

## Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve – Draft Masterplan

To: Leonie Hogue & Rhonda Daniels - Australian Plants Society

From: Kate Guthrie – Parks Project Officer

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Subject: August 2012 Public Exhibition – Summary response to APS submission dated 10 July 2012

	APS submission	Council comments
<b>1</b>	<b>1. PATHS</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	<p><b>Keep more paths open to provide access to enjoy and appreciate native plants</b></p> <p>We are disappointed at how many paths throughout the Reserve are proposed to be removed. These paths are not redundant. A variety of paths is important to provide access and provide different viewpoints of the Reserve. Closing so many paths is not consistent with the idea of the Masterplan to improve access to the Reserve. Paths allow access to see plants. A variety of paths provides an incentive to return to the Reserve, rather than making a one-off visit having seen it all. Closing paths and path options reduces the mystery and sense of adventure, particularly important for children exploring the natural environment. Paths are also important for maintenance and help keep areas weed free by increasing access and visibility. We do not understand the value in spending scarce resources to remove existing paths.</p>	<p>There are several locations across the reserve where paths are proposed to be removed for one or more of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paths are generally too steep to be safely used by visitors and staff. In some cases stairs are not a viable option due to maintenance access requirements.</li> <li>• Paths are duplicated or even quadruplicated within close proximity.</li> <li>• Damage from tree roots is a public safety and liability issue.</li> <li>• Paths are too steep to be able to be used by maintenance staff with wheelbarrows full of materials etc.</li> </ul> <p>The general philosophy of the Masterplan is to rationalise and consolidate the number of pathways where there are duplicates in close proximity and concentrate new plantings along these pathways. A hierarchy of paths for different abilities will be established, based on the grade and width of the path.</p> <p>Damage from tree roots is an issue for pathways in some areas. Maintenance of these pathways takes considerable resources which could be better focused on improving and upgrading other areas of the reserve.</p>

	APS submission	Council comments
1.2	<p>Paths may be confusing to some users because there are currently no markings to indicate primary and secondary paths. Existing paths can be kept and marked with simple indicators such as painted dots on the path. We suggest that a hierarchy of paths is considered and displayed in signage.</p>	<p>Wayfinding signage and markers are proposed to be installed across the site as part of the signage package to clearly delineate different path types.</p>
1.3	<p>Paths which should remain open include:</p>	
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paths in the Mixed Proteaceae “Sunny garden” area. This area contains the most floriferous, colourful plants in the Reserve and is a popular part of the Reserve. Paths create small beds which allow plants, particularly smaller shrubs and groundcovers, to be viewed from different angles. The proposed single all-ability loop path creates a very large, deep central garden bed which will be difficult to view and access.</li> </ul>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Some paths can be kept open to create smaller garden beds, including the minor east-west path crossing the all-ability loop. These will not be all-ability accessible paths.</p>
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paths in the Mixed Shade garden area at the bottom of the Reserve</li> </ul>	<p>The lower path will be closed to the public and used for maintenance access only. The second path up from Bates Drive will be closed as this is in close proximity to the third path up the hill and views of the same gardens as this higher path. This path does not provide any more value and it is better to concentrate plantings along a single path in this area. The other two paths at the top of the 4 in a row will remain open as shown on the Masterplan.</p>
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Path and stairs between the Natural area and the Fern garden</li> </ul>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The stairs near the entry off Bates Drive up to the picnic area will remain open.</p>
1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paths in the Rainforest area in the north-east of the Reserve</li> </ul>	<p>The majority of paths will be retained except for the zig-zag path in the far north west of the reserve down to Bates Drive. This path is very steep and the traffic noise from Bates Drive is very loud in this location.</p> <p>The zig-zag path will not lead anywhere as the lower path along Bates Drive will be closed to the public and only used for maintenance access. See 1.9.</p>
1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paths in the Sutherland Group volunteer garden</li> </ul>	<p>See 1.16. Council will request that the consultant review the design and location of the all ability pathway. If it is possible to move the path, some of the existing pathways may be retained.</p>

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1.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Path along the bottom of the Reserve along Bates Drive</li> </ul>	<p>This area offers little value in terms of plant value with the fence on one side. The traffic noise from Bates Drive and the exposure in summer makes this an unpleasant place within the reserve. It is also quite a long loop along Bates Drive back to reach any alternate pathways. The upper path that takes off to the east before the stairs in the existing rainforest area is much more pleasant and has a greater diversity of plants to view.</p> <p>The lower path along Bates Drive will be closed to the public and only used for maintenance access.</p>
1.10	<p>In addition the proposal to remove the path alongside the water feature near the Information kiosk would remove the most direct route between the car park and the new work compound. This will make it more difficult for staff to access the top area with wheelbarrows. This path is steep but could be redesigned.</p>	<p>This path may be the most direct; however the grade is very steep and presents a public safety issue. The maintenance staff onsite prefer to use the path which is less direct and a slightly longer route over this steep section of path.</p> <p>The extension of the information kiosk and addition of a timber decking area would encroach on this existing path. This area once planted will provide a beautiful outlook from the kiosk and decking.</p> <p>Currently this path is quite visible from the information kiosk and visitors tend to use this path instead of the path to the west of the kiosk. This means that some visitors miss the sunny garden area.</p>
1.11	<p><b>Provide new paths to open up access to new areas of the Reserve</b></p> <p>The Masterplan is an opportunity to provide more paths to increase access to currently inaccessible areas and provide new experiences at the Reserve. Some of the new paths could be provided in a different material such as mulch/gravel/timber boards (not a hard surface) to highlight they are secondary paths.</p>	<p>There is currently an oversupply of paths in the reserve, which are difficult to maintain and disturb the sense of visitors being immersed into a bushland environment. The inclusion of additional paths in the reserve is not recommended, as they will disturb existing plantings and increase maintenance costs. Informal gravel pathways could be considered in the future if additional necessary routes are identified.</p>
	<p>Potential new paths include:</p>	
1.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Path from the Silver foliage garden into the centre of the Natural area to view remnant vegetation</li> </ul>	<p>The inclusion of an additional path into this area is not recommended as it would alter the natural appearance of this area, disturb existing plantings and increase maintenance costs.</p>

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1.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Path through remnant vegetation in the Mixed Proteaceae/Sunny garden area, connecting two existing dead-end paths at the southern end of the Reserve</li> </ul>	<p>The path down to the start of the old boardwalk is steep and in poor condition. Regrading the path would cause much disturbance to the surrounding plantings.</p> <p>A path along the southern boundary of the site would not present a new experience for visitors, and it is not feasible due to the steep changes in levels. A path in this location would also fragment the intact 'Sydney Sandstone Remnant' vegetation.</p>
1.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Path or walkway to replace the timber boardwalk around the cliff face below the Sunny garden area, to provide a view of the cliff-face and tree canopy</li> </ul>	<p>A boardwalk is a relatively expensive piece of infrastructure to install. A boardwalk of this length would cost approximately half of the available construction budget (Stage 1). In order to use such a large portion of the budget, we would want to make sure the boardwalk was located in an ideal location. The old boardwalk was in close proximity to the reserve boundary with a less than ideal outlook out over Sylvanvale.</p>
1.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Path and stairs from the Fern garden to the car park area under the cliff-line (already in place but often blocked).</li> </ul>	<p>This route is in close proximity to the high risk escarpment edge, with stairs that are in poor condition. It has been closed by Council for safety reasons.</p> <p>In order to make this area safe, the stairs would have to be rebuilt and handrails installed along the pathway. This is costly and the handrail would be visually intrusive and would detract from the natural character of the reserve. The locations of pathways have been carefully considered to reduce or eliminate the need for handrails.</p>
1.16	<p><b>Redesign the all-ability path to minimise impact on the Sutherland Group volunteer garden</b></p> <p>The all-ability access path should be designed to reduce impact on the Sutherland Group volunteer garden. The new path could leave the new entry area to the east and swing further to the east into a less densely planted area, rather than directly through the Sutherland Group garden. Or the new path could leave the entry area to the west (not the east) and then join the existing east-west paved path in the Sutherland Group volunteer garden (instead of closing this path).</p>	<p>Council will request that the consultant review the design and location of this pathway to reduce the impact on the APS garden.</p> <p>The ideal location for the path to leave the entry area is on the eastern side as this is more visible from the carpark and entry area. The intention is to provide a clearly visible starting point to the loop pathway. The western side of the entry area will be obscured.</p>

