



The Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association Inc.

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SUBMISSION NBC DELIVERY PROGRAM 2022 - 2026

We understand that the Council's draft Delivery Programme 2022-26 and Operational Plan 2022/23 is the response to the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and that the CSP responds to the vision, priorities and passions of **THE COMMUNITY**.

The Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association (PBWBA) has more than 300 members in this Community and while we welcome the opportunity to comment on the Delivery Program we are very disappointed to note the lack of expenditure and overall direction for Palm Beach and Whale Beach. Palm Beach in particular is a major domestic and international visitor destination and it has also become apparent, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic began, that the permanent population is increasing in both Palm & Whale Beach.

The Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan & Budget 2022/2023 is a complex but interesting document with sound "big-picture" goals but it is a very difficult document to review because in so many areas it is non-specific about the actual work details, where they will occur or the cost within the overall budget.

We note the Program states that Council places emphasis on health and recreation, to support the community, getting together and enjoying everything that the Northern Beaches has to offer and that there is a continued emphasis on environmental protection.

Bearing this important statement in mind, and over-development aside, the PB & WB Community nominates the following as being the most important local issues at present -

- The poor state Governor Phillip Park & the importance of preservation of Barrenjoey Headland.
- The deterioration of the ocean pools at Palm Beach & Whale Beach
- The lack of footpaths and the poor state of the roads

We do not understand why these issues have not been addressed in the proposed Delivery Program.

GOVERNOR PHILLIP PARK (GPP)

Governor Phillip Park is an extremely popular regional recreation and tourist area attracting locals, people living throughout Sydney, other domestic and overseas visitors alike. The dramatic setting, sense of isolation, diversity of recreational opportunities and numerous cultural, heritage and geological features provide a unique environment. However, this natural beauty, historical significance, and recreational value of Governor Phillip Park give rise to increasing pressures upon its natural environment, threats to its heritage features, conflicts between various uses of the park and pressures to raise funds for park improvements from commercial activities. NPWS has informed us that 250 000 + visitors walk to Barrenjoey Lighthouse via GPP each year. Thousands more come just to visit/utilise the Park. To preserve

its attractions while its facilities remain available to those who wish to enjoy them, this valuable Crown Land open space resource must be carefully managed by NBC.

PBWBA believes a new Plan Of Management (PoM) is urgently required to ensure it is appropriate and relevant for 2022 and beyond. It must address key considerations including parking, connectivity, accessibility, inclusion, public safety, amenity and sustainable ongoing management.

The local community is becoming more and more concerned about the increasingly tired, neglected and worn state of Governor Phillip Park.

Action is urgently required on, but not limited to, the following -

- weeds which are rampant in the bushland and dunes areas
- crushed sand/gravel "path" is spreading and suffocating the turf on the eastern side above the sand at Nth Palm Beach
- poor drainage, particularly in parking areas
- broken road edges and potholes
- ugly 240l plastic garbage bins which detract from the natural beauty and a lack of recycling bins
- temporary toilet block hire over summer is expensive and unattractive so appropriate, discreet, permanent toilets should be built on the western side near the children's playground
- planting of established trees to provide shade over/beside picnic tables

With its picnic shelters and tables, barbecues and playground, open space for activities, walking and quiet contemplation, GPP has been a very popular place to exercise and meet safely and socially outdoors especially during the pandemic.

At the end of 2020 Council proposed a Landscape Improvement Plan (not a new PoM) for GPP to "tidy up"/improve/tweak the Park whilst keeping its character, celebrating its environment and improving functionality.

It was made clear that the intention was to minimise any works that would impact upon the wild and natural aspects of the park whilst considering the pressure of excessive maintenance demands.

It would, amongst other things, include:

- 1 Attend to beach side erosion east and west.
- 2 Assess strategic planting of mature trees for shade (but mindful of view blocking).
- 3 Provide for the replacement or adding of bins and assessing their overall look.
- 4 Undertake maintenance of seating and tables.
- 5 Improving paths and wayfinding.
- 6 Look into increasing toilet facilities.

This has not happened.

Despite being part of the 'jewel in the crown' of Pittwater we are extremely disappointed to note that no funds have been allocated in the Delivery Program either for expenditure in GPP (apart from regular maintenance and upkeep), or for the preparation of a new PoM.

