



Lake Macquarie City Council



Rathmines Park Plan of Management September 2020



Acknowledgment of Country

Locale Consulting acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land over which this document was prepared, the Awabakal People, and we pay our respect to all Aboriginal people of this land and to Elders past, present and future.

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Executive summary

Rathmines Park is a highly valued open space of over 50 hectares situated on the western shoreline of Lake Macquarie. The area has a rich cultural heritage, being part of the lands of the Awabakal People, who are the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of Lake Macquarie. In more recent times, Rathmines Park was established as the RAAF Base Rathmines in 1939, becoming the largest flying boat base in Australia until its closure in 1961, and being sold to Lake Macquarie City Council in 1962.

The site is also listed on the State Heritage Register due to the seaplane base playing a pivotal role in the defence of Australia in World War II. According to the Statement of significance for the listing, the base was the largest seaplane base in the Southern Hemisphere, was the longest serving during the war effort and is the most intact example of an RAAF World War II seaplane base in Australia. The site includes the Council owned 'Community' land subject to this Plan of Management, but also two privately owned land parcels within the site - home to the Christadelphian Bible School (former Main Hangar complex) and Catalina Lakefront Retreat (former base Hospital). Whilst within the State listed heritage curtilage, these privately owned areas, along with Council owned 'Operational' land to the south of Dorrington Road, are not formally part of this Plan of Management.

The site now provides an idyllic recreational setting, and whilst few of the original base-era buildings remain, they are well utilised for a range of community purposes including:

- the former Officer's Mess is now the Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club (Club Catalina)
- the former Airmen's Ablution and former Emergency Power House buildings are utilised by the Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association
- the former Inflammable Liquids Store is occupied by Rathmines Scouts
- the former Sergeant's Mess has been converted into the Westlakes Music Centre
- the former Picture Theatre and Gymnasium had operated as the Rathmines Community Hall and now the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre.

The closure of the former RAAF base more than 50 years ago has provided a unique opportunity to retain a sizeable portion of foreshore land for access and use by the general public. As a result, Rathmines Park now represents a significant portion of the recreational parkland within the 'Westlakes' area of the Lake Macquarie City Council area. Ongoing urban development in and around the area highlights the growing importance of public foreshore land as a valuable resource.

Guided by and building on the *Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan*, this Plan of Management provides foundations for retention and enhancement of the site's key values - including those strong heritage, environmental and recreational values highlighted by the community. The Plan of Management is further supported by the associated site Master Plan that outlines the physical layout of the site into the future.

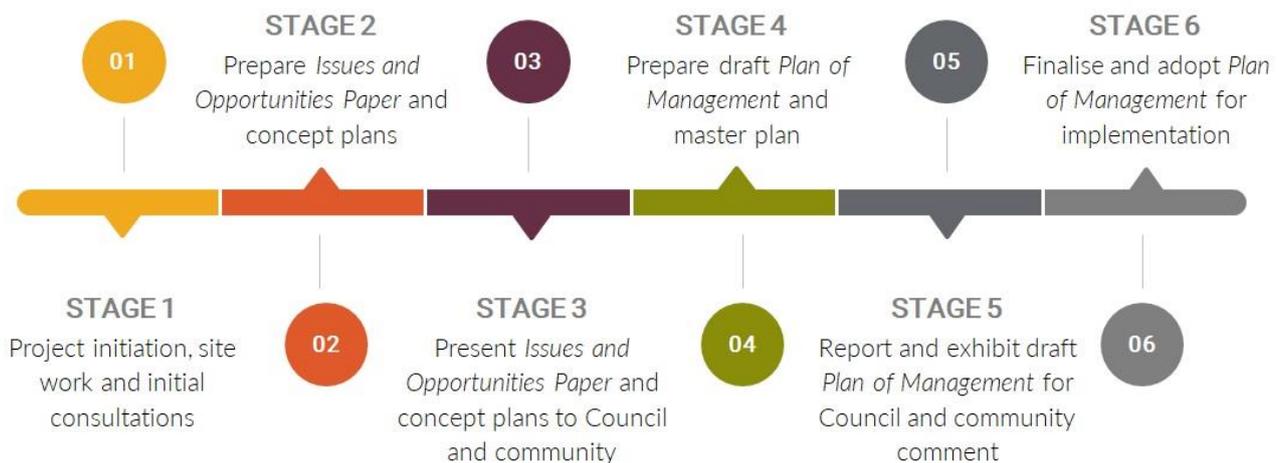
Current use

Rathmines Park is used by both local community members and visitors for a variety of active and passive recreation. These primarily include walking, cycling, picnicking, aquatic activities and formal sporting pursuits. The site is also home to a number of social/cultural activities, including those undertaken in the retained buildings, including the Westlakes Music Hall, Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre, Scout Hall, classic boat restoration buildings and the Catalina Memorial Bowling Club. Sporting activities undertaken on the site include football (soccer), cricket, lawn bowls and tennis.

A number of events are also held in Rathmines Park, ranging from small scale community events to large scale festivals such as the Catalina Festival. The Park can be accessed by active transport means (e.g. cycling and walking), public transport (albeit limited), private vehicles and by boat. Predominantly residential development borders the Park with the Rathmines town centre/commercial area located to the immediate south. The proximity to the Lake, along with extensive green space and history of the site, ensures that Rathmines is a popular destination for many.

Plan process

The Plan of Management has been developed over a six-stage process as outlined below.



Key values, vision and management objectives

The staged process of development has enabled a number of key values, vision and management objectives to be established to drive both the development of the site Master Plan and the implementation of this Plan of Management. These key values and vision are highlighted below.

Cultural Heritage and Natural Values



Rathmines Park is part of Australia’s World War II history. It is also part of an important network of natural areas and a longer-term history associated with Aboriginal inhabitation. The extensive foreshore and other bushland areas present opportunities to connect with nature and cultural heritage, evident in the layout, buildings and structures throughout the park and RAAF heritage significance. These spaces and the wider history of the site are valued by many in the community as well as being an important drawcard for visitors.

Recreation and Sporting Values



Rathmines Park provides highly valued recreational facilities for the Rathmines community and beyond. The scale and diversity of spaces coupled with the high scenic value and tranquility of the place provides a unique recreation experience. The spaces and facilities provide for diverse sporting and recreational opportunities including field sports, youth activities and passive recreation including walking and cycling. Related clubs and associations, and their respective activities, provide a major focus for many local and regional residents as well as visitors to the area.

Social and Visitor Values



Rathmines Park is a hub for community groups, events and recreational activities, an important part of the Westlakes community. The Park includes a range of buildings and facilities which accommodates many of these activities, facilitating strong local identity and connectivity for many participants. Rathmines Park is also known for its events - large and small, being a drawcard for locals and visitors as well as being a great source of pride for the community.

A VISION FOR RATHMINES PARK

Into the future Rathmines Park will continue to be a place that is available and accessible to a wide spectrum of the community, which recognises and embraces its history and interprets this through tangible and innovative ways – being a living Park with hidden treasures.

Rathmines Park will be managed in ways that enhance and accentuate its natural environment, both on land and water. Improvements will be simple and effective, creating an inviting place which the community is proud of, and engaged in.

Strategic themes and Master Plan intent

This Plan of Management builds on consultation activities, and the subsequent values and vision, to establish management directions for the future. These are articulated in the Plan of Management through the identification of strategic themes which are interpreted spatially through the supporting Master Plan drawings. The key themes identified are:

Indigenous and European heritage: Highlighting the importance of both Indigenous and European heritage on the area, and the variety of ways that these can be celebrated through interpretation, education and public interaction

Sports, recreation and youth activities: Highlighting the variety of opportunities on offer - including youth orientated activities from skateboarding to learn to ride facilities, sports grounds, children's playground, recreational paths and lake access opportunities

Environment and sustainability: Highlighting the need to balance unique site interactions between large areas of native bushland, sensitive foreshore environments, active recreation opportunities and large hardstand spaces

Events and attractions: Highlighting the opportunities for a range of events, attractions and activities to be undertaken given the size of the site, facilities available and potential to further celebrate the site's heritage through additional attractions in the future

Community facilities and other buildings: Highlighting the diverse range of existing community and other buildings available at the site, how these interact with the Park more broadly and the opportunities for these to be improved into the future

Implementation

Key directions toward implementation of the Plan of Management are articulated through a series of Implementation Action Plans that align to the strategic themes identified above. These identify some key short-term directions based on creating foundation documents and facilitating projects that have some funding available. These include:

- Establishing a *Vegetation Management Plan* that provides direction for the implementation of natural asset care and improvement
- Establishing an *Interpretation Plan*, building on existing Council guidance and strategies including the short-term Interpretation Plan for Rathmines Park, and that leads the detailed outcomes for interpretation, signage and project development to incorporate a range of heritage and related interpretation outcomes
- Undertaking detailed design for the youth hub, children's playground and outdoor gym equipment projects, all of which have some funding established through the *Recreation and Land Plan - Toronto Contributions Catchment 2015 - 2030*
- Working with the Catalina Association to progress business case, feasibility and approvals for a 'Catalina interpretation hangar' should these enable the project progression
- Including detailed consideration of key projects including swimming bath improvements and the provision of new clubhouse facilities at Fishburn Fields within broader strategic reviews for aquatic and sporting facilities respectively
- Undertaking forward planning for works to key buildings being the Westlakes Music Centre and the Catalina Memorial Bowling Club facilities, with a view to addressing issues raised by the *Conservation Management Plan* whilst providing a basis for securing funding

Implementation for other works and activities will be established through recurring budgets, grants opportunities and one-off project funding allocations. This will include ongoing improvements to various picnic areas, address need for parking and vehicle access, public amenities (where not otherwise incorporated into larger projects), as well as establishing a management process for the introduction of overnight RV camping.

The Plan of Management is identified as a 10-year plan, with implementation to be staged and subject to funding availability. Ongoing monitoring at regular intervals, with reference to the *Conservation Management Plan* directions, and in line with Council's broader planning and reporting framework is recommended through this period.

Key site information

SITE NAME Rathmines Park

LAND OWNER Lake Macquarie City Council

APPLICABLE LAND Lots 37-51 DP 11537
Lot 1 DP 226530
Lot 3 DP 226532
Lot 4 DP 226533
Lot 7 DP 516152
Lot 60 DP 584602
Lot 62 DP 596913
Lot 63 DP 596913
Part Lot 64 DP 596913
Lot 4 DP 704472
Lot 648 and 654 DP 806611

LAND AREA 50.8 hectares

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA Lake Macquarie City

LAND CATEGORIES General Community Use, Park, Natural Area (Bushland & Foreshore), Sportsground

DATE OF ADOPTION 26 October 2020

KEY FACILITIES Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre
Club Catalina / Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club
Westlakes Music Centre
Fishburn Fields and sporting club facilities
Lake Macquarie Classic Boast Association facilities
Rathmines Scout Hall

1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Plan of Management?

Lake Macquarie City Council is responsible for a range of Council owned land that extends across its local government area. Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council owned land is managed as either 'Community' or 'Operational' land, with a range of land 'categories' being applied to Community land to guide its ongoing management. All Community land is required to be captured within a Plan of Management, which provides the details of how that land will be managed. This relationship is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Legislative relationship to Plan of Management requirements

In essence, a Plan of Management guides the future management of the land to which it applies. It is developed in conjunction with the community and identifies how the important values of the place will be protected. In doing so, current and potential future use of the land is identified and the directions for how these will be delivered over time is established.

1.2 Why is Council preparing this Plan of Management?

In 2002, Council adopted the *Rathmines Park Plan of Management* (2002 Plan of Management). In the intervening time Rathmines Park has been listed on the State Heritage Register, the surrounding urban areas have grown, and important elements of the site have been improved. To ensure that the ongoing management reflects the current and future needs of Council and the community, as well as ensuring the State heritage significance of the site is conserved, it is time to renew the Plan of Management to provide a solid basis for the future.

To assist in articulating the community's vision for Rathmines Park, this Plan of Management is accompanied by a site Master Plan. The Plan of Management and Master Plan recognise and, where relevant, integrate the broader strategic directions and actions from related plans and strategies. This includes the *Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan* (Umwelt 2019) (CMP), which was completed in 2019 and provides a framework for the development of the Plan of Management and Master Plan in accordance with the heritage significance of the site. The Plan of Management also incorporates the

community and recreational facilities that are identified in the contribution plans that are relevant to the area.

Together with the site CMP, the Plan of Management creates a platform for the continued celebration of Rathmines Park's unique history, as well as delivering modern facilities and enabling activities that can meet long-term community needs.

1.3 Aims of the Plan

This Plan of Management aims to document the key values of Rathmines Park, and to guide the ongoing management, future use and development of the site. The Plan considers current uses, demands and trends, as well as those that are anticipated to impact on the area in the future. It also considers the range of major events and future opportunities for attraction of visitors from near and far, to deliver a balance between localised social and recreational needs, and the opportunity for economic growth and prosperity. The Plan of Management also aims to balance these opportunities with the natural environment, retaining the area as a natural refuge between urban lands and the edge of Lake Macquarie.

The Plan of Management will assist Council to meet its broader strategic goals and vision set out in *Our Future in Focus, the Lake Macquarie City Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027*, and other strategic documents as further discussed in Section 3.

1.4 Structure of the Plan

This Plan of Management has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*, and in the context of relevant Council plans and policies. It is divided into six sections as follows:

1. *Introduction*: Describes the rationale behind plans of management, why a Plan of Management is being prepared for Rathmines Park, and what land is included.
2. *Existing Site Use and Context*: Provides an overview of Rathmines Park, including its history, as well as current use and condition of the site via a series of 'precinct' areas.
3. *Legislative and Planning Context*: Describes the legislative requirements generally, as well as links to other planning and strategy documents that influence the development of this Plan of Management, and the current and future demands that can be expected.
4. *Basis for Management*: Provides a summary of the community and stakeholder consultation undertaken as part of the development of this Plan of Management. From these processes, the key values, vision and management objectives are identified. The land categories and their core objectives from the *Local Government Act 1993* are also identified in this section.
5. *Management Directions*: Identifies the proposed management directions through a theme-based approach, before identifying the future use and development of the area and subsequent interpretation via the Master Plan and associated precincts. Implementation Action Plans set out management directions that identify priorities over time periods. Performance targets and means of assessing the achievement of the directions are also included. This section identified leases and licences in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

6. *Implementation and review*: Identifies key and prioritised works and how progression of the Plan of Management is dependent on resourcing availability. It further recognises the intent to review the Plan of Management 10 years from adoption.

1.5 Land covered by this plan

Rathmines Park is located within the Lake Macquarie City local government area, around 35 kilometres from the Newcastle city centre, 60 kilometres from Gosford and 130 kilometres from the centre of Sydney. Regional access to the area from the Pacific Motorway is available from the Morrissett interchange to the south, and Toronto interchange to the north/west. Access to the site via Dorrington Road is then provided from the B53/Wangi Road.

The context of the site in terms of the broader region context is identified in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Regional context of Rathmines Park

At the local level, Rathmines Park is located on the western shoreline of Lake Macquarie, approximately ten minutes' drive south of Toronto, which is the main urban centre for the western part of the local government area. Rathmines Park occupies just over 50 hectares of land, with a total length of waterfrontage of 2,600 metres. The land is situated on Kilaben Bay, with the smaller Catalina Bay to its east, and adjoins urban residential land to the west and south.

The site in terms of its local context is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Local context of Rathmines Park

The jetties and boat ramps in Rathmines Park make the area accessible by water for larger craft as well as the Catalina ramp providing connections to a much wider catchment for sea plane use. Along the lakefront, Rathmines Park has some connectivity although public access is restricted in some adjacent areas and detours via road are required.

The topography of the site is variable, with some gently sloping and well vegetated areas around the western portion of the site, opening out to more flat, open grassed parkland and sporting spaces in the east, north and south. Foreshore vegetation occupies large portions of the waterfront, balanced with areas of greater recreational access in key locations.

Rathmines Park was acquired by the Council in 1963 from the Commonwealth Department of the Interior. The land was previously used as an RAAF flying and training base. The Park was predominantly cleared during the development of the base, with more than 100 buildings being spread across much of the landscape. Few of these remain in the current day, with those still within Council ownership being utilised for various community and recreational activities.

In the current day, the Park accommodates a broad range of passive and active activities. These include a number of organised sporting activities, passive recreational activities, waterfront pursuits, as well as a range of social and culturally based activities within and around retained buildings. The adjoining residential areas allow easy access for the local population and the site is easily accessible by private vehicle from nearby urban centres.

Details of the land that is subject to this Plan of Management is provided in Table 1 and shown visually in Figure 4.

Table 1: Land subject to this Plan of Management

Address	Lot	Plan	Size (Ha)	Category(s)
1 Overhill Road Rathmines	(Part) 64	DP 596913	46.885	Natural Area (Bushland), Natural Area (Foreshore), Park, Sportsground, General Community Use
31 Overhill Road Rathmines	3	DP 226532	0.334	Bushland
37 Overhill Road Rathmines	60	DP 584602	0.188	Bushland
81 Dorrington Road Rathmines	62	DP 596913	0.204	Bushland
85 Dorrington Road Rathmines	63	DP 596913	0.259	Bushland
151 Dorrington Road Rathmines	7	DP 516152	0.162	Bushland
1 Stilling Street Rathmines	4	DP 226533	0.842	General Community Use
3 Stilling Street Rathmines	1	DP 226530	0.170	General Community Use
9 Stilling Street Rathmines	4	DP 704472	0.730	Park
The Circler Rathmines	37-51	DP 11537	0.997	Park
107 Rosemary Row Rathmines	654	DP 806611	0.060	Sportsground
13 Coventry Street Rathmines	648	DP 806611	0.020	Sportsground



Figure 4: Land subject to this Plan of Management

2. Existing Site Use and Context

This section provides a review of the historic and current use of Rathmines Park. In particular, it identifies key aspects of the previous use of the area, the site's context in the region and locally, and details the current use of the site on a precinct basis.

2.1 Site history

Council acknowledges that Rathmines Park is part of the lands of the Awabakal People, who are the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of Lake Macquarie. Long before the site became a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base, the Awabakal people were present in and around the site and the wider Lake Macquarie area. The Lake foreshore is rich in Aboriginal culture and history, with close access to water and visual connections to various nearby locations.

The name Rathmines was taken from the name of the farm property first settled by Edward Hely in 1841, named after a small village near Dublin. Much of the original foreshore around what is now the hardstand and Parade Ground areas was originally swampy ground and subsequently reclaimed. Vegetation comprising of various eucalypt species covered the original site.

The RAAF established the flying boat base, 'RAAF Base Rathmines', in 1939. It became the largest flying boat base in Australia until its closure in 1961. The base was originally established as a permanent flying boat base for 20 Short Sunderland flying boats from the Short Aircraft Company in England. These aircraft were later replaced by the PBV Catalina flying boat from America. Images of the base during this time of operation are provided at Figure 5.



View north over base towards Kilaben Bay



View of north-east portion of the site (Styles Point in background)



Main hangar building, now removed, with view from inside building with flying boat ramp in background



Figure 5: Images of RAAF Base Rathmines during operation (Source: Lake Macquarie City Council)

Many aircraft missions originated from the RAAF Base Rathmines. Aircraft were used during the Second World War for sea lane mine laying operations, supply and transport, as well as search and recovery. The Catalina Memorial which extends to the east of the bowling club (the former Officer's Mess / Club Catalina) is a memorial erected to the men and women who served at RAAF Base Rathmines.

The site of the former RAAF base now provides an idyllic recreational setting on the foreshore of Lake Macquarie. The few original base buildings which remain are used for a variety of purposes, and the large surrounding open spaces are available to the general public. Of those buildings retained:

- the former Officer's Mess is now the Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club (Club Catalina)
- the former Airmen's Ablution and former Emergency Power House buildings are utilised by the Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association
- the former Inflammable Liquids Store is occupied by Rathmines Scouts
- the former Sergeant's Mess has been converted into the Westlakes Music Centre
- the former Picture Theatre and Gymnasium has operated as the Rathmines Community Hall and now the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre.

The two-storey building previously used in conjunction with the main hangar and workshop (as seen in the background of the bottom right image at Figure 5) is now privately owned and used by the Christadelphian Bible School. This building and the surrounding land (Lot 5 DP226534) was sold by Council and subsequently is not part of this Plan of Management. The former base Hospital is also now located on privately owned land (Lot 2 DP226531) and operates as a conference and accommodation facility operating as the Catalina Lakefront Retreat. Like the Christadelphian Bible School, this area is not part of this Plan of Management. These buildings and main existing site features are identified in Plan 01 - Existing Site at Appendix A.

Several of the base era buildings were also sold or transported to suburbs throughout Lake Macquarie City for use as community halls e.g. Brightwaters, Balcolyn and Kilaben Bay. A number were also relocated within the site and now sit on the original main hangar building and are owned and utilised by the Christadelphian Bible School. Compared with the large number of buildings associated with the former RAAF base, there are now relatively few identifiable buildings and features of this period, with foreshore areas generally being used for parks and recreational opportunities, whilst large areas to the west of the site have gradually returned to a more natural state.

2.2 Current context

The closure of the former RAAF base more than 50 years ago has provided a unique opportunity to retain a sizeable portion of foreshore land for access and use by the general public. As a result, Rathmines Park now represents a significant portion of the recreational parkland within the 'Westlakes' planning precinct of the Lake Macquarie City local government area. Ongoing urban development in and around the area highlights the growing importance of public foreshore land as a valuable resource.

However, the important recent history of the site has not been forgotten, with the site being added to the NSW State Heritage Register in November 2005. This led to the development of the *Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan* (July 2019, Umwelt) that was endorsed by the Heritage Council of NSW on 12 August 2019. This document provides an important foundation for retention of the heritage values of the area and is a key document that forms a basis for this Plan of Management (see further details in Section 3.3.2).

The current values of Rathmines Park are well recognised within the local community, with the land having long-term potential as an important heritage, environmental and social resource resulting in

real public benefits. The need for a Plan of Management is apparent in order that future funding for improvements and open space planning is consistent community expectations and legislative requirements.

This Plan of Management therefore looks to assist Council in managing the area and providing useful guidance to direct the future use of the park. The document does not provide for detailed design of the proposed works, structures and landscaping as these will need to evolve over time and be delivered in conjunction with the intent of the associated site Master Plan and adopted Conservation Management Plan.

2.3 Current uses and condition of land and facilities

Rathmines Park is a large public space on the foreshore of Lake Macquarie with a range of facilities and spaces which attract a wide variety of individual users and community groups. The Park and its facilities are used for a wide variety of passive and active recreation activities, including walking, picnics, music and cultural pursuits, boating, fishing, sports, skating, dog exercise and as a place to enjoy the natural surrounds.

The Park is frequented by the local community, school and formal groups utilising the spaces and buildings for various special interest pursuits as well as ad hoc visitation and attendance to various events including the well-known 'Catalina Festival' and 'Blast from the Past'. The Park is well used by organised sports groups and their spectators – including football (soccer), cricket, tennis, disc golf, lawn bowls and sailing.

Given this diversity of use and activities, the Park has been divided into a series of precincts based on the existing facilities, type of space and the way in which these areas are used. These precincts are shown in the plan at Figure 6. Each precinct is subsequently discussed in this section, highlighting their existing use, how these areas are valued by the community, and areas of need and opportunities to address issues identified. Each section also provides a number of images highlighting key areas, uses and condition of facilities based on visual inspection, Council records and the site *Conservation Management Plan*. Current asset details should be sourced from Council's asset management systems and the conditional information provided herein is indicative of the condition at the time of preparing this Plan of Management.

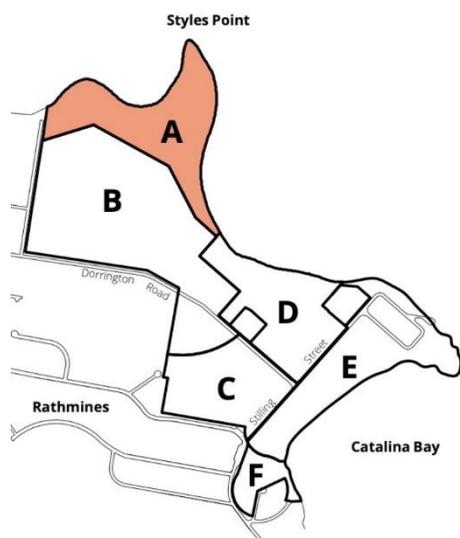
In an overall context, it is noted that the condition of services within Rathmines Park, including water, sewer and electrical, all require detailed assessment and upgrade to meet ongoing needs. The *Conservation Management Plan* highlights that the services are in variable condition and have a grading of significance that is similarly variable. Unlike most of the Lake Macquarie area, these services are predominantly in the ownership of Council, with much of the infrastructure being constructed in association with the previous use of the site for war time purposes. Repair and/or replacement costs of this infrastructure is likely to be substantial.

Similarly, the size of scale of Rathmines Park means that the condition of open space areas varies between locations. Much of the open space areas are however in generally good condition, though vehicle access causes damage in some locations and this will need to be monitored over time. This is particularly the case where there is regular and potentially increasing use, such as overflow parking on the Parade Ground and on foreshore land associated in the vicinity of the former Airmen's Ablution Building.



Figure 6: Rathmines Park precinct plan

2.3.1 Precinct A - Styles Point



The Styles Point precinct is an attractive foreshore area accessible by vehicle from Overhill Road and connected via a shared pathway to the remainder of Rathmines Park. The topography of the precinct is gently sloping with some gentle slope to the north and west and with more steeply sloping areas towards the eastern foreshore.

The area is used for a variety of recreational activities, with the boat ramp and jetty being well-used and valued facilities given the gradient, depth and availability of rigging and tie up areas. The area is regularly used for organised events by the *Newcastle and Hunter Trailer Yacht Association*, as well as other watercraft that use the jetty, water-based dump point and as a point to come ashore. Fishing groups and individuals also use the ramp, whilst the point itself has an attractive setting and some basic picnic

facilities.

The Rathmines Disc Golf Course is spread throughout this precinct, with a total of 10 holes / baskets with an additional 9 temporary holes provided over a larger area for competitions. The course is free to use and open to the public. There is potential for conflict on one hole in particular, where foreshore use adjoining the boat ramp is in close proximity to a basket.

Walking / cycling is a popular use of the precinct, utilising the popular shared path that extends east-west through the area. The area is otherwise relatively open forest (containing areas of Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs)), with minimal picnic facilities and a toilet block that is in basic condition and not constructed to current accessibility standards. Extensive roads and parking detract from the appearance of the area, but this open format is well received from a boating perspective.

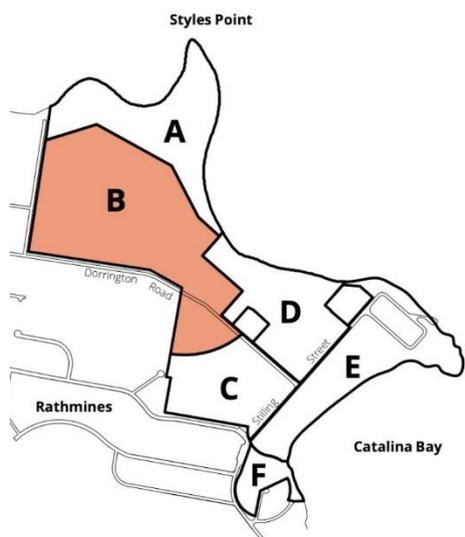
Facility	Description / Condition	Key users
Amenities block <i>CMP significance grading – Neutral</i>	Basic but generally in operational condition. Improvements for privacy and showering required. Reaching useful life during plan period.	Visiting public, Newcastle and Hunter Trailer Yacht Association, other boating public
Jetty and slipway complex <i>CMP significance grading – High</i>	Good condition, includes more recent addition of concrete jetty in original configuration.	Newcastle and Hunter Trailer Yacht Association, other boating public
Gravel landing strip / entry road <i>CMP significance grading – Moderate</i>	Former landing strip area, possibly constructed around 1950 as an early addition to the base facilities. Fair condition, though additional maintenance required to assist in interpretation of the heritage element.	General public as part of access road



- 1 BOAT RAMP AND JETTY
- 3 DISC GOLF "BASKET" HOLE
- 5 AGING AMENITIES BUILDING

- 2 INFORMAL PARKING / RIGGING AREAS
- 4 POPULAR SHARED PATH
- 6 WESTERN FORESHORE AREA

2.3.2 Precinct B - Bushland / Native Vegetation

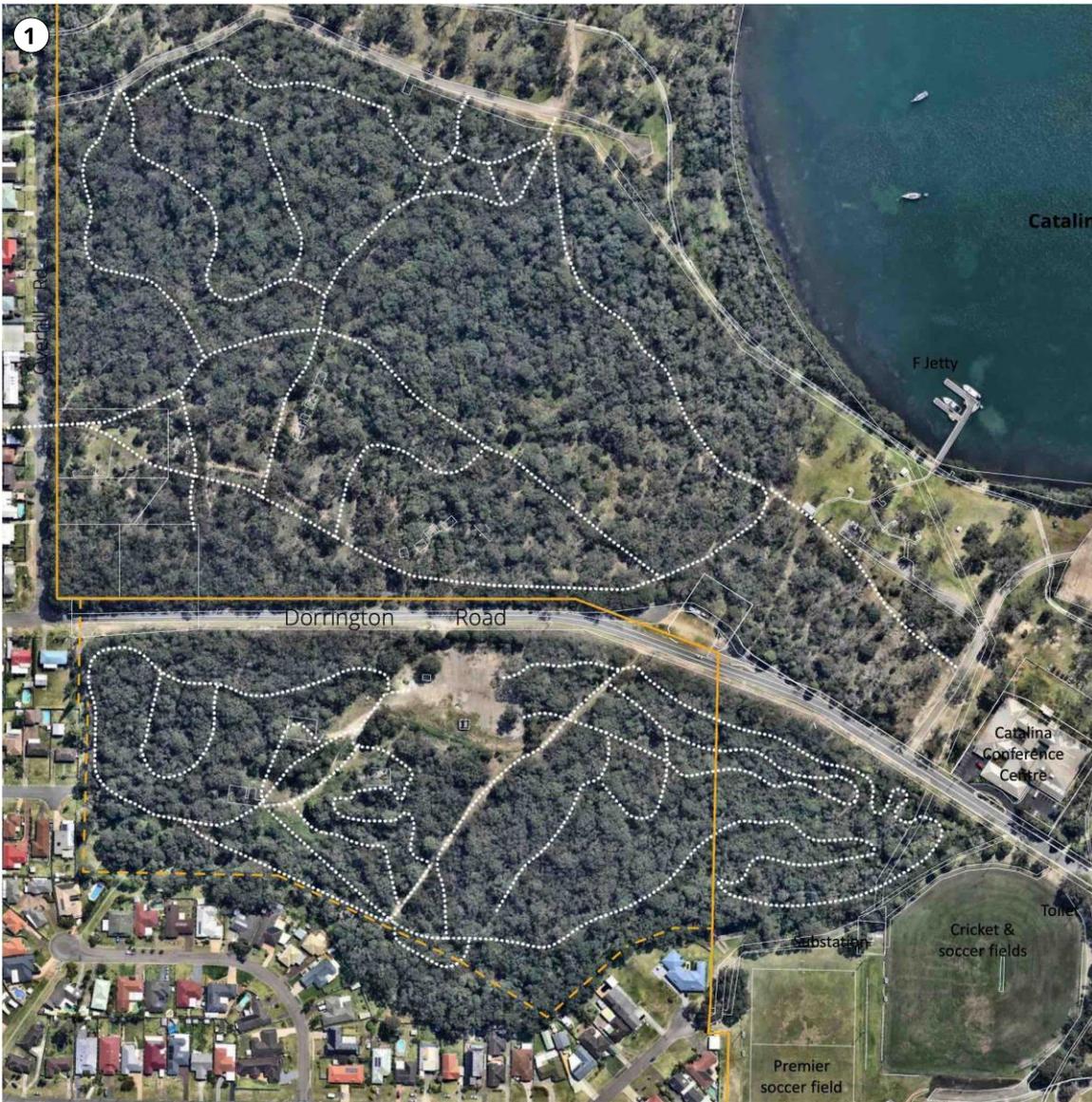


Located in the north-western portion of the Park, this precinct is highly vegetated with gentle slopes from a central high point. The south-west corner, being the intersection of Overhill Road and Dorrington Road, is the commencement of Rathmines Park. The former Guard House site is located further to the east within the precinct on Dorrington Road. This area provided a historical threshold or entry point to the base which no longer exists, reinforcing the lack of distinctive entry points and signage.

The precinct is popular for walking, running and cycling, utilising the large network of predominantly informal trails. The area is enjoyed for the peace and quiet of its natural setting and undeveloped feel, with walking and bush tracks highly valued by Park users.

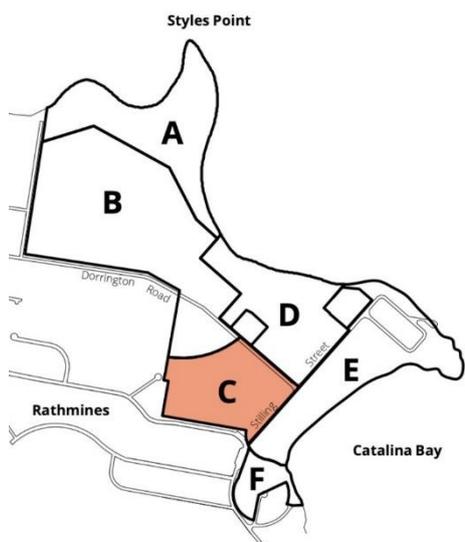
These areas also have some existing connections with community environmental management groups with further opportunities for improvement. The area also traverses through some important remnant RAAF heritage items, including the former transmission station, residential areas and Guard House. These items provide an opportunity in the precinct to combine walking trails with interpretation opportunities, including natural, Aboriginal and heritage areas.

Facility	Description / Condition	Key users
Residential subdivision for married personnel and other remnant buildings / areas <i>CMP significance grading - Moderate</i>	Former residential areas, sleeping quarters and wireless transmission station within now predominantly bushland area. Heritage road and building foundations are still notable and in fair condition.	Walking trail users
Guard House area <i>CMP significance grading - Little</i>	Original building removed, with the resulting area appearing to be little more than open space.	N/A
Walking tracks and trails	Generally well utilised, albeit numerous informal tracks have been established over time and some are subject to erosion and require additional maintenance.	Walking trail users



- 1 LARGE NETWORK OF INFORMAL BUSH TRACKS NORTH AND SOUTH OF DORRINGTON ROAD
- 2 FORMER ROAD WITHIN RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION "HIDDEN" ALONG BUSH TRACK
- 3 LARGER AND WELL UTILISED TRAIL
- 4 EVIDENCE OF EROSION ON SMALLER TRAIL

2.3.3 Precinct C - Sports & Youth Facilities



This precinct is located adjacent to the Rathmines retail/town centre on the western side of Stilling Street and to the south of Dorrington Road. There is potential to improve the interface between the precinct, Rathmines retail/town centre and Stilling Street, including parking and an entry threshold.

The precinct contains the Rathmines Tennis Courts as well as the sporting field infrastructure associated with the Park - known as Fishburn Fields. The area also contains an existing small skate park facility, as well as a number of overflow parking areas that are well utilised during sporting activities and more occasionally in association with the skate park or events around the Park.

The sports fields and skate park are very well utilised facilities, with strong sporting and user groups, but have limited infrastructure such as amenities, parking, irrigation, seating, shade and viewing areas. The skate park is also limited in size with a poor-quality surface. The tennis courts on the other hand are valued but not highly utilised.

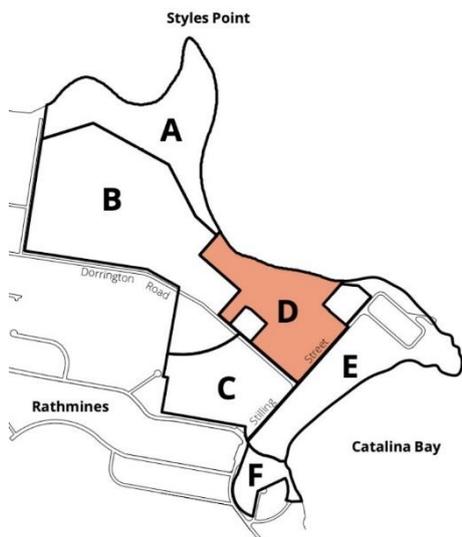
The precinct includes the RAAF base era septic tank installation/pump house and Emergency Power House building - which is now utilised by the Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association. Several adjoining open space areas suffer from unrestricted vehicle access, highlighting the need for formalised car parking areas and vehicle restrictions where appropriate.

Facility	Description / Condition	Key users
Skatepark <i>CMP significance grading - Neutral</i>	Basic but well utilised skate park. Poor surface condition and one-dimensional in skill level.	Children and youth from local and surrounding areas
Fishburn Fields and Rathmines Tennis Courts (Sportsgrounds) <i>CMP significance grading - Little</i>	District level sporting facility which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four fields (soccer / cricket) Four tennis courts Small tennis club house General use change rooms and canteen building <p>Basic club buildings in operational condition, albeit main clubrooms are not fit for purpose.</p>	Westlake Wildcats Football Club Wangi Warriors Cricket Club Rathmines Public School Casual tennis players (no formal club competition)
Amenities block <i>CMP significance grading - Neutral</i>	Basic but generally in operational condition. Not reaching useful life during plan period. Potential for basic upgrade in lieu of new facility in association with the skate park area development.	Sporting groups, skate park users, general public
Emergency Power House <i>CMP significance grading - Moderate</i>	Used by Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association for restoration activities. Some brickwork cracking requires monitoring. CMP indicates facility in good condition.	Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association



- 1 INFORMAL PARKING ON OPEN SPACE AREA SERVICING SPORTS FIELDS AND SKATE PARK
- 2 INADEQUATE CHANGE FACILITIES
- 3 TENNIS COURTS CATERING TO RELATIVELY LOW USER BASE
- 4 BASIC, WELL UTILISED SKATE PARK WITH POOR SURFACING AND MINIMAL DIVERSITY OF USE

2.3.4 Precinct D - Catalina Ramp / Foreshore



A central feature of Rathmines Park is the large open space that is associated with the Catalina flying boat ramp, surrounding concrete and bitumen hardstands and the adjoining Parade Ground and foreshore picnic areas.

The precinct is well used for walking, picnicking, boat access, dog exercise as well as more occasional uses such as sea plane access and large events. The hardstand is also a popular location for learner drivers, although it also attracts drivers who indulge in anti-social behaviour. Part of the precinct (Parade Ground) is a designated dog off-leash area.

The boat ramp holds an important connection to the former historical use of the area for Catalina flying boats, with the wide ramp still used for occasional sea plane and Catalina access. The

adjoining smaller boat ramp has recently had a pontoon / tie up points installed in late 2019, improving the accessibility and use of the area for water access. The Styles Point ramp provides a nearby alternative.

The large open hardstand and boat ramp area is an important open space for events, including for overflow parking. The precinct also includes the locations of a number of former hangars and other building sites, with footprints located around and adjoining the remaining hardstand area. The site also adjoins two privately owned facilities:

- Christadelphian Bible School: located to the east of the Catalina flying boat ramp, operate bible camps during school holidays. The site contains part of the former Main Hangar complex and a number of other original buildings relocated from around the former base
- Catalina Lakefront Retreat (formerly the Catalina Conference Centre): operated by a registered charity that provides accessible accommodation as well as functions and other accommodation. Incorporates the former Base Hospital building and also leases an adjoining section of the Park located to its immediate north

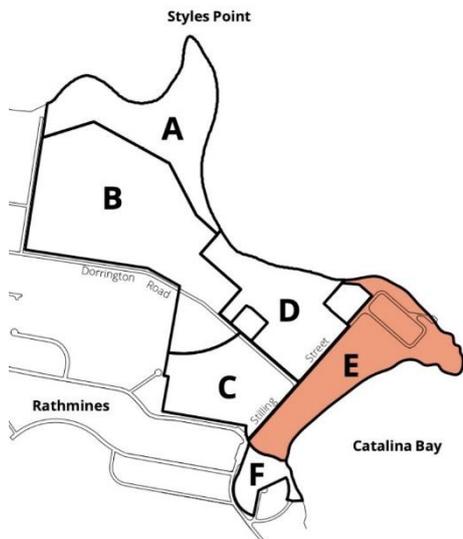
Facility	Description / Condition	Key users
F Jetty (Marine Section Timber Wharf) <i>CMP significance grading - Moderate</i>	2hr in 24hr boat parking area. Also used for fishing and swimming. Facility recently renewed in original configuration (2019)	Boat access, fishing and swimming users / general community
Catalina Ramp (Jetty and slipway complex) <i>CMP significance grading - High</i>	Occasional sea plane usage usually associated with the Catalina Festival. Adjoining boat ramp now includes recently installed pontoon (2019)	Rathmines Catalina Memorial Park Association, Catalina Festival, Sydney Sea Planes, boating public
Concrete Apron area <i>CMP significance grading - Exceptional</i> Bitumen Hardstand <i>CMP significance grading - Moderate</i>	Used mainly for vehicle related activities and purposes including access to the ramps. Bitumen hardstand area in poor condition and requiring renewal. Concerns regarding open nature and associated anti-social behaviour	Learner drivers, events parking and staging, Christadelphian Bible School parking, events, sea planes
Substation no. 2 <i>CMP significance grading - Moderate</i>	Basic building previously utilised for Scout storage. Part of original base construction in good condition.	Community groups

Facility	Description / Condition	Key users
Amenities block <i>CMP significance grading – Neutral</i>	Basic but generally in operational condition. Reaching useful life during plan period.	Public visitors to adjoining picnic area, boating users utilising F-jetty
Parade Ground (dog off leash area) <i>CMP significance grading – Moderate</i>	Unfenced but designated off leash area of mostly open grass. Used for overflow event parking and informal recreation. Condition to be monitored with renewed use of Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre.	Dog owners, walkers, general community, Christadelphian Bible School, Catalina Lakefront Retreat



- 1 RESTORED F – JETTY
- 2 BASIC PICNIC FACILITIES NEAR THE F – JETTY
- 3 FLYING BOAT RAMP - OCCASIONAL SEA PLANE USE
- 4 CONCRETE APRON - CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE SCHOOL BEHIND
- 5 BOAT RAMP WITH PONTOON (INSTALLED LATE 2019)
- 6 SHARED PATH CONCRETE APRON & BITUMEN HARDSTAND ADJOIN
- 7 PARADE GROUND / DOG OFF LEASH AREA
- 8 WESTERN HANGAR ON EDGE OF APRON - LAKEFRONT RETREAT BEHIND

2.3.5 Precinct E - Catalina Bay / Memorial Point



This precinct extends along the foreshore between Stilling Street and the eastern foreshore and is referred to as Catalina Bay. It contains several community and Council managed buildings as well as a number of other facilities and spaces.

The area is used for walking, picnicking, small passive watercraft access, events, swimming as well as music and cultural pursuits associated with some facilities. Most facilities and spaces are well utilised and provide for a range of activities. Rectification of asbestos and contamination are significant management issues, whilst other buildings require ongoing and regular maintenance due to their age and heritage value.

Key community facilities include the Westlakes Music Centre which is internally functional, although it does not present well externally or fully cater for the larger performance space needs

of its users. Located within this precinct, the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre (formerly known as the Rathmines Community Hall) was closed in 2016 for substantial repair and refurbishment before reopening in mid-2020. The facility was well utilised by a range of community groups prior to its closure and will be a prominent centre-piece of the site in the future.

However, the lengthy closure of this high profile building has contributed to a sense of the Park being 'closed'. This building will become a key performing arts space for the local government area, catering to both local performance groups in addition to an expanded touring performance schedule.

Other buildings with specific user groups in the precinct include:

- former Airmen's Ablution Building used by the Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association
- the Scout Hall which were recently reopened (early 2020) following repeated closures to enable rectification and contamination works to be undertaken
- the Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club (Club Catalina), which has been leased and operated as a lawn bowling club since the 1970s.

The Bowling Club signed a new 20-year lease in 2015, with the facilities including the Club building, adjoining car park and two bowling greens. The lease area is surrounded by a loop access road, with an adjacent War Memorial to the east of the area known as Memorial Point.

The Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association use the foreshore area and building adjacent to Catalina Bay, including for access to the foreshore and water for launching boats. While most smaller craft are carried and launched by hand, some level of vehicle access is still required to both the building and the surrounding area for loading and unloading larger boats.

Along the foreshore itself, a number of water-based activities and facilities are present, including the Bomb and Fuel Wharf which is currently unused due to its state of disrepair. This area has potential for restoration and use as a disabled friendly fishing platform or future boating use to provide more direct water access to the adjoining Bowling Club. To the immediate west, the Swimming Baths is a semi-formalised bathing area which was previously popular but currently in poor condition with no nearby facilities and subsequently having low levels of use.

The foreshore playground and picnic facilities on Catalina Bay have with a minor 'Catalina' theme and is popular with local families and particularly with younger children. However, like the skate park, the facilities are relatively limited and only cater to younger audiences with a poor range of skill levels / diversity to appeal to a broader age range. Picnic, BBQ and toilet facilities are highly used to the point of being insufficient or of a relatively poor quality.

Within the immediate surrounds of the playground are three concrete pads which mark the locations of former RAAF base buildings. These pads are generally unused/underutilised. The most southerly pad, which includes a small isolated toilet block, acts as the main parking area for the adjoining playground, although is not marked as such. The pad to the north was previously used for a trial of overnight RV camping, which was discontinued but has strong support to be reinstated. The third pad is located to the immediate north of the playground, with the shared user pathway moving through it. This pad is currently underutilised, though its proximity to the play space provides potential for learn to ride or other youth orientated activity - e.g. basketball.

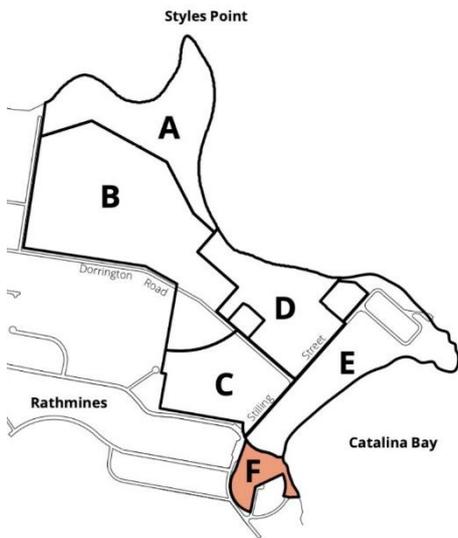
The concrete pads are in variable condition, with interpretative information being needed to fully understand their presence. The popularity of the shared path and playground also raises safety concerns regarding the lack of road crossings as well as lighting and passive surveillance opportunities.

Facility	Description / Condition	Key users
Scout Hall (previously Inflammable Liquids Store) <i>CMP significance grading - Moderate</i>	Building rectification works undertaken in 2019 / 2020. Reopening in early 2020. Previous assessment identify building as being in good condition.	Rathmines Scout Group
Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre (previously Picture theatre and Gymnasium) <i>CMP significance grading - Exceptional</i>	Substantial repair and refurbishment undertaken in 2019/2020 before reopening in mid-2020.	Previously used by tai chi, Catalina Players, Dobel Society, Zebra Finch Society Touring performances
Central Boiler House <i>CMP significance grading - Moderate</i>	Substantial repair and refurbishment undertaken in 2019/2020 before reopening in mid-2020.	To be utilised in conjunction with Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre
Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club / Club Catalina (previously Officer's Mess) <i>CMP significance grading - High</i>	Club building including original and more recent additions. Two bowling greens. Leased and operated by Club.	Bowling Club members, Rathmines and surrounding community, visiting public
Westlakes Music Centre (previously Sergeant's Mess) <i>CMP significance grading - High</i>	Highly used practice, lesson, and performance space with storage for a number of music groups.	Stilling Street Singers, Lake Macquarie Concert Band, Toronto Brass Band, yoga classes, public for small performances
Classic Boat workshop (previously Airmen's Ablution Building) <i>CMP significance grading - High</i>	Well utilised workshop space for classic boat restoration by Association members.	Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association (also use Emergency Power house - <i>CMP significance grading - Moderate</i>)
Amenities facility within Motor Transport Building hardstand <i>CMP significance grading - Intrusive</i>	Poorly located, intrusive and not fit for purpose despite being generally operational. Reaching useful life early in plan period presenting opportunity for renewal in associated with playground area.	General public, including adjoining playground users
Playground facilities <i>CMP significance grading - Neutral</i>	Basic play facilities replacing customised facilities previously destroyed by fire. Good condition, but generally not representative of heritage context.	General public



- 1** BOWLING CLUB NORTH EASTERN ENTRY AND OUTDOOR AREA WHICH OFFERS LAKE VIEWS
- 2** FORESHORE ACCESS TO SWIMMING BATHS WITH NORTHERN ASPECT, BUT NO FACILITIES
- 3** BASIC ISOLATED TOILET WITHIN HARDSTAND AREA / CAR PARK
- 4** POPULAR PLAYGROUND FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN WITH MINOR CATALINA THEME
- 5** BBQ AND PICNIC SHELTER ADJOINING PLAYGROUND AREA
- 6** CLOSED SCOUT HALL WITH FENCING
- 7** CONCRETE PAD WITH POTENTIAL USE AS A LEARN TO RIDE AREA OR SIMILAR YOUTH ACTIVITY
- 8** EXISTING GRAVEL CAR PARK ON FORESHORE BETWEEN TWO OPEN SPACE AREAS
- 9** CLASSIC BOAT ASSOCIATION WORKSHOP, REGULARLY USED AND MAINTAINED BY THE ASSOCIATION
- 10** COMMUNITY HALL WITH WORKS UNDERWAY. HIGHLY VISIBLE ENTRY ELEMENT AT KEY INTERSECTION
- 11** WESTLAKES MUSIC HALL, BEING INTERNALLY EFFECTIVE, BUT WITH POOR EXTERNAL PRESENTATION
- 12** FORESHORE SHARED PATH WITH SEATING ALONG CATALINA BEACH AREA

2.3.6 Precinct F - Town Park



The area opposite the Rathmines retail/town centre, sometimes referred to as ‘the Cirlet’, is a relatively large and underutilised area of public open space with basic infrastructure improvements including picnic tables, seats, signage and toilets. These facilities are relatively well used by visitors to the shops and occasionally for local events and gatherings.

While the precinct is one of the key entry points it feels disconnected from the wider Rathmines Park. This disconnection is enhanced by existing vegetation and a retaining wall creating separation between this area and the adjoining Westlakes Music Centre to its north.

This separation is further highlighted within the *Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan* which identified limited use of the area as part of the previous RAAF Base Rathmines.

Nonetheless, the precinct does have foreshore connection potential that may assist in pedestrian and cycle access from the south into the Catalina Bay foreshore park area. Open space quality is otherwise basic with some attractive mature trees offsetting basic condition of some turfed areas.

Facility	Description / Condition	Key users
Amenities facility within open space <i>CMP significance grading - Neutral</i>	Reasonable well located, though not fit for purpose despite being generally operational. Reaching useful life early in plan period.	General public, including adjoining Rathmines town centre / shops users



- 1 BASIC TOILET FACILITIES WITHOUT APPROPRIATE DISABILITY ACCESS
- 2 INFORMAL PARK SPACE WITH LAKE VIEWS BUT NO FORMAL CONNECTION TO WIDER PARK AREA OR FORESHORE
- 3 LARGE AREA OF UNDERUTILISED TO SOUTH-EAST OF SHOPS
- 4 LOCAL INFORMATION SIGNAGE BOARD

3. Legislative and Planning Context

This section provides an overview of the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*, *Heritage Act 1977* and other localised planning and contextual information as they relate to the use of Rathmines Park. It also identifies the current and potential future demands on the area and how these are likely to influence the ongoing management of the Park over time.

3.1 Local Government Act 1993

Under Section 36(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, plans of management must be prepared for all 'Community' land. In general terms, plans of management:

- are prepared by a council in consultation with the community
- identify the important features and attributes of the land, including how it is used at the current time
- identify how the council will manage the land
- indicate how the land may be used or developed in the future.

The *Local Government Act* sets out a range of associated activities and processes under various sections. A summary of the key provisions is provided in the table below, though a number of other sections also apply, generally being captured under Chapter 6, Part 2, Division 2 of the Act.

Requirement	Act Section
To prepare plans of management for all 'Community' land	35, 36(1)
What a plan of management for council owned land must include and how it is to be categorised for use	36(3), 36(4)
A draft must be exhibited prior to adoption and may be re-exhibited if amended prior to adoption	38, 39, 40
Use and nature of 'Community' land must not change prior to the preparation of a plan of management	44

Under Section 36 of the Act, all 'Community' land must be categorised in one or more of the following five categories:

- Natural area
- Sportsground
- Park
- Area of cultural significance
- General community use.

The Act then sets out broad 'core objectives' for the management of land to which those category(s) have been applied. The categories of land that are applied to Rathmines Park through this Plan of Management are identified and discussed in Section 4.5.

3.2 Heritage Act 1977

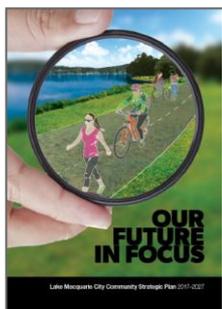
The key purpose of the Heritage Act 1977 is to ensure that cultural heritage in NSW is adequately identified and conserved. Under the Act, items of environmental heritage include places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects and precincts that have been identified as having significance based on historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic values. State significant items are listed on the NSW State Heritage Register and are given automatic protection against any activities that may damage an item or place or affect its heritage and/or archaeological significance. Rathmines Park is listed on this register as an item/place of State heritage significance (SHR ID 01740).

When a place is listed on the register, the approval of the Heritage Council of NSW is required for any major work under Section 60 of the Act. The Heritage Council ensures that any changes do not detract from the place's heritage significance. Section 57 of the Act also provides for some exemptions from such approvals in specific circumstances. Further details on the application of the *Heritage Act 1977* can be found in the *Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan* which has been endorsed by the Heritage Council of NSW (endorsed 12 August 2019, OEH/HC file number SF19/50153).

3.3 Local planning context

The following sub-sections provide an overview of site context with respect to previous planning undertaken by Council and other government plans and strategies. Many of these provide important insight and direction for the current planning processes.

3.3.1 Community Strategic Plan



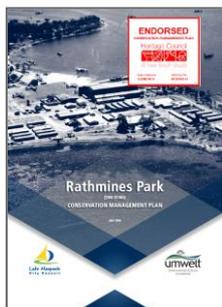
The development of the Plan of Management for Rathmines Park is supported by and links at a broad level to Council's overarching directions outlined in the 2017 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) - "Our Future in Focus".

The CSP Vision identifies that *Lake Macquarie is a City with a lake at its heart encircled by distinctive towns and villages. We balance our cherished environments with our need for great spaces to live and visit, smart transport options and a thriving economy; which adapt and strive to be fair for all.*

The CSP identifies a series of core values to direct the vision for Lake Macquarie. Whilst branching across all identified 'focus areas', the project has a particularly strong alignment with the strategies of the *Lifestyle and Wellbeing* focus area. These relate to a range of community wellness, festivals and events as well as future development of spaces and facilities to meet and support community needs.

Other related strategies include *Mobility and Accessibility* which identifies the value of active transportation that meets community needs - primarily walking and cycling infrastructure, and *Connected Communities*, that value diverse cultures, as well as empowering the community to adopt sustainable behaviours and enhance community spaces with urban and public art, place making and place activation.

3.3.2 Conservation Management Plan



The 2019 *Conservation Management Plan* was prepared in response to the need to manage the site in accordance with its State heritage listing. Various elements of the Park are also individually listed in Schedule 5 of the *Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014* as having local significance.

The purpose of the Conservation Management Plan is to guide future development, use and management of the Park with respect to its heritage status. The Conservation Management Plan contains a total of 137 policies that relate to a wide variety of directions, and these provide the core parameters within which the

Plan of Management and Master Plan outcomes have considered and sought to be consistent with.

Key policy directions of note include:

- the need to retain, emphasise and prioritise work to elements that are of 'exceptional' or 'high' significance
- the delineation of areas of:
 - previous disturbance to Rathmines Park
 - related plantings from the RAAF period
 - potential reinterpretation of 'lost' elements
 - key historical precincts
- the need for a cyclical maintenance, management and inspection program to be established for items of significance to avoid degradation over time
- to utilise the Burra Charter philosophy to *'do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that the cultural significance is retained'*

The CMP also highlights the approvals requirements for work within the Park, as well as a range of design principles for future uses and interventions to existing buildings.

3.3.3 2002 Plan of Management

The previous/2002 Plan of Management for Rathmines Park identified a range of potential projects that supported the long-term use of the site for open space activities whilst maintaining the heritage and cultural importance of the site. The 2002 Plan of Management confirms that much of the use of the Park remains as it did at that time - including sporting activities, the Music Centre and Bowling Club.

Significant changes to this older Plan are however notable, reflecting the popularity of current recreation and sporting activities and the more recent State heritage listing of the site. For example, the 2002 Plan identified the removal of the Boiler House that adjoins the Rathmines Theatre which is replaced with a large external deck overlooking the Lake. This change would not be supported by the current heritage controls, though many other projects and uses are similar to those being considered in the current day.

In general terms, the key facility that has been developed since the 2002 plan is the shared user path which now extends through the site and is a popular addition for many in the community.

3.3.4 Tourism, events and economic development

Council's *Destination Management Plan 2018-2022* highlights Rathmines as a 'hidden treasure location' and contains actions regarding embedding tourism elements relating to the Park's World War II heritage in future master planning. The Plan also identified the potential for a major 'flagship' event centred around the Lake which builds on existing events, potentially including the Catalina Festival. Music events are another opportunity that is identified for the Rathmines Park area.

The *Destination NSW Management Plan Sydney Surrounds North* identifies the key tourism market of "families and caravan & camping" for Lake Macquarie. This Plan identified gaps in the area which include activation of the Lake foreshore, improved access to waterways and provision of conferencing and event facilities.

Council's *Event and Festival Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2024* highlights Council's commitment to master planning of Rathmines Park with an event focus, to take advantage of its open space for large events and the Lake as a stage and backdrop. Other opportunities identified included programming and activation of the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre, including for performing arts and night-time activities.

The Action Plan states that event weaknesses include the lack of parking and transport options at major sites, making it difficult to attract large events. Directions seek to incorporate supporting infrastructure within open spaces - such as three-phase power to support pop-up and temporary activities.

Council's *Urban & Public Art Strategy 2019-2029* identifies funding for interpretation elements at Rathmines Park, due to be implemented in the 2020/21 period. This is supported by the *Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027*, which identifies the 'Rathmines Heritage Precinct' as a location to develop one of a network of heritage interpretation elements.

The long-term strategic document for Lake Macquarie – *Lake Mac 2050* also highlights the need for adaptive re-use of Rathmines Park to improve cultural, heritage, recreation, sustainability and economic outcomes.

3.3.5 Transport and access

The ability to move to and around the area is critical to it being attractive to locals and visitors and to encourage the active and healthy lifestyle attributes that are desired of such a prominent location.

Council's *Cycling Strategy 2021* acknowledges the existing shared path / cycle track through the park. It also includes an 'indicative future link' along the foreshore to Kilaben Bay, as well as proposed on-road routes along Dorrington Road and Wangi Road.



Public transportation options to the area are limited. No bus stops are located within Rathmines Park, though the Wangi to Toronto route stops at the nearby retail/town centre area. Few services are available from this locality, and as such, those accessing the site from outside the immediate Plan area are likely to do so by private vehicle.

3.3.6 Community, recreation and sports

The *Toronto Recreation & Land Plan – 2016 - 2030* and its associated *Contributions Plan* identifies a number of projects associated with the Rathmines area (note this includes the broader Rathmines area, not only Rathmines Park). These include, in order of the priority given by the plan:

- Outdoor gym equipment (new / high priority)
- Community garden (new, high priority)
- Dog off-leash area / fenced dog park (Rathmines Park or at Carey Bay Hampton St Reserve - upgrade / high priority)
- Playground upgrade with theme (upgrade / medium priority)
- Skate park (new or upgrade, medium priority)
- BMX track (new / medium priority)
- Tennis (or at Toronto tennis centre - upgrade / medium priority)

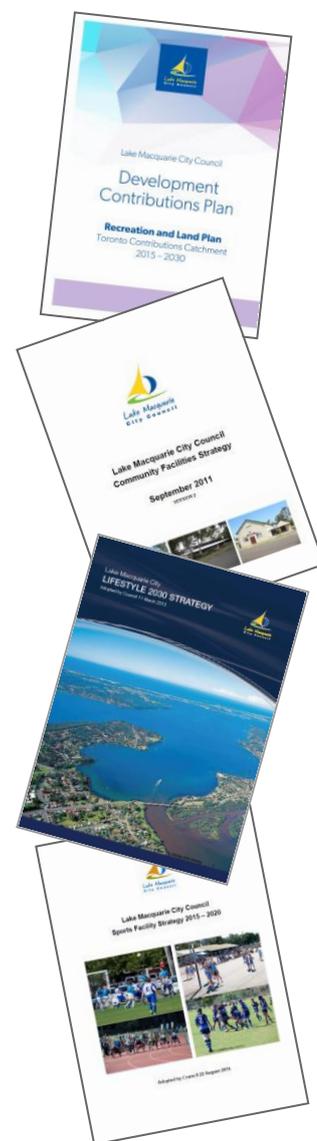
The Plan also highlighted Rathmines Park as a site to investigate as part of a citywide tourism strategy for overnight stays at certain locations. As the population ages, the Plan also notes the importance of other recreational and social activities including lawn bowls and 'Men's Shed' type facilities (such as the Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association).

Lake Macquarie City Council Sports Facility Strategy 2015 – 2020 identifies issues relating to sporting fields at Rathmines Park (Fishburn Fields) which are used by the cricket and football clubs. Identified needs included playing surface improvements, the amenities building having inadequate provision of space, and seating, shade, public toilets and car park not being suitable. However, only playing surface improvements are identified within the upgrade works associated by this plan.

Lifestyles 2030 is another Council long-term strategic policy document, with Strategic Direction 3 highlighting the need for a stronger functional and urban design relationship between the Lake and centres including Rathmines. Direction 6 identifies Rathmines Park as a special place to focus for specific place making activity. There is also direction for plans of management to identify the appropriate level of intensity of open space development for specific parks, support for lake based aquatic facilities to be upgraded to meet increased community needs as well as inclusion of Rathmines in a potential ferry network if / when viable.

3.3.7 Land use planning

Under the *Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2014*, the majority of Rathmines Park is located on public land zoned *RE1 - Public Recreation*. A number of smaller areas are zoned *RE2 - Private Recreation*, which applies to Council's land incorporating the Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club (Club Catalina) and Westlakes Music Centre, as well as the two privately owned land parcels (the Catalina Lakefront Retreat / Catalina Conference Centre and the Christadelphian Bible School).



The area of land to the south of Dorrington Road covering the former Bomb Dump area is predominantly identified within the *SP3 - Tourist* zone and is outside of this Plan of Management due to this land being classified as 'Operational' and not 'Community' land under the *Local Government Act* (albeit, this area remains part of the curtilage of the State heritage listing). Surrounding the Park to the west and south is land zoned for residential and business purposes as shown in Figure 7.

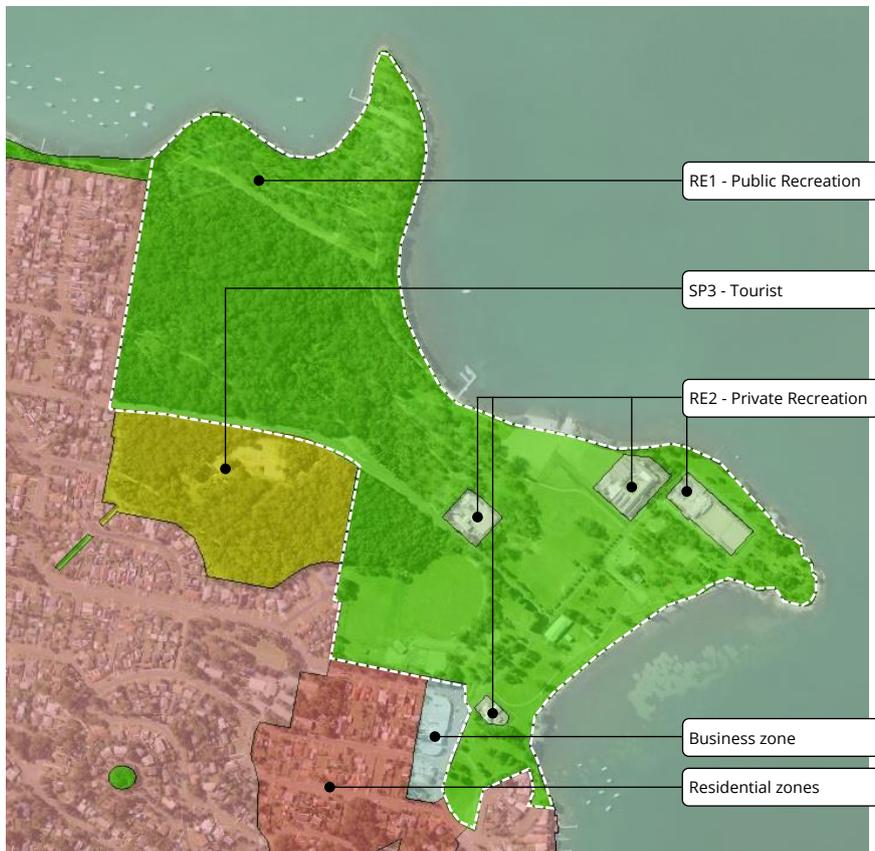


Figure 7: Land Use Zone

With respect to other planning matters, Rathmines Park has a number of key considerations including the following:

- Heritage - the entire site has been listed as having State heritage significance, with the heritage curtilage extending into the surrounding water - refer to Figure 8. A number of individual items are also listed as having Local heritage significance in Schedule 5 of Council's LEP 2014 - refer to Figure 9.
- Flooding - a portion of Rathmines Park is identified as being within a flood planning area - refer to Figure 10. The frequency and intensity of flood impacts are anticipated to worsen with climate change and sea level rise over the longer term.
- Local provisions - the foreshore around the Park has been mapped as a Sensitive Aboriginal Landscape - refer to Figure 11. Clause 7.7 of LEP 2014 requires an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Statement to be developed before granting consent to any development in this area.
- Acid sulfate soils - a portion of the Park has been mapped as possible occurrence of class 2 and 3 acid sulfate soils - refer to Figure 12. If present, these soils may become unstable when exposed to the air.
- Bushfire - large vegetated areas are mapped as being bushfire prone and will require assessment in accordance with relevant legislation - refer to Figure 13.
- Contamination - as a consequence of building demolition and former use of the site, Rathmines Park is listed in Council's Contaminated Land Database as being Potentially

Contaminated Land. Any work on site that involves development or excavation will therefore need to be carried out in accordance with Council's *Environmental Management Plan for Contaminated Land in Council's Care and Control* (D08820904) and *State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 - Remediation of Land*.

The *Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan (DCP) 2014* applies to the area. Part 11.5 of the DCP incorporates *Heritage Area Plans – Rathmines RAAF Base*, providing specific controls relating to the site. This section specifies that development in the park must comply with the Conservation Management Plan and this Plan of Management.

Rathmines Park is also within the 'Coastal Environment Area' and/or 'Coastal Use Area' under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management)*. This planning instrument seeks to ensure that there is an integrated and co-ordinated approach to land use planning in the coastal zone, and in particular to protect the environmental assets of the coast and guide decision-making on future uses. Future development within the Park will be required to address the specific considerations for development under this Policy within these areas.



Figure 8: State Heritage Curtilage



Figure 9: Heritage Listings (LEP)

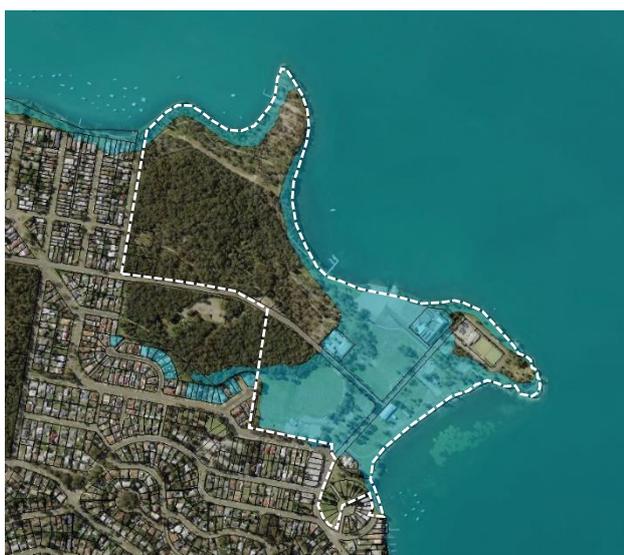


Figure 10: Flood Planning Area

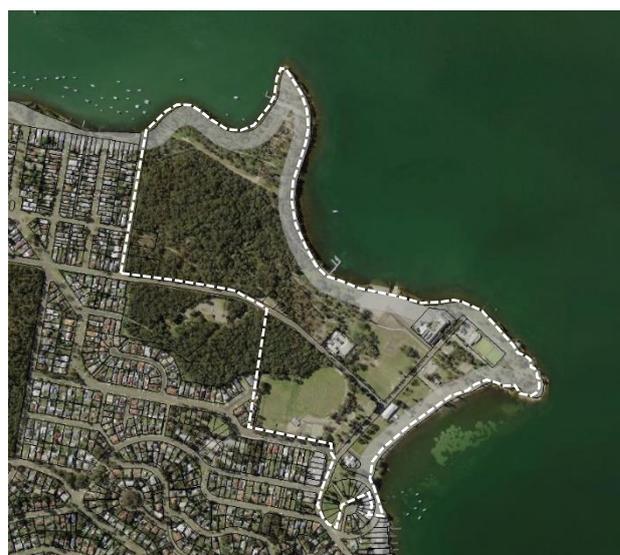


Figure 11: Sensitive Aboriginal Landscape



Figure 12: Acid Sulfate Soil

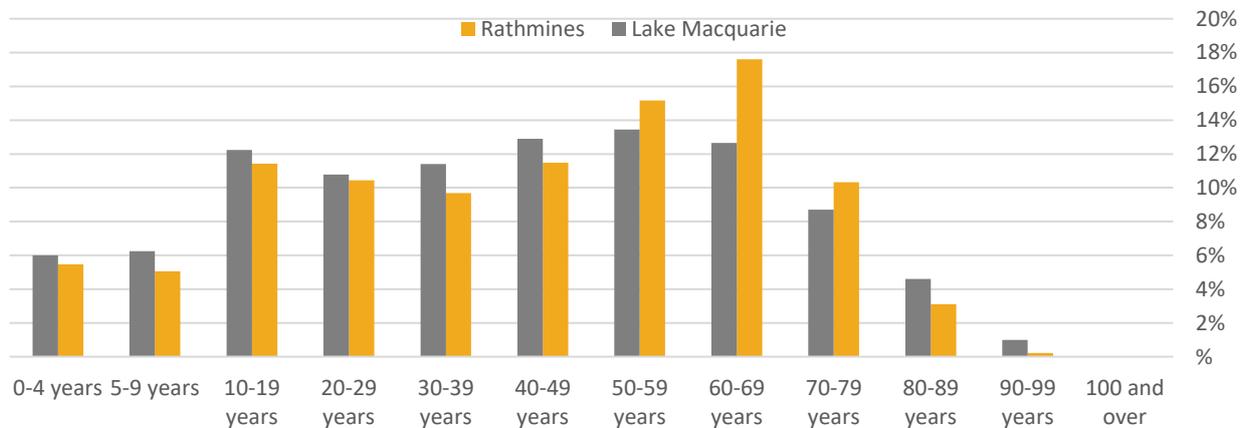


Figure 13: Bushfire Prone Land

3.4 Current and future demands

Rathmines Park caters for a wide variety of users and uses with a combination of built facilities as well as open spaces set within an increasingly urbanised locality. However, the limited availability of public transport or provision of higher-level facilities (such as those present at the Toronto foreshore or Speers Point) impacts on the level of attraction of users from outside the local area. Over time, and with the local government area population expected to increase by more than 15% by 2041¹, the extent of use and the infrastructure required to cater for this use is expected to nonetheless increase from the current base level.

Like many coastal areas, Lake Macquarie and Rathmines more specifically have an ageing population, with the older age groups most likely to see significant increases in population over coming years. At the 2016 Census, the Rathmines local area had a higher proportion of 50 through to 79 year old people than the overall LGA (as shown in Figure 14). Combined with only relatively minor localised development and general population increases, growth in these older cohorts will have implications for how the Park continues to be used in the future. Responding to these needs whilst retaining and engaging younger cohorts presents a range of challenges and opportunities.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census of Population and Housing, REMPLAN Community.

Figure 14: Population profile of Lake Macquarie and Rathmines at 2016 census

¹ Department of Planning - 2019 Population Projections

Over and above planning for demographic change, the Plan of Management process also takes into account other trends in recreation, open space and community planning. For example, wider trends across the housing sector and land use planning highlight increasing housing densities and a corresponding reduction in the size and availability of private open spaces - increasing the pressure on public spaces. Other trends include the increase in personal fitness operators and their use of open space areas, use of outdoor fitness equipment, activities and venues associated with specific age cohorts, and increasing expectations for facilities such as playgrounds and youth hubs.

On a local level, increased demand from those with accessibility needs can reasonably be expected with the presence of a disability sector not-for-profit facilities being located within Rathmines Park (Disability Life Enrichment is based at the Catalina Lakefront Retreat). Combined with the demographic trends outlined above, accessibility and design of Park elements such as meeting appropriate grades on pathways and for access to amenities will become increasingly important.

Also at the local level, the temporary closure of some Park facilities in recent years (including the Scout Hall and the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre), has resulted in some frustration from the local community. This has been further impacted by perceived delays in decision making associated with the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan and Plan of Management. The temporary closures have restricted usage, though new momentum associated with the reopening of these facilities provides a positive step for future community involvement.

In keeping with this progress, many groups associated with Rathmines Park have expressed a willingness and an ability to help in the delivery of future elements and works for the benefit of the Park. These offers have particularly been expressed in respect to the ongoing use and improvement of community-based facilities, and in the improvement of the natural environment. This community involvement will assist in protecting and enhancing the social and environmental values and attributes of Rathmines Park into the future.

4. Basis for Management

This section provides a basis for ongoing management of Rathmines Park, including review of consultation undertaken in preparation of the Plan, the resulting key values identified, and the subsequent vision for the area and management principles that have been applied. This section also identifies the categories to be applied to the land and the 'core objectives' for these that are prescribed by the *Local Government Act 1993*.

4.1 Community consultation

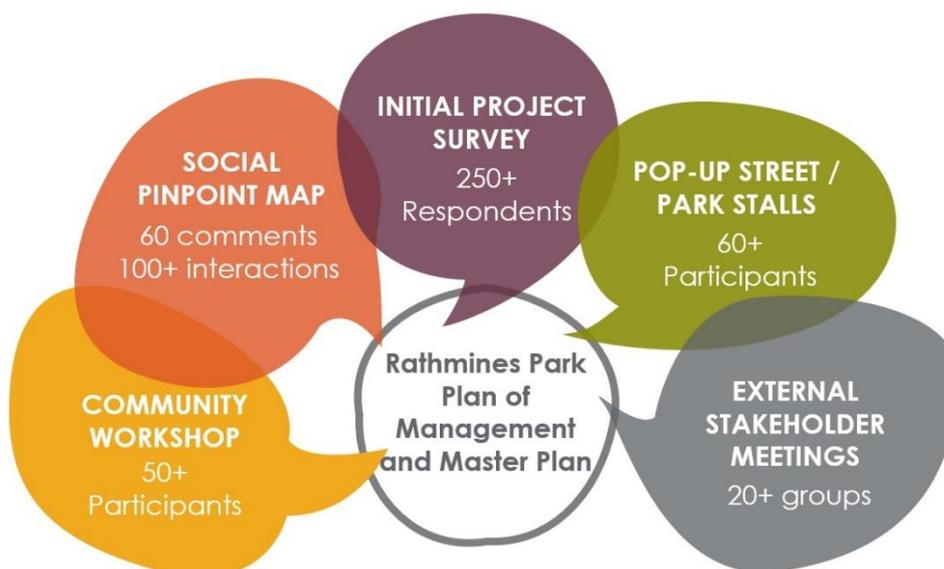
A plan of management for 'Community' land is to be prepared in consultation with the community. As such, an Engagement Plan was developed at the inception of the project to ensure that community and other stakeholders were offered the opportunity to provide input into developing this Rathmines Park Plan of Management. The community and stakeholder consultation identified a series of values for the Park, along with key issues to be addressed and a range of future opportunities. These have been used to guide the development of actions and directions, culminating in this Plan of Management and the associated Master Plan.

The initial engagement process was undertaken between 2 September and 11 October 2019. Consultation was undertaken via face to face meetings, pop up stalls, workshop, email and telephone, as well as through an online survey and mapping on the 'Shape Lake Mac' consultation webpage. The aim of this consultation was to understand the community's vision for Rathmines Park and obtain initial ideas and priorities to further progress the master planning and plan of management process. Importantly, the consultation also built on the work undertaken as part of the Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan.

In total over 500 community members were directly involved in the initial consultation as follows:

- External stakeholder meetings - 20+ groups
- Pop-up stalls - 60+ participants
- Community workshop - 50+ participants
- Initial project survey - 253 respondents
- Social PinPoint page - 60 comments / 100+ interactions

In addition, more than 1,100 visits were made to the Shape Lac Mac consultation website.



A second round of community consultation was undertaken between 2 March and 23 March 2020. The objective of the consultation was to seek feedback on draft Concept Master Plans for the Park including an understanding of the community's priorities in delivering 'potential' projects. The consultation was informed by a comprehensive *Issues and Opportunities Paper* which outlined the proposed directions in more detail and was available on the Shape Lake Mac consultation webpage.

Consultation was undertaken via pop up stalls, a community information session and on-line survey and mapping on the Shape Lake Mac consultation webpage which had a total of 1,900 visitors.

In total, approximately 250 community members were directly involved in this round of consultation as follows:

- Pop-up stalls - 25+ participants
- Community information session - 70+ participants
- Community Survey - 102 respondents
- Social PinPoint page - 150+ comments (including in-built survey) / 180 interactions



The outcomes of these processes were used to establish the draft Rathmines Park Plan of Management, which was subsequently exhibited in accordance with the requirements under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

4.2 Key Values

Consistent with the outcomes of the consultation process, and the broader directions provided by the legislative and planning context outlines in Section 3, the following key values have been identified in association with Rathmines Park:

Cultural Heritage and Natural Values



Rathmines Park is part of Australia's World War II history. It is also part of an important network of natural areas and a longer-term history associated with Aboriginal inhabitation. The extensive foreshore and other bushland areas present opportunities to connect with nature and cultural heritage, evident in the layout, buildings and structures throughout the park and RAAF heritage significance. These spaces and the wider history of the site are valued by many in the community as well as being an important drawcard for visitors.

Recreation and Sporting Values



Rathmines Park provides highly valued recreational facilities for the Rathmines community and beyond. The scale and diversity of spaces coupled with the high scenic value and tranquility of the place provides a unique recreation experience. The spaces and facilities provide for diverse sporting and recreational opportunities including field sports, youth activities and passive recreation including walking and cycling. Related clubs and associations, and their respective activities, provide a major focus for many local and regional residents as well as visitors to the area.

Social and Visitor Values



Rathmines Park is a hub for community groups, events and recreational activities, an important part of the Westlakes community. The Park includes a range of buildings and facilities which accommodates many of these activities, facilitating strong local identity and connectivity for many participants. Rathmines Park is also known for its events - large and small, being a drawcard for locals and visitors as well as being a great source of pride for the community.

4.3 Vision

A VISION FOR RATHMINES PARK

Into the future Rathmines Park will continue to be a place that is available and accessible to a wide spectrum of the community, which recognises and embraces its history and interprets this through tangible and innovative ways – being a living Park with hidden treasures.

Rathmines Park will be managed in ways that enhance and accentuate its natural environment, both on land and water. Improvements will be simple and effective, creating an inviting place which the community is proud of, and engaged in.

4.4 Management objectives

Based on the vision for Rathmines Park, and taking into account the key values of the site, the following management objectives have been developed:

- i. To ensure that areas of natural environment and cultural significance are recognised, integrated and celebrated through site planning, design and development.
- ii. To enhance the identity and presence of Rathmines Park, promoting its connection to its RAAF history, natural environment and Aboriginal use, creating interpretation opportunities through the consistent use of materials, landscape, furniture and colours palettes.
- iii. To increase the attractiveness, useability and user comfort through higher quality facilities, including the presence of simple amenities such as shade trees, pathways and connections, as well as delineating spaces between people and vehicles.
- iv. To ensure that all existing user needs are carefully considered alongside opportunities to establish additional ongoing uses that activate all facilities and their surrounds.
- v. To elevate Rathmines Park as a locality that supports and enables localised and regionally significant events and attractions, including recognition of the association of the site with the Catalina flying boat.
- vi. To elevate the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre and surrounds as a core locality within Rathmines Park, establishing a visually attractive and inviting space that is multi-purpose and well utilised by visitors and the local community and that engages with its surrounds and celebrates the site's unique history.
- vii. To facilitate provision of necessary infrastructure to support core activities, including significant sporting use, youth activities and passive open space enjoyment. This includes services infrastructure improvements, as well as shared access, parking and equitable, accessible and modern amenity facilities.
- viii. To recognise key constraints and opportunities to the development and use of Rathmines Park, such as locations of cultural and environmental sensitivity, neighbouring land uses and broader context including climate change impacts relating to the low-lying nature of the area.
- ix. To ensure that new facilities, structures and uses are designed and undertaken in accordance with the site Conservation Management Plan, with a view to ensuring the long-term protection of the site's heritage significance for future generations.

These management objectives are reflected in the directions outlined in Section 5 and the Master Plan that has been developed in support of this Plan of Management - as provided in Appendix B. They should also be read in conjunction with the 'core objectives' that apply to each land category (see Section 4.5 for further details).

4.5 Community land categorisation

All the land subject to this Plan of Management is classified as 'Community' land as defined by the *Local Government Act 1993*. The Act requires all Community land to be 'categorised' into one of more of the five available categories as follows:

- o Park
- o Sportsground
- o Area of cultural significance
- o Natural area (under which a further subcategory is also required)
- o General community use.

The Act also sets out 'core objectives' that are required in the management of an area subject to that category. Considering the values, principles and intended future use of Rathmines Park, this Plan of Management has applied the following categories:

- Park: applied to areas that are used for passive recreation, including open spaces, picnics areas, playgrounds and areas of active use of the foreshore
- Sportsground: applied where active sporting activities are undertaken on land that is otherwise generally accessible to the public, such as Fishburn Fields and the proposed youth hub area
- Natural Area - Bushland: applied where native vegetation is the predominant feature, and where use is limited to passive activities, interpretation and environmental improvement
- Natural Area - Foreshore: applied to areas of the foreshore where access is limited, and environmental protection or improvement is required
- General Community Use: applied to areas that are generally subject to lease arrangements.

Each of these categories applies to one area only, as shown in Figure 15. The core objectives in the *Local Government Act 1993* relating to these categories are outlined thereafter. It is noted that whilst the 2002 Plan of Management included the entire site as an Area of Cultural Significance, the subsequent listing of the site on the State Heritage Register, and adoption of a Conservation Management Plan means that this category is no longer considered to be necessary for the protection of cultural features.



Figure 15: Rathmines Park land categories

4.5.1 Park category core objectives

In accordance with Section 36G of the *Local Government Act*, the core objectives for the 'Park' category are as follows.

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as park are:

- (a) to encourage, promote and facilitate recreational, cultural, social and educational pastimes and activities, and*
- (b) to provide for passive recreational activities or pastimes and for the casual playing of games, and*
- (c) to improve the land in such a way as to promote and facilitate its use to achieve the other core objectives for its management.*

4.5.2 Sportsground core objectives

In accordance with Section 36F of the *Local Government Act*, the core objectives for the Sportsground category are as follows.

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as sportsground are:

- (a) to encourage, promote and facilitate recreational pursuits in the community involving organised and informal sporting activities and games, and*
- (b) to ensure that such activities are managed having regard to any adverse impact on nearby residences.*

4.5.3 Natural Area core objectives

In accordance with Section 36E of the *Local Government Act*, the core objectives for the Natural Area category, are as follows.

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as a natural area are:

- (a) 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 as a natural area, and*
- (b) to maintain the land, or that feature or habitat, in its natural state and setting, and*
- (c) to provide for the restoration and regeneration of the land, and*
- (d) 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*
- (e) to assist in and facilitate the implementation 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 Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 or the Fisheries Management Act 1994.*

As outlined in Section 4.5, the Natural Area category is required to be associated with a further subcategory that provides further details as to the type of natural area that is present. In the case of Rathmines Park, these areas are identified as being within the 'Bushland' and 'Foreshore' subcategories.

For the further subcategory of 'Bushland', and in accordance with Section 36J of the *Local Government Act*, additional core objectives are as follows.

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as bushland are:

- (a) 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*
- (b) to protect the aesthetic, heritage, recreational, educational and scientific values of the land, and*
- (c) 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*
- (d) to restore degraded bushland, and*
- (e) to protect existing landforms such as natural drainage lines, watercourses and foreshores, and*
- (f) 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*
- (g) to protect bushland as a natural stabiliser of the soil surface.*

For the further subcategory of 'Foreshore', and in accordance with Section 36N of the *Local Government Act*, additional core objectives are as follows.

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as a foreshore are:

- (a) to maintain the foreshore as a transition area between the aquatic and the terrestrial environment, and to protect and enhance all functions associated with the foreshore's role as a transition area, and*
- (b) to facilitate the ecologically sustainable use of the foreshore, and to mitigate impact on the foreshore by community use.*

4.5.4 General Community Use core objectives

In accordance with Section 36I of the *Local Government Act*, the core objectives for the General Community Use category are as follows.

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as general community use are to promote, encourage and provide for the use of the land, and to provide facilities on the land, to meet the current and future needs of the local community and of the wider public:

- (a) in relation to public recreation and the physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare or development of individual members of the public, and*
- (b) in relation to purposes for which a lease, licence or other estate may be granted in respect of the land (other than the provision of public utilities and works associated with or ancillary to public utilities).*

5. Management Directions

This section establishes the key management directions for Rathmines Park based on the use 'themes', which are subsequently identified in the context of the site Master Plan and future use of the area. This section also identifies the existing or possible future leases and licences associated with Rathmines Park, and establishes actions to facilitate implementation.

5.1 Strategic directions by theme

Building on the 'basis for management' established in Section 4, key issues identified through community consultation and the planning process have been collated based on use 'themes'. These themes were initially developed, detailed and discussed through initial consultation in late 2019, and further established and consulted on through the preparation and exhibition of the *Rathmines Park Issues and Options Discussion Paper* exhibited in February / March 2020.

The use themes and associated key issues and directions are grouped under the following:

- Indigenous and European Heritage
- Sports, recreation and youth activities
- Environment and sustainability
- Events and attractions
- Community facilities and other buildings

These themes form the basis of strategic directions and actions for the future management, use and any development of the Park and are discussed further in the following sections.

5.1.1 Indigenous and European heritage

Existing situation

With the site listed as a State heritage item, the historical use of Rathmines Park as a World War II RAAF base is a dominant feature of the site. This former use takes its current form in the presence of original buildings and aquatic infrastructure, through to the footprints and remnants of various items throughout the site (e.g. concrete building pads).

Of the original buildings, of which there were more than 100 in total, only six key buildings remain on the public land subject to this Plan of Management. A further 10 buildings are located on private land, predominantly on the site of the Christadelphian Bible School, as well as the former hospital which is now part of the Catalina Lakefront Retreat. Key buildings remaining in Council ownership include:

- Westlakes Music Centre - former Sergeant's Mess
- Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre - former Picture Theatre and Gymnasium
- Scout Hall - former Inflammable Liquids Store
- Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club (Club Catalina) - former Officer's Mess
- Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association - former Airmen's Ablution Building and Emergency Power House

Several hardstand areas and concrete pads associated with former larger storage buildings also exist within the Park, providing numerous opportunities for interpretation or adaptive re-use. At present however, the extent of base interpretation is very limited, with existing signage and recognition of the site as a former Defence establishment being poor or, in many cases, non-existent (albeit items and information are well displayed within the Bowling Club as well as heritage display to be established in 2020 within Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre).

Long before the base was developed, the Awabakal people were present on and around the site and the wider Lake Macquarie area. With close access to water and visual connections to various nearby locations, the area is thought to be rich in Aboriginal culture and history.

Existing key benefits

The extent and size of the former base, and therefore the current Rathmines Park area, means that there are numerous opportunities to recognise, interpret and celebrate both pre and post-European heritage. Key benefits of the current situation include:

- The history of the site, and particularly the connection to the Catalina flying boat aircraft, is relatively unique and interesting
- The history of the site provides a point of difference with other parks located on Lake Macquarie in terms of size, attraction and branding potential
- Significant levels of information on the RAAF base are known and able to be interpreted, including the extent of information resulting from the adopted Conservation Management Plan
- Physical elements of the past use of the area for Defence purposes are available in various forms to assist in developing displays and interpretation within existing or new buildings
- Defined entry points on Dorrington Road and Stilling Street are known and able to be interpreted to increase acknowledgement of 'entry' into the precinct
- Interest and engagement with some Aboriginal stakeholders has been established, though relatively limited information on previous site use or occupation is available at the current time

Future directions

With a unique and tangible recent history alongside the story-telling and connection to the Aboriginal people of the area, there are significant opportunities to draw on key heritage themes in future design processes and subsequent works. Directions to engage with the theme of Indigenous and European heritage include:

- Development of an Interpretative Plan in consultation with key groups including:
 - Consideration of Council's existing signage plans and related strategies to assist in creating consistency across the area and to establish a sense of place and identity that carries through to landmarks and wayfinding opportunities
 - Heritage and cultural information signage / feature points around the shared path and where appropriate along rationalised bush tracks
 - Hierarchy of interpretive signage ranging from entry landmarks to interactive park features, to simple pedestrian markers (building off the short-term Interpretation Plan already established for implementation)
 - Opportunities for the use of technologies and alternatives to signage associated with interpretation - e.g. for example to enable recognition of the size and extent of the base when visiting key locations
- Recognition of the long-term presence of local Aboriginal people through consideration of site design outcomes and potentially for story-telling opportunities - e.g. public art pieces, gathering places and plantings
- Incorporation and co-ordination of heritage information as part of public buildings, such as the permanent Rathmines Heritage Interpretation Centre to be established within the Rathmines Theatre and the existing information within the Catalina Memorial Bowling Club building

- Reinterpretation of the Guard House as a significant entry feature along Dorrington Road including key interpretive information and entry point to associated bush walks and their integrated heritage opportunities
- Subject to business case / feasibility and approvals, development of a 'Catalina interpretation hangar' which could potentially accommodate a range of historical elements including a static Catalina aircraft display, Classic Boat Association displays, restoration space, café / kiosk with the potential expansion for a broader museum



1 & 2 CATALINA MEMORIAL / INTERPRETATION - BOWEN QLD
 3 & 4 INDIGENOUS INTERPRETATION ARTWORK / GATHERING SPACE
 5 & 6 PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING INFORMATION

Figure 16: Potential outcomes examples associated with site heritage

Desired outcomes

Over time, the entry and experience of being within Rathmines Park will become more connected to its unique heritage and cultural past. In doing so the area will not be 'fixed in time', but become an engaging, living museum with a range of heritage and cultural interpretation opportunities integrated into the Park's features and facilities.

Led by a comprehensive Interpretation Plan, the opportunities will be highlighted and pursued over the short, medium and longer-term (including the more immediate implementation of the current Interpretation Plan already commenced). Simple elements including signage and wayfinding will be consistently applied based on short-term funding and Council's existing signage guide and other relevant plans and strategies, whilst larger projects will be further developed and opportunities for

funding sought to enable their progression. Whilst a level of consistency with broader Council guides and strategies is supported, it is also viewed that through a consistent palette and hierarchy of materials and a clear 'style guide' for the area as a significant heritage items, Rathmines Park will have its own presence, which can be regularly promoted and celebrated through online sources and community networks.

The management actions associated with this theme are identified in Table 3 at Section 5.5 on page 65.

5.1.2 Sports, recreation and youth activities

Existing situation

Rathmines Park comprises a range of spaces and connected areas that are utilised by the public as well as informal and formal groups for passive and active recreation. The available spaces range from the extensive foreshore reserve wrapping around the Park, to both formal and informal sports including football (soccer), lawn bowls, tennis, cricket and skate boarding. The area also contains a well utilised playground designed for younger age groups.

The primary sporting assets of the Park are the Fishburn Fields, located in the south-west adjoining the Rathmines retail/town centre and which are home to the Westlake Wildcats Football Club and the Wangi Warriors Cricket Club. With a combination of soccer and cricket, alongside the adjoining use of the tennis courts and skate park, the area is already relatively well utilised. The fields are also used by visiting sporting teams that occasionally occupy the Catalina Lakefront Retreat. A single shared club and amenity building services the soccer and cricket clubs, with the tennis court enclosure containing a basic standalone building within their fenced area.

Aquatic facilities such as the swimming baths and boat ramps / wharves / jetties, as well as walking and cycling pathways extend around and through the park, providing a range of passive recreation opportunities that interact with both land and water environments. Walking through the area is a high use daily activity, with the shared path being a substantive base for this activity, alongside the more informal bush tracks and trails. Many people also utilise the area for the associated dog off-leash area, located on the former Parade Ground, but lacking any fencing or other improvements.

This range of facilities provides core formal recreational infrastructure for local residents, as recognised and supported by Council through its *Toronto Recreation & Land Plan – 2016 - 2030*. This document sets the direction for recreation and open space planning and the provision of facilities for the broader area.

The existing situation for Rathmines Park's sporting and recreation infrastructure highlights that each of the core facilities face their own challenges:

- Swimming baths infrastructure is highly valued but incomplete and aging, whilst design and landscaping mean that it is not taking full advantage of its foreshore context
- The playground is popular, but caters only to younger children
- The skate park is well utilised, but of very limited scope and with poor-quality surface
- Parking and access for these facilities is largely unmanaged and informal
- The playing fields are well utilised, but the supporting facilities are not adequate for the extent of use
- Public toilet facilities, picnic and BBQ facilities as well as Fishburn Fields sports club facilities, are relatively poor or inadequately sized to meet regular use demand and do not meet accessibility standards
- Tracks and trails are subject to erosion issues

Existing key benefits

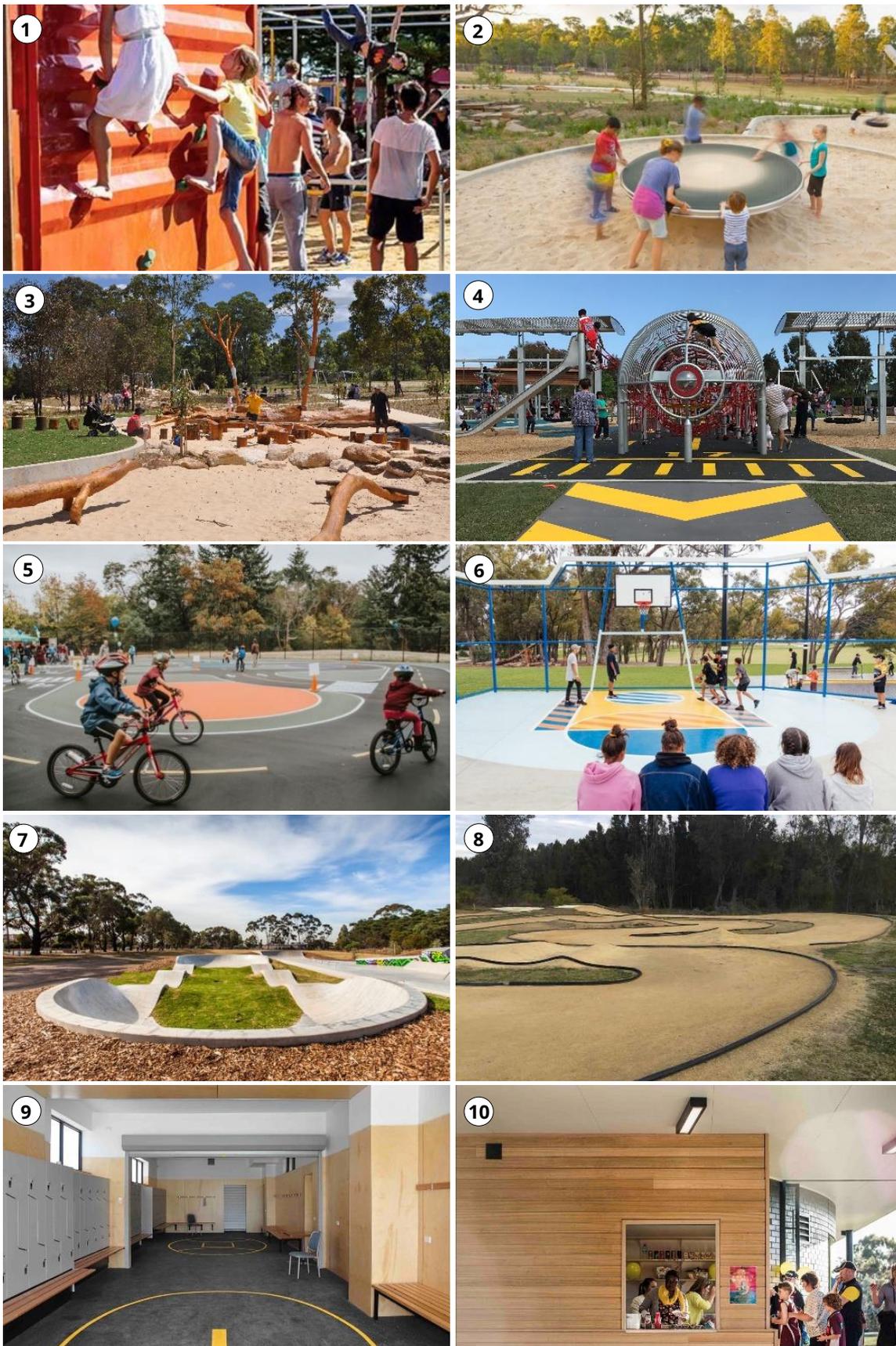
With a large and diverse range of sporting and recreational facilities available, Rathmines Park provides a healthy outlet for many people in the Westlake's area. Key benefits of the current situation include:

- A range of facility offerings catering for a variety of passive, formal and competitive activities and sports, all within close proximity - meaning that they can co-share ancillary facilities such as parking and amenities
- Many existing facilities have strong and well-established user groups / clubs that are able to maintain and facilitate high levels of use
- There is sufficient space for additional outdoor recreation facilities, meaning that the area is well positioned for future growth

Future directions

With well-used existing facilities and infrastructure, and sufficient space to cater for further growth, there is opportunity to build on the existing situation through a series of targeted improvements to specific areas. Directions within the theme of sports, recreation and youth activities include:

- Establish a new skate park within a broader youth hub area, providing for a variety of skill levels, as well as additional, but integrated youth orientated activities (e.g. pump track and multi-use court), as well as parking, shade, seating and pop-up spaces for small events
- Diversify the extent and type of play facilities for wider experience and age ranges with better integration of the previous Catalina theme. Additional activities and facilities include a learn to ride area on the nearby concrete pad, climbing nets with lookout and nature play elements
- Subject to broader sporting review, improve or replace the basic clubhouse building to better cater to male, female and disabled participation at Fishburn Fields. Formalise parking areas and improve circulation for the safety of pedestrians
- Ensure lighting, irrigation, drainage, spectator seating and other support infrastructure is adequate for the high use levels of Fishburn Fields
- Provide ongoing maintenance/replacement (where supported by demand) of tennis facilities
- Formalise parking on Rosemary Row to provide additional parking with easy access to tennis, Fishburn Fields and retail area areas
- Subject to broader aquatic facility planning, consider the reinstatement of a lake baths/swimming area, including improved access and support/change facilities. Include safe on-street parking through conversion of loop road around Bowling Club to one-way and include seating, shade and other facilities to encourage use.
- Include access to Bowling Club for kiosk / café / food options, or allow pop-up food van on demand and encourage non-swimming community who can enjoy the ideal waterfront location via a place making approach - e.g. summer outdoor cinema.
- Establish a formalised shared path around Memorial Point in conjunction with revegetation and environmental improvements as a Landcare or similar initiative
- Subject to broader aquatic facility planning, re-establish the former Bomb and Fuel Wharf as an accessible fishing platform (and/or ferry stop subject to future assessment)
- Establish and signpost key links and loops for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, to be based on the primary road access via Dorrington Road and Stilling Street as well as the shared path and broader 'loop' walk opportunity, incorporating the bushland area, Memorial Point and Styles Point extensions
- Engage reserve users as they move along the pathway system through provision of occasional, or grouped, outdoor fitness equipment stations
- Facilitate ongoing and increased water-based activities via a range of support infrastructure as well as maintaining passive craft access points with potential for localised hire



1 MULTI-FUNCTION / AGE PLAY AREA

2 TACTILE PLAY MATERIALS AND PLAY ELEMENTS

3 NATURE BASED PLAY ELEMENTS

4 AEROPLANE THEMED PLAY SPACE

5 LEARN TO RIDE AREA WITHIN HARDSTAND SPACE

6 MULTI-PURPOSE COURT ADJOINING SKATEPARK

7 & 8 BMX STYLE FACILITIES, OR PUMP TRACK IN CONJUNCTION WITH SKATE PARK AREA

9 & 10 MODERN SPORTING AMENITIES AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES

Figure 17: Potential outcomes examples associated with sport, recreation and youth activities

Desired outcomes

The directions for sporting, recreation and youth activities are designed to enable both the short and long-term progression of existing facilities and uses associated with the Rathmines Park area. In the long-term, use of the site for larger and higher-level competitions is envisaged, providing opportunity for grassroots through to high level competition to be attained locally whilst simultaneously supporting potential for sports tourism and associated economic benefits.

Establishing adequate amenities and facilities at Fishburn Fields, a more comprehensive youth hub, improving and expanding the children's play space and facilitating better use of the swimming baths and surrounds will be key to these outcomes. Together these provide a diverse range of activities which support long-term growth of active and healthy activities across a spectrum of user groups.

The management actions associated with this theme are identified in Table 4 at Section 5.5 on page 66.

5.1.3 Environment and sustainability

Existing situation

A primary asset of Rathmines Park is its natural beauty, which is highly valued by both locals and visitors. This relationship is highlighted by the popularity of activities associated with the natural bushland areas and the adjoining Lake Macquarie foreshore. The Park is already relatively well connected to these features, including various waterfront access points such as ramps, jetties and beaches, as well as through both formal and informal walking and shared access pathways.

Though the most visible or recognisable environmental attributes of the Park are associated with its waterfront location, the area also contains significant land based environmental features and areas of interest which may not be immediately apparent - some of the 'hidden treasures' of the area. These areas, comprising of almost 30 hectares of native vegetation, are home to a range of wildlife - an attraction in their own right - as well as having a range of former RAAF and Indigenous features and stories.

The current natural assets provide a strong platform from which to further develop new opportunities within the Rathmines area to enhance, protect and promote these key attributes. The provision of native vegetation and landscape works also provides valuable elements such as shade to the users of the Park.

Existing key benefits

There are a number of strong benefits to the current situation, both within the context of existing natural assets, as well as the community interest in ensuring the ongoing integration of healthy natural environments into the future. Key benefits of the current situation include:

- Large areas of native bushland, large portions of which have regenerated since the RAAF Base Rathmines was closed
- A range of existing trails and walkways through more open park areas, as well as bushland areas
- A range of waterfront environments and access points, offering both existing and future improvement opportunities
- An engaged community, as well as formalised Landcare groups that are associated with the Rathmines Park and supportive of ongoing works
- Sufficient space / scale of site that allows for a range of opportunities to be explored
- Considered direction provided by the 2019 Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan

Future directions

With the area rich in environmental assets, there is a need to protect and maintain the existing environment - whilst highlighting it as an opportunity and asset for education and biodiversity enrichment. Core to ensuring this direction is the ability to define and establish opportunities that are consistent with broader Rathmines Park activities and the Conservation Management Plan. Directions to engage with the theme of environment and sustainability include:

- Establish key management documents including a Vegetation Management Plan to guide future works across the short, medium and long-term aimed at maintaining and improving the environmental attributes and biodiversity of the Park and incorporating ongoing controlled burns and tree management measures as required
- Rationalise existing walking and cycle trails through native bushland areas, creating a smaller number of purpose-built and maintained trails that include interpretation opportunities of heritage, Indigenous and natural environment themes and which considers equal access and minimises ongoing impacts on the natural environment
- Establish a 'Parkcare group' or similar, to assist with landscape maintenance, weed control and improvement within areas categorised as 'Park', which would be in addition to Landcare initiatives that would assist with bush regeneration, native vegetation maintenance, weed control and improvement within locations categorised as 'Natural Area'
- Identify clear and controlled water access arrangements, whilst rehabilitating and improving those areas not required or designated for foreshore access (i.e. those areas identified within the Natural Area - Foreshore land category)
- Reinforce the use of substantial native street trees where possible to emphasise the for RAAF base road layout / structure and to provide consistency in landscape (including removal of Oleander trees on Stilling Street and replacement with appropriate native species - e.g. Brush Box)

Desired outcomes

Rathmines Park varies between highly altered and maintained areas (e.g. Parade Ground and Fishburn Fields), and others that are relatively natural and have important environment and cultural significance. The master planning process has sought to recognise and integrate these elements, ensuring that both are an important part of the overall design and user experience. Alongside the development and implementation of key management documents such as a Vegetation Management Plan, this will deliver a balanced approach to retaining and enhancing the natural and cultural significance of the area whilst providing an attractive natural backdrop and opportunity to better inform and educate users on the history and significance of the area.

Consideration of environmental constraints and the potential for impacts of climate change on the frequency and severity of flood and bushfire must also be taken into account in the consideration of new buildings - particularly the provision of a 'Catalina interpretation hangar'. This will need to meet appropriate standards related to design and financial viability as planning approvals are sought.

The management actions associated with this theme are identified in Table 5 at Section 5.5 on page 67.



- 1 STREET TREE PLANTING TO REINFORCE BASE LAYOUT
- 2 LANDCARE INITIATIVES / PARTICIPATION
- 3 SEMI-FORMALISED SHARED USER PATH
- 4 CONTROLLED FORESHORE ACCESS
- 5 TRACK HEAD SIGNAGE
- 6 ENVIRONMENT THEMED NATURE PLAY SPACES

Figure 18: Potential outcomes examples associated with environment and sustainability

5.1.4 Events and attractions

Current situation

The primary tourism and visitor attraction asset of Rathmines Park is its natural setting, large open space for events, waterfront connections and heritage importance. The frontage to Lake Macquarie is a key element that integrates the offerings on land with water craft access, occasional sea plane usage and other water-based activities. On land, the natural areas, open spaces and foreshore, various community buildings and scattered reminders of the area’s past provides a baseline for future attraction.

Part of the mix of visitor attraction and expanded recognition of the area is through a healthy range of appropriate events. These are a tourism priority for Council, with some - such as the Catalina Festival and Lakefest - now well established and increasingly popular annual events. With this increasing scale and opportunity comes the need to plan and establish well located spaces that are adaptable to meet event needs.

Ultimately, events bring increased economic opportunities as visitors stay longer, spend more and then return more frequently - often with other family or friends. Ensuring there are opportunities to engage visitors with a range of products to satisfy their needs (i.e. more than just occasional events), and that they have opportunities for both high and low value expenditure, will provide the greatest opportunities for returns to the local economy.

There is a need to consider how people arrive, engage with the location and the subsequent relationship between the precincts and surrounding areas. Connectivity within the Park is very important and traffic management as well as wayfinding can be improved to assist in encouraging those that do stop, to further explore both the immediate and broader location. Reinstatement of limited RV camping as previously trialled in the area may also assist in encouraging visitors to stay and explore the area.

Existing key benefits

There are significant benefits to the current situation which provides a strong platform to further develop new opportunities within Rathmines Park. Key benefits of the current situation include:

- A flat, visually attractive and generally accessible location
- Large public foreshore space and waterfront
- A range of regular and typically growing events including (among others):
 - Catalina Festival: Being the showcase event for the area each year
 - Blast from the Past: A large gathering of classic vehicles utilising the Park and its open spaces
 - Lakefest: A celebration of all things boating at various sites around the Lake including classic boats at Rathmines.
- Unique sea plane ramp and space for planes on the heritage hardstand apron
- Variety of water access locations / types including foreshore, ramps, jetties and wharves
- Valued and well used community buildings including the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre and the Westlakes Music Centre
- Potential to establish a more direct link to the history of the area through a permanent on-site museum or other static display/s
- Potential for overnight RV camping arrangements

Future directions

With a solid basis already in place, there is significant opportunity to facilitate tourism and event activity at Rathmines Park. Core to this is creating products and services that are easily recognisable and accessible to the public. Directions to engage with the theme of events and attractions include:

- Promote programs and activities within and surrounding the on-site community buildings - particularly the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre and the Westlakes Music Centre, including promotion of the Heritage Interpretation Centre which is to be established within the Rathmines Theatre building during 2020
- Subject to business case / feasibility and approvals, develop a permanent 'Catalina interpretation hangar' on-site facility with Catalina flying boat, interpretive information and associated café / kiosk at either the former Western Hangar area or the former Bellman Hangar area. Facilities may be similar to the Flying Boat Museum at Lake Boga - refer to Figure 19
- Identify, establish and/or rationalise essential infrastructure needs for outdoor events, such as water / electrical / sewer connections in key locations including within the Parade Ground,

adjoining the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre at the Westlakes Music Centre (refer event locations at Figure 20)

- Establish an interpretive walking loop facilitated with directional, wayfinding and information signage in a co-ordinated and clear manner - key themes to include RAAF era activities, Aboriginal heritage and the natural environment
- Create an improved sense of place by removing older signage and replacing with a clear hierarchy of new signage including entry thresholds and both vehicle and pedestrian wayfinding signage, as well as a consistent palette of materials and plants to emphasise the natural and heritage character of the area
- Subject to broader aquatic facilities review (potentially including a site options study to confirm the proposed location), improve the foreshore swimming baths, including access, seating, tables, change facilities and associated improvements to the bath infrastructure - e.g. nets and access, as well as potential to integrate with the Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club via the northern courtyard and possible kiosk / café style facilities
- Highlight water-based activities through increased connectivity to wharves, Catalina Bay foreshore and Catalina boat ramp areas - such as provision for future ferry access and water or air-based day visitation
- Improve connectivity to the retail shops to encourage visitor spending at existing facilities, including through the reinstatement of limited RV camping as previously trialled in the area to encourage visitors to stay and explore the area
- Provide for a mix of self-guided, organised and commercial options to explore the wider area e.g. charter boats, walking tours or hire opportunities
- Improve the safety and comfort for event users and visitors – including access, shade, amenities, furniture and lighting



1 CATALINA FLYING BOAT MUSEUM - LAKE BOGA

2 CATALINA / THEME BASED EVENTS

3 TERRACED AREA OVERLOOKING SWIMMING BATHS

4 OUTDOOR EVENTS / MUSIC

Figure 19: Potential outcomes examples associated with events and attractions



Figure 20: Rathmines Park typical event locations

Desired outcomes

The future directions identified for events and attractions are designed to enable both local and visitor opportunities to be considered at varying scales throughout Rathmines Park. With an attractive waterfront, large open spaces (including large hardstand areas being protected by heritage values), and buildings that are able to facilitate long-term use, there is great opportunity to encourage engagement with the local area, stay for longer and participate in more of the available offerings.

In the short-term, this may be more focused around the use of the area for event purposes, whilst over the longer-term, opportunities for new attractions such as a 'Catalina interpretation hangar' would expand on the attraction of the site (subject to detailed business case preparation and approvals). Combined with the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre and the Westlakes Music Centre, these facilities provide a platform for a full range of opportunities that will be encouraged to showcase the area.

Ensuring that key infrastructure is available to support long-term use will also be critical. This will require ongoing monitoring of parking demand as well as replacement/upgrade of core services such as water, sewer and electrical infrastructure to support expanded use.

The management actions associated with this theme are identified in Table 6 at Section 5.5 on page 68.

5.1.5 Community facilities and other buildings

Existing situation

The primary community facilities and associated buildings within Rathmines Park are located within the eastern portion of the site, along the Catalina Bay foreshore and within the area of Fishburn Fields. Whilst the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre and the Scout Hall buildings were closed for a number of years, these facilities have recently reopened (in 2020). In conjunction with the other key community facilities, which include the Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association buildings, Westlakes Music Centre, sporting club rooms and Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club (Club Catalina), there is a relatively wide range and large number of facilities available to enable ongoing growth in community use in the future.

The Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre building, previously known as the 'Rathmines Community Hall' and the 'Picture Theatre and Gymnasium' during the RAAF Base Rathmines period, will provide for more formalised performance and event space, including the incorporation of an outdoor forecourt to the east incorporating and the reuse of the former Boiler House building. The reopening of the facility in mid-2020 is expected to reinvigorate the use of the building and adjoining area, with a number of events for up to 300 people being undertaken throughout the year, as well as private functions via hire of the facility. Similarly, the Scout Hall building was reopened in early 2020, again providing an increase in the utilisation of the building and surrounding spaces.

Other buildings require additional work and forward planning - including the Westlakes Music Centre and Bowling Club buildings. Both these are of high significance from a heritage perspective, with internal improvements / conditions that are functional, but external appearance requiring further attention. Conversely, the sporting Westlakes Wildcats Junior and Senior Football Club building struggles internally for adequate space to enable functional and safe use, lacks suitable toilet amenities and has neutral heritage significance. Substantial effort is required to ensure the building can meet long-term sporting needs and appropriate guidelines / standards, with removal and redevelopment of a new facility being a likely scenario over time.

The Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association occupy two buildings within the Park. The former Airmen's Ablution Building adjoining Catalina Bay is the main launching point for craft from the adjoining beach area. Access to the building, parking arrangements for members that avoids degradation of the grassed public open spaces, and water access/launching facilities are all important requirements for the ongoing use of this facility. The Emergency Power House building on the western side of Stilling Street provides a secondary storage and work facility, although it lacks water access.

Council currently provides a number of leases and licences to user groups that utilise the Park and these buildings. This practice is consistent with local government requirements and these are supported by this Plan of Management (refer Section 5.3 for further details).

In addition to the buildings located on public land, both the Christadelphian Bible School and Catalina Lakefront Retreat are bound by the sitewide Conservation Management Plan, but are not within Council's control or part of this Plan of Management. Concerns raised with asbestos deterioration on some of these buildings have been referred to appropriate Council staff and this is an ongoing matter for investigation by Council.

A key built facility identified through the master planning process is the development of a 'Catalina interpretation hangar' to accommodate a restored Catalina flying boat. Proposed by the Rathmines Catalina Memorial Park Association (known as the Rathmines Catalina Association), the project has strong community support. Two potential locations for the project have been identified, though planning is in its relative infancy, and a business case, funding and approvals will all be required before the project may proceed.

Existing key benefits

With a range of community facilities available, there is a strong onus on building on the existing community use of Rathmines Park buildings and spaces. Key benefits of the current situation include:

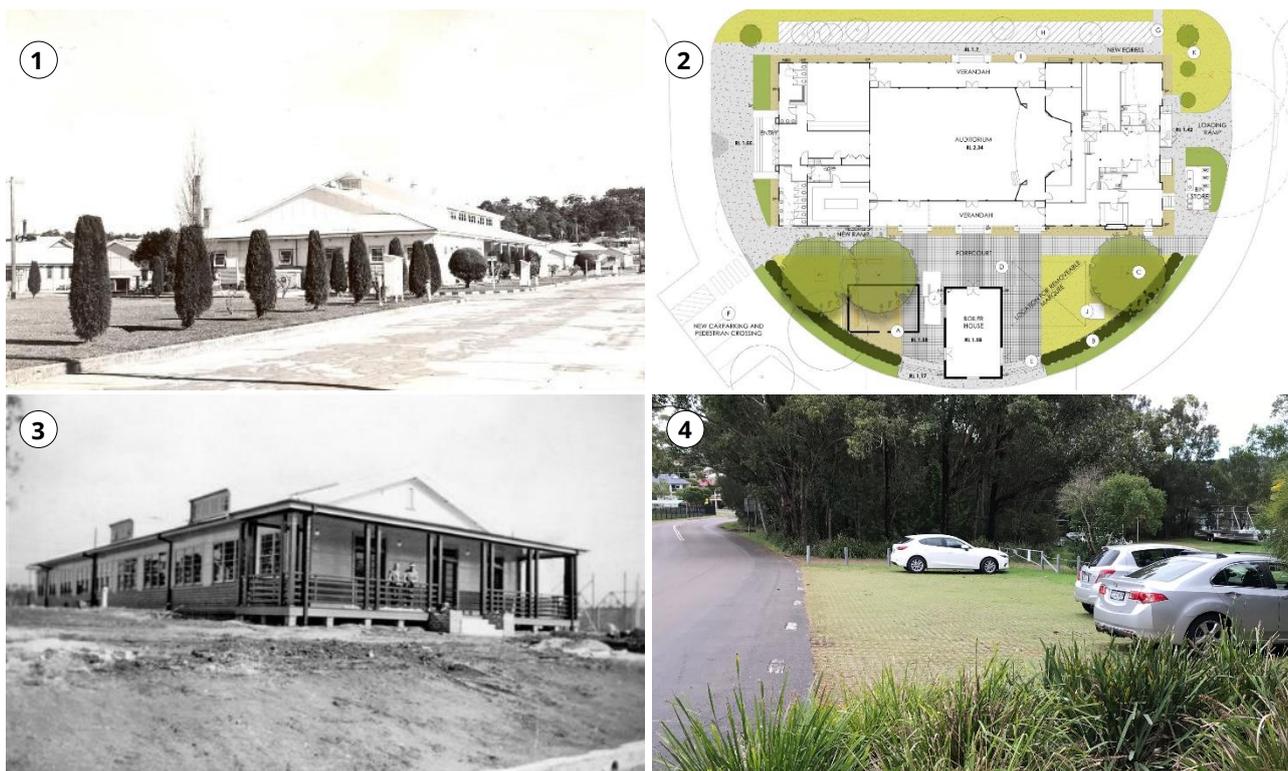
- There is a range in size and use of existing facilities, enabling the engagement of a wide spectrum of the community
- Renewal and restoration of some buildings provides a new platform for use and momentum with respect to engaging new users
- Many of the facilities provide a tangible connection to the past - particularly the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre building being a prominent building at a key intersection within the Park and containing the Rathmines Heritage Centre
- Other buildings are recognised as requiring improvement, with opportunities to target funding opportunities for these specific items
- The proposed 'Catalina interpretation hangar' can complement these existing facilities, reinstating a 'hangar' type facility of which a large number were previously present on the site

Future directions

With a range of available spaces, there is opportunity to build on the availability/reopening of facilities with a refreshed focus on maximising the use and outcomes associated with the available buildings at the site. Opportunities and directions to engage with the theme of community facilities and other buildings include:

- Drive the utilisation and connectivity of the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre (including associated outdoor areas) as a key facility for performances, functions, displays and events
- Reinforce and encourage the use of other facilities to maximise their value to the community, enable their upkeep/maintenance and ensure their currency for community needs

- Monitor parking demand and pursue off-street parking options for facilities and associated events, seeking to reduce impacts on or overuse of grassed recreation and open space areas where possible, and particularly on the foreshore
- Identify systems and processes to formalise maintenance and improvement in accordance with Conservation Management Plan requirements, user needs and resource availability. This includes preparation of facility plans for key locations including the Bowling Club and Westlakes Music Centre buildings to enable improvement to their external presentation, engagement with outdoor areas and functionality of indoor spaces to best meet user needs
- Provision of suitable club facilities associated with the sports grounds, potentially as an expansion to the existing building, or more likely through a new purpose-built facility in an adjusted location to assist in improving on-site parking arrangements
- Ensure ongoing functionality of Classic Boat Association Buildings with respect to member access, parking and launching facilities, including cross-benefit for general public use
- Continue planning for and, subsequent to acceptable planning outcomes and approvals, implementation of the proposed 'Catalina interpretation hangar' facility to incorporate static Catalina display, interpretative information, café or kiosk and potential for broader museum offerings (potentially as a staged program of works)
- Upgrade or replacement of key service infrastructure to assist in ensuring public safety through appropriate fire-fighting facilities / services and basic services needs



1 ORIGINAL GYMNASIUM AND PICTURE THEATRE BUILDING
3 ORIGINAL OFFICER'S MESS NOW BOWLING CLUB

2 RATHMINES THEATRE AND HERITAGE CENTRE LAYOUT PLAN
4 POTENTIAL PARKING WITHIN OPEN SPACE CONTEXT

Figure 21: Potential outcome examples associated with community facilities and buildings

Desired outcomes

A key outcome of the master planning process, and as reinforced by this Plan of Management, is the desire to celebrate and utilise the retained heritage buildings in an effective way that retains extensive community use. Existing facilities will be improved and utilised by a broad range of groups over the

Plan period. High levels of use and activation will support the retention and upkeep of facilities that are available, responding to their ongoing heritage needs and controls.

Maintaining close working relationships with community groups and future users is important to enable utilisation of facilities to be maximised. At full operation, it is envisaged that the promotion and use of the buildings within the Park could be well co-ordinated with regular events and activities that engage a wide spectrum of the broader community and others visiting from outside the area.

The intent is not to replace any existing user groups and their established activities, but to supplement this use where desired by Council with additional groups, operators and activities which have a relationship to the site and are consistent with the intent for its long-term use. This may result in additional user groups agreements, and modification of existing user group agreements to best meet the needs of Council and the broader community over time. Council will continue to ensure that appropriate management systems are in place to facilitate this and to determine the appropriate form of leases, licences or other mechanisms as applicable at the time of need.

The management actions associated with this theme are identified in Table 7 at Section 5.5 on page 69.

5.2 Future use and development

The future development and use of Rathmines Park will be required to meet the high standards, values and expectations that accompany a site of State heritage significance. As such, future use and development will need to be consistent with both the *Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan* as well as this Plan of Management.

In general terms however, and subject to necessary heritage approvals as required, the future use and development of the site is set out in the Master Plan drawings associated with this Plan of Management as provided in Appendix B. Further details of the intent and proposed infrastructure associated with implementation of the Master Plan and this Plan of Management more broadly is also discussed further in Section 5.3 and the Management Actions in Section 5.5. This Plan of Management enables the development of the land consistent with the intent of the Master Plan, including subsequent evolution through the detailed design process as the proposed works are progressed to implementation over the short, medium and longer-term.

Other development may also be required from time to time that is not directly identified by the Master Plan drawings. Such development should be integrated with the directions and intent of the Master Plan and this Plan of Management more broadly so as to not impact on its future implementation or intended outcomes. In particular, this Plan of Management does not prevent the implementation of infrastructure under the following:

- *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007* - provides for certain infrastructure developments to be exempt development, complying development or development that is permitted with consent. Division 12 of the SEPP applies to parks and other public reserves and includes a wide range of infrastructure developments for sport and recreation activities.
- Division 1 of Part 2 of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008* provides for a range of activities to be exempt including:
 - Temporary event signs
 - Community notice and public information signs
 - Tents, marquees or booths for events
 - Stage or platforms for events

For the avoidance of doubt, these activities remain possible under this Plan of Management over and above those specifically identified by the Master Plan drawings.

