



Scouts
ACT

CAMP COTTERMOUTH

MASTER PLAN

2019



INTRODUCTION

Need for a Plan

Since the major works undertaken to reinstate Camp Cottermouth's functionality following the 2003 ACT bushfires, there have been ongoing developments at the camp and many improvements have been undertaken in recent times.

The ACT Branch Executive Committee (BEC) needs to ensure that the camp continues to provide maximum flexibility and functionality for existing activities while minimising constraints on future new developments.

The master plan establishes the framework for guiding future development of the camp. It does not establish priorities for future projects.

Background

The camp was first established by NSW Scout Association (via the region then encompassing the ACT) in the 1930s. The focus has always been on providing a venue for camping and a range of outdoor activities. The present camp layout and functionality is, to a significant extent, the result of work undertaken to recover from the 2003 ACT bushfires.

The main new features, provided since the bushfires, have been the construction of the Shakespeare Centre (including cabin accommodation) and the development of activity infrastructure on the original camp site. Improvements have continued to be made since that time.

Scouts ACT currently has a 25 year lease (from 2005) issued on a concessional basis. Scouts ACT was not required to pay for the lease and has no ownership of improvements should the lease be terminated or not renewed. The lease includes a land management agreement for responsible use of the area.

The physical Layout

The camp comprises around 24 hectares on the Cotter Road divided into two parcels separated by a common access road from the Cotter Road shared with the Uniting Church's Greenhills Conference Centre. The camp facilities are:

- The Shakespeare Centre (including cabin accommodation)
- Camping sites
- Parking
- Ablutions blocks
- First aid room
- Training rooms
- Performance stage
- Parade Ground
- Cook-out facilities
- The camp maintenance facility
- A climbing, abseiling and flying fox tower
- An archery field
- The managers' residence
- Activity storage containers
- Permanent shade shelters

Management

Management of the camp is overseen by a committee appointed by the BEC. The Camp Cottermouth Committee (the committee) has terms of reference and is subject to applicable Branch policies as well as any BEC directives.

The committee is required to ensure that services provided are of a high standard; that an acceptable financial return is achieved while recognising the special relationship with scouting; that the camp's infrastructure is maintained so that facilities are safe for users and staff; and that asset value is maintained. The committee is also responsible for providing direction on siting and infrastructure for new facilities.

THE MASTER PLAN

Vision for the Camp

The vision for the camp is that it continues to provide a safe and accessible environment for outdoor and adventurous activities for ACT scouts and guides while also supporting ACT Branch operations through its cabin accommodation and Shakespeare Centre facility.

By providing access to a range of outdoor activities, the camp must be one means by which Scouts ACT promotes and encourages the development of young people to achieve their full potential as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their communities.

The camp must continue to be an attractive and viable accommodation option for the wider community, in particular school groups visiting Canberra.

Master Plan Principles

The master plan is based on the following principles:

1. The camp continues to provide a safe yet challenging outdoor environment for scouts and guides;
2. The camp's accommodation facility continues to provide financial support for the Branch's operations;
3. The value of the camp's assets is maintained and facilities are rendered safe for use by staff, scouts and the wider community;
4. Provision is made for future possible expansion of the camp's 'core' features; these being the camping sites, the Accommodation, Training and Conference Facilities including the Shakespeare Centre, the activities areas and associated roads and parking;
5. There is safe and convenient foot and vehicle access around and between camp facilities;
6. The introduction of new facilities and the expansion of existing facilities are provided in a form and appearance which is in harmony with the camp's natural and built environment;
7. Preservation, to the maximum extent possible, of the natural environment is critical;
8. The functional relationship between facilities is an important consideration; and
9. All new facilities are approved by BEC taking into account the advice and views of the committee.

Precincts and Functional Relationships

The camp's facilities combine to form six precincts as depicted in the diagram on the following page:

- Camping Precinct
- Accommodation, Training and Conference Precinct
- Activity Areas Precinct
- Service Areas Precinct
- Parking Precinct
- Woodland Precinct including conservation areas

The camping site is a key camp facility and integral to its effective operation is the need for it to be closely located with the main ablutions facility and such associated facilities as the first aid room, the performance stage and the cookout facility.

Another important facility is the Shakespeare Centre which groups cabin accommodation with the kitchen, dining and laundry facilities. Most training rooms are close to the Shakespeare Centre and thus can utilise its toilets and other facilities.

The climbing, abseiling and flying fox tower and archery field have been established since the 2003 bushfires and are co-located and near the managers' residence. This provides some separation between the main activities area and the camping site and the accommodation and conference site. There are a number of other activity areas distributed across the site. These are currently used for temporary activities during events at the camp. Sufficient areas are available for future development of permanent activity facilities whilst still allowing for event activities.

The managers' residence was, pre-bushfires, close to the then existing bunk house accommodation. Its isolation from the post-bush fires Shakespeare Centre is, thus, an accident of history.

The camp's maintenance shed is centrally located with easy access to all areas.

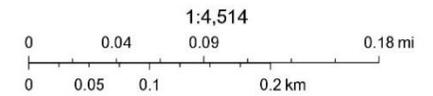
There are a number of woodland areas in the camp. Some of these are available for use as activity spaces. Others are in locations where landform makes them less suitable (or in some cases unsuitable) for active use, mainly because of the slope of the land. These are maintained as areas of remnant woodland. Scouting has made extensive efforts since the 2003 bushfires to rehabilitate some areas of red gum yellow box grassy woodland.

Attachment A shows the precincts overlaid onto aerial photography to show the camp in its immediate geographic context.

CAMP COTTERMOUTH PRECINCTS



May 16, 2019



Esri, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

Consultation

In 2017 the scout and guide community was invited to suggest activities and issues to be taken into account in the master plan. The aim of this consultation was not to suggest future project priorities but to ensure the adequate definition of precincts.

Some 47 suggestions were received covering new activities, enhancements to existing facilities and issues of general amenity. As well, over time a number of additional facilities for and improvements to the camp had been identified and these have also been taken into account.

Attachment B provides a summary of suggestions made and issues identified. These can be broadly categorised as follows:

- General Amenity;
- Roads Maintenance;
- New Facilities;
- Enhanced Facilities; and
- Environment Items.

The majority of suggestions made during the consultation can be accommodated within the existing precincts subject to funding priorities set and approvals given by BEC in the normal way. An exception is the suggestion for a large flat area suitable for sports-type activity. The leased area does not provide sufficient space for such an activity.

The primary impact of consultation suggestions is the need to ensure that sufficient capacity exists within specific precincts to cope with new/expanded facilities. The suggestions with these potential precinct implications are:

- Replacement of the main ablutions block
- Extension of the Shakespeare Centre
- Additional parking
- Establishment of a purpose built training centre
- Road upgrades/extensions
- Introduction of marked navigation courses
- Establishment of a “low ropes” course
- Establishment of a water slide
- Conservation/Environment Education and Projects

Ablutions Block

Replacing the existing ablutions block would not affect the existing precinct structure since it would need to be in the camping site precinct and sufficient space exists. Sufficient additional space in the camping precinct needs to be preserved should it be necessary to duplicate the ‘worm farm’ sewerage system.

The Shakespeare Centre

While there are no current plans to either extend the Shakespeare Centre or add additional cabins, sufficient space in the accommodation, training and conference precinct needs to be preserved to allow for such expansion.

Parking

In addition to onsite parking, overflow parking to date has been addressed by using Greenhills land with the agreement of Greenhills' management. The master plan makes provision for this additional parking to be on site by expanding the parking precinct, should the Greenhills' arrangement no longer be possible.

Training Centre

Whilst there is a user requirements brief for a major new training centre, there are currently no funded plans. Space near the existing training rooms needs to be provided in the accommodation, training and conference precinct for interim training facilities and longer term possibilities. Sufficient space in this precinct exists for a major new training centre.

Roads and Parking

The current roads within the camp provide access to all areas which require it. In addition most other areas of the camp can be accessed when necessary by AWD vehicle. The condition of the roads is variable, with the majority being gravel. The previously mentioned expansion of the area set aside for event parking means that if this new area west of the entrance road comes to require regular use then a formed road may be needed as its entry.

