tell you from my overview how well it investigates or supports First Nations values. I would have to look into that further. But at the moment there is a structure from an existing CMP plan of management that actually divides the whole park, as I think I've mentioned, into eight areas. The river is one area. There's a statement of significance there. There's a list of policies. How well that's supported by the CMP is questionable, in my view, but, nonetheless, it is there.

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE:

For clarity, the question asks for my views about management of the Parramatta River. The question covers:

- the significance of the Parramatta River,
- its importance to First Nation's people,
- preserving the river,
- management of the river, including either side by different agencies, and
- management of the Parramatta River by First Nations people.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

For all aspects of the question, I referred to the Your *Parramatta Park 2030 draft Conservation Management Plan and Plan of Management (2030 draft CMP PoM)*.

It is the guidance document for the management of Parramatta Park, one of the 5 Greater Sydney Parklands (GSP) governed by the GSP Trust Act 2022.

This includes guiding conservation management of its exceptional cultural landscape.

The boundaries of Parramatta Park include the Parramatta River and areas either side of the river.

The Parramatta River is included in its State Heritage listing. The river is also within a buffer zone for its World Heritage listing (draft CMP POM p87).

(Italicised text are excerpts from the document).

PRESERVING THE RIVER, IMPORTANT TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

- The document addresses Aboriginal Cultural Heritage as a fundamental consideration for the park, it:
 - States evidence of occupation along the river dates to 35,000 to 40,000 years ago.
 - Maps the Parramatta Sand Body, an ancient Aboriginal landscape where the ancient riverbed and banks of the Parramatta River were located
 - Maps areas of significant Aboriginal archaeological potential and significance
 - Maps Aboriginal Heritage Landscape Settings
 - Maps geology and natural heritage

This mapping makes a significant contribution to understanding First Nations values across the parklands, and vitally for managing these values via the CMP PoM in connection to the river corridor.

The mapping encompasses the Parramatta River and its ecological corridor.

- Conservation of the river corridor is addressed in the document's River Precinct policies and objectives (see Management – Precincts, below).

SIGNIFICANCE TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

- The document's Statement of Significance outlined below states (in part) the Aboriginal values of the parkland:
 - *Parramatta Park is significant for its large section of the Parramatta Sand Body, the ancient riverbed and banks of the late Pleistocene/early Holocene river. The Parramatta Sand Body is a rare and finite archaeological resource. It is significant as it documents the antiquity of Aboriginal life on Parramatta River back to between 35,000 to 40,000 years ago — one of the earliest cultural sites in the Sydney Basin.*
- Parramatta Park is significant to the local Aboriginal community today*
- One of many important comments in the document about the importance of the park to First Nations people:
 - *Parramatta Park is significant as it contains a combination of geological and landscape features that were routinely used by, and important to, Aboriginal people. These features are still mostly visible in the Park's landscape today and include the main creek, the river and its exposed sandstone flats upstream, the ox bow billabong formerly in The Crescent, the extensive alluvial flats and the river bank sand terraces overlooked by the shale ridge, now occupied by Old Government House*

MANAGEMENT – OVERALL OF FIRST NATIONS VALUES

- *The Aboriginal heritage significance of the Park has been assessed and statutorily listed as being of state heritage significance. This heritage value is managed under the provisions of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife regulations and NSW Heritage Act 1977. The World Heritage, National and State mapping of curtilages relevant to the parkland are included in the document.*
- Four parkwide objectives, with strategies and lists of actions, are identified in the document. Of relevance are:
 - Objective 1: Identify, conserve and celebrate natural and cultural heritage values
 - Strategy 1.2 Improve understanding of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal cultural heritage values
 - Action: Engage with Aboriginal and heritage groups, government agencies and the community on cultural heritage projects.

Note: other parkwide objectives, strategies and actions also address Aboriginal values.

MANAGEMENT - PRECINCTS THAT INCLUDE ABORIGINAL VALUES

- The document identifies eight (sub) precincts within Parramatta Park.
- Some precincts include objectives about investigating, identifying, and managing Aboriginal values, including interpretation, and communicating about significant remnants of a larger Aboriginal river and creek landscape.
- These mapped precincts include: The Parramatta River, The landscape setting, Murray and Rumsay Rose Garden, Dairy and Salter's farm and Old Government Farm and Sports

- Notably, The **Parramatta River Precinct** (in the management plan of the document) sets out heritage policies and management priorities that includes sustainable management of the river precinct's sensitive ecological corridor. Importantly, the policies and priorities demonstrate numerous strategic frameworks under which the riparian corridor is organised and managed. This includes partnerships, collaborative work with other agencies and groups, masterplans and other management plans.

MANAGEMENT OF THE RIVER BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

- In the final section of the document *Putting the Plan Into Action* it states:
 - *Continue to engage and consult with the community in the activation and day to day running of the park.*

CONCLUSION

The 2030 draft CMP PoM is not a final document however it appears comprehensive about identifying and managing First Nations values, across the park including the Parramatta River precinct.

This includes engagement with Aboriginal groups for projects. Particularly the document displays a landscape heritage approach to managing the complexities of a significant cultural landscape with exceptional Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values. This includes managing geological, ecological, and visual and spatial values. The document, with its lists of on-going actions, exhibits the vital importance of long-term conservation management guidelines when managing a complex heritage place.