

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Location

Centennial Parklands is located at the heart of Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, just a couple of kilometres from the city centre. It forms a green swathe of parkland, ponds and sporting fields amidst the most densely populated urban areas in Australia (Figure 1). Figure 1 also shows the Parklands in relation to Sydney Harbour, the City, Royal Botanic Gardens, Bondi Beach and Randwick Racecourse.

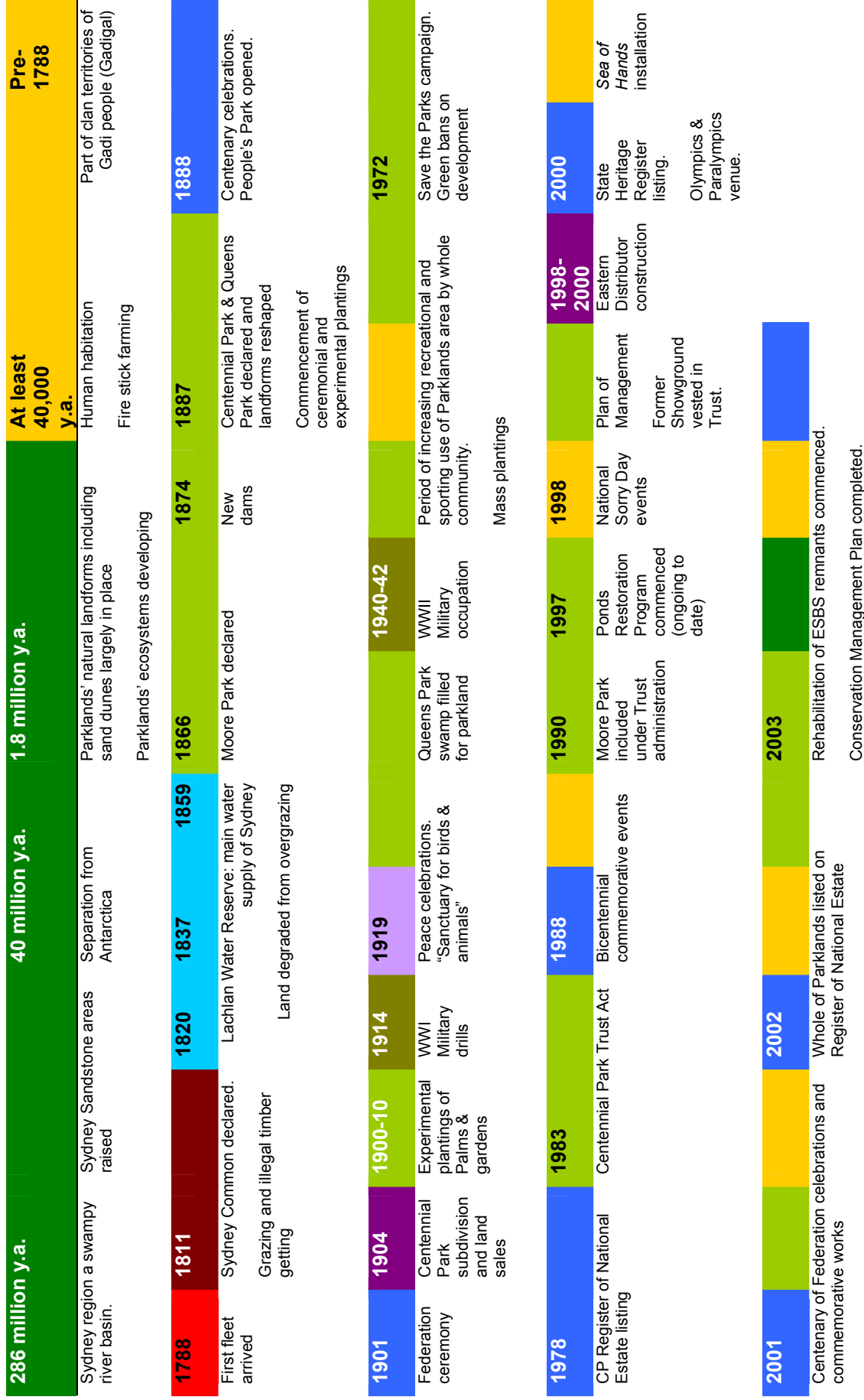
Figure 1 Centennial Parklands in Context



Note: Photograph taken in 1998-2000 during construction of the Eastern Distributor and Fox Studios. Moore Park West (northern corner) has since been refurbished and restored to parkland. The construction area to the left of Moore Park Golf Course forms part of the South Sydney Growth Area.

Timeline of Centennial Parklands

A more detailed timeline is provided at Appendix B of this volume.



Summary of the Parklands Heritage

The findings of the Conservation Management Plan include an assessment of the Parklands' significance, of which this summary provides an overview. More detail is provided in Chapter 3 of this volume and Chapter 4 of Volume 2.

Statement of Significance

Centennial Parklands is a unique place of exceptional National, State and Local heritage significance. It is a grand, linked open space of largely nineteenth-century landscape design intended for social and physical activity. The Parklands has developed at the head of the Botany Bay catchment in an area originally part of the territory of the Gadi people on lands designated in 1811 as the Sydney Common. The Parklands retains evidence of the original landforms and plays a vital role in sustaining natural processes and biological diversity on a scale that is rare in the inner urban environment. The Parklands has national significance as the place of the inauguration of the nation, the creation of a People's Park, events, persons and monuments of national importance. The place also has strong associations with convict heritage, pathways and transportation routes, water supply, horticultural and agricultural experimentation, nature conservation, military use, and a diversity of sport, recreation and cultures.

Summary of Natural Heritage

Centennial Parklands retains rare evidence of the original geodiversity, biodiversity, and ecosystems of the area known today as the eastern suburbs of Sydney. The natural basin in which the Parklands is situated retains its hydrological and ecological function as the head of the Botany Bay catchment. The waterbodies and vegetation in the Parklands continue to provide rare habitat for a wide diversity of indigenous flora and fauna within a highly urbanised area.

The Parklands provides habitat for rare and threatened species and contains remnants of an endangered ecological community, Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub, which covered much of the area prior to European contact. The natural significance of the Parklands underpins its value to current and future generations and to the regional environment.

Summary of Indigenous Heritage

Today's Parklands forms a part of a complex of Indigenous places used as a natural resource for social, ceremonial and subsistence purposes in the pre-colonial and post-contact periods.

The traditional Gadigal cultural landscape included a detailed knowledge of the land and resources of today's Parklands, which allowed the Gadi people as custodians to manage them and look after them properly. In return the land looked after the Gadi.

The springs, wetlands and remnant vegetation that can still be found in the Parklands today continue to represent an important biological resource which would have been a useful source of fresh water, plants and animals through the generations. It is therefore probable that the Gadi people used the area for camping, food collecting and other activities in the pre-colonial period. Known associations during the post-contact era include camping and food collecting visits, employment, military activities, sport, cultural events and leisure.

The maintenance of ongoing spiritual and other associations with Country continues to be important to Indigenous Australians who wish to care for this place as a cultural landscape.

*“It is emphatically the
People’s Park...
one of the grandest
adornments of this
beautiful country”*

*Sir Henry Parkes,
opening Centennial Park,
26 January, 1888.*

Summary of Cultural Heritage

Centennial Parklands is highly valued for its space, scale, beauty and grandeur and for the rarity and diversity of its Natural, Indigenous and Cultural heritage. For many individuals, groups and the community as a whole, Centennial Parklands is a cultural landscape that continues to play an important and vital role in personal and social histories.

The place retains significant associations with the development of the early colony of NSW, the establishment and design of parks and gardens for the public good, and prominent events. These include the Centenary and Bicentenary of the establishment of the NSW colony, inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, the 2000 Olympic Games, Paralympics and the Centenary of Federation celebrations in 2001.

Centennial Parklands is highly significant for its leisure and sporting heritage. The individual parks that make up the Parklands were specifically established to cater for public recreation and have been an important social and recreational resource for over a century.

Centennial Parklands now receives millions of visits annually, attracting people from surrounding residential areas, the wider Sydney region and beyond. The Parklands provides a unique area of open space that supports a diversity of activities that are rare in an inner urban area.

Structure of Conservation Management Plan

The Conservation Management Plan (Volume 1) is the distillation of the material evaluated for the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan. Volume 1 is the principal document from which conservation management policies will be drawn.

It should be noted that this volume contains the combined ratings of significance for types of items (exceptional and high ratings only), with individual items of *all* ratings being included in Chapter 4 of Volume 2 and Appendix K of Volume 3.

Volume 1 also contains maps showing the Parklands' development (Attachment A), a more detailed timeline (Attachment B) and a summary of the thematic history of the Parklands (Attachment C). Attachment D (Vol 1) provides an index to Volumes 2 and 3.

Volumes 2 and 3 are supporting documents associated with the preparation of the Conservation Management Plan. These volumes are viewed as living documents and may be reviewed as additional information comes to light and is verified. Volume 2 contains the initial CMP report upon which Volume 1 draws. Volume 3 contains the appendices and background detail of the initial study.

How the Conservation Management Plan will be used

The policies contained in the Conservation Management Plan (Vol. 1 Chapter 5) embrace the following principles:

- Retain, restore or reinstate significant heritage attributes of the Parklands;
- Conserve the significance of the Parklands, including functional relationships, spaces, vistas and fabric;
- Record all elements of significance which are affected by change,
- Enhance appreciation of the Parklands' heritage significance through appropriate presentation, education and interpretation;
- Fulfil the objectives of the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act, and the principles of the Australian Natural Heritage Charter and the Burra Charter;
- Consider the relative significance of the whole and individual elements in conservation and use;
- Allow ongoing use, change, development and maintenance in the Parklands, whilst retaining its heritage significance;
- Ecological, social and economic sustainability;
- Observe and comply with legislative requirements.

A diagram showing how the Conservation Management Plan will be used as a filter for decision-making in the Parklands is provided overleaf. To see how proposals are to be assessed and the process for approvals, refer to Chapter 6 of this volume.

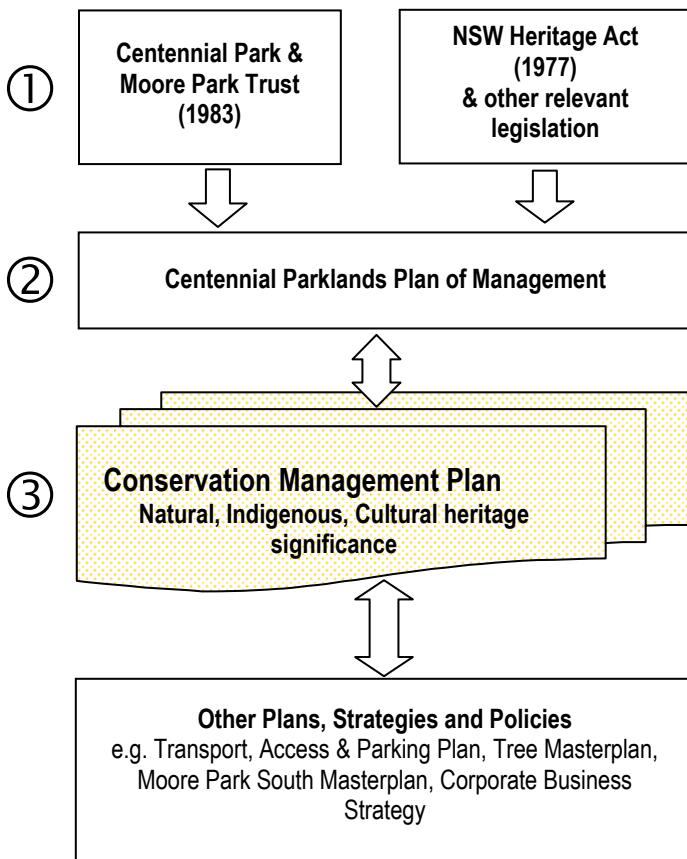
The Conservation Management Plan as a Filter for Decision-Making

The value of Centennial Parklands to the community is central to its planning framework. Centennial Parklands is important to the community in terms of Natural, Indigenous, and Cultural heritage. These values, together with Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust's (Trust) Plan of Management, underpin all planning, policy development and decision-making of the Trust.

Regulations and policies in Centennial Parklands are also required to comply with a range of legislation such as *The Centennial Park & Moore Park Trust Act 1983*, the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*, and other laws governing public safety, environment protection and urban open space planning.

This means that there are many different factors to consider when making decisions about programs and services in Centennial Parklands. These factors include the levels of heritage significance and policies identified in the Conservation Management Plan, as well as other requirements such as public safety.

The following flow chart and step-by-step explanation shows how the Conservation Management Plan will act as a filter within the planning framework for Centennial Parklands.



Level 1

- The Centennial Park & Moore Park Trust Act establishes the Trust and how it operates.
- Listing of Centennial Parklands under the NSW Heritage Act means that a Conservation Management Plan must be prepared to conserve its heritage significance.
- Other laws include requirements for Centennial Parklands to be managed for the public good: for example, by protecting public safety, health and the environment.

Level 2

- The Plan of Management for Centennial Parklands is a statutory document under the Trust Act, meaning that it is also a form of legislation by which Centennial Parklands is governed and managed.
- It contains the context and framework for a number of other consequent planning documents. It sets out an approach to the tasks of protecting the integrity of Centennial Parklands, conserving its natural and cultural heritage and securing a continuing place for Centennial Parklands in the hearts of all Australians.

Level 3

- **The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) will act as a filter through which other plans, strategies and policies are tested. The CMP will be used to ensure proper consideration of the various layers of heritage in the planning stages and implementation of programs and services.**
- The CMP will be a vital tool in identifying the various layers of heritage significance in Centennial Parklands when other strategies and works are being planned. The CMP will provide direction on heritage conservation and management for all programs and services.
- The CMP will be linked to the Parklands' Asset Management system and strategies, and to a digital mapping system, enabling Parklands staff to quickly access information on the heritage significance of a particular location within Centennial Parklands and identify which policies have been developed for its conservation.