It is further noted that any development of the site must continue to meet the requirements of the *Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan* and any associated heritage approvals. While this Plan of Management is intended to be complementary to the heritage significance of Rathmines Park and the requirements under heritage controls, it does not over-ride heritage approval requirements for any development or use activities. Development, maintenance or modification of facilities and spaces, including consideration of scale and intensity of use will need to demonstrate consistency with exemptions or required heritage approvals under Sections 57 and 60 of the *Heritage Act 1977*.

Future use of the Park is to include those parties authorised under Section 5.3 of this Plan of Management to enter into appropriate forms of agreement with Council in regard to that use.

Permitted uses

It is recognised that the identification of all possible uses that could take place in the future is not practical. It is therefore recognised that additional uses, activities and facilities or developments may be permitted within Rathmines Park, but only where these are assessed as being consistent with the following, and which have received the necessary approvals:

- Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014
- Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan (July 2019)
- The Vision, management principles and key values of this Plan of Management
- The core objectives of the category that apply to the subject location within Rathmines Park.

Scale and intensity of use and development

The scale and intensity of future use and development is generally shown on the site Master Plan and described throughout this Plan of Management. The scale and intensity of permitted use and development should always be consistent with:

- The Vision, management principles and key values of this Plan of Management
- Rathmines Park Conservation Management Plan (July 2019)
- Assessment of impact on park users and adjoining neighbours

5.3 Leases, licenses and other estates

This Plan of Management authorises Council to enter into the most appropriate management arrangement for the use of buildings and spaces within Rathmines Park, with consideration of:

- Current and future benefit to the relevant community group, operator or sporting activities, where applicable, and the local community and visitors to the area more broadly
- Capacity to respond to the respective facility needs including asset maintenance and care requirements applicable to the facility
- Potential financial cost to Council of the facilities in their entirety or by segregation of the respective aspects of the facility

It is noted that leases or licences may only be granted where they are consistent with the core objective for the applicable land category or are purposes nominated by the *Local Government Act 1993* (Section 46(1)(b)), being public recreation activities or activities supporting the physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare or development of persons. Generally speaking, Council will consider the use of an appropriate lease arrangement where a facility has single user.

Existing lease and licence arrangements are identified in Table 2.

Table 2: Current leases and licences within Rathmines Park

Organisation	Lease area	Use type	Term	Comment
Lake Macquarie Classic Boat Association	Former Airmen's Ablution Building and former Emergency Power House	Historic boat restoration	1 March 2019 to 29 February 2024	Potential for additional facilities to be required over time to cater for Association growth
Scout Association	Former Inflammable Liquids Store building and Sub Station No. 2	Scouting activities and associated storage	<i>Currently being negotiated - Term and area to be confirmed</i>	Re-established a presence on site in 2020 following building works
Westlakes Music Centre	Former Sergeants Mess building	Music and related community activity	1 March 2019 to 29 February 2024	
Disability Life Enrichment Limited	Park area adjoining Catalina Lakefront Retreat (171 Dorrington Road)		1 July 2016 to 30 June 2021	Area of grassed open space adjoining privately owned, not-for-profit facility
Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club	Former Officer's Mess and small Brick Boiler House buildings, bowling greens and surrounds	Bowling club and associated facilities	1 July 2015 to 30 June 2036	Long-term occupation of specialist facility

Authorisation of future leases, licences and other estates

In authorising future leases and licences, Council generally supports:

- a multi-user approach to community assets
- the use of licences that allow for a broad range of uses, and
- licences for commercial activities that are in keeping with the core objectives for the land and do not unreasonably alienate the land

In the future, Council may enter into leases or licenses with community or commercial operators, including but not limited to the following uses and facilities:

- To renew or continue activities as listed in Table 2 above
- Occupation of the former Substation No. 2 building - should the ongoing need for Scout storage no longer be required
- Occupation of current or future sports facility buildings associated with Fishburn Fields
- Occupation of the proposed 'Catalina interpretation hangar' building and associated external areas as may be applicable and pending detailed design
- Occupation of the hardstand adjoining the Christadelphian Bible School for the purposes of car parking

- Occupation of storage facilities at Styles Point associated with sporting activities undertaken in the area
- Occupation of part or all of the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre building to facilitate use in accordance with current approvals (DA1853/2018)
- Use of a pop-up café or similar facility or, subject to the development application process, as part of the Catalina interpretation hangar, Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre or Bowling Club.
- Use of open space areas associated with disc golf at Styles Point
- Use of open space or associated roadways for the provision of mobile food/drink related facilities (e.g. food trucks) on a temporary or occasional basis
- Use of open space for tourist kiosk or similar
- Use of open space for health and well-being related activities (e.g. personal trainers)
- Use of open space for the hire of goods, including but not limited to bikes, paddle boats, kayaks and other goods and services generally associated with the enjoyment of the Park or adjoining waterfront
- Use of open space for the purposes of overnight camping that is associated with events on, or in the vicinity of Rathmines Park and which is temporary in nature

Casual licences

As outlined above, a range of temporary uses would be envisaged across various areas of the site. These would typically include potential for pop-up food vans or similar during events or occasional use, hire of equipment for use at the site (e.g. bikes or kayaks), and for events and like activities. Key opportunity areas would include in the vicinity of the skate park / youth hub, playground / Scout Hall area and adjoining the swimming baths should substantial improvements be undertaken in this area.

Whilst Council will continue to encourage an appropriate range of uses and events within Rathmines Park, it is also necessary to manage these activities to minimise impact on Park users and adjoining residents and to prevent physical damage to heritage assets and the Park more broadly. Council will monitor ongoing use of the Park to ensure that the scale and intensity of use continues to be consistent with this Plan of Management and the adopted Conservation Management Plan.

5.4 Master Plan intent

In terms of the extent and type of infrastructure proposed, master planning for Rathmines Park has retained the six precincts previously identified in Section 2.3 and shown in Figure 6 (see Page 10). In summary, these six precincts are:

- Precinct A - Styles Point
- Precinct B - Bushland / Native Vegetation
- Precinct C - Sports & Youth Facilities
- Precinct D - Catalina Ramp / Foreshore
- Precinct E - Catalina Beach / Memorial Point
- Precinct F - Town Park

The extent of development and use of each of these precincts is summarised below and articulated on the Master Plan drawings, as applicable to this Plan of Management, at Appendix B. It is reiterated that

all Master Plan works would be subject to further detailed design through the life of this Plan of Management, and such detailed processes may alter the layout and extent of works shown.

5.4.1 Precinct A - Styles Point

Future use of the Styles Point Precinct is generally consistent with retention and improvement of its existing use patterns. Key improvements are focused around supporting these current activities by increasing the practical use of the site (which is likely to increase over time) and to renew and improve infrastructure to enable this ongoing use to occur.

Key works as shown in Drawing 09 - Master Plan - Precinct A at Appendix B are:

- **Vehicle access rationalisation:** Creating a more discernible vehicle access loop / rationalising the extent of gravel access roads, whilst ensuring that trailer parking remains possible and practical. This includes additional vehicle controls to avoid excessive damage to existing open space areas whilst retaining the open and natural feel of the locality. Detailed design would include close discussion with the Newcastle and Hunter Trailer Yacht Association and boat ramp users.
- **Pedestrian access to trail head:** Creating a pedestrian connection between the existing shared path and the bush tracks to the south, including associated interpretive information opportunities at the track head. This will create greater connectivity and integration of the vegetated and more parkland areas. This new access pathway would link with work on bushland tracks as discussed in Precinct B.
- **Entry markers:** Use of entry markers at the access point off Overhill Road to assist in defining the boundary of Rathmines Park and its heritage curtilage. These would be relatively simple markers that are used at all road entry points.
- **Landing strip:** Highlight and interpret the landing strip area on the entry to the park, such as with perimeter bollards, visual cues and other means, including the retention of the open feel of the space through ongoing vegetation management.
- **Pedestrian access / picnic facilities at Styles Point:** Extension of the pedestrian pathway through to the boat ramp to provide high levels of pedestrian accessibility and opportunity to establish new / associated picnic facilities. This would expand on the current extent of parkland areas and provide increased pedestrian/walking opportunities throughout Rathmines Park.
- **Amenities / toilet block:** Renewal or replacement of the existing amenities block, incorporating key facilities for trailer yacht needs and boating community, as well as general use. Whilst the existing facilities are in working order, they are dated and perceived to be in relatively poor condition. Opportunities for Yacht Club storage and improved accessibility would be important considerations.

5.4.2 Precinct B - Bushland / Native Vegetation

Future use of the Bushland / Native Vegetation Precinct is designed to reinforce existing use, but in ways that respect and celebrate former RAAF use, whilst creating opportunities for environmental and cultural education. Key improvements are focused around rationalisation of the current myriad of tracks to create greater access across a smaller number of well-marked and maintained trails.

Key works as shown in Drawing 10 - Master Plan - Precinct B & C at Appendix B are:

- **Rationalising trails and incorporating heritage elements:** Create a small number of track heads and a connected series of trails that are marked / sign-posted and which capture

heritage interpretation opportunities - incorporating the spine road to the former Sleeping Quarters and Wireless Transmission Station areas. Track markers used to direct and inform users, whilst some existing tracks could be closed and rehabilitated. A rationalised set of tracks would be more manageable for ongoing maintenance and care, whilst enabling interaction with the natural environment and heritage elements of the locality. Details of works to be confirmed through Vegetation Management Plan and Interpretation Plan or similar.

- **Landcare:** In association with the above trail works, clear long-term plans would be established to define and encourage Landcare initiatives within the precinct and in the establishment and ongoing maintenance of proposed trails. Details of works to be confirmed through Vegetation Management Plan or similar.
- **Entry markers:** Use of entry markers on Dorrington Road (near corner of Overhill Road) to assist in defining the boundary of Rathmines Park and its heritage curtilage. These would be relatively simple markers that are used at all road entry points.
- **Reinterpretation of the Guard House:** Establish a new interpretive “guard house” element including a small parking area, outline of original building, interpretive signage / shelter and gate pillars. This would also act as a track head to encourage engagement with other historical elements such as the spine road to the former Sleeping Quarters, whilst utilising the existing disturbed space and providing a more significant entry feature. Details of works to be confirmed through the site-wide Interpretation Plan or as a standalone project design.

5.4.3 Precinct C - Sports & Youth Facilities

Future use of the Sports & Youth Facilities Precinct seeks to both improve on current use and associated facilities, but to also significantly expand on the current offerings for informal youth recreational activities. Key improvements are focused on providing supporting infrastructure to maximise formal sports use, whilst establishing a new and distinct youth attraction through a range of youth activities centred around a new youth hub area.

Key works as shown in Drawing 10 - Master Plan - Precinct B & C at Appendix B are:

- **Formalise parking areas:** Create formalised parking areas to increase efficiency to cater for increasing sports activities, youth hub activities and town centre or event overflow. Informal parking arrangements retained around the oval and in the south-eastern corner of precinct, whilst formalised areas include the space between the tennis court and oval (approx. 50 spaces) and at the youth hub area (approx. 60 spaces).
- **Pedestrian access:** Creating greater connectivity between boat ramp, Parade Ground, youth hub area and town centre for pedestrians (connecting existing pathway at Dorrington Road to the town centre). This includes new interpretive information and use of entry markers on Stilling Street to assist in defining the boundaries of Rathmines Park and its heritage curtilage.
- **Establishing a “Youth Hub”:** Create a youth hub with high visibility from both Stilling Street and Dorrington Road, whilst using the existing vehicle access point to the south (also providing access to the sports precinct) to establish safe parking and vehicle access arrangements. Facilities include skatepark, bmx / pump track, multi-court/basketball, parkour area, as well as shelters and seating. Existing skate bowl removed due to poor surface quality, basic design and poor location hidden behind septic tank (poor passive surveillance). Inclusions subject to detailed design and implementation to be staged should funding require.
- **New sporting clubhouse & facilities:** New sports clubhouse building, to cater for growing sports use (both male and female), provision of accessible toilets, storage and other needs to meet relevant standards. Improvements to fields including lighting, irrigation and drainage

that may be required to be considered over time. Opportunities for Council funding would be subject to broader sporting facilities review and prioritisation.

- **Additional formalised parking:** Additional formalised parking behind the new clubhouse area, as well as along Rosemary Row to benefit sporting users, as well as town centre/retail area considered and provided in a staged manner, or as required according to demand and funding.
- **Amenities / toilet block:** Relocate the existing toilet block to be a new, more centrally located facility for use by both the youth hub and sporting fields. Existing facilities are in working order but are dated and perceived to be in relatively poor condition. Current location is also relatively isolated and would be more logically placed adjoining the new youth hub facilities.

5.4.4 Precinct D - Catalina Ramp / Foreshore

Future use of the Catalina Ramp / Foreshore Precinct seeks to reinterpret former use of areas and to provide a greater sense of place within the expansive spaces available. Many of the key improvements to the area would be based around retaining the flexibility and use of the area for major events, whilst providing a more appropriate scale for day to day interpretation and use of the space. The potential for ferry services to service the Rathmines area as well as use of the area by sea planes is retained with available infrastructure and planned changes or upgrades not precluding this from occurring should a service become viable or demand increase.

Forms of vehicle traffic control, access management and surveillance of the hard stand area are required to reduce incidence of anti-social behaviour. Options include traffic calming and line marking, use of CCTV or closure of some areas after hours. Depending on the form and type of use that ultimately exists on or around the hardstand area, including potential for the construction of a new 'Catalina interpretation hangar' facility, these controls will need to respond accordingly.

Key works as shown in Drawing 11 - Master Plan - Precinct D, E & F at Appendix B are:

- **Potential 'Catalina interpretation hangar':** Subject to business case, detailed design and approvals, development of a new hangar building to be located on the footprint of the former Bellman Hangar or Western Hangar area (eastern side), to include restored Catalina plane, interpretive information, café/kiosk and potential for more substantial museum. Facility to have event capacity, with potential to also include Lake Macquarie Classic Boast Association artefacts and displays.
- **Heritage road alignment:** Reinforce the heritage road alignments and spatial areas through the use of new street and/or shade trees (including removal of Oleander plantings and replacement with Brush Box trees (or similar) along Stilling Street). Details of works to be confirmed through Vegetation Management Plan and Interpretation Plan or similar.
- **Parade Ground delineation:** Increase delineation and recognition of the Parade Ground area through use of boundary shade trees on the east and north, and new linking pathway on the northern side. This enables ongoing use for dog off-leash and overflow parking (albeit reduced where possible), whilst providing clearer interpretation of the former Parade Ground as a defined use area. Trees to be spaced appropriately and with high level canopy to maintain views through area. Details of works to be confirmed through Vegetation Management Plan and Interpretation Plan or similar. Ongoing monitoring of overflow car parking to be incorporated into event management procedures and plans.
- **Hardstand interpretation:** Repair and interpretation of Catalina boat ramp and hardstand areas with a series of Catalina silhouettes, as well as hangar footprints and interpretive elements. Reinforce delineation between the bitumen and concrete elements, with the

bitumen areas (being of lower heritage significance) being resurfaced and areas marked for parking areas (for Bible School and 'Catalina interpretation hangar' or other general use). Opportunity to include some form of shade trees within raised plant beds on bitumen area to further delineate and breakdown the expansive surfaces whilst retaining views through use of high canopy species. Details of works to be confirmed through Vegetation Management Plan and Interpretation Plan or similar.

- **Foreshore park improvements:** Upgrade to foreshore park adjoining F-jetty to include new picnic shelters and facilities over time. Area to include an opportunity for Aboriginal interpretive elements, e.g. yarning circle / rest space or integrated art work, celebrating local Aboriginal culture. Details of interpretation space to be developed in consultation with local Aboriginal groups and parameters of project adjusted accordingly.
- **Foreshore park amenities and parking:** Upgrade existing toilet / amenities building and parking bay to improve quality over time. Existing areas are currently operational / in working order however are dated and perceived to be in relatively poor condition. Future works to have a particular focus on accessibility and meeting future demands, whilst reducing vehicle access to public open space areas.

5.4.5 Precinct E - Catalina Bay / Memorial Point

Future use of the Catalina Bay / Memorial Point Precinct seeks to create greater integration of areas, facilitate foreshore use of the site, as well as creating opportunities for a range of ongoing activities that currently exist, but in relative isolation. This Precinct would also see the ongoing improvement and maintenance of key heritage buildings, including the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre, Scout Hall, Bowling Club and Music Centre buildings and their surrounds.

Key works as shown in Drawing 11 - Master Plan - Precinct D, E & F at Appendix B are:

- **Major swimming baths upgrade:** Substantial upgrade to the swimming baths, with potential to have supporting infrastructure on the foreshore, as well as upgrading and expanding the in-water infrastructure (to original proportions - 50m). Connections to Bowling Club, provision of seating and change facilities and other supporting infrastructure to be considered through detailed design development. Progression of works to be subject to the outcomes of a broader aquatic facilities review and potentially preceded by a site options study to confirm the site location (alternative sites in Catalina Bay to be considered).
- **Bowling Club:** Develop long-term plans to assist in the reinstatement of the original Officer's Mess building, removing the detracting brick addition (as recommended by the Conservation Management Plan) and creating greater connection between inside and outside spaces - particularly to the north. Work with heritage architect and Bowling Club to identify appropriate changes and seek funding assistance for implementation. Consider options for kiosk style service area to north to cater for swimming area / new pathway users as part of detailed design process.
- **Memorial Point access:** New pedestrian path around Memorial Point (also known as Catalina Point), reducing impacts of unregulated access, with Landcare initiatives to be continued / expanded around the foreshore. Existing shelters retained, and the memorial area improved in accordance with the adopted Conservation Management Plan. This would provide an additional walking link and connect the area to the swimming baths and former Bomb and Fuel Wharf/fishing platform.

- **Accessible fishing platform:** Re-establish the former Bomb and Fuel Wharf (following appropriate contamination assessments) as an accessible fishing platform. Provide disabled car spaces, with alternate parking on-street following conversion of loop-road to one-way. Pedestrian access also provided via new foreshore pathway.
- **RV camping area:** Provision of an RV camping area to enable overnight camping potential to be reinstated on the former General Stores concrete pad area. Management details and facility improvement to be confirmed prior to implementation, and to include consideration of the need for a dump point (potentially at the concrete pad to the south), line marking, interpretation information and landscape works. Recommended to include two-night maximum stay under Clause 77 of the *Local Government Regulations*. Future expansion possible to hardstand area subject to trial period, ongoing consultation and management review.
- **New playground elements:** Provision of new climbing net area, nature play elements and learn-to-ride facility linking the existing playground (where the flying fox would be retained and new elements including Catalina interpretation would be added) through to the surrounding areas to the north and west. Detailed design is to consider, and where possible avoid, the drip zone and impacts on mature native vegetation of the area to retain the current conditions. Associated picnic shelters, new amenities and interpretation information to be included. Former Motor Transport Building pad to be improved and formalised as supporting car parking area. This area would take advantage of the extensive tree cover for shade and incorporate the former Aircraft Stores concrete pad. New parking arrangement and exercise equipment to be implemented to the immediate south. Existing trees to be retained and protected through careful detailed design process.
- **Foreshore connectivity:** Removal of the gravel foreshore parking area adjoining the Scout Hall building to create improved visual and physical connection between the playground area and the open foreshore space to the south. Parking in this area was not part of the original RAAF Base Rathmines layout and removing vehicles from this area will provide opportunities for greater public use of the foreshore. Removal to be co-ordinated with broader improvements to playground and formalisation of other parking areas.
- **Off-street parking:** Provision of new off-street parking areas along Stilling Street - staged as required by demand, but maintaining the historic linear form parallel to Stilling Street (similar orientation to the buildings that previously covered much of this area). Parking areas would utilise permeable grass paver style construction so as to not compete with the original RAAF base road alignments, whilst also acting to reduce vehicle access onto other open space areas.
- **Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre and Classic Boat Association area:** Redevelop and utilise Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre in accordance with current cultural facility plans with extensive connection to public open space surrounds, including outdoor events within or including the former Boiler House area. Provide further context with an established foreshore event space to the east, with tree planting and a new shelter to create symmetry to the existing Classic Boat Association building. Ensure adequate parking and access arrangements are retained for Classic Boat Association needs, including from the existing building to the foreshore/water's edge. Potential for more formal water access infrastructure such as floating pontoon and beach ramp subject to detailed design and consultation.
- **Music Centre:** Upgrade Music Centre for internal efficiency, safety and to meet ongoing user needs. Improve relationship to open space area to the north, including potential for outdoor performances. Future plan opportunities to be developed in conjunction with Centre user groups and heritage architect to identify appropriate changes and seek funding assistance for implementation.

