

MINUTES

WOLLONGONG HERITAGE REFERENCE GROUP

5.15PM ON THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2025



PRESENT

Cr Ann Martin (Chair)	Aunty Sheryl Davis-Fulcher
Cr Ryan Morris via Microsoft Teams	Aara Welz
Meredith Hutton	Camellia Webb-Gannon
Fiona Reynolds	

IN ATTENDANCE

Joel Thompson – Coordinator Heritage WCC	Chris Stewart – Manager City Strategy WCC
David Green – Land Use Planning Manager WCC	Carly Boag – Heritage Officer WCC
David Fitzgibbon, Urban Release Manager WCC	Sophia McCrea – Engagement Coordinator (Acting) WCC
Juliet Beale – Service Team Leader Local Studies Library WCC	Denese Thornton – Administration Officer WCC
Jeremy Wilshire – Destination Wollongong	

1 WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting at 5:15pm and welcomed all present.

2 APOLOGIES

Rod Logan, David Bottin, Samantha Keats and Sofia Gibson

3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chair provided an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed all Aboriginal people present.

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Nil conflicts were noted.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 8 MAY 2025

The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 8 May 2025 are noted and confirmed.

Moved by Camellia Webb-Gannon and Fiona Reynolds

6 WEST DAPTO RIPARIAN CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

David Fitzgibbon presented an overview of the Riparian Management Strategy for the West Dapto Urban Release Area (WDURA) and encouraged the Members to review the draft document and provide input for consideration prior to Council finalising the strategy.

Discussion occurred around the following:

- Watercourse changes and riparian buffer classifications/categories
- The landscape and environmental conservation value of riparian corridors and how they can be better managed
- Cultural significance of watercourses to the Aboriginal community
- Bespoke guidelines for the WDURA Riparian Corridor Management Strategy

The strategy is currently on public exhibition until 19 June 2025. Members of the Aboriginal Community are being consulted with through this process and Auntie Sheryl David-Fulcher noted that she had provided a detailed submission.

Councillor Martin thanked David for his presentation.

David Fitzgibbon left the meeting at 5:50pm

7 DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2035

Joel gave a brief overview of the Draft Asset Management Plan, noting that the exhibition period for submissions closed on the 4 June 2025.

The membership discussed the draft Asset Plan in relation to the management of Heritage items as assets and raised the following issues and questions:

- Noting there is not a specific list or classification for all the heritage assets within the plan and the difficulties in creating a list of 'heritage assets' owned by Council
- How does Council manage the ongoing maintenance of heritage assets, and is a maintenance budget for heritage assets considered within this plan?
- There are a number of heritage assets that do not fit neatly into the asset categories such as the fortifications at Smiths and Flagstaff Hill and require specific management plans such as Council is preparing for this site.
- The definition and scope of asset categories and what is considered an asset such as significant Aboriginal Sites and places or landscape features should be considered in the management of Council owned land.

Members noted that Heritage assets require a higher level of maintenance to ensure their ongoing conservation than standard Council asset types and may not fit the normal approach of managing assets through depreciation and financial planning for renewal/replacement.

The membership resolved that there is a need for heritage assets to be managed with a focus on conservation, not through depreciation, and that assets with Aboriginal Cultural Values should be acknowledged and managed in this way.

Moved by Meredith Hutton and Aara Welz

8 SMITHS HILL AND FLAGSTAFF HILL FORTS CMP PROJECT

Joel provided an update on the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan for Smiths Hill and Flagstaff Hill Fortifications as per the business paper report.

3D imaging and structural survey findings were discussed.

Joel noted that further consultation with key stakeholders and interest groups is currently being undertaken prior to the finalising the document for broader public consultation

The complexities of the project related to confined spaces legislation and the outcome of the structural integrity assessment of the various components were noted. Advice from Council's arborist recommending the removal of a large Norfolk Island Pine Tree inappropriately planted on top of the underground elements at Smith's Hill was discussed.

Joel welcomed the Members thoughts on the future access opportunities for the site, such as guided tours and interpretive outcomes and what uses may not be appropriate or achievable due to the nature of the structures, community safety and risk of vandalism.

The membership discussed that the activation of heritage items for public use are more highly valued and are better looked after by the community and therefore Council. The activation of the forts would contribute historical value and enhance the experiences of both our community and visitors. The progress of this project was also welcomed by Destination Wollongong who indicated they were interested in progressing these discussions further.

The Draft Conservation Management Plan will be circulated to the Membership for discussion as a formal agenda item in the coming months.

9 WCC CULTURE TEAM UPDATE- MUSEUM ADVISOR QUESTIONS

Joel noted that Sofia was unable to attend the meeting and provide an update and referred Members to the business paper, where Sofia Gibson had provided an interim response to questions raised by the membership at our previous meeting of 8 May 2025.

A further update will be requested to be provided on the Breakwater Battery Museum at the next WHRG meeting.

10 UPDATES FROM MEMBERS/LOCAL HERITAGE INTEREST GROUPS

Steam Locomotive, Bulli Station – The engine has recently been removed to a purpose-built facility at Chullora run by Transport Heritage NSW where it is to be restored and housed. Meredith enquired after the carriages and whether they are also to be removed/restored. Joel advised that he will seek further information on this and provide a further update to Members when available.

Aara Welz (ILALC) gave the following update:

- This is the last week working in her current role with ILAC, however Aara advised that she will be continuing with ILAC in a different capacity, that includes research and assisting with grant funded projects.

Camellia Webb-Cannon gave the following update:

- Research project continuing with the Bellambi community, collecting stories about the area and exploring the indigenous perspective of Caring for Country.

Meredith Hutton / Fiona Reynolds (Illawarra Shoalhaven Branch of the National Trust) provided the following update:

- Mount Kembla Mine Disaster Site – Heritage NSW have responded to the National Trust request for the expansion of the State Heritage Listing to include the Mount Kembla Village and Windy Gully Cemetery. Unfortunately, the advice provided stated that they have been unable to secure the support of the primary landowner to progress at this time.
- Steam Crane at Port Kembla – advice has been received from Ports NSW that they are planning restoration works staged over the next three years. The first stage will be to engage a structural engineer to undertake an assessment. Concerns were raised regarding Ports NSW plans to undertake extensive off-site repairs with no consultation with WCC or Heritage NSW.
- Wollongong Health Precinct and Wollongong Station Masterplan - Fiona advised that the Illawarra /Shoalhaven branch of the National Trust are making formal submissions on both these proposals. Submission close on 11 June 2025.

Aunty Sheryl Davis-Fulcher gave the following update:

- Provided a submission to the West Dapto Riparian Corridor Project.
- Provided a submission to the Flinders Street Precinct planning proposal. Joel thanked Aunty Sheryl for her detailed submission noting the Strategic Planning team were very appreciative of the input provided.

Juliet Beale (Local Studies Library) provided the following update:

- Bellambi Community Stories project was discussed.
- Local History Prize was noted and Members requested further info on this annual Library project to be provided at the next meeting.

Jeremy Wilshire (Destination Wollongong) gave the following update:

- Destination Wollongong are keen to be involved and will follow the outcome of the Smith Hill/Flagstaff Hill Forts CMP and tourism opportunities that arise from this project.

Councillor Morris provided the following update

- Military artillery piece identified in the creek at Corrimal - Army HQ and the Holsworthy Barracks have offered their assistance with the retrieval, restoration and reinstallation at Corrimal.

11 WCC ENGAGEMENT TEAM UPDATE`

Sophie McCrea gave an overview of Council's changing approach for community engagement, moving to place-based engagement. Sophie advised the next "Let's Talk" drop in place-based engagement is planned for Tuesday 24 June 2025 at the Berkeley Neighbourhood Centre. Several Council representatives across the organisation will be attending to provide information and to respond to participants' questions. The theme will be "the Lake".

Sophie also provided a summary of the following recent and upcoming engagement projects:

- West Dapto Riparian Corridor Management Strategy
- The entrance Portico, Helensburgh Cemetery
- Community Strategic Plan
- Mt Kembla Community Visioning
- Lake Illawarra Entrance Options
- Disability Inclusion Plan
- Grand Pacific Walk - Coledale
- Flinders Street Precinct
- Botanic Garden Masterplan

12 HERITAGE STAFF REPORT

Joel Thompson gave the following updates as detailed in the business paper report:

- NSW Heritage Strategy
- Windang Lake Foreshore Projects

13 OTHER MATTERS

Old Bulli Hospital Site:

- Meredith enquired whether information on the original hospital cottage on the site has been documented and requested.
- Carly noted that footings of the cottage had been located during archaeological monitoring however the documentation of this had not yet been provided to Council as part of assessment of the current Development Application (DA-2023/895). Archaeological investigations on the site have also been complicated due to contamination.
- The final Heritage Interpretation outcomes for the site, such as the use of the hospital ward names eg. Syd Atkins, and whether their inclusion had been considered as part of a heritage interpretative plan was raised. Council staff noted this is linked to an active DA assessment and would normally be managed through conditions of consent.

The next WHRG Meeting was noted to be held on the 11 September 2025 at 5:15pm.

Councillor Martin closed the meeting at 7:10pm

ACTION SUMMARY

Item	Action	Who	Status
1	Organise Sub-Committee Meeting – assessment of Heritage Grant applications for 2025-26 program	Heritage Staff	Complete - Grant Assessment Finalised – See Heritage Staff Report for 11 September 2025.
2	Breakwater Battery Museum – Update be prepared for next WHRG meeting	City and Cultural Manager	Item added to Agenda for 11 September 2025.
3	Wooden Carriages, Bulli Station – Provide information on whether the wooden carriages are also to be removed/restored.	Heritage Staff	Enquiry made to Black Diamond Heritage Centre