FILMING FEES IN GOV PHILLIP PARK

"Home and Away" has been filming for approximately 30 years in Gov Phillip Park - which is Crown Land - and is distributed to more than 80 countries around the world. This would suggest it generates very substantial revenue for the TV Network. We acknowledge and welcome the fact that "Home & Away" showcases Palm Beach and the Barrenjoey Lighthouse precinct to the world and provides benefits to various sectors of the Pittwater economy such as accommodation, surf schools, hospitality and weddings. However we are concerned that the filming fees charged in Gov Phillip Park for the filming of "Home Away" do not reflect comparative rates in other cities where the location is a major element of the brand and is a vital outdoor studio for the work.

OCEAN POOLS

Palm Beach Pool is well used all year by residents and visitors. The current state of the concrete in and around the pool creates unsafe conditions for people, including the many elderly and less able bodied people who use it. The pool and surrounds generally look tired and uninviting yet there is no stated plan for a major (and badly needed) revitalisation.

Whale Beach Pool

We note the budget includes funds for PLANNING for a major upgrade of the pool, but the major works which are desperately required for safe access and use by the public of all abilities and ages will not be implemented until at least 23/24.

We note that the steps from Whale Beach Rd to The Strand on the beach will be renewed which will make pedestrian access safer and easier.

ROADS & FOOTPATHS

In Palm Beach and Whale Beach there are a few roads which are absolutely critical for access to our suburbs and they carry a considerable volume of traffic. Barrenjoey Road is without doubt the most important and it is essential that we have a footpath along its whole length so that it is possible to walk safely from Avalon to Palm Beach. Government constantly emphasises the importance of "active travel". While we understand that this will require the involvement of Local, State and Federal Governments we ask Council to start the planning process as with increasing traffic volume it is becoming more and more necessary to protect pedestrians and road users alike. Many residents wish to walk or to use public transport/Keoride rather than drive and they need to be able to walk safely to bus stops as well as for recreation.

For several years we have advocated for a footpath to be built on the southern side of Surf Rd to/from the intersection of Barrenjoey Road. Tragically there was fatality at this dangerous intersection last year. Surf Road is an important local access road as it carries a great deal of traffic to Whale Beach, Bynya Rd and Whale Beach Rd. It is a difficult corner for cars to negotiate with poor visibility when turning out of Surf Road in either direction and it is very dangerous for pedestrians. There are bus stops situated near this intersection on both sides of Barrenjoey Road and neither has safe pedestrian access. The choice is to either to walk on the narrow roadway with cars turning from several directions or to scramble down a steep, often slippery, grassy bank which is impossible for the elderly, the less able, pedestrians with strollers and inadvisable for children.

We would suggest some steps be cut into the bank with a protective balustrade, similar to the steps at the corner of Darley Street (East) and Barrenjoey Road, Mona Vale. The suggested steps would be exactly opposite a bus stop where the Heritage Bus Shelter is located.

Ocean Place, Palm Beach, is a small road running from Florida Road to the bus stop. Although small it is a strategic road as it leads not only to the bus stop but the shops and cafes in Ocean Road. It is a one way street but the buses, including large articulated buses, turn out of Florida Road and proceed down the hill to the bus stop at the bottom of the street. Because of the size of the buses they often hit the wooden balustrades on the sides of the road. Pedestrians need protection for the whole of this road. There is a footpath on a section of it but this needs to be continued to the top on the northern side. This work should be high priority as it is currently a very dangerous road for pedestrians.

Many of the local roads and in particular Whale Beach Rd are in a very poor state with potholes, missing/faded traffic signs, faded line markings and crumbling edges.

Given our safety concerns for the above mentioned roads we do not understand why the only road or footpath repair or construction allocated to Palm Beach and Whale Beach is for two very quiet, dead-end streets - Currawong Ave re-sheeting 22/23 and 170m of re-sheeting of Waratah Rd and Beach Rd 22/23. In the LGA new footpath expenditure 22/23 will be \$2.636 million while \$5.2 million will be spent on cycleways. Given the topography and demographics of Palm & Whale Beach we believe more should be spent on footpaths in this area.

We do note that in conjunction with NSW State Govt funding 740m of new footpath will be constructed on the eastern side of Barrenjoey Rd from Careel Head Rd to Currawong Ave and also that work will continue along the Whale Beach to Palm Beach Coast Walk.

Although further away from Palm Beach flood proofing of Wakehurst Parkway is considered essential by the Community. Flooding has closed this major link to the Northern Beaches Hospital and the city many times this year and we urge Council to work with all relevant authorities to floodproof this vital road as soon as possible.

We ask Council to consider our comments regarding Governor Phillip Park, the ocean pools, roads and footpaths and we look forward to continuing consultation with Council. We fully support Council's vision of a safe, diverse, inclusive and connected Community which lives in balance with our extraordinary coastal and bushland environment.

Prof Richard West
President
29 May 2022