

# Media Release

13 May 2022

## **Cockburn Council to consider further studies before final decision on trails for Manning Park**

Cockburn Council has deferred any decision on trails in Manning Park until it can consider the costs and timing of detailed environmental evaluations and heritage assessments of the upland area of the highly valued 117ha regional park.

The decision was handed down at the 12 May Ordinary Council Meeting which, in a rare occurrence for the City of Cockburn, adjourned at 10pm under standing orders before all items on the Agenda could be considered. The meeting will reconvene on Tuesday 17 May to allow Elected Members to address outstanding Agenda items.

The Council decision to defer any progress on trails at Manning Park pending further studies followed passionate deputations from a variety of Manning Park users, including environmental, mountain bike and running groups, and residents.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Elected Members up to 30 minutes to debate and consider a City officer recommendation to ban mountain bike trails at the park to protect its significant environmental values, along with alternative recommendations proposed by Councillors.

The Council chose to defer any trails decision until it can consider the costs and timings of biodiversity and environmental evaluations, Aboriginal and European heritage assessments, the creation of a detailed management plan for the upland park area, and a structured process for trails development using the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' eight-stage planning process for trails development.

These costs and timings will be presented to the City's Expenditure Review Committee for consideration by this September at the latest, when the Council will again consider the matter.

If a management plan for the park is completed as a result of a future Council decision, the City will form a Community Advisory Group to guide and inform the plan and Manning Park's future management.



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City of Cockburn Mayor Logan Howlett said the City acknowledged decisions around mountain bike trails at Manning Park were contentious.

“We acknowledge the strong community feeling from advocates wanting to protect the park’s unique environmental and heritage values and the growing number of mountain bike enthusiasts looking for places to recreate in the metropolitan area, a use long endorsed by State Government-led planning for the parks and recreation reserve.

He said the Council had listened to the community’s views on how Manning Park should be used and managed via a variety of consultations and plans over a number of years.

“Thursday night’s meeting was another step in this important process,” Mayor Howlett said.

“Manning Park is a Bush Forever site, is part of Beeliar Regional Park, contains threatened ecological flora and fauna communities, has significant heritage features and history, and is highly valued for conservation and myriad recreation purposes by locals and visitors alike.

“On Thursday, Council listened to the community and then debated the merits of the wide variety of uses and users of this unique park, which the State Government has entrusted to us to manage on its behalf.

“Elected Members now await completion of the Expenditure Review Committee report by September at the latest, so we can again consider this matter which is so important to the whole community.”

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