



**HAVEN AMPHITHEATRE**

**CASTLEHAVEN RESERVE, CASTLECRAIG**

**PLAN OF MANAGEMENT**

Adopted by Council: 12 April 2021

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# Haven Amphitheatre – Plan of Management

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Land to which the plan applies

This plan applies to community land in Castlecrag, known as Castlehaven Reserve in which the Haven Amphitheatre is situated. Refer to Figure 1 for land boundaries.



**Figure 1 – Haven Amphitheatre site - outlined in yellow**

The Haven Amphitheatre is located in Castlehaven Reserve which is composed of bushland containing a creek line which flows into Middle Harbour. The amphitheatre contains a series of stone terraces used to watch performances, to enjoy nature or to be part of informal bush play.

Bushland areas of the reserve are covered by the *Urban Bushland Plan of Management 2014 (under review in 2019/20)*. The reserve is within the Griffin Reserves Conservation Area and is also subject to the *Castlecrag Griffin Reserves Plan of Management 2016*.

### 1.2 Background to the Plan of Management

In September 2016 Council demolished the timber stage in the Haven Amphitheatre due to structural concerns about the stage stability. The stage had been built in 1976 by the Castlecrag community and had been used for regular performances, including the annual Christmas Carols.

Development Application 2016/283 was approved by Council on 23 December 2018 for *'Alterations and Additions to Haven Amphitheatre including stage replacement, with a storeroom, accessible ramps, terrace and associated works.'*

However the Castlecrag community was opposed to the proposal for accessible ramps in the site as they believed that this would damage the natural environment and destroy the unique performance space generated at the site. Consequently the stage replacement has not commenced.

In December 2019 Council established a Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) for the Haven Amphitheatre. The purpose of the SRG was to:

- Inform and guide the development of the Haven Amphitheatre Plan of Management.
- Represent a breadth of the views of the community, key stakeholders and other interested parties.

The SRG's report is a reference document for the Plan of Management- see References, Section 7.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Plan of Management**

The purpose of preparing this Plan of Management is to ensure that this land is subject to an adopted Plan of Management, and to ensure that the land is managed to balance four key aspects:

- The natural environment
- Historical and cultural significance
- Unique performance space
- Safe community usage

### **1.4 Relevant legislation**

Legislation which applies to the land in this Plan of Management is:

- ☐ *Local Government Act 1993*, which requires all community land to be subject to a Plan of Management ('the Act')
- ☐ *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.*
- ☐ *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- ☐ *Native Title Act 1993.*
- ☐ *Disability Discrimination Act 1992.*

### **1.5 Willoughby planning context**

This Plan of Management relates to some of the key strategic directions of the *Willoughby City Council Community Strategic Plan 2028*, including:

Outcome 1 – A City that is green:

- Enhance, protect and respect waterways, bushland, nature, wildlife and ecological systems.

### Outcome 2- A City that is connected and inclusive:

- Respect and celebrate our history and heritage sites.

### Outcome 3- A City that is liveable:

- Create desirable spaces to be and enjoy
- Activate spaces in creative ways.

The *Willoughby Open Space and Recreation Plan 2013* recommends measures to improve open space and recreation opportunities in Willoughby, including improvements to passive recreation areas.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE LAND**

### **2.1 Land ownership and tenure**

Castlehaven Reserve was gifted to Council by Marion Mahony Griffin (1871-1961) by the Deed of Trust dated 12 October 1943 and is now owned in Fee Simple. The Deed imposes a number of obligations on Council including the entitlement to permit the use of the Haven as a natural open-air theatre. The Haven Amphitheatre is a locality name applied to the precinct containing the natural amphitheatre and the stone terrace seating. The Haven Amphitheatre is surrounded by:

- Residential housing to the north on The Scarp, and the south on The Barricade.
- Local roads – The Scarp and The Barricade.
- Bushland of Castlehaven Reserve to the east joining Middle Harbour.

The reserve is Lot 1, DP 1128276. The Haven Amphitheatre is not a separate lot.

The subject land of the Haven Amphitheatre is approximately 1197 square metres in area.

The subject land is zoned E2 – Environmental Conservation under the *Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012*.

### **2.2 Physical description**

The Haven Amphitheatre is located within a natural bushland gully shaped by the confluence of two creeks which flow from the upper slopes of Castlecrag to the foreshore of Sailors Bay. The land slopes to the south-east and includes sandstone outcrops. The reserve is dominated by Hawkesbury Sandstone vegetation including fern-lined gullies, an upper

canopy of tree ferns along the creek and mature specimens of the Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata*.

By 1935, stone seating had been built in terrace formation on the western side of the gully, with performances enacted on the eastern side.

In the early 1970s the seating was restored and expanded, and a wooden stage built by the Castlecrag community. Up to six productions per year were held at the Haven.

However in late 2016 Council demolished the timber stage due to structural concerns about its structural stability. Currently the site is stable with the stone terrace seating, walling and stairways intact. Native vegetation has regenerated along the creek banks. A low post and wire fence has been installed along the steep edge above the creek for public safety. This was required for the return of Christmas Carols at the Haven in December 2019.

The site has a sewer line running along the creek. The former stage had an undercroft with a toilet connected to the sewer. An electricity connection is located in the upper east part of the site.

A stone block retaining wall forms the northern boundary of the site; the wall retains the roadway of The Scarp. A northern portion of the wall is subject to annual monitoring due to sub-soil water damage which displaced its vertical alignment in 2016.

### **2.3 Uses of the land**

The Strategic Reference Group's vision for the Haven Amphitheatre is:

*A low maintenance and cost effective performance and activity space, which will serve the current community and future generations, whilst conserving the natural and cultural heritage of the site.*

The site is/ has been used for:

1. Community and cultural events – heritage walks and tours; open-air performances such as the annual Christmas Carols; musical events and plays; outdoor movie nights.
2. Informal recreation – bush walking tracks; nature appreciation; meditation, yoga and relaxation; small scale weddings; social gatherings and picnics.
3. Environmental management – bushland provides a protected environment for wildlife linkages, soil conservation and climate amelioration.

The site is predominantly used during the week and weekends for informal recreation within a natural bushland setting. Community and cultural events are/ were usually held late afternoons and evenings on weekends.

See Figure 2 for a summary of permitted uses of the land and whether further development is permitted.

**Figure 2 – Permitted uses of the land**

<b>Buildings/ improvements</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Permitted use</b>	<b>Further development permitted?</b>
Sandstone terrace seating and steps	Good	Bank retention and stabilisation; seating for informal recreation and performances.	Accessible improvements and maintenance, and renewal only.
The Scarp retaining wall and steps	Varying from good to average (north portion).	Roadway support	Maintenance and renewal only.
Performance space - the timber stage was removed in 2016.	To date a replacement stage has not been constructed.	SEPP Exempt and Complying and SEPP Infrastructure allow landscaping and retaining walls, paving and pathways.  Development Application 2016/283 - Alterations and Additions to Haven Amphitheatre including stage replacement, with a storeroom, accessible ramps, terrace and associated works.	Landscape works including retaining walls, paving and pathways subject to Council Heritage Architect's concurrence.  Accessible improvements and maintenance, and renewal only.
Timber arris rail fence along The Scarp retaining wall.	Good to average	Public safety	Maintenance and renewal only.
Sewer	Good	Potential connection to a new site toilet and waste water outlet/s.	Maintenance and renewal only.
Electricity	Good	Potential connection for the lighting and audio of performances.	Maintenance and renewal only.

### **3. THE CATEGORY OF THE LAND**

Community land is categorised under Section 36 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. There are 10 categories of community land, including park, sportsground, bushland, area of cultural significance, and general community use.

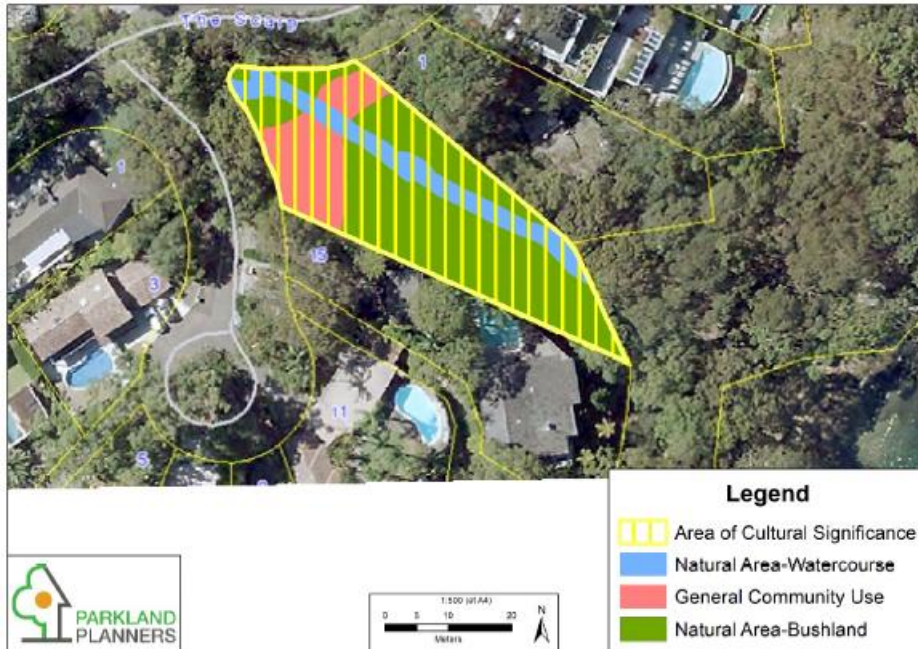
The Haven Amphitheatre is categorised as:

- Natural area- Bushland and Watercourse



- General community use
- Area of cultural significance

Figure 3 - Category of the land



#### 4. ISSUES PERTINENT TO THE LAND

The issues pertinent to the subject land have been canvassed in the *Haven Amphitheatre Stakeholder Reference Group Report 2020*; the *Urban Bushland Plan of Management 2014*; the *Castlecrag Griffin Reserves Plan of Management 2016*, and from background information listed in the references.

In 2016 the timber stage in the Haven Amphitheatre was removed due to structural concerns.

In May 2018 Council approved Development Application 2016/283 - Alterations and Additions to Haven Amphitheatre including stage replacement, with a storeroom, accessible ramps, terrace and associated works. It is Council's intention to continue community and cultural activities at the Haven Amphitheatre in a natural bushland setting.

In summary, the relevant issues pertinent to the land are:

##### 4.1 The natural environment

- Protection of site trees and bushland areas
- Natural watercourses flow without hindrance and erosion

##### 4.2 Historical and cultural significance

- Continued use of the site as a natural open-air theatre as intended by Marion Mahony Griffin in 1943



#### 4.3 Unique performance space

- Protection and conservation of the amphitheatre terracing, seating and steps
- Wide variety of community and cultural activities including performances, passive recreation and educational activities

#### 4.4 Safe community usage

- Access into and through the site is improved
- Disability access for community and cultural activities is improved to be inclusive of the community

#### 4.5 Lease/ licence and other estate

Council is expressly authorised to grant leases and / or licences in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Leases / licences in the Haven Amphitheatre include:

- Licence to host community and cultural events
- Licence to provide refreshments for community and cultural events
- Casual hire of the site by community groups, schools, professional and amateur performance groups, not-for-profit groups and individuals.

## 5. BASIS FOR MANAGEMENT

### 5.1 Core objectives

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, the core objectives for management of community land categorised as natural area- bushland, natural area- watercourse, general community and area of cultural significance are set out in Figure 4.

**Figure 4 – Core objectives for community land management**

Category	Core objectives
Natural area- bushland – Section 36J	(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.
Natural area- watercourse- Section 36M	(a) to manage watercourses so as to protect the biodiversity and ecological values of the instream environment, particularly in relation to water quality and water flows, and (b) to manage watercourses so as to protect the riparian environment, particularly in relation to riparian vegetation and habitats and bank stability, and

	<p>(c) to restore degraded watercourses, and</p> <p>(d) to promote community education, and community access to and use of the watercourse, without compromising the other core objectives of the category.</p>
General community use - Section 36I	<p>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—</p> <p>(a) in relation to public recreation and the physical, cultural, social and intellectual welfare or development of individual members of the public, and</p> <p>(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).</p>
Area of cultural significance – Section 36H	<p>(1) The core objectives for management of community land categorised as an area of cultural significance are <u>to retain and enhance the cultural significance of the area</u> (namely its Aboriginal, aesthetic, archaeological, historical, technical or research or social significance) for past, present or future generations by the active use of conservation methods.</p> <p>(2) Those conservation methods may include any or all of the following methods—</p> <p>(a) the continuous protective care and maintenance of the physical material of the land or of the context and setting of the area of cultural significance,</p> <p>(b) the restoration of the land, that is, the returning of the existing physical material of the land to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material,</p> <p>(c) the reconstruction of the land, that is, the returning of the land as nearly as possible to a known earlier state,</p> <p>(d) the adaptive reuse of the land, that is, the enhancement or reinforcement of the cultural significance of the land by the introduction of sympathetic alterations or additions to allow compatible uses (that is, uses that involve no changes to the cultural significance of the physical material of the area, or uses that involve changes that are substantially reversible or changes that require a minimum impact),</p> <p>(e) the preservation of the land, that is, the maintenance of the physical material of the land in its existing state and the retardation of deterioration of the land.</p> <p>(3) A reference in subsection (2) to land includes a reference to any buildings erected on the land</p>

## 5.2 Zoning objectives in Willoughby Local Environment Plan 2012

The objectives of the E2 – Environmental conservation of the subject land under the *Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012* are to:

- protect, manage and restore areas of high ecological, scientific, cultural or aesthetic values.
- prevent development that could destroy, damage or otherwise have an adverse effect on those values.
- conserve native plant and animal species through the maintenance of suitable habitats.
- contribute to the scenic quality of Willoughby, including the foreshore.

### 5.3 Council City Strategy objectives

The *Council Community Strategic Plan – Our Future Willoughby 2028*, has the following relevant outcomes, including these priorities:

*A City that is green:*

- *Enhance, protect and respect waterways, bushland, nature, wildlife and ecological systems.*

*A City that is connected and inclusive:*

- *Respect and celebrate our history and heritage sites.*

*A City that is liveable:*

- *Create desirable spaces to be and enjoy*
- *Activate spaces in creative ways.*

*A City that is effective and accountable:*

- *Make it easy for citizens to participate in decision making.*

The *Willoughby Open Space and Recreation Plan 2013* provides the following strategic objectives:

- Maintain and upgrade existing recreation facilities in areas of greatest use and demand.
- Promote community awareness of heritage values
- Facilitate access for people with disabilities to Council's open space and recreation facilities.

## 6. PERFORMANCE TARGETS, MEANS OF ACHIEVING TARGETS AND METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

**Figure 5 – Performance targets, means of achieving targets and methods of assessment**

Performance Targets	Means of Achieving Targets	Methods of Assessment
<p>A City that is green:</p> <p><i>Enhance, protect and respect waterways, bushland, nature, wildlife and ecological systems.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is undertaken as adopted by the Castlehaven Reserve Action Plan for bushland areas.</li> <li>• Weed control and bush regeneration is undertaken as necessary by qualified bush regenerators.</li> </ul>	<p>The Castlehaven Reserve Action Plan is reviewed every 5 years.</p> <p>Bushland areas are weed free and regenerating with local endemic species.</p>
<p>A City that is connected and inclusive:</p> <p><i>Respect and celebrate our history and heritage sites.</i></p> <p><i>Create family friendly neighbourhoods that connect people.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All work undertaken at the site is approved by Council's Heritage Architect / NSW Heritage/ independent heritage advice.</li> <li>• <i>Haven Amphitheatre Heritage Interpretation Strategy 2018</i> is implemented by means of an Interpretation Plan, subject to Council funds/ grants availability.</li> <li>• Leases and licences of the site for community and cultural events are expressly authorised in accordance with <i>the Local Government Act 1993</i>, subject to the zoning and any relevant development consents.</li> <li>• An Access Improvements Plan is prepared and implemented to ensure the community can enjoy and attend performances / activities held at the site.</li> </ul>	<p>Approvals for site work are attained and the heritage significance of the site is not diminished.</p> <p>The history of the site is available to the community by a range of means such as digital, visual, physical.</p> <p>Suitably experienced organisations take responsibility for staging and marketing community and cultural events at the site.</p> <p>Events held at the site are inclusive.</p> <p>Complaints concerning access to the site are minimised.</p>
<p>A City that is liveable:</p> <p><i>Create desirable spaces to be and enjoy</i></p> <p><i>Activate local spaces in creative ways.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haven Amphitheatre Landscape Plan is developed with the community to create a performance space/s within the bushland setting.</li> <li>• The approved works in DA 2016/283 or any modification are implemented subject to Council funds/ grants availability.</li> </ul>	<p>The bushland setting is preserved and not diminished nor damaged as a result of site events.</p> <p>Favourable feedback from the community on the range of community and cultural events offered at the site.</p>

## 7. REFERENCES

- Deed of Trust for Castlehaven Reserve- Marion Mahony Griffin to Willoughby Council 12 October 1943.
- Willoughby City Council, Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012.
- Willoughby City Council, Community Strategic Plan-Our Future Willoughby 2028.
- Willoughby Open Space and Recreation Plan 2013.
- Willoughby City Council, Urban Bushland Plan of Management -2014.
- DA 2016/283 – Castlehaven Reserve- Alterations and Additions to Haven Amphitheatre including stage replacement with a storeroom, accessible ramps, terrace and associated works.
- Willoughby City Council, Castlecrag Griffin Reserves- Plan of Management 2016.
- Haven Amphitheatre Heritage Interpretation Strategy 2018 (Betteridge Heritage)
- Haven Amphitheatre- Stakeholder Reference Group Report 2020 (Micromex)