

Mr Viv May

Administrator

Armidale Regional Council

15 September 2020

Dear Mr May,

PUBLIC SUBMISSION – ARMIDALE CREEKLANDS MASTERPLAN

I would like to take this opportunity to provide a submission on the Armidale Creeklands Master Plan (I will refer to this as the Plan).

Firstly, I would like to thank Armidale Regional Council for the foresight and vision to undertake this planning process and then to make this plan available for community comment. This is an excellent opportunity for Council and the community to develop a plan to optimise the community's vision and use of the creekland area identified in the Masterplan.

I state that I have been a resident of Armidale for nearly 30 years. I am actively involved in the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group (AURG) and I work for the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA). In my professional capacity at the EPA I have intimate knowledge of the contamination of the creeklands from the Armidale Gasworks site and Martin Street. I am using this knowledge to provide comment on the Masterplan as a private citizen.

General comments on Masterplan

Firstly, I note that the Plan only deals with the section of creeklands from Markham Street to Douglas Street. The Armidale community actively utilises much more of the creeklands than the area covered by this plan.

I also note that Council has another plan in place for activities and management principles along Dumaresq Creek being, "*Armidale Dumaresq Council – Revegetation Guidelines for the Urban Reaches of Dumaresq Creek, 2009*". This document has been used by Council to guide and manage the activities of the AURG. This document has largely been the basis for Council restricting AURG activities between Markham Street and Marsh Street.

Overall, I feel that the Plan is an excellent document and a great guide for moving forward in the areas covered by the Plan.

The Plan talks about connectivity along this section of the creeklands. This concept only seems to have been considered for human and social interaction within and along the creeklands. There does not appear to have been any consideration of ecological connectivity within the stretch of the creek covered by the Plan. As the plan identifies the AURG has undertaken extensive native plantings at Ken Jones Park and Elizabeth Park to the west and at both Rologas and Wicklow parks to the east. We know that we have good, recovering ecological communities in these locations. The area covered by the Plan does not have any native vegetation and is a significant barrier to the movement of fauna and flora along this section of the creek. It is not connected ecologically!

Through the report there is reference to the “Armidale Creeklands Committee”. I am not aware of this committee and surprised that it exists and does not have a representative from AURG – one of the most active groups along Dumaresq Creek. I would strongly suggest that this committee needs an AURG representative and I would nominate Mr Bruce Whan from our group to be on that committee. Mr Whan has an extensive knowledge about the history of the creeklands and would be an invaluable asset to that committee.

A summary of my general comments regarding the plan:

- I strongly support the construction and management of stormwater bio-detention structures. Not only will this provide some additional litter and pollution management for the creeklands but if managed and maintained appropriately will provide additional intermittent waterbodies along the creekland with habitat and aesthetic value.
- I strongly support the construction of viewing platforms along this section of the creek. This will allow the community to easily see the “state of the creek”. In many areas the creek is isolated from community view by steep sides and dense vegetation. This will allow the community to become more engaged in the annual life cycle of the creeklands. I also suspect it will provide an excellent educational tool for schools in Armidale.
- There needs to be continued removal of exotic trees from instream and on bank of stream. The significant eutrophication of the creeklands every autumn from leaf fall can be seen downstream from this location for quite some distance and have lasting effects until spring.
- I would like to see paths closer to the creek. The AURG’s experience is that once some of these areas are opened up from the exotic vegetation, walkers along Dumaresq Creek want to get closer to the creek and push paths into the creek banks. I feel that this should be recognised and encouraged to allowing our community to be more engaged with the creek.
- Finally, I note the commentary on page 42 of the Plan. At no point during the plan is there any specific commentary about large bodies of water being considered by the plan other than in the Engagement Outcomes for Areas 2, 3, 4 & 5. I also note that those responses only comprise 9 community inputs verses significantly more for some of those responses further up those lists. If this plan was developed to specifically address this issue as shown by the page 42 commentary, then that needs to be stated up front and addressed appropriately. For your information and with my background in fluvial geomorphology and hydrology I am well aware that any attempts to get a permeant water body in the middle of town will result in a fetid mess! There is simply not the water in the creek system to support a large permeant water body. I do believe that there is sufficient water and opportunity to provide a pool and riffle zone system between Markham Street and Marsh Street and this would be an excellent outcome – if it can be afforded.

Prioritisation of works along the creeklands

In discussions with yourself on 1 September 2020 you asked that I provide some commentary on what priorities of works I would undertake along the creeklands in consideration of my ecological background, my work with AURG and my knowledge and understanding of the contamination along the creeklands. Following I provide some dot points for each area.

Active Family Precinct

- My main priority would be to remove the exotic vegetation that can provide leaf drop into this section of the creek. I would replace that with patch or stepping stone plantings of natives that will provide shade and visual amenity along this section the creek.

- I support the establishment of the stormwater bioretention area but planted out with natives.
- I strongly support the establishment of the bike/walking track to the north of the creek and would suggest a path from Markham Street to the Centro may drawn people along the south side of the creek.
- I disagree with a shade structure for the skate park. Surely we can find something less obtrusive?
- I agree with points 8 & 9 of this section (pg 57).
- Finally I note that a significant amount of work will need to be undertaken on the banks of the creek here if you want child access to the creek. While I would support this, there is the potential for significant costs associated with such works.

Harris Park Sporting Precinct

- I would strongly recommend the removal of exotic vegetation along the creek banks with replacement of native vegetation to reduce the autumn organic load on the creek.
- I agree with the proposed stormwater bioretention areas.
- I would also like to see a walking/cycle track to the north of the creek to provide an alternative view of the creek.
- I strongly support the cross-section diagram at bottom of page 61. This would be an excellent outcome for this section of the creek. However, if this is cost prohibitive I would support the establishment of a canter-levered viewing platform in this section. This would allow great community access to the creek.
- Before proceeding with Point 14 on page 63 you will need to determine if the proposed use is compatible with the contamination assessment of this area.

Civic and Curtis Park Precinct

- Please note that this section of the creek has a rather healthy frog population. I am not sure how they survive there given the contamination in the sediments in this section of the creek!
- Again, the stormwater bioretention systems are an excellent idea.
- Again, I really would like to see the establishment of the creek cross section at the bottom of page 65. This would provide a far more visually appealing and ecologically sound creek line as opposed to what is currently there.
- As you will know there is limited exotic vegetation near stream in this section of the creek. I would strongly support isolated or grove native tree plantings in this area to provide summer shade.
- I really like the village green with permanent structure – Armidale really needs that!

Rologas/Wicklow Sports Fields

- As you will be aware the AURG and others have already done extensive plantings in these areas. For your information there is an active and health ecosystem in those areas including Eastern Water Dragons and White-tailed Water Rats.
- I would support the establishment of the stormwater bioretention systems.
- I would also like to see walking/cycle tracks both north and south of the creek to allow greater community access to areas that are largely just mowed grass.

Should you have any questions regarding any of my comments please feel free to contact me at my contact details below.

Can I please get an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission.

Thanks very much and regards



Angus Adair

B.Nat.Res(Hons)

M.Env & Local Govt. Law

Comments on Creeklands Master Plan

From Barbara Finch 15.9.2020

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this.

I was very interested to read it, and learned a lot, such as the challenging presence of underground services, and the pros and cons of on-line and off-line water bodies.

A general comment is the need for the vegetation along the **whole** Creeklands to create a corridor. Considerable planting has been done east and west of the city centre, creating corridors for land and water critters, and the urban part of the Creeklands should link these.

A Master Plan takes a very long view, and the reality is that it can't all be done at once, some elements of the plan will in fact be completed before the plan is adopted (the new playground), and decisions on the preferred order of work depend so much on funding.

I hope that the setting of a priority order of proposed works will be done soon, with sufficient flexibility to take advantage of grants (i.e. some projects to be shovel-ready, just in case). Public awareness of such a timetable would be a Good Thing.

I also would like to see Council encouraging any commercial development proposals (including renovations) for buildings in the urban areas adjoining the Creeklands to orient their access and outlook in relationship to this area. Previous planning, as you note, has failed to integrate the CBD with the wonderful Creeklands.

A few comments on details:**Active Family Precinct**

p.57 item 03. The island behind the Aquatic Centre. Yes, create passive water interaction area, but the island is a fauna refuge and therefore should not have a bridge to it. (see p.28)

p.57 item 06 shade for skate park – could there be problems with safety with irregular shadows cast on the skating areas?

p.56 new shared path back of pool. Good.

Civic and Curtis Parks

p.67 item 04. Excellent to re-shape the creek to give access to the water, possibly with more than one set of 'stepping stones'.

Rologas/Wicklows Sports Field

p.73 item 03. extra shared path north of creek. Good.

17th September, 2020

To Whom This May Concern,

This submission relates to the 'Draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan' which is currently on Public Exhibition (17/09/2020).

We believe that a major focus of the redevelopment of the Creeklands should focus on showcasing and communicating the natural environmental attributes of Dumaresq Creek and more broadly the New England Tablelands. Therefore we make the following recommendations;

All vegetation plantings along the Creeklands and on the adjacent floodplain pockets should utilise locally endemic riparian plant species and not exotic plant species. Planting native plant species further compliments and enhances the great work undertaken to date by Southern New England Landcare (SNELC) and others in enhancing riparian connectivity which supports native biodiversity and landscape connectivity. These plantings are not only considered to be the best option for maintaining long-term ecological health of the Creeklands, they also offer a unique opportunity for the local community to establish and benefit from a connection with local biodiversity in their very own urban environment setting. Planting native plants is best practice restoration whereas exotic and deciduous species can reduce water quality in autumn when large amounts of Nitrogen are released in a pulse event as leaves are shed.

Species selection should be guided by previous advice provided by UNE's A/Prof. Darren Ryder, Dr. Dorothy Bell and Dr. Sarah Mika and Dr. David Carr of Stringybark Ecological/the Armidale Tree Group, among others (see pages 92-101 of the Armidale Creeklands Draft Management Plan). An additional most valuable resource which describes in further detail many of the local vegetation communities including those that line Dumaresq Creek is the Vegetation of the Guyra 1: 100 00 map sheet New England Bioregion, NSW produced by Benson and Ashby in 2000 ([https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/getmedia/56dd9872-a86a-42e4-bb7b-2178b728902c/Volume-6\(3\)-2000-Cun63747Ben-872.pdf.aspx](https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/getmedia/56dd9872-a86a-42e4-bb7b-2178b728902c/Volume-6(3)-2000-Cun63747Ben-872.pdf.aspx)).

An additional suggestion for the improvement of the Armidale Creeklands is to explore the idea of establishment of a wetlands section. This could be incorporated into the current stormwater bioretention facilities. Not only would a functioning ecological wetland be a valuable inclusion from an aesthetic sense and an ecological point of view (provision of habitat, natural water filtering), an urban wetland offers additional value as an educational tool for students (primary, secondary and tertiary) and the community to learn more about the beneficial roles of wetlands across the New England Landscape and beyond. For an educational centre such as Armidale, the establishment of an urban wetland along the Creeklands would be a great asset. To see how other centres have incorporated a wetland design into their green spaces see the following links from the Adelaide Botanic Gardens.

<https://www.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/visit/adelaide-botanic-garden/gardens/first-creek-wetland>
and the associated teaching tools:

<http://botanicdns.rbe.net.au/bgaeducation/images/pdf/wetland/Wetland%20prim%20Teacher.pdf>

We also suggest the promotion of citizen science platforms on informative and interactive signs. There are numerous public databases that can be used by the community to contribute towards monitoring and knowledge of biological trends in Armidale over time. An example of these is the

inaturalist app that can be used to identify a photograph of any species, the FrogID app run by the Australian Museum that offers to identify frogs by from a recording of their call (two species such as the sign-bearing froglet *Crinia signifera* and the eastern banjo frog *Limnodynastes dumerilii* call from the frog often) and the turtleSAT app.

We also suggest that enhancing habitat for native species would greatly increase the value of the Creeklands. Nesting boxes for possums and birds could replace tree hollows until restored areas of the creek develop this core habitat.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,



Ben Vincent (BEnvSci, MEnvSci)
Plant Ecologist
University of New England



Deborah Bower (PhD)
Lecturer in Ecology and Zoology
University of New England

Council,

I write on behalf of the Armidale Neighbourhood Watch Group with recommendations to be included or given some serious thought to be included in the final Draft of the Dumaresq Creek Management Plan.

Our first being over the 12 month period of 2019 there were 84 deliberately lit fires within in the town boundary approximately 60% of these fires occurred along the Dumaresq Creek. Most occasions multiple Fire vehicles and Police were in attendance to extinguish them including the RFS when other crews were already called out. Fires occurred in other locations in the east of town, along the New England HWY off Claude St and the Lookout.

The fires along the Dumaresq Creek were close to homes, and Schools. It was quite concerning to residents and the Community especially the Fire Brigade who were already stretched with resources due to fires out of town at the same time. On many occasions multiple fires were lit at once or the Crew would put one out to be back in 1 hour putting out another. These fires occurred from in the afternoon up until 11 pm a night. Alarming many.

This led the Group to write to the then CEO and the Safety and Well- Being Committee in July 2019. The aim was to highlight the potential hazzards to homes and lives and to get it cleaned up with the possible removal of the reeds, shopping trolly's, stolen push bikes and plastic bags from where the Youth get in behind Centro and sniff deodorant cans.

Correspondence from the CEO mentioned weed spraying that would take place in January 2020 when it was the appropriate time. This was of no benefit to the ongoing issue nor did it address the Fire Hazzard Issue in the short or long term.

We can not afford another year like that and with the Fire Stats since 2015 approx 100 deliberately lit grass fires occur in the town boundry (Armidale Fire Brigade) it's dangerous it puts many innocent people at risk.

A Fire Hazzard plan should be included in the Management process so it is done within appropriate Environmental Legislations and Policies appropriate to the water way in an Urban area.

The second point we would like to add in is in May 2020 of this year Crime Prevention Officer SNR Constable Chris Jordan conducted a Safety Audit at the request of the Armidale Crime Prevention and Neighbourhood Watch Community Group this included the Dumaresq Creek and bike path area due to the significant number of stolen vehicles accessing this area and the then torching of. Out of the 40 cars stolen in Armidale approx half that number are torched in 2019 13 of those were around the Creeklands and Bike Path Area. NSW BOSCAR Crime Stats 2019

The Proposal for Bollard Installation -NSW Police Force was given to the Council Ms Sally Schofield and a copy to the Armidale ARC Well-being Committee. I would like this document to be reviewed and included in the Management Plan as it includes the use of Bollards and Art pieces or Sculptures to deter in authorised vehicle access to the Creek land and Bike Path area and would be an ideal addition to the overall scope of the Creeklands Plan

just as the Lighting has been along the bike path with enormous positive community response.

We have a wonderful area we just need to Tweek it a little to make it safe for everyone to enjoy.

I look forward to seeing the final Draft and I am happy to discuss any of the above mentioned issues highlighted if required.

Kathy Clare
nhwswarmidale@gmail.com
0460535456

Armidale Creeklands Masterplan

Comments from David Carr

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dbcarr@bigpond.com

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the consultants, Macgregor Coxall, on the work they have done on the Masterplan. I feel that they did a very good job of the consultation process and have canvassed a wide range of views. They have then successfully pulled all these different comments into a well-presented Masterplan.

I don't understand why Armidale Regional Council took so long to release the draft for comment as they lost a lot of community momentum built up during the consultation process.

The Masterplan for the Creeklands as it stands, proposes some very good ideas, which I will comment on specifically. Council will need to consider the Masterplan when designing new projects or changes in adjoining areas and make sure any Masterplan for the CBD is aligned with the Creeklands Masterplan.

There is very little mention of fauna in the Masterplan. The creek is increasingly important as a fauna corridor. Since all the plantings have been done, we are seeing more and more birds and other animals in the creeklands. We need to incorporate specific habitat needs of threatened species to encourage them to use the creek. Also add nest boxes to existing trees.

Place Principles

The Economic Place Principle seems a bit meaningless to me. The creeklands have very limited economic activity and are definitely not going to become "the focus of aregional urban economy". There are obvious connections between economic activity and how Armidale is perceived aesthetically, socially, culturally and environmentally, but the Masterplan does not address these indirect relationships.

Numbers below refer to the numbered proposals for each section.

Albion Park section

1. I really like the idea of the shared path running through the back of the pool and connecting to Markham St, but this needs to work out how it crosses Markham St.
2. Stormwater bioretention areas. I'd like to see more detail of the design of these. Are they a drowning risk? Will they be high maintenance?
3. I like the idea of a passive recreation area built around the pond in the creek with the habitat island. The island is so small I don't think a bridge to it is worthwhile. The pond is very deep and could be risky for drowning. Can use vegetation to control where people can access the creek.

4. OK
5. Centre for Earth and Water. Not a high priority as this building is already well-used by the community.
6. Vegetated shade structure. Must be correct scale. Not sure what vines would grow well enough and tolerate extreme frost. Need more development of the skate park. More covered seating. How about a DJ booth with a roof and power so local DJs can play their music? Free Wi fi? Filtered water station.
7. OK
8. OK
9. OK
10. Need a formalised pedestrian crossing of Dumaresq St with traffic calming.

Harris Park Section

1. I like the idea and location of moving the bike track into the park.
2. OK
3. OK
4. Stormwater bioremediation. Same comment as previous park.
5. OK
6. Terraced creek bed. N bank needs to retain a bank at least 1m deep to hold mid level flows off playing fields, but this could be placed well back from current bank and then sloped gradually to water. Need study of water rat population in that section of the creek. Need a plan to manage contaminated soil before earthworks. Need to move bike track on S side to allow for changing bank slope.
7. Ok
8. Ok
9. Ok
10. Ok
11. Ok
12. I like the idea of scattered shade trees – either native or exotic.
13. Need to get rid of all the willows in this part of the creek channel.
14. Is it safe to put seating in the area where there is contaminated soil?

Curtis and Civic Parks

1. I like the village green idea with a permanent covered stage but would prefer retention of existing duck pond. Instead of the rock lined drain the overflow from the duck pond could be put in pipes under ground with surface flow for heavy rain (as in Merinda Place). Could make the duck pond more natural with areas of reeds and rushes. See Darren Ryder's ideas on this.
2. Tunnel of trees sounds great but curve it around duckpond either on E side to go to mid block pedestrian crossing or W to go to corner of Dangar and Dumaresq. Alternative would be a Wisteria pergola. Toilet and kiosk is a great idea and would increase usage.
3. Pedestrian crossing with traffic calming is great but we need to think how this connects to the CBD. Would it be better to cross further west (set back from Roundabout) to connect to path past Kmart building.
4. Doug Westhorpe and I have previously suggested ways to do this. Important to use low spiky plants to keep kids back from sections of the creek yet still let people see

to and across the creek. Taking the rocks out of the channel in this section will have positive effects along creek downstream.

5. Use leaky weirs to broaden creek pools and then use rocks set into top of these as stepping stones to cross creek. See work in Black Gully behind NERAM.
6. Move back track as shown on S side to avoid flood damage. Also extend bike track on N side from Taylor St to Harris Park, perhaps as an 'express' bike lane.
7. Ok
8. Ok
9. Meditative precinct. Give design of this to Aboriginal community. Include dense unmowed areas local native tussock grasses (Themeda, Sorghum, Poa etc) and bush food lilies and yam daisies.
10. Ok
11. Ok
12. Ok
13. Ok
14. Ok
15. The existing N side playground area is very popular and should be retained. This area is well used for large family gatherings because of the shelters and toilet. Put in more tables and shelters.

Rologas

This section completely ignores existing showcase plantings (N of creek between Marsh and Taylor and adjacent to Taylor St on E side).

1. Screening plantings could be exotic or native or both. Not in front of soccer clubhouse or toilets. Include plantings on E side of Taylor St and E side of bike path near Marsh St to reduce wind speed across the soccer fields.
2. I like the bike path link but where it is shown is too steep. It should be E of Gross Pollutant Trap.
3. New bike path on N side of creek is good and could be made as a path for commuting bikes, including electric bikes. It should link up to track through to Harris Park or to Kirkwood St. Needs a really good crossing on Marsh St with traffic calming both sides.
4. Some of the spectator seating will interfere with cricket played on these grounds.
5. Ok
6. Stormwater basin in NE corner of Rologas is good but need to see specifics. The one on the east side of Taylor st is right where one of our showcase plantings is. People also park here when soccer is on Rologas Oval. Move the stormwater basin further NE.

Secondary Placemaking

I really like these ideas. Lighting design must be low energy and not create light pollution. Public art is desperately needed and I like the idea of incorporating it into structures. Need to incorporate local Aboriginal art and we have some good artists.

Risk

Road crossings all need pedestrian islands and traffic calming.

Creek plantings can use low spiky plants to 'fence' out sections of the creek and retain views. E.g *Lomandra*, *Poa labillardiere*, *Hakea macrocarpa*, *Leptospermum gregarium*, *Gahnia aspera*.

Planting strategy

Good to base some of this on local EECs but can choose better plants. Get local expertise. *Pimelea curviflora* and *Leucopogon fraseri* are very difficult to propagate.

Wetland planting species are good.

Don't rule out dense shrub plantings. When done properly they eliminate maintenance and can be used to create natural walls.

Grassland species – good. Add *Imperata cylindrica*

Avenue and parkland species. Consider Wisteria on a pergola. *Koelreuteria* is a weed.

Documents

Document 27. HiCUB is High Country Urban Biodiversity project (SNEL). The wetland proposal mentioned here is the one detailed as Document 25.

David Carr

Stringybark Ecological – owner and principal environmental consultant,
Armidale Tree Group – Vice President,
University of New England – Adjunct Senior Lecturer
Society for Ecological Restoration – Member and Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner.
The Musicians of Armidale – Treasurer
Eco Arts Australis – board member.

From: A Laws [<mailto:alaws2008@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2020 11:49 AM
To: Council
Subject: Submission on the 2018 Armidale Creeklands Masterplan

Dear Armidale Regional Council,

Thankyou for the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2018 Armidale Creeklands Masterplan prepared by McGregor Coxall. It is wonderful to see the community invigorated by the discussion of the future of the Creeklands site. The number and diversity of ideas generated by the consultants' engagement process is impressive.

I would like to limit my comments to two aspects of the plan:

1. Retaining the Labyrinth in its current position, rather than shifting to a 'meditative precinct' closer to the Judith Wright Memorial Grove.
2. Applying nature conservation connectivity principles in the immediate area of the creek and banks.

Both of these matters are close to my heart, as I have been a volunteer with the Labyrinth group led by Joy Bowles, and with the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group on its rehabilitation projects along Dumaresq Creek.

1. Labyrinth

The consultants acknowledged the Labyrinth in its list of community initiatives at the Creeklands site (page 6). Council showed much foresight and genius in supporting Joy Bowles' brainchild, which meant the Council was able to harness the passion and hard work of volunteers in establishing the Labyrinth, at minimal cost to ratepayers. As a result, Armidale is now connected to the Australian Labyrinth Network – a tourist trail of labyrinths across NSW and beyond.

The Labyrinth was one of the most popular of the twenty-four suggestions coming out of the *Social Infrastructure Ideas Generator* (page 20 – most popular ideas: adventure playground, dining arbour, labyrinth, and outdoor cinema). The Labyrinth is so firmly settled in the social infrastructure of the Creeklands that the consultants have even suggested re-working it in a more durable form, potentially using stone from the creek channel (page 67).

I am supportive of the re-working in stone, but would urge Council to retain the Labyrinth in its current location. Considerable time and attention was spent by Joy Bowles in her community consultations and negotiations with Council to arrive at this location. It is away from the hustle and bustle of Dumaresq Street, with a sweeping view to the north-east, which is integral to its charm and meditative character. It gives due respect and space (geographically and psychology) to the Judith Wright Memorial Grove, which should remain the central focus of the Dumaresq-Faulkner Streets corner. Retaining its current position gives the Creeklands site a more spontaneous and varied landscape architecture, rather than crowding and compartmentalising its reflective spaces into a more predictable 'meditative precinct'.

2. Re-connecting Dumaresq Creek

I concentrate on the creek channel and immediