

<p>Neighbourhood Forum 5</p> <p>Wollongong's Heartland</p> <p><i>Collaborating with Council on community aspirations, visions, needs & concerns.</i></p>		<p>Coniston, Figtree, Gwynneville, Keiraville, Mangerton, Mount Keira, Mount St Thomas, North Wollongong, West Wollongong, Wollongong City.</p>
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**MINUTES of meeting WEDNESDAY 9th July 2025 at 6.30
In the Library Theatre**

- 1 Welcome
- Presentation Felicity Skoberne, Vanni de Luca and Sophie McCrae were thanked for their presentation on the Botanic Gardens Master Plan and responding to questions.
- 3 Apologies were accepted
- 4 Minutes of meeting of 4th June were agreed with no matters arising.
- 5 Comments Noted
- 6 Caveats **Noted**
- 7 Responses
 - 7.1 Building Commissioner Certification**
It was agreed that
 - 1 a meeting be sought with the Building Commissioner be approached about concerns by residents and NSW Councils to private certification issues.
 - 2 Council be requested to urge Local Government NSW to make representations to the Building Commissioner to discuss ways to improve the NSW Building Certification System..
 - 7.2 Beaton Park feasibility study**
It was agreed that Council be:
 - 1 commended for conducting a timely review of its 2018 Beaton Park Master Plan.
 - 2 requested to ensure that the consultancy provides an open, even-handed and transparent review of the needs of all sports using Beaton Park to deliver an outcome that is to the equal benefit of all sporting groups, be they community based or elite.
 - 3 Requested to consider the provision of outdoor basketball courts.

		<p>7.3 Wollongong Harbour Breakwall safety upgrade: It was agreed to write again to Council seeking progress on the resurfacing on the northern breakwater not least because the vandalism of boats continues.</p> <p>7.4-7.9 Responses: Noted</p> <p>7.10 Awaiting responses: Noted</p>
8	Reports	<p>8.1 Freight Policy It was agreed that That the Forum write to Paul Scully MP and Ryan Park MP asking that our concerns with the NSW Freight Policy Reform report and requesting them to approach the NSW Minister for Transport about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 the potential closing of more branch lines (shared with the NSW Farmers Association) and seeking an assurance from any proposed closure of a branch line will be preceded by public consultation, 2 what measures the NSW Government will be taking to 3 improving heavy vehicle safety within NSW; 4 improving the NSW rail infrastructure to increase rail's competitive position re freight; and ensuring that the timing of the work on the dedicated freight route round Sydney is elevated to medium term – say 2 years <p>8.2 Meeting with Lord Mayor: Noted</p> <p>8.3 Delivery Program 2025-29/Operational Plan 2025-26: Noted</p> <p>8.4 Wollongong Botanic Gardens Master Plan: It was noted that this is now on public exhibition to close next month. Members are encouraged to make submissions and send copies to the Secretary so that a formal NF 5 submission can be formulated for the August meeting.</p> <p>8.5 Central Floodplain Risk Management: Noted</p> <p>8.6 Temporary Events: It was agreed that action by the executive be endorsed seeking support from Ward 2 Councillors and the Lord Mayor to ensure that all Temporary Events are subject to public notification and consultation.</p> <p>8.7 Open Streets Program 2025-2028 Grants: Noted</p> <p>8.8 NSW Budget: Noted</p>
9	Planning	<p>9.1 Planning: Noted</p>

		9.2 DA-2025/376	It was agreed to endorse the submission of objection
		9.3 DA determinations:	Noted
10	General Business	10.1 Review of the Code of Meeting Practice	Council have placed this on exhibition until 12 th August. A submission will be prepared for the August meeting and in the meantime Members are encouraged to read it and make their own submission.
		10.2 City Foreshore Plan of Management	A summary of concerns is in attachment 1. It was agreed the executive should make a suitable submission.
		10.3 Electrify Illawarra.	A local community group has the goal of goal is to accelerate the transition to all electric homes and business across the Illawarra to reduce the cost of living and climate emissions. Details and links are in Attachnent 2.
		10.4 DA-2024/476. 264-6 Keira St.	The height of this proposal was queried.
			The Forum objected to this proposal for most of the reasons it objected to the previous application. The Forum is aware that the State Government has changed the rules, nevertheless we continue to object because:
1			it is totally out of scale and character of the street;
2			the site is too narrow for such a large ill proportioned building;
3			its unfortunate shape and height will make it intrusive into and across McCabe Park;
4			it does not comply with requirements for building separation;
5			it does not comply with requirements for setback above street frontage;
6			it does not comply with requirements for maximum floorplate size;
7			it does not comply with requirements for side setbacks;
8			it does not comply with requirements for maximum building depth;
9			it does not comply with requirements for deep planting zone; and
10			quite apart from the unacceptable bulk and height of the building, the cumulative impact of all the non-compliances warrant refusal.
11	Snippets	Noted	

Current active membership of Neighbourhood Forum 5 : 452 households

On 30 June 2025 Council considered a 360-page report following public exhibition on the CF PoM, including a detailed submission by NF5 in Feb re the Stuart Park component. This incorporated concerns frequently raised with Council over the past 10 years in support of representations by many residents, and included:

“NF5 focus is the section re Stuart Park (SP) Crown Reserve 580060, that was gazetted about 140 years ago as a Public Park, in particular Community land east of Squires Way categorised as a Park. But since 1997 SP Oval has been allowed to be used as a primary landing zone for commercial skydiving, even though it contravenes case law, legislation, PoMs and licence conditions, as detailed in this submission. Despite this the draft CF PoM seeks to perpetuate skydiving in SP, and even to enable whatever else Council might decide, now and in future, which needs to be withdrawn.”

Extracts from NF5 submission also included: “since 2010 Council’s rent for landing at SP (Crown Land) and Dalton Park (Council land) has been minimal at about \$8,000 pa. Whereas arguably it could be about \$500,000 pa more if market value was applied in comparison with their St Kilda landing site, (about \$27/jump v SP less than 50 cents/jump). This contravenes recognised commercial good practice and requirements and has resulted in foregone income to Council arguably up to many hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.”

Also: “NF5 submits that the draft PoM must be reworded to recognise the myriad of contraventions, deny continuation of skydiving operations in Sturt Park, and restore the public’s rights of access to SP Oval in our regionally unique and cherished Public Park. As an overall solution, NF5 requests Council to require the skydiving landings be moved to a large area of seldom-used Council land north of Fairy Meadow Surf Club, where landings often occur during winds preclude use of SP.”.

The report’s response did not refer to concerns, raised again by NF5 and in other submissions, re apparent major rent shortcomings during at least the past 20 years (nor “sweetheart deals” as acknowledged by a councillor during debate). The report concluded that “the exhibited PoM permits skydiving in Stuart Park, and this remains in the proposed amended PoM.”

Council adopted a recommendation that the updated draft CF PoM “be referred to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure – Crown Lands as a delegate for the Minister to obtain consent to adopt the amended Plan of Management.”

In summary, there has been considerable public concern particularly since 2014, a documented history of alleged contraventions, but skydivers can continue to land and expand their business on Council’s land at Fairy Meadow, as they have done for the past 20 years. Therefore it is not understood why this Council seems to intend to continue allowing commercial skydivers to land on Stuart Park Oval for private profit, thus denying the public’s right of access to this iconic Crown Land Park, created 140 years ago for the people of NSW to access and enjoy for passive recreation.

The Recommendation from Neighbourhood Forum 5 at our 4 November 2024 meeting item 6.1 Gas Ban Proposal for New Buildings, was that Council be requested to apply the gas ban where possible. We requested the Council amend the Wollongong Development Control Plan to require all new residential and commercial developments in the LGA to be fully electric. This confirmed our 2 September Minute Item 7.4 Gas Ban Proposal for New Buildings: It was agreed that Council be requested to amend its Development Control Plan to require all new residential and commercial developments in the LGA to be fully electric.

In line with these recommendations we are happy to direct any members who wish to seek information on how to electrify their homes to the Electrify Illawarra Website: Electrify Illawarra

Electrify Illawarra is a local community volunteer run group that aims to accelerate the transition to all electric homes and businesses across the Illawarra to reduce the cost of living and climate emissions.

Recommendation:

Any members that wish to sign the petition by July 28 from Electrify Illawarra for: "Wollongong City Council to update its Development Control Plan (DCP) to require that newly built homes in the LGA are all-electric, without gas appliances".

This decision would NOT require any change to existing homes with gas appliances.

Petition to Wollongong City Council Protect Community Health,
Electrify Now!