Marked Navigation Courses, Low Ropes Course and Water Slide

There are some proposed navigation courses available, as well as flora / fauna guides. They fit into the precinct structure and would utilise the Activity and Woodland precincts. Work would be needed to formalise and distribute them, and develop further courses. Similarly a future low ropes course and water slide could be located in areas identified in this master plan as areas in the Activity precinct.

Conservation/Environment Education and Projects

There are sufficient buildings in the Accommodation, Training and Conference precincts to allow for environmental education activities. For example, the classroom adjacent to the residence has previously been designated as a Scouts of the World base, and it is still available for such use. There are sufficient spaces in the Woodland and Activity precincts to accommodate environment activities. Past and future conservation and rehabilitation activities also fall into these precincts.

CONCLUSIONS

The present layout of the camp follows the planning principles, in particular with facilities established having regard to the need for separation and functional relationships.

Potential new and expanded facilities identified during consultation require only marginal changes to the camp's existing precincts, mainly by ensuring that precinct boundaries allow for some expansion. The precincts depicted in the previous diagram and at *Attachment A* allow for this and are therefore confirmed.

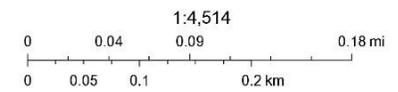
The consultation resulted in a plethora of sound suggestions and ensured that potential uses for the camp were not overlooked. Some suggestions would represent major projects with substantial financial implications. There will be a continuing need for balance in setting funding priorities with an emphasis on promoting scouting activities, maintaining safety and amenity and ensuring the continued commercial viability of the camp.

**Adopted by
Scouts ACT
Branch Executive Committee
July 2019**

MASTER PLAN PRECINCTS



May 16, 2019



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Summary of Items Previously Identified And Consultation Suggestions

Items Previously Identified

Significant items previously identified in addition to those suggested during consultation include:

- refurbished road surfacing (general amenity);
- additional cabins (new facilities);
- additional parking (new facilities); and
- upgraded Shakespeare Centre and Training Facilities (enhanced existing facilities).

A number of the 47 items suggested during consultation had previously been identified by the committee and are denoted (*). Some have been addressed in whole or part and are denoted (#).

Consultation Suggestions

General Amenity

Fifteen general amenity items:

- Levelling of camp sites (*)
- Upgraded phone access
- Better WiFi (#)
- Additional camp shelters
- Improved 3G/4G mobile phone coverage (#)
- Benches/shade near climbing tower (*)
- Permanent radio antenna near radio shack (#)
- Underground power to radio shack (*) (#)
- Reinstate some formal patrol campsites
- Permanent walls on shade shelters (*) (#)
- Camp map and direction signs at Camp entrance (*)
- Storage for archery range
- More storage for adventurous activities
- Shelter at archery shooting stand (*)
- Internet across site

New Facilities

Eighteen New Facilities items:

- Bunkhouse style accommodation
- Permanent HQ building for events (#)
- Additional designated fire places
- Enclosed alpine-style camping room
- Marked navigation courses (including on other side of river)
- Large flat area for sports-type activities
- Play space/equipment for younger members

- High-end commando course
- Permanent fire circle (#)
- Reflection area (multiple mentions)
- Improved ablution facilities for transgender people
- Extra cookout
- Formal training centre (long term) (*)
- Additional training room (short term) (*)
- Completion of senior flying fox (*)
- Water slide (*)
- Low ropes course (*)
- Stage improvements (*) (#)

Enhanced Existing Facilities

Six Enhanced Existing Facilities items:

- Ablutions improvements (*)
- Improved track access to river and scout rock
- Improvements to Activity Centre cookout
- Restoring recognition of Jim Anderson and Ross Hohnen
- Widen archery course

Environment Items

Five Environment items:

- Environment education activities
- Sensory trail for younger members
- Remediation of eroded areas
- Bird nest boxes
- Storage for environment program resources

Miscellaneous

Three 'Miscellaneous' items:

- Online booking system for camping
- Periodic maintenance of climbing tower
- Formal agreement with Greenhills re use of climbing tower (*) (#)