5.4.6 Precinct F - Town Park

Future use of the Town Park Precinct seeks to provide better integration of the space with the remainder of Rathmines Park, as well as connecting to the town centre/retail area and creating greater purpose of use. Current uses would be retained with minor improvements made over time.

Key works as shown in Drawing 11 - Master Plan - Precinct D, E & F at Appendix B are:

- **Local park upgrades:** Development of a more defined local park directly across from the town centre/retail area to include shelters, park furniture and associated landscaping as well as new amenities building over time. The area would complement the town centre for lunch breaks and as a local meeting place.
- **Circle path connection:** Provision of a new perimeter pedestrian pathway to better link residential areas to the south/east to the town centre/retail area and to frame the existing open space which currently lacks definition. The pathway would extend to the waterfront at the end of "The Circuit" and link to the existing shared user path to the north, providing a more direct route to Rathmines Park for local residents.

5.5 Implementation Action Plans

This section provides an ongoing management framework for the implementation of this Plan of Management. This framework is identified through the "Action Plans" presented overleaf, which includes the minimum requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

References to various elements included within the Implementation Action Plan are further explained below:

- **Management Theme:** Refers to the themes identified in Section 5.1 of this Plan of Management.
- **Objectives and Performance Targets:** Refers to the 'core objectives' for General Community Use / Park / Natural Area / Sportsground land and the 'management objectives' that are nominated in Section 4.5. It also provides performance targets that can be used to measure outcomes (in accordance with Section 36(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1993*).
- **Means of achievement of objectives:** Refers to options available to undertake actions that seek to meet the objectives (in accordance with Section 36(3)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1993*). These are identified in terms of short, medium, long-term or ongoing actions. Timing would generally be as follows, but is subject to funding availability and is intended to be flexible in approach:
 - Short term - 1 to 2 years
 - Medium term - 3 to 5 years
 - Long term - 5 to 10 years
- **Manner of assessment of performance:** Refers to the ways that performance or success of the management process will be measured (in accordance with Section 36(3)(d) of the *Local Government Act 1993*).

The Implementation Action Plans are divided into themes as previously presented at Section 5.1 including:

- Indigenous and European heritage (see Table 3)
- Sports, recreation and youth activities (see Table 4)
- Environment and sustainability (see Table 5)
- Events and attractions (see Table 6)
- Community facilities and other buildings (see Table 7)

Key immediate priorities and order of priority of some generic elements of the plans, being car parking and public amenities, are also identified in Section 6.1.

Table 3: Implementation Action Plan - Indigenous and European heritage

Objectives and Performance Targets	Means of achievement of objectives and targets	Manner of assessment of performance
<p>Core Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o General Community Use (a) (b) o Park (a) (b) (c) o Sportsground (a) (b) o Natural Area (a) (b) (c) (d) / Bushland (a) - (g) / Foreshore (a) (b) <p>Management Objectives: i, ii, iii, iv, vi, ix</p> <p>Performance Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Effective and consistent interpretation of Aboriginal, environmental and RAAF Base Rathmines elements are in place to reflect the unique features of the Park o Heritage stakeholders are identified and consulted during all key infrastructure projects, including the Heritage Council of NSW 	<p>Short term:</p> <p>I&EH 1. Develop an <i>Interpretation Plan</i> for Rathmines Park consistent with Council's signage guide and other relevant plans and strategies. Undertake implementation in a staged fashion to create consistency over the long-term in consultation with key stakeholders and which builds on the short-term Interpretation Plan already developed and as per the outcomes of the Conservation Management Plan</p> <p>I&EH 2. As part of the short-term Interpretation Plan implementation, review and finalise signage and wayfinding design, layout and content to facilitate the immediate implementation of available interpretation funding for Park signage</p> <p>Medium term:</p> <p>I&EH 3. Implement gateway signage and interpretive elements, including the former Guard House interpretation project, to strengthen the sense of arrival at Rathmines Park</p> <p>I&EH 4. Implement interpretive elements in the Catalina Ramp / Foreshore Precinct including Bitumen Hardstand and Parade Ground improvements, as well as Catalina and hangar silhouettes and associated works in accordance with the Interpretation Plan (co-ordinate with 'Catalina interpretation hangar' as required)</p> <p>Ongoing:</p> <p>I&EH 5. Implement other opportunities identified by the Interpretation Plan and in accordance with priorities identified therein</p> <p>I&EH 6. Integrate signage, branding and public art opportunities with all infrastructure works or as funding opportunities arise and in accordance with the Interpretation Plan, Conservation Management Plan and Master Plan directions</p> <p>I&EH 7. Recognise areas of cultural and heritage significance in all infrastructure works and undertake appropriate consultation with relevant groups during detailed design and as otherwise required - including Aboriginal and RAAF associated groups and individuals</p> <p>I&EH 8. Continue to encourage and facilitate active interpretation opportunities, including guided tours, heritage related events and community-based groups/association involvement in heritage interpretation/preservation</p> <p>I&EH 9. Make leaseholders and other regular Park user groups aware of their heritage obligations, including that relevant policies and guidelines be incorporated into lease conditions where applicable</p> <p>I&EH 10. In accordance with Conservation Management Plan Policy 24, Rathmines Park must be inspected every 12 months by a suitably qualified heritage consultant to identify maintenance and repairs that are needed to ensure compliance with the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Interpretation Plan is available to guide implementation of signage, interpretation projects and related elements over time o Interpretive opportunities are delivered as integral components of all key infrastructure projects o Heritage stakeholders, including Aboriginal and RAAF associated groups, are consulted in development and implementation of key infrastructure projects as applicable o Heritage Management expertise is enlisted to guide future work proposals (other than minor works or routine maintenance) o Copies of the Conservation Management Plan and this Plan of Management are made available to all personnel charged with primary responsibility for management and maintenance of Rathmines Park. o Regular maintenance and review of heritage items is undertaken in accordance with the Conservation Management Plan and legislative requirements

Table 4: Implementation Action Plan - Sports, recreation and youth activities

Objectives and Performance Targets	Means of achievement of objectives and targets	Manner of assessment of performance
<p>Core Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o General Community Use (a) (b) o Park (a) (b) (c) o Sportsground (a) (b) <p>Management Objectives: iii, iv, vii, viii</p> <p>Performance Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Increase the number of groups, and their membership numbers, that train and/or undertake sporting activities at Fishburn Fields o Increase the number of user groups utilising Rathmines Park for recreational opportunities o Youth and children’s facilities are improved to meet extent of use and prominence of the facility o General improvements to infrastructure, such as seating, pathways and picnic facilities, are improved over time to enable ongoing passive enjoyment of open space areas 	<p>Short term:</p> <p>SR&Y 1. Develop the detailed design of youth hub and children’s playground areas in accordance with the intent of the Master Plan and through targeted engagement with young people</p> <p>SR&Y 2. Undertake implementation of youth hub and children’s playground works, including staging of works as required to meet budget allowances</p> <p>SR&Y 3. Identify opportunities to improve access across Dorrington Road and Stilling Street and implement to improve pedestrian safety at crossing points</p> <p>Medium term:</p> <p>SR&Y 4. Pending broader sports facilities review, develop plans and implementation options for new sporting club facilities at Fishburn Fields</p> <p>Long term:</p> <p>SR&Y 5. Pending broader aquatic facility planning, develop plans and implementation options for upgraded swimming baths, including associated infrastructure and access works</p> <p>Ongoing:</p> <p>SR&Y 6. Maintain current facilities prior to new development by Council, including ongoing maintenance thereafter - in accordance with Council service level standards</p> <p>SR&Y 7. Retain Parade Ground as an unfenced dog off-leash use area, including appropriate signage and facilities (e.g. dog waste bags) in accordance with Council’s Dog in Open Space Policy</p> <p>SR&Y 8. Provide new pathways, picnic facilities and access upgrades in accordance with the intent of the Master Plan over time (on a precinct by precinct basis) and utilising a consistent material palette to be defined through youth hub and children’s playground projects</p> <p>SR&Y 9. Provide new sporting field upgrades, including lighting, irrigation, drainage and parking upgrades in accordance with the intent of the Master Plan over time and in conjunction with broader strategic planning sporting improvements across the Lake Macquarie local government area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Number of user groups or bookings for use of Fishburn Fields o Number of members of sporting organisations associated with Rathmines Park areas o Number of sporting events held per annum (non-regular) o Youth hub and children’s playground upgrades implemented and post-implementation assessment of works are established o Road crossing points improved at Dorrington Road and Stilling Street o Street and park furniture consistently implemented in accordance with the intent of the Master Plan o Compliance achieved with appropriate access and disability standards for all new works

Table 5: Implementation Action Plan - Environment and sustainability

Objectives and Performance Targets	Means of achievement of objectives and targets	Manner of assessment of performance
<p>Core Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General Community Use (a) (b) ○ Park (a) (b) (c) ○ Sportsground (a) (b) ○ Natural Area (a) (b) (c) (d) / Bushland (a) - (g) / Foreshore (a) (b) <p>Management Objectives: i, iii, iv, viii, ix</p> <p>Performance Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of areas reflects and responds to their natural assets and constraints ○ Natural and cultural elements of the site are retained and integrated into use activities wherever appropriate ○ Pathways and trails are constructed and able to be maintained in ways that are appropriate to the environmental context ○ Important environmental attributes are recognised, conserved and improved over time ○ Vehicle access to open space is restricted to formal and recognised overflow parking areas 	<p>Short term:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vegetation Management Plan (or similar) is in place for Rathmines Park ○ Appropriate environmental assessment is undertaken prior to development or disturbance of natural areas in accordance with relevant legislation ○ Number of trails through <i>Precinct B - Bushland / Native Vegetation</i> is reduced, with associated signage and interpretation information available ○ Water and energy use of community facilities is monitored ○ Street tree cover signifying original RAAF Base Rathmines layout is increased ○ Landcare Groups/other organisations are provided with guidance and opportunities to contribute positively to enhancement of the natural environment ○ Contamination assessment is undertaken prior to all works on buildings and other features requiring ground disturbance
	<p>E&S 1. Development of a Vegetation Management Plan, including Tree Management Plan (or similar), to guide future implementation of environmental protection / restoration by Council, Landcare and/or other organisations</p> <p>E&S 2. Record the extent of energy and water use of community facilities (as a baseline) and identify opportunities to reduce consumption</p>	
	<p>Medium term</p>	
	<p>E&S 3. Rationalise trails throughout <i>Precinct B - Bushland / Native Vegetation</i> in accordance with Vegetation Management Plan</p>	
	<p>E&S 4. Implement measures to manage vehicle access to turf areas in unison with staged implementation of off-street parking or other related arrangements</p>	
	<p>E&S 5. Implement associated trail signage and interpretation information in accordance with Vegetation Management Plan and Interpretation Plan as applicable</p>	
	<p>E&S 6. Establish 'Parkcare' or similar group to assist with landscape maintenance and improvement in the areas categorised as 'Park'</p>	
	<p>Long term:</p>	
	<p>E&S 7. Undertake street-tree audit and undertake supplementary or additional planting to reinforce the RAAF Base Rathmines street layout (including removal and replacement of Oleander species on Stilling Street)</p>	
	<p>Ongoing:</p>	
	<p>E&S 8. Maintain and improve current trails and vegetated areas prior to rationalisation, including ongoing maintenance thereafter in accordance with Vegetation Management Plan</p> <p>E&S 9. Establish and implement foreshore protection works and access improvements in areas outside the <i>Natural Area - Foreshore</i> category to balance recreational access needs, natural environment and impacts of Climate Change</p> <p>E&S 10. Undertake regular (annual) monitoring of water and energy use of community facilities, noting impacts of improvements over time</p> <p>E&S 11. All future development / works includes assessment and consideration of contamination risk including of asbestos and former RAAF activities</p> <p>E&S 12. Include waste minimisation and recycling requirements as part of all future lease/license arrangements and in events planning</p>	

Table 6: Implementation Action Plan - Events and attractions

Objectives and Performance Targets	Means of achievement of objectives and targets	Manner of assessment of performance
<p>Core objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General Community Use (a) (b) ○ Park (a) (b) (c) ○ Sportsground (a) (b) <p>Management objectives: iv, v, vi, vii, viii</p> <p>Performance Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the number of visitors to Rathmines Park ○ Increase the number of events undertaken within Rathmines Park ○ Ensure that the frequency and range of events are in keeping with the site constraints and infrastructure available to support such activities ○ Upcoming events and activities at the site are effectively communicated 	<p>Short-term:</p> <p>E&A 1. Develop programming and activities within community buildings that are consistent with broader Park activities - particularly the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre and the Westlakes Music Centre - including co-ordination and promotion thereof</p> <p>E&A 2. Establish an <i>Event Management Plan</i> to provide guidance on appropriate types of events and functions that are consistent with the heritage significance, values and core objectives of Rathmines Park. The Plan shall include protocols for the preparation of a <i>Traffic Control Plan</i> and <i>Traffic Management Plan</i> as required under Council's Event Licence Application process. The Plan shall consider the impact on heritage items, recreational assets (including existing dog off-leash area) and establish triggers for implementation of off-street parking to ensure sustainable use of the Park over the long-term</p> <p>E&A 3. Undertake/consider a business case, feasibility, funding and approvals for an on-site 'Catalina interpretation hangar', including interpretive information, café / kiosk and museum potential at either the former Western Hangar or former Bellman Hangar areas</p> <p>E&A 4. Review requirements and establish a process for enabling RV camping on the former General Stores concrete pad, including need for signage, line marking, interpretation and enforcement / management</p> <p>E&A 5. Assess service infrastructure requirements (water, sewer, electrical), including for ongoing use and provision of event specific infrastructure (such as access to water, three-phase power and sewer connections), to facilitate future use opportunities</p> <p>Ongoing:</p> <p>E&A 6. Maintenance of current event locations and associated infrastructure is undertaken by Council and/or associated groups as applicable</p> <p>E&A 7. Regular reviews of car parking arrangements and suitability are undertaken, responding to changing use patterns and need for additional parking areas as required</p> <p>E&A 8. Upcoming events and activities are effectively communicated through Council or other organisation communication channels, including on-site signage where applicable</p> <p>E&A 9. Review RV camping and consider need and options for expansion to Hardstand area, need for dump point and other matters as arising from review process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An <i>Event Management Plan</i> is established for Rathmines Park ○ Extent of visitation to Rathmines Park (anecdotal) ○ Number of events held within Rathmines Park ○ Community satisfaction with Park events and management there-of ○ Services (e.g. water, electricity and sewer) for broad based use and for events are effective and fit for purpose ○ Regular monitoring undertaken of Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre car parking use ○ Car parking meets events needs with consideration of size and frequency of events as measured by complaints and extent of parking on open space areas

Table 7: Implementation Action Plan - Community facilities and other buildings

Objectives and Performance Targets	Means of achievement of objectives and targets	Manner of assessment of performance
<p>Core Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o General Community Use (a) (b) o Park (a) (b) (c) <p>Management Objectives: i, ii, iii, iv, vi, vii, ix</p> <p>Performance Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o New and existing facilities are well integrated to the broader Rathmines Park area through careful site planning and detailed design o User groups have clear and defined roles established under user agreements o Key facilities are able to operate under clear planning and operational parameters that reflect user needs, heritage outcomes and integration with broader Rathmines Park objectives 	<p>Short term:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Key facilities, including Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre, Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club and Westlakes Music Centre have long-term plans in place for operation and works o Regular facility users are captured within user agreements, either with Council or another identified site user under subservient agreements where applicable o Facilities respond to their surrounding context as identified through the intent of the Rathmines Park Master Plan o Increased number of user groups and casual bookings resulting in more activated buildings and spaces
	<p>CF 1. Identify and integrate community use of Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre with opportunities for external events and curated programming, including regular user groups</p>	
	<p>CF 2. Prepare facility plans for key locations including the Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club and Westlakes Music Centre buildings to enable improvement to their external presentation, engagement with outdoor areas and functionality of indoor spaces to best meet user needs</p>	
	<p>CF 3. Measures established to encourage/accommodate other organised community activities and casual users of buildings - including Scout Hall, Music Centre and others - through appropriate leases, licenses, and/or promotion of facilities</p>	
	<p>CF 4. Identify opportunities to maximise the number of user groups on site, and the effective utilisation of buildings that are currently available, or which may be available in the future</p>	
	<p>CF 5. Establish upgrade requirements for services to meet user needs, and options for funding and implementation</p>	
	<p>Medium term:</p>	
	<p>CF 6. Undertake program of works improvements to the Westlakes Music Centre in accordance with the facility plans, Conservation Management Plan and Master Plan intent</p>	
	<p>Long term:</p>	
	<p>CF 7. Undertake program of works improvements to the Rathmines Memorial Bowling Club in accordance with the facility plans, Conservation Management Plan and Master Plan intent</p>	
<p>Ongoing:</p>		
<p>CF 8. Undertake regular communication with relevant user groups associated with the review, design and implementation of facility improvements</p>		
<p>CF 9. Ensure appropriate agreements are in place between Council and facility user groups that are current, clear and appropriate</p>		
<p>CF 10. Identify systems and processes to formalise maintenance and improvement in accordance with Conservation Management Plan requirements, user needs and resource availability</p>		

6. Implementation and review

This section provides an overview of implementation and review of the Plan of Management, including the availability of resources for implementation and periods for review.

6.1 Resourcing and implementation

Council will administer this Plan of Management in conjunction with its other plans of management for individual sites and generic plans that incorporate a range of 'community' land. Funding for ongoing development and improvement of Rathmines Park will generally be through a combination of development contributions, recurring funding allocations, special project requests and grant funds. Whilst a number of projects and opportunities have been identified in this Plan of Management and accompanying Master Plan, Council has many and competing needs for funding allocations and these will need to be considered in the context of broader planning throughout the local government area.

Funding is however identified for a number of projects at Rathmines Park through the *Toronto Contributions Plan (Recreation and Land Plan - Toronto Contributions Catchment 2016 - 2030)* and other project specific allocations. This includes the establishment of the Rathmines Heritage Centre located within the Rathmines Theatre and broader interpretive signage improvements for Rathmines Park. The full cost of project implementation will only be known once detailed design is undertaken and some projects may need to be staged as a consequence.

Ongoing efforts will also be made to secure external funding for projects at Rathmines Park. This will include both State and Federal programs, with funding opportunities and efforts to be co-ordinated with user groups as required. Where external funding can be obtained, improvements identified as longer-term priorities in the Implementation Action Plan tables may be expediated. Council will also work closely with community groups to undertake projects that may be pursued at the local level through co-operative agreements.

In light of available funds and the interrelated nature of many projects, the following key projects are highlighted for immediate consideration:

- Development of a *Vegetation Management Plan* (incorporating a Tree Management Plan or similar) is required to provide detailed direction on the rationalisation of existing trails, ongoing maintenance and improvement of vegetation and the priorities for implementation
- Development of an *Interpretation Plan* is required to provide detailed direction on interpretation works, as well as to create a clear palette of materials and signage to be used throughout the site and implemented over the long term, and building off the current short-term plan for more immediate signage upgrades
- Development of an *Event Management Plan* that can be used to assist hirers of the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre and which creates parameters around the use of overflow parking areas (particularly the Parade Ground area), and an onus to establish and maintain additional off-street parking in the longer-term
- Detailed design and commencement of works on the youth hub and children's playground areas, including their surrounds. Efforts to supplement available funds

should be pursued to enable complete implementation of these projects in the short-term

Consideration of the need for upgraded or renewed amenities are also identified. At present there are no facilities within Rathmines Park that meet current access standards. Subject to funding and progression of associated works (e.g. delivery of youth hub or children's playground areas), the order of implementation for amenities is recommended to be:

- Children's play space area amenities (new)
- Skate park area amenities (upgrade or new)
- Styles Point area amenities (upgrade or new)
- Town centre area amenities (new)
- F-Jetty Park amenities (upgrade or new)

Additional formalised parking is also likely to be required to support the ongoing growth in use of facilities and spaces within Rathmines Park. A staged approach to these works, based on monitoring and demand assessment following the opening of the Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre, would be expected to see parking delivered in the following order:

- Area north of Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre to Scout Hall access road
- Northern verge of Rosemary Row adjoining sports fields and tennis courts
- Area south of Rathmines Theatre and Heritage Centre to the Westlakes Music Centre access road

Wherever possible, introduction of parking areas should be undertaken in conjunction with other nearby works that may influence demand and access arrangements.

6.2 Review

It is intended that the Plan of Management will be reviewed within 10 years of the date of endorsement by Council. Annual reviews are also encouraged to monitor implementation and ensure ongoing consistency with broader Council plans and strategies into the future.

Appendix A – Site and Analysis Drawings

Appendix B – Master Plan Drawings

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