

26th September 2022

Denise Ora
Chief Executive
Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust
362 Narellan Road
Mount Annan NSW 2567

Submitted via [email](#)

Dear Denise,

Re: Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan Masterplan

Thank you for your invitation to provide feedback and comment on the initial concepts for the Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan Masterplan.

In reviewing the Masterplan and attending the community consultation session, **Bicycle NSW is very supportive of the vision for the Botanic Garden.**

The '6 Big Ideas' or pillars provide outstanding benefits for the community, the environment and the core functions of the Garden's scientific and research commitments. We support the further development of the Masterplan to reflect the 6 Big Ideas.

As advocates for sustainable and active transport, Bicycle NSW is most focused on the final pillar, '**Connected, Permeable and Equitable**', which aims to establish '*an outward looking place by strengthening connections into the site, increasing permeability across the site, and ensuring equitable access to key facilities and spaces is centred on people not vehicles*'.

Visitor numbers to the Botanic Garden have soared since 2020¹ as the local residents explored green spaces on their doorstep during the pandemic lockdowns. Unprecedented population growth is forecast in the South West Growth Areas over the next few years, adding to the pressure to provide equitable access to open spaces. It is essential that the Botanic Garden fully embraces active transport, both to and within the site. By concentrating on the provision of green space, not concrete infrastructure for private vehicles, Mount Annan will remain an exceptional place as visitor numbers continue to grow.

The concept plan indicates that additional access points will be made available to visitors, particularly in the southern sections (Figure 1). In a pleasing prioritisation of active transport, several new entrances will offer exclusive access for those on foot or bicycle. This will encourage a low-impact, healthy and desirable way to experience Mount Annan. The new entrances will attract additional visitors and provide local, car-free recreation opportunities for residents of the fast growing new suburbs to the south and west of the Botanic Garden.

We would prefer all vehicles to park close to the entrances with movement through the park restricted to walking, cycling, shared shuttles or micromobility. If routes through the Botanic Garden are used as

thoroughfares, appropriate planning, design and development must be implemented to ensure user groups are considered and accommodated. For example, certain sections may also need to be illuminated, with access allowed before and after the gardens closing hours. Vehicle speeds must be kept very low.

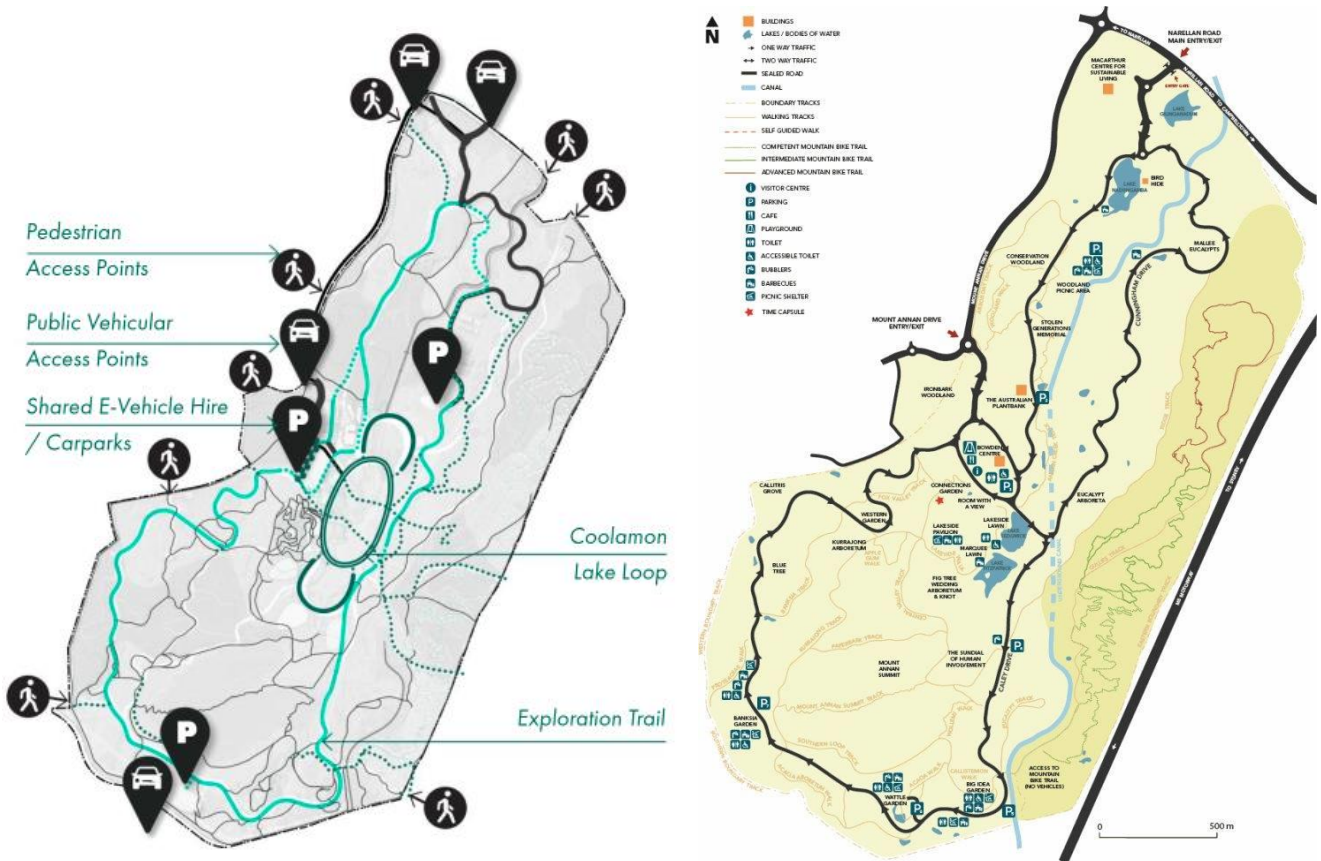


Figure 1: the proposed plan for access and movement (left) showing the new vehicle entrance from the south and a series of new pedestrian access points. The present layout (right) only allows access from the north and west. (Source: ABGMA)

To facilitate active transport to the Botanic Garden, Bicycle NSW is very excited that conversations continue to develop the **Upper Canal corridor** for walking and cycling. The Upper Canal dates from 1880 and represents a feat of engineering, dropping just 50m over 54km. A cycleway adjacent to the canal would follow a near-level path along its full length from the Nepean Dam to Prospect Reservoir via the Botanic Garden and Western Sydney Parklands.

The Upper Canal has been identified as a priority recreational open space project for Sydney’s Green Gridⁱⁱ (Figure 2) and we urge Australian Botanic Garden to ensure that the Masterplan contributes to the future development of the corridor.

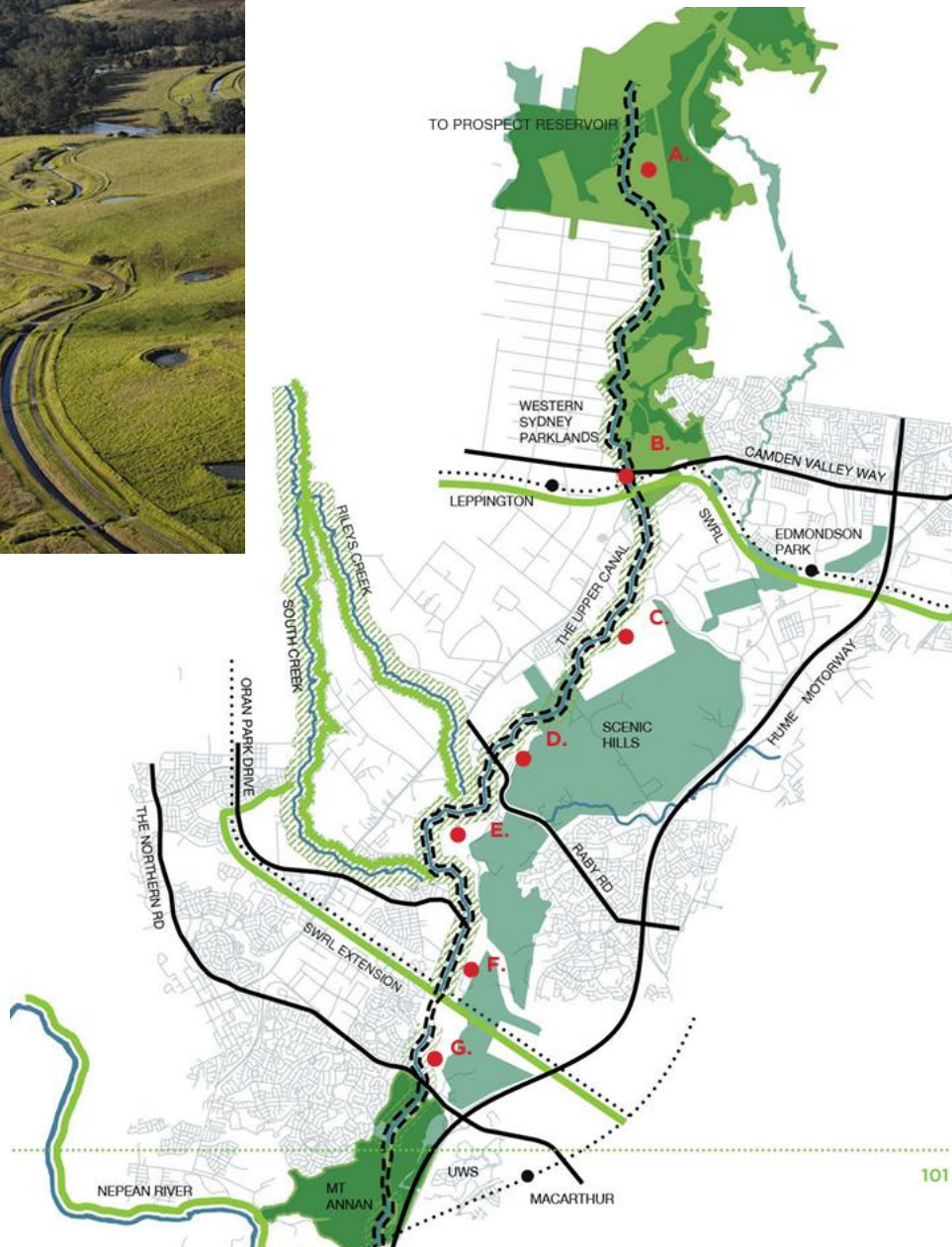


Figure 2: The route of the Upper Canal (Source: Sydney Green Grid/Tyrrell Studio)

In guiding the future development, Bicycle NSW also asks that the following points are integrated and embraced:

- The concept of ‘Movement and Place’ underpins Future Transport 2056. It is a planning framework that ensures ‘movement’ and ‘place’ are considered together as part of a ‘place-based’ approach to the planning, design, delivery and operation of transport networks. Movement and Place takes a cross-governmental integrated approach to planning and no longer considers roads and movement in isolation to community needs.
- The NSW Governments ‘Road User Space Allocation Policy’ (CP21000). This policy puts pedestrians, the less able and bicycle users first’, followed by public transport and shared mobility, while private vehicles receive the priority. It is very pleasing that future plans for the Botanic Garden will centre around people not vehicles and this will ultimately mean that

private vehicles become excluded from most areas of the site in favour of active transport options for all. In addition, this would exclude the need to build more roads and car parks which encourage private vehicle use.

Bicycle NSW would also like to highlight opportunities to further enhance the 'Leaders in Sustainability and Innovation' pillar through strengthening existing community partnerships. For example, the Macarthur Centre for Sustainable Living (MCSL) and Narellan Men's Shed both provide exceptional community services and benefits and are located on the grounds of the Botanic Garden. MCSL could provide and/or support education to stem the impact of global climate problems while Narellan Men's Shed could assist in refurbishing items which could be reused, such as bicycles which members of the public could use when visiting the Garden. This also addresses equity and access to transport for everyone. Bicycle NSW can share examples of where this is occurring elsewhere.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the concept stage of what we expect will be a very progressive and visionary Masterplan. We are happy to work with ABGMA on the operational and delivery detail of future development to ensure these proposed elements become a reality. Please don't hesitate to reach out at the appropriate time.

Best regards,



Peter McLean
Chief Executive Officer

cc: abgma@wsp.com

ⁱ Power, J. 2022, April 26. Green corridor would link Mt Annan gardens to Western Sydney Parklands. Sydney Morning Herald. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/green-corridor-would-link-mt-annan-gardens-to-western-sydney-parklands-20220420-p5aeut.html>

ⁱⁱ Tyrrell Studio. 2017. Sydney Green Grid, South West District.

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/plans/sydney-green-grid-plan-3-south-west-district-2017.pdf>