	<b>APS submission</b>	<b>Council comments</b>
1.17	<p><b>Fix or replace the steep path in the Rainforest area</b></p> <p>The path from the Warm Rainforest area which provides access down to the Palm garden, the Silver foliage area and the lower areas of the Reserve, is one of the steepest in the Reserve, yet only the very upper portion is proposed to be fixed. Tree roots have disrupted the surface. This path should be fixed. The steep bitumen path could be replaced with a raised metal footpath (as seen in high use areas of National Parks) that would cross back and forth across the creek until it met the path again near the Silver foliage themed area. This would keep the steepness manageable. The path could be identified in the Masterplan as a later stage project, which would assist in applying for funding grants from external agencies.</p>	<p>This path will be repaired as part of the Stage 1 work to repair damage from tree roots. The upper section of the path near the new viewing deck over the pond will be relocated to the east to reduce its steepness.</p> <p>A raised metal path is a very expensive piece of infrastructure to install. A boardwalk from the rainforest area to the silver foliage garden would need to be approx. 115 metres long to move down the 30 lineal metres of existing pathway. A boardwalk of this length would cost more than half of the available construction budget (Stage 1). Grants of this size are very rarely awarded. This boardwalk would bring visitors in close proximity to adjacent residences, and detract from the natural character of the reserve.</p>
2	<p><b>2. ENTRY AREA AND CAR PARK</b></p>	
2.1	<p><b>Redesign the orientation and entry gathering area (and all-ability path) to increase size of area and reduce impact on well-established Sutherland Group volunteer garden</b></p> <p>We support the relocation of the work compound from the entrance and replacement with a new gathering/entry area. However, we are concerned that the shape and size of the area means it will not be useful for events, and also that it will encroach on well-established gardens maintained by APS Sutherland Group. This area, being most visible from the car park, will be the preferred location for events such as the annual Spring Walks day which includes plant sales, information displays and light refreshments. The area should be relocated further south more within the compound footprint to provide a larger space and more useful shape while minimising disruption to the existing garden. As it will be difficult to establish shrubs under the mature tree in the compound without affecting its root zone, this area could be retained as gravel, with seating under the shade of the tree.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Council will request that the consultant review increasing the size of the entry area and moving it to the south to reduce the impact on the APS garden. Currently the entry area encroaches onto the APS garden by approximately 1m. The remainder of the entry area is over the footprint of the existing depot.</p>

	<b>APS submission</b>	<b>Council comments</b>
2.2	<p>The proposed all-ability access path should be designed to reduce impact on the Sutherland Group garden. The path could leave the entry area to the east and swing further to the east into a less densely planted area, rather than directly through the Sutherland Group garden. Or the path could leave the entry area to the west (not the east) and then join the existing east-west paved path in the Sutherland Group garden. There is much potential to redesign the entry area and path to minimise impact on the existing garden.</p>	<p>See 1.16. Council will request that the consultant review the design and location to see if other options are available.</p>
2.3	<p>The entry area would be more usable if a lightweight cover such as shade sails was also provided over part of the area. This would protect groups, such as seniors waiting for their transport, from both sun and rain.</p>	<p>The inclusion of a lightweight, permanent structure was considered in the design stage, however it was considered unnecessary as the existing large tree provides shade to this area. Provision of a shelter to provide effective protection from the rain would require a substantial structure with large posts and a permanent roof. This would cause damage and disruption to the tree roots and could affect the long term health of the tree by reducing the water reaching the roots. The information kiosk currently provides shelter from the rain, and the extension will increase its capacity.</p>
2.4	<p>There is currently water and power available at this site due to the location of the work compound. It is important that this remains available as it is essential for using the space for educational and promotional activities. There is an existing 'bubbler'/ water fountain near the compound – one of only two available on the site. Will it be retained and/or relocated?</p>	<p>Agree. Water and power will be retained in this location. The bubbler will be kept, either in its current location or relocated slightly within the entry area to suit the new design.</p>
2.5	<p>The location of the existing electricity pole relative to the new area is not clear from the draft Masterplan.</p>	<p>The existing power pole is located in the garden bed north of where the all-ability path takes off from the entry area. Entry signage is situated in front of the power pole to decrease its visual prominence.</p>
2.6	<p><b>Relocate stormwater pond away from Sutherland Group established garden area</b> A new stormwater pond is proposed to be located in the garden maintained by APS Sutherland Group volunteers in the vicinity of a large tree and existing garden containing a native bee hive purchased by Sutherland Group. The stormwater pond could be relocated further to the west, over the existing drainage channel, to retain the existing mature tree and established garden.</p>	<p>Agree. Council will request that the consultant review the location of the stormwater pond. There appears there may be a large tree close to the pond that was not on the survey. We are not proposing to remove this tree, so the pond may need to be moved to avoid it. The ideal location of the pond appears to be to the west of the existing stone channel.</p>

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2.7	<p>The proposed stormwater pond, together with the new gathering area and path removal and realignment, means the APS Sutherland Group garden, one of the most densely planted and labelled areas of the Reserve and carefully maintained by volunteers over many years, will be significantly damaged.</p>	<p>See 2.1 and 2.6.</p>
2.8	<p><b>Redesign the car park to increase parking capacity (not reduce it)</b></p> <p>The redesign of the car park appears to reduce the size and capacity of the car park from its current status. The car park should retain at least its current capacity and allow for long vehicles. The car park currently has capacity for at least 12-14 vehicles, while the draft Masterplan shows 10 vehicle spaces and a disabled parking space. There is no provision for coach or minibus parking in the Masterplan. A bus bay could be considered outside the fence in Manooka Place.</p>	<p>The existing carpark allows for either 10 regular spaces and 1 disabled parking space, <u>or</u> 12 regular car spaces, when calculated in accordance with size specified in the Australian Standards for parking and circulation. The Masterplan proposes the same quantity of parking, with 10 regular spaces and 1 disabled parking space, <u>or</u> 12 regular car spaces if the disabled parking is not included. The existing carpark is poorly laid out; hence the Masterplan has decreased the total carpark area whilst maintaining the same capacity. The new layout will provide views into the reserve from the carpark entry.</p> <p>If a bus bay is provided within the carpark, a turning circle or hammerhead is also required at the end of the carpark. The size of the turning circle required for a bus is large and would result in the removal of carparking spaces and / or removal of garden beds.</p> <p>The option of an actual bus bay indented into the nature strip was looked at during the design phase, however this would block pedestrian access which is not permitted.</p> <p>Installing 'Buses only' signage on Manooka Place was also looked at during the design phase, however RMS (former RTA) does not permit 'buses only' signage unless there is an actual bus stop, which in this case there is not.</p> <p>Buses and mini buses can park on the street in Manooka Place in front of the reserve, however this will not be designated bus parking.</p>
2.9	<p>The purpose of the small vegetation island in the car park is not clear, and it is likely to be difficult to maintain it in a healthy condition due to its small size.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The purpose of the small pathway that creates this island is to provide an access pathway from the disabled parking space. This access can be provided through the carpark itself so this pathway can be deleted.</p>

	<b>APS submission</b>	<b>Council comments</b>
2.10	The car park changes are not a high priority and should be deferred to focus on higher priorities.	<p>The upgrade and rationalisation of the carpark is part of the entry upgrade and important in improving the sense of arrival to the reserve.</p> <p>The staging of the different areas will be reviewed once the Masterplan has been finalised, based on the priority and cost of each element.</p>
2.11	<p><b>Provide bicycle parking facilities in the car park</b></p> <p>The car park should include a designated area for parking bicycles and bicycle racks. There is currently no designated bicycle parking area. The Reserve is located close to the new Kirrawee- Sutherland-Menai cross-regional cycleway and is likely to increase in popularity as a cycling destination.</p>	Agree.
3	<b>3. FEATURES AND FACILITIES</b>	
3.1	<p><b>Retain existing water features near Information kiosk and in the Fern garden</b></p> <p>It is disappointing that three and a half of the four existing water features in the Reserve are proposed to be removed/filled in – the feature near the Information kiosk, the feature near the Fern garden, and the lower feature in the Rainforest area. The Masterplan describes the ponds as dilapidated – this is only due to poor maintenance by Council. Council appears able to maintain reticulated water features at the Camellia Gardens. On a steep slope, there are natural water flows, and the water features and ponds are an important feature of Joseph Banks Reserve, particularly for water-dependent plant communities such as ferns and rainforest. They provide an opportunity to show water-dependent plants, and educate the community on the role of water in the landscape, aquatic ecosystems, and the relationship between flora and fauna. If the use of potable water to top up ponds is a concern, the provision of rainwater tanks could be investigated.</p>	<p>Even with all the rain earlier this year and recently, the upper area of this pond, which is not topped up, is currently very dry which shows that it has a small catchment area and receives minimal runoff from natural water flows.</p> <p>Maintenance of water features including repairs to liners and pumps is continuous and expensive. The water features at Joseph Banks Reserve are constantly breaking down and requiring repair. This is expensive and takes considerable resources. The water features at the Camellia Gardens also break down regularly and require repair.</p> <p>Water features greater than 300mm in depth are classified as swimming pools and are required to have a pool fence surrounding or edges of the pond at a 1:8 grade to allow safe exit if a person fell in. A pool fence is obviously not an option in a natural setting and there is not enough room for pond edges of 1:8 grade. This poses a public safety and liability issue for Council.</p> <p>The safety of staff and volunteers working in and around water is also a consideration as there are special precautions required for this.</p> <p>The ponds liners are damaged and cracked, thus the ponds are leaking at a fast rate which requires continuous top up to maintain the water level.</p> <p>The pond liners are in such poor condition that they would be required to be totally removed and rebuilt with a proper liner, much like building a</p>

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		<p>swimming pool. The cost of this work and the disturbance to the adjacent gardens would be very high. Removal and reconstruction of this pond would take considerable resources which could be better focused on improving and upgrading other areas of the reserve.</p> <p>Currently the ponds are topped up with potable water which is dripping into the pond continuously to maintain the water level. In a time where water resources are scarce and reducing water use is of such importance, topping artificial water features up with potable water is against Council's environmental policies and is also the wrong message to be providing to the public. It would be much better to show a natural, shaded gully garden area.</p> <p>Rainwater tanks require a large roof surface to top up the tank during periods of rain. The only roof surface available in the upper area of the reserve is the kiosk which is too small to provide the water required to keep the pond topped up in its current condition.</p> <p>Ferns and rainforest do not require a permanent water body with a concrete liner and pumps, rather they require adequate rainfall, a protected aspect and an overhead shade tree canopy which will protect them from the sun. The existing tree canopy provides good protection. Currently runoff from the pathways above the pond does not drain into the pond areas because of the solid timber edging, however it would be great to adjust the edging to incorporate breaks which will allow more water to enter the area and provide that moist environment that ferns require, without the need for potable water or irrigation.</p> <p>A moist, shaded, ephemeral fern garden could be created with plantings that thrive in the moist conditions periodically after rainfall, and also tolerate the drier times in between. For people to be able to see this change during periods of varied rainfall is valuable in educating visitors.</p> <p>Many gardens throughout the Shire would have a similar situation in their backyard in a moist, rocky, shady corner and it would be great to show visitors what a beautiful garden can be created in a shaded area.</p>
3.2	The water feature near the Information kiosk should be the focal point of the new deck extension off the Information kiosk, and should be fixed, not removed.	This area will be a lovely focal point off the new deck extension, however it will be a shaded, fern gully area rather than a permanent water body.

	<b>APS submission</b>	<b>Council comments</b>
<b>3.3</b>	We support the removal of the small water feature in the Sunny garden area, but it should be replaced with an alternative feature or focal point, perhaps a Banksia garden to commemorate Sir Joseph Banks, or a memorial artwork/sculpture.	Agree. A garden to commemorate the namesake of the reserve is a wonderful idea.
<b>3.4</b>	It is a priority that the water features should be fixed, not removed.	Removal and reconstruction of the ponds would take considerable resources which could be better focused on improving and upgrading other areas of the reserve.
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Relocate picnic tables from the Celebration terrace to keep the area open</b> The proposal to increase the size of the flat terraces is supported. However, the ability for large groups to use the terraces for events will be significantly reduced if picnic tables are positioned on the terraces. Picnic tables should be located in smaller areas, not on a large paved area which should be kept free for other purposes. The existing table could be retained in the existing area to the east of the Celebration terrace. Seating could be provided around the edge of the terrace, similar to now.	Agree. The picnic table on the lower terrace will restrict access for larger groups. Its location will be reviewed.
<b>3.6</b>	The terrace is already the best area for gatherings in the Reserve. The extensive work required to remove the existing pavers, dig out levels and resurface the whole area means this should be deferred to focus on higher priorities in areas more in need of improvement.	The amount of work required for this area is relatively low and inexpensive. This work is currently programmed for Stage 2, however the staging of the different areas will be reviewed once the Masterplan has been finalised.
<b>3.7</b>	<b>Retain picnic areas (tables/BBQs) in existing locations</b> The draft Masterplan proposes to reduce the number of picnic tables and BBQs in the Reserve by removing the ones in the Sunny garden, near the Cycad garden, and at the top of the stairs near the Fern garden, and concentrating tables in one area. Existing picnic areas throughout the Reserve should be maintained and replaced with new tables. Tables in multiple areas allow several different groups to enjoy the Reserve. If all tables are concentrated in one area, it reduces the number of groups who can enjoy the Reserve at the same time.	The timber BBQs are rarely used and will be removed from their current locations and replaced with 2 electric BBQ hotplates at the top of the reserve. The picnic tables and shelters are in a poor state and are in need of replacement. The shelters will be removed as the trees provide adequate shade in these areas. All of the picnic tables can be retained in their current locations, and replaced with new timber picnic tables with cast aluminium frames.

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<b>3.8</b>	<p><b>Relocate the escarpment viewing deck further to the west</b></p> <p>The small viewing deck on top of the escarpment may be better located slightly to the west (about 5- 10 m) of the proposed location. The corridor under the electricity wires will always remain clear for power supply reasons and may provide a better view corridor. It also allows a shorter, straighter access path off the main path.</p>	This location will be reviewed as an option.
<b>3.9</b>	<p>The deck off the Information kiosk is a higher priority than the escarpment deck, as northern water views are already available from several locations in the Reserve.</p>	Agree, however the small viewing deck is less costly than the upgrade to the information kiosk.
<b>3.10</b>	<p><b>Retain bridge over water feature near the Information kiosk</b></p> <p>The wooden bridge provides level access between two major garden areas, and is a feature from which to admire the water feature we would like to see retained. We are concerned about the notation on the Masterplan to “investigate bridge removal and path re-alignment”. The bridge may need repair but should not be removed. We are concerned that many of the interesting features at the Reserve are proposed to be removed, and not replaced with anything of interest.</p>	<p>The bridge is in a poor state and requires replacement. Repair would only be a temporary measure and the bridge would ultimately need to be replaced.</p> <p>Replacement of the bridge can be reviewed as an option, however this would have to be included in stage 1 due to the safety risk and may displace another element within the design to a later stage.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>4. PLANTINGS</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Improve the vegetation communities plan</b></p> <p>The vegetation communities plan (existing and proposed) was not publicly available, but was provided to APS Sutherland Group on request. The map of existing vegetation communities does not show all the important plantings at the Reserve.</p>	Request that APS mark up the Vegetation Communities Plan to add the plantings that are missing or incorrect.
	Existing plantings:	
<b>4.2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The map does not identify the Palm area which currently has an interpretative sign.</li> </ul>	Noted. The plan will be updated to include this.
<b>4.3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing area identified as “Western Australian” does not focus on WA plantings and in fact includes many trees around the water feature which prevent WA species.</li> </ul>	Noted. The plan will be updated to reflect this.

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4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The identification of two separate areas as Flowering and Proteaceae/Myrtaceae in the south of the Reserve is an artificial distinction</li> </ul>	Noted. The plan will be updated to reflect this.
	Proposed vegetation communities:	
4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WA plantings: Many trees would have to be removed from the water feature near the Information kiosk in order to create a sunny environment suitable for WA species. WA species do best on a north-west aspect, not an east aspect as the proposed area is.</li> </ul>	Noted. The plan will be updated with an adjusted boundary further to the south.
4.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The warm rainforest in the north-west of the Reserve is not marked on the proposed map. Does this mean it is intended to remove all rainforest trees in this area and replant with indigenous species?</li> </ul>	<p>The Proposed Vegetation Communities plan reflects a long term vision for the site.</p> <p>The existing plantings, including trees, will not be removed, however the plan recommends that no new rainforest species be planted in this area which is north facing and an unsuitable and unnatural location for a rainforest. New plantings over time will be from the Sydney Sandstone Ridgetop Woodland and Sydney Sandstone Gully Forest associations.</p>
4.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why is the cool rainforest (near the Fern garden) shaded in different colours on the existing and proposed maps?</li> </ul>	This will be amended to only show Rainforest.
4.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed area identified for cycads does not include the current cycad garden. Is it intended to relocate all the existing cycads from their current location?</li> </ul>	It is not proposed to relocate any Cycads. From discussions with site staff Cycads are in poor condition in their current location, and needed replacing. Future Cycad plantings are to occur in the proposed new location, which is better suited to these species.
4.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The edible plants area would be better named as “Useful plants” to allow a wide range of plants to reflect indigenous use of plants.</li> </ul>	Agree.
4.10	<p>The proposed vegetation plan does not identify a memorial garden for the Reserve’s namesake Sir Joseph Banks. This could take several forms such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plantings of species Banks collected at Botany Bay in 1770, or</li> <li>plantings of Banksia genus species, or</li> <li>plantings of species named after Banks.</li> </ul>	Agree. This is a good idea which we will investigate further.

	<b>APS submission</b>	<b>Council comments</b>
4.11	<p><b>Maintain diversity of existing plantings in new plantings</b></p> <p>Currently one-third of the over 550 labelled plant species in the Reserve are from the Sydney region while two-thirds are from other areas in Australia (the list of plants is available at <a href="http://sutherland.austplants.com.au">http://sutherland.austplants.com.au</a> ). This allows the community to see a wide range of native plants which can grow well in Sutherland Shire conditions. We hope the diversity of existing plantings is maintained in new plantings. While local indigenous plants can be easily sourced from the Council Nursery, this will not ensure new plantings represent the diversity of Australian native plants such as new hybrids available for Grevillea species.</p>	<p>The Sydney Sandstone Remnant areas would mostly showcase the indigenous species, while the other areas would contain species from other locations around Australia.</p>
4.12	<p><b>Protect plants during construction and monitor to minimise damage</b></p> <p>We are concerned about the very high risk of damage to established trees and plants in the Reserve during the construction phase, particularly as most of the construction work will occur in the most densely planted and well-established parts of the Reserve.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Detailed construction drawings will be prepared which will show how the existing vegetation, including tree, will be retained and protected during construction. Council's project manager will also be on site during construction to ensure that the areas identified to be protected are not damaged.</p>
4.13	<p>The changes in surface levels required to implement the all-ability path are also a high risk to both established and new plantings, as new paths will be sunken below the level of the surrounding garden beds or raised above the garden beds with sloping slides. It may be difficult to re-establish plants in these disturbed areas alongside the all-ability path as natural water flows and soil levels will be disrupted.</p>	<p>In most instances the all ability path does not differ from existing surface grades significantly, around 300-400mm. A gently sloped batter will be implemented along the edge of the new path to meet existing surface levels. Where significant vegetation is located directly adjacent to path, a low wall can be considered along the path edge to minimise encroachment. Natural surface water flows will be maintained through installation of subsurface pipes/culverts below the path if necessary.</p>
5	<b>5. OTHER ISSUES</b>	
5.1	<p><b>Upgrade information displays including in the Information kiosk</b></p> <p>The existing information display facilities in the Information Kiosk should be updated. The existing display cabinets are old, outdated, dirty and difficult to access safely. The draft Masterplan refers to an extension of the roof and viewing deck at the kiosk but there are no other details.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The upgrade of the display cabinets or an alternative display method will be reviewed.</p>

	<b>APS submission</b>	<b>Council comments</b>
5.2	<p>The proposed location for an information sign in the entry gathering area seems remote from the car park. The main information and map should be located closer to the entrance of the orientation/gathering area, so it is more visible.</p>	<p>The information sign has been located in the main entry area where people will gather and congregate to orientate themselves within the park. The design of the orientation area has been carefully considered to guide people in from the carpark as a first stop before taking off on a walk around the gardens. The signage will be clearly visible from the carpark.</p>
5.3	<p><b>Retain access to water and electricity at the new welcome/entry area</b></p> <p>There is currently water and power available at this site due to the location of the work compound. It is important that this remains available as it is essential for using the space for educational and promotional activities. There is an existing 'bubbler'/ water fountain near the compound – one of only two available on the site. Will it be retained and/or relocated?</p>	<p>Agree. Refer 2.4.</p>
5.4	<p><b>Provide storage for plant name labels in new work compound (or alternative site)</b></p> <p>Currently unused metallic plant name labels, which are maintained and managed by APS Sutherland Group, are stored on a special table and rack in the existing work compound. A new site for storing labels is required, either in the new Work Compound or preferably at the top of the Reserve, perhaps in the Information kiosk.</p>	<p>Agree. Storage for the plant labels will be provided. One option is within the storage area between the toilets.</p>
5.5	<p><b>Provide email and internet access for staff in the new work compound</b></p> <p>It is important that Council staff at the Reserve have access to email and the internet for efficient work practices and to get information about native plants. This is particularly important if staff without a knowledge base in native plants are allocated to the Reserve. The new work compound should include an internet connection to provide access to the internet for staff.</p>	<p>There is already internet access available for staff use around the corner at Council's depot at Kirrawee, so we won't be provisioning the infrastructure at the Reserve at this stage, however we'll review and reconsider the staff internet access matter as the Masterplan rolls out in the next year or two.</p>

<b>6</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	<p><b>Identify priorities and stages of work including planting design detail</b></p> <p>The draft Masterplan flyer refers to Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 of works. However these are not identified on the draft Masterplan. The final Masterplan should identify which proposals are for Stage 1 and which are for later stages. Our priorities for Stage 1 are:</p>	<p>An indicative staging has been established based on preliminary costings. This staging was sent to APS.</p> <p>The final staging of the different areas will be reviewed once the Masterplan has been finalised, based on the priority and cost of each element.</p>
<b>6.2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relocate the compound and build the new entry/gathering area (redesigned as suggested)</li> </ul>	Agree. This is currently included in Stage 1.
<b>6.3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build the all-ability loop in the north of the Reserve (redesigned as suggested), but consider deferring the loop in the Sunny garden area in the south to a later stage</li> </ul>	Agree that the all-ability loop in the north of the reserve is Stage 1 priority. Deferring the southern loop to a later stage will be reviewed once the Masterplan has been finalised.
<b>6.4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build the deck off the Information kiosk</li> </ul>	This work is currently in stage 3. Bringing this work forward to Stage 1 will be considered once the Masterplan has been finalised, however this would mean that another element currently shown in Stage 1 would have to be displaced to a later stage.
<b>6.5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create the pedestrian entry off Bates Drive – this only requires replacing the existing vehicle gate in the fence with a pedestrian gate. The proposed stairs are not required for access as there is an existing path from the fence.</li> </ul>	Agree. This is currently included in Stage 1.
<b>6.6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rejuvenate areas with new plantings</li> </ul>	Agree. This is currently included in Stage 1, however this will be an ongoing activity.
<b>6.7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update picnic tables and seating throughout the Reserve</li> </ul>	Agree. This is currently included in Stage 1.
<b>6.8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update information and interpretative signage.</li> </ul>	Agree. Information and wayfinding signage is currently included in Stage 1. Interpretive signage is currently in Stage 3, however this will be reviewed once the Masterplan has been finalised.
<b>6.9</b>	<p>Removing existing paths and reducing the size of the car park is not necessary.</p>	<p>Paths which are currently in poor condition and pose a public safety risk are required to be replaced / significantly repaired or removed in stage 1.</p> <p>The upgrade and rationalisation of the carpark is part of the entry upgrade and important in improving the sense of arrival to the reserve.</p>

<p><b>6.10</b></p>	<p>The Masterplan should identify future improvements and projects which are not currently funded. There are few new features or focal points proposed to increase the attractions at the Reserve. It is easier for both Council and the Australian Plants Society to seek funding from external sources for projects which have already been identified in a strategic plan.</p>	<p>Council's current funding allocation barely covers the stage 1 works as shown on the Masterplan. There is currently no funding available for the future stages.</p> <p>Agree - The purpose of preparing a Masterplan, in addition to setting a long term goals and framework for the site, is to be used as a tool to seek further funding, whether from Council or via government grants.</p>
<p><b>6.11</b></p>	<p>The Key Objectives note an 'improved planting design focussed on defined plant community areas' but these are not explained publicly in the one page Masterplan. Even with the vegetation communities map, it is not clear how much new planting will be implemented in tandem with the landscaping work, and what proportion of the budget is allocated to plants. The vegetation communities map was not publicly available, but our comments on plantings are made above. Australian plants should be the focus of Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve.</p>	<p>A Masterplan is designed to be an overall bigger vision planning document. The detail of which plants will be planted and where does not occur until later stages. The next stage of the process, after the Masterplan is finalised and endorsed, is to prepare detailed drawings which will resolve all of the details of materials, planting and how the work will be constructed.</p> <p>The reserve is a native plants garden, thus all plantings will be Australian plants. This will not change.</p>
<p><b>6.12</b></p>	<p><b>Keep the Reserve open to the public during construction</b></p> <p>We believe it is important to keep the Reserve open to the public throughout the construction phase, even if some areas of the Reserve are not accessible at some times for safety issues. Closing the Reserve will disrupt ongoing efforts by Council and APS Sutherland Group to increase promotion and awareness of the Reserve.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The reserve will be kept open for the duration of construction, with some areas closed to accommodate the work.</p>