
**SCENIC HILL USER GROUP
TO BE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GRIFFITH ON
MONDAY, 6 MAY 2024 AT 5:30 PM**

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Confirmation of Minutes
- 3 Business Arising
- 4 Declarations of Interest
- 5 Items of Business
 - CL01 p5 Committee Membership
 - CL02 p6 Committee "Wish Lists"
 - CL03 p14 rPPP Grant
 - CL04 p15 Review of the Community Strategic Plan
- 6 General Business
- 7 Next Meeting

DISTRIBUTION LIST

Councillor Jenny Ellis (Chair), Councillor Christine Stead, Leanne McKinnon (Community Representative), Ronald Anson (Community Representative), Matthew Hockings (Community Representative), Sharon Careri (Community Representative), Helen Vowles (Community Representative), David Heffer (Community Representative), Denis Couch (Community Representative), Matthew Pasin (Community Representative), Sally Bamblett (Community Representative), Julie Groat (Community Representative)

Director Sustainable Development, Bruce Gibbs; Corporate Property Officer, Amanda Vardanega and Minute Secretary, Joanne Bollen

Quorum = 3

If you are unable to attend this meeting please notify the Minute Secretary prior to commencement of the meeting by email or by telephoning Council on 1300 176 077.

This Committee meeting may be attended remotely and recorded by audio or audio-visual means for administrative purposes. No other recording is permitted.

Acknowledgement of Country

Griffith City Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters, and their deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community.

Council further pays respect to the local Wiradjuri Elders, past, present and those emerging, for whom we acknowledge have responsibilities for the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of the local Wiradjuri people.

**SCENIC HILL USER GROUP
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GRIFFITH ON
MONDAY, 4 MARCH 2024 COMMENCING AT 5:30 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Jenny Ellis (Chair), Ronald Anson (Community Representative), Matthew Hockings (Community Representative), Helen Vowles (Community Representative), David Heffer (Community Representative), Denis Couch (Community Representative), Matthew Pasin (Community Representative), Sally Bamblett (ZOOM) (Community Representative), Karen Patten (Community Representative), Deb Longhurst (Community Representative), Desma Newman (GLALC Representative)

Quorum = 3

STAFF

Director Sustainable Development, Bruce Gibbs, Director Infrastructure & Operations, Phil King, Tourism Manager, Mirella Guidolin, Visitor Information Centre Coordinator, Vicki McRae, Minute Taker, Joanne Bollen

1 APOLOGIES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Ronald Anson and Rodney Savage that apologies be received from Sharon Careri (Community Representative), Julie Groat (Community Representative) and Corporate Property Officer & Native Title Coordinator, Amanda Vardanega.

Absent: Councillor Christine Stead.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RECOMMENDED on the motion of Ronald Anson and Denis Couch that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 February 2024, having first been circulated amongst all members, be confirmed.

3 BUSINESS ARISING

Nil.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pecuniary Interests

There were no pecuniary interests declared.

Significant Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no significant non-pecuniary interests declared.

Less Than Significant Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no significant non-pecuniary interests declared.

5 ITEMS OF BUSINESS

CL01 DESMA NEWMAN - GRIFFITH LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL

Desma Newman addressed the Committee and advised what the Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council (GLALC) has been working on and what plans it has for Scenic Hill.

Ms Newman informed the Committee that GLALC currently has 8 or 9 land claims over Scenic Hill.

Ms Newman read the following definition of a Land Claim to the Committee:

“The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (ALRA)* was introduced to compensate Aboriginal people in NSW for dispossession of their land.

The *ALRA* enables Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCS) to claim Crown Land, that is, land in NSW that is owned and managed by the State Government. LALCs can have land transferred to them in freehold title if at the time of the claim the land is, among other requirements:

- Able to be lawfully sold or leased
- Not lawfully used or occupied
- Not needed nor likely to be needed as residential lands
- Not needed nor likely to be needed for an essential public purpose including nature conservation
- Not impacted by native title (registration application or determination).

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has no role or power to determine Aboriginal Land claims in NSW. The role of determining land claims resides with the Minister administering the Crown Lands Management Act 2016, currently the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, and for claims made in the Greater Sydney region the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

Successful claims result in the transfer of land in freehold title to the claimant LALC.

LALCs can develop and/or sell land based on the decision of their members and with the approval of NSWALC. However, land acquired under the NSW land claims process after 1994 is subject to Native Title and the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993*.

LALC land acquired under the land claims process is held in freehold title and is subject to all prevailing planning, environmental management, and cultural heritage legislation.”

Ms Newman advised that the GLALC’s aims for Scenic Hill include:

- Preserving land for cultural heritage
- Indigenous tourism
- Cultural gathering place
- Yarning circle.

Any works that the GLALC would intend on undertaking would have to be funded by grants.

The Committee agreed to invite CEO of the GLALC to the next meeting of the Scenic Hill User Group so he can provide some further information.

CL02 UPDATE ON CURRENT LEVELS OF SERVICE / RESOURCING ON SCENIC HILL.

Director Infrastructure & Operations, Phil King addressed the Committee regarding resourcing for Scenic Hill. He advised that there is a budget allocation of \$6,000 per year which equates to roughly 2 hours per week.

Members of the community subject to Corrections Order also help clean up Scenic Hill as part of their community service.

CL03 UPDATE ON VISITOR FEEDBACK.

Tourism Manager, Mirella Guidolin spoke to the Committee about feedback they get from visitors to Griffith about Hermit's Cave and the lookout.

She advised the Committee that Scenic Hill, the Scenic Lookout and Hermits Cave are one of Griffith's main tourist attractions and the state of it lets Griffith down.

Ms Guidolin advised that due to the overgrown flora, rubbish, vandalism and lack of signage that the majority of feedback they are receiving is negative.

Ms Guidolin noted that accessibility is also an issue.

6 GENERAL BUSINESS

6.1 Hazard Reduction Burning

Helen Vowles enquired about hazard reduction burns on Scenic Hill. Mr King advised that Council puts in an application to the Rural Fire Service to engage them for hazard reduction burning.

SMT Comment:

RFS advised hazard reduction burns to take place the first week of April on some parts of Scenic Hill.

6.2 "Wish List" from Committee Members

Councillor Ellis asked Committee members to come up with a "wish list" of works and ideas that they wish to be involved in. The Committee will review them at the next meeting.

7 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Scenic Hill User Group is to be held on Monday, 6 May 2024 at 5:30pm.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 6:50pm.

CLAUSE **CL01**

TITLE **Committee Membership**

FROM **Jenny Ellis, Councillor**

TRIM REF **24/49660**

SUMMARY

The Scenic Hill User Group held its first meeting on 5 February 2024.

The Scenic Hill User Group was established for the purpose of raising issues and sharing information.

The Committee would like to invite Desma Newman to join the Committee as a voting member.

RECOMMENDATION

The Scenic Hill User Group recommend Desma Newman become a voting member of the Committee.

REPORT

As per Summary above.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This item links to Council's Strategic Plan item 4.6 Promote reconciliation and embrace our Wiradjuri heritage and culture.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

CLAUSE **CL02**

TITLE **Committee "Wish Lists"**

TRIM REF **24/49550**

Committee "Wish Lists"

Committee members are able to present the "Wish List" for Scenic Hill.

Some suggestions include:

- Walking track upgrade and signage;
- Erosion control;
- War on weeds;
- Rubbish removal;
- Establish connections with local groups including GLALC, NPWS, CSU Local Land Service, Landcare and Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists regarding Scenic Hill, to determine what surveys or research have been done, projects in place, planned projects, group activities undertaken and funding available;
- Organise and advertise community clean-ups including digging out prickly pear, weeding, litter removal;
- Guidance to source funding for committee projects;
- Establish Griffith shire as a cat containment area. Staged implementation beginning with suburbs abutting Scenic Hill;
- Designate Scenic Hill a greybox woodland and wildlife sanctuary with a commitment to conserve local flora and fauna;
- Install fox and cat proof fencing around Scenic Hill reserve;
- Gated fire trails;
- A register for recording committee member requests/suggestions and what Council's response and actions are;
- Viewing platform off the lookout with all access ramp. I have travelled up to Mt Buffalo in Victoria and seen what they have made. It's awesome. See photos attached. I know a grant has been attempted before but I feel we need to keep trying;
- Cultural Wiradjuri trail walk. I know we speak about the history of the hermit, however, this happened 5 minutes ago compared to the history of the indigenous Wiradjuri people that occupied the land for thousands of years. How great would it be to have a trail walk with signage, showcasing the history of the Wiradjuri in the area. Maybe pointing out historical significant areas of importance. Great for tourism but also on educating the locals;
- Trail restoration for mountain bikers, joggers and walkers. To be able to have accessible trails all over scenic hill would be fantastic for all age groups to use.

Signposted and available online. Could work in conjunction with point above. Would need to keep motorbike riders off them somehow as they would destroy them;

- Improvement of the Snap Send Solve app (or something similar). I think it would be a great tool to have something that gives the community quick and easy contact with council for dumped rubbish, overgrown vegetation, vandalism etc. This gives council a quick opportunity to act;
- Back burning of overgrown grasses each year. Rejuvenates the vegetation;
- Clean up of the old MTN9 site. As an entry point to the town from the airport this needs to be cleaned up. Terrible look.





Scenic Hill Users Group

Project submission by Denis Couch

April 30th 2024

Preface

As a member of the newly formed Scenic Hill Users Group and the Griffith Pioneer Park Museum Committee, I would like to canvass a worthwhile project that I think would kick start the rejuvenation of much of the Scenic Hill precinct.

One of the early initiatives of the Pioneer Park Committee was to make the area more amenable to the large groups of citizens and visitors who recreate in this vicinity. The condition of facilities on Scenic Hill are often nothing short of a municipal disgrace, and it requires positive and assertive citizen initiatives to amend this problem. Griffith City Council has continued to turn a blind eye to the condition of the Scenic Hill environs, citing budgetary constraints and lack of sovereignty over Crown Lands.

This proposal may at first glance appear to be overwhelming for this committee, but I am sure that with the groundwork done towards an outcome to date, and by integrating this into the Scenic Hill Strategic Plan, it will form the basis for much of the work necessary to bring the Scenic Hill precinct into a safe, valuable area to be enjoyed by all

Scenic Hill Rotary Lookout Park

An early resolution of the Pioneer Park Museum (PPM) Committee, formed in 2021, was to rehabilitate the Rotary Lookout park adjacent the Museum. This has been in a deplorable state for decades, but we now have an excellent case study on how to approach such a task. On behalf of the PPM Committee, I approached the four local Rotary Clubs with a view to forming a partnership to rebuild and rebrand the area as a valuable 21st Century civic amenity, and to herald Rotary over the past 100 years in Australia. This has been greeted with enthusiasm but the project has stalled for various impediments listed later in this proposal.

In early 2022, a notice from the local Crown Land office was attached to the old lookout platform to advertise its removal as an unauthorised structure. Crown Reserves and Griffith City Council apparently do not have any records as to how the park was established. Senior members of Griffith Rotary remember the viewing platform being established in the mid 1960's, and that it was constructed by Rotarian Flavio Bordignon. I am senior enough to remember its existence in the late 1960's when the eastern extremities of Griffith were clearly visible from the platform. This facility has served citizens and visitors for 60 years and is now considered for demolition by Crown Reserves without a whimper from Griffith City Council.

Since late 2021, I have personally cared for the area, using PPM equipment, and do a very regular patrol of the area to remove rubbish from the carpark and the lookout area. This has been a constant battle, but with interesting outcomes. I have used my diligence to test the

theory that the constant supervision and correction of the miserable attitude of those that foul these areas can be modified by example. This is only the start of a wider campaign for Scenic Hill, but the ramifications of this will be the basis of work by this committee to see results along the whole ridgeline.

The Proposal thus far

1. Form a working group to explore the design, funding and building of a recreational area on the site of the existing Rotary Lookout Park on Scenic Drive.
2. The delegation would consist of:
 1. A delegate from each of the local Rotary Clubs
 2. Member of the Griffith Pioneer Park Committee – reporting to the PPM Committee chair.
 3. A senior member of the responsible Griffith City Council directorate for this area
 4. Griffith City Councillor(s)
 5. Member(s) of the Sect 355 Scenic Hill Users Group.- (not part of the original proposals)
3. Develop the area as a semi arid parkland to compliment the surrounding McPherson Range bushland and existing and proposed walking and cycle trails along Scenic Hill.
4. Consider an irrigated parkland with accessible pathways, some lawn and semi arid garden beds
5. As part of its commitment, Pioneer Park provide water infrastructure and possibly electrical supply to the area.
 1. This would incorporate access to the CCTV monitoring proposed for Pioneer Park.
6. Consider the installation of electric barbeque facilities and low rise seating shelters within the area.
7. Consider using remnant granite blocks from the Griffith Willow Park sculpture project as a similar commissioned art project within the proposed park grounds.
8. Use the park and the associated carpark as a launch for a history and arts trail, with a particular emphasis on the indigenous history of the region.

Why do this?

1. The old infrastructure is already there. The viewing platform may not pass design standards today, but it has been robust now for nearly 60 years.
2. The park area is the first port of call for visitors along Scenic Drive – indeed conversation with a great many visitors over the past years has revealed that most self driving visitors think they have landed at Hermits Cave lookout, such is the paucity of signage on Scenic Hill
3. Despite the fact that Griffith City Council wishes to disown the site, it has provided an ample bitumen carpark to the area. Presumably, previous Wade and Griffith City Councils have seen the merits of the site.
4. The area is busy – vehicles are constantly parked on site as a “time out” zone. This of course extends into the night where the city vista to the south provides a welcome backdrop. The provision of lighting and security cameras should make the area more usable., and deter the litter bugs. (90% McDonalds refuse)
5. The history of Rotary International can be exhibited in line with the original project, and would form a great historical legacy for them.
6. The site is central to a lot of work currently enhancing the Scenic Hill precinct. Pioneer Park has been virtually reborn with new governance and facilities, and the new water reservoir murals will greatly enhance the adjacent area.
7. Griffith City Council is now the manager of all the Scenic Hill Crown Reserves, and despite its reluctance to extend the City budget higher than the suburban streets contour, it must find a way to enhance the region as befits a growing small city.
8. The growing population of our town needs amenities to attract and maintain a quality lifestyle. Scenic Hill and environs soft development is crucial to sustain this aspect of the “Love the Lifestyle” mantra.
9. The “experiment” of maintaining the Rotary Lookout park and its surrounding area has proven that the site will be valued by most visitors. The area was treated as a refuse dump because it looked like a dump. Rubbish disposal and dumping has decreased remarkably since the program started, and citizen groups have pitched in to keep the area presentable. The grass does not mow itself, but if it can be maintained regularly by a very small volunteer corps, then it can not be onerous for the City Parks and Gardens, despite their protests of no funds for this.

Impediments to this proposal

1. Crown Lands

1. They are attempting to divest responsibility of all Crown Reserves to local government, and doing so without regard for the funding of the upkeep.
2. They would prefer that all development on Crown Reserves revert to bushland, hence the notice to remove the viewing platform.
 - I met with the local Crown Lands manager, and was informed that they would move immediately to remove the structure. That was in March 2022, and nothing has been heard since.
3. Crown Land alliance with the Surveyor General's office – all preliminary discussions indicate that any proposal to develop the site would be stringently opposed.

2. Surveyor General

1. The current Rotary Lookout Park is situated within the Scenic Hill trigonometry station footprint. The trig point is actually some distance away in the Pioneer Park area, but the current opinion is that any development will be an impediment to the station
 1. This is nonsense – the trig station is not used, and if it were to used as a sighting reference as it used to be, then whole swaths of Scenic Hill bushland would have to be razed to accommodate this.
 - Surveying work is now almost exclusively referenced to GPS datums.
 2. The more recent installation of the Optus and 2MIA transmitter towers adjacent the actual trig station make this objection ridiculous.

3. Griffith City Council

1. There appears to be little enthusiasm from Senior Management for a project of this sort. Every possible adversity to projects on Scenic Hill have been offered.
 1. Objections are not just budgetary. There is no wish to engage NSW government due to the raw deals being delivered, such as the dumping of Crown Reserves responsibility on Councils without the resources to manage them.
2. GCC does not wish to provide maintenance services to any part of Scenic Hill, and the department managers actively discourage any project that will lead to extension of responsibility. An example of this is the fact that they refuse to mow any verges on Remembrance Drive – the main road in from the airport.

4. Aboriginal Land Council

1. The whole Scenic Hill area is subject to Native Title claims which means careful negotiation of any proposals within the Plan of Management area.
2. The local ALC has a fractious relationship with Griffith City Council, and finding common ground on any land use issue is a problem for now.
3. The inaugural meetings of the Scenic Hill Users Group expressed the desire to form an alliance with the ALC and indigenous cultural groups with a view to showcase their rich history within the development of facilities on Scenic Hill.

Conclusions

This proposal would be a signature project for any enhancement of Scenic Hill, and work has already progressed despite the impediments listed above. I do not propose that this committee launch into this as a core responsibility, but rather that it discuss the merits of the project and then consider its involvement in advancing the initiative.

If the project does get endorsement from all the stakeholders listed, and seed funding can be procured for a concept plan, then it would form a good pivot for other projects that radiate from its current area all the way along the Scenic Hill ridge.

I feel that there are plenty of low cost projects that can be visited long before this proposal could come to fruition. Some of these could include:

- Planning for trails along the whole range to make the bushland areas safe and accessible
- Cleanup initiatives to counter the appalling neglect of all the current trail areas
- Provision of suitable signage for navigation to all areas of Scenic Hill facilities.
- Attention to the aesthetics of the current roads and reserves within the Scenic Hill areas. Wyangan Ave to Rifle Range Rd, the Airport to Boonah St have a degraded appearance that does no service to the natural beauty of the rangelands on our city doorstep.

The focus of this proposal is very much at the front window of the Scenic Hill soft development plans. This is not to ignore the pressing needs of other areas in the Plan of Management. Dalton Park, the Motor Sports Club, Hermits Cave, Rodeo Grounds, bike trails and more all require individual management proposals requiring significant funding.

Please digest and discuss this proposal as a compliment to the other needy areas of the Scenic Hill Precinct. I welcome any criticism or suggestions before during or after our next meetings

Denis Couch

CLAUSE **CL03**
TITLE **rPPP Grant**
TRIM REF **24/50571**

Councillor Jenny Ellis to discuss the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (rPPP).

CLAUSE	CL04
TITLE	Review of the Community Strategic Plan
FROM	Joanne Bollen, Governance Officer
TRIM REF	24/44592

SUMMARY

Council is currently reviewing the Community Strategic Plan and is asking all community members to actively participate to help shape the future of the Griffith Local Government Area.

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the highest-level plan that Council is required to prepare.

While Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the CSP on behalf of the local government area, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, such as state agencies, non-government organisations, business and industry, and community groups may also be engaged in delivering the strategies of the Plan.

The CSP must identify the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the local government area and cover a minimum timeframe of 10 years.

The Plan must also address civic leadership, social, environmental and economic issues and be based on social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

In preparing the CSP, Council must identify key issues and challenges for the local government area and consider the levels of service that the community has indicated it expects.

How you can get involved

Over the next six months there will be opportunities for the community to get involved and have their say.

Engagement opportunities include Council Cafes at Kooyoo Street Kiosk, pop up stand at Riverina Field Days and during Local Government Week, Community Opinion Group (COG) Meetings in May and August.

Complete our survey here: [Your Vision, Our Future Survey](#)

Find out more or make a submission [here](#)

[You can view the current Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 here](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Committee note the information.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This item links to Council's Strategic Plan item 3.1 Undertake Council activities within a clear framework of strategic planning, policies, procedures and service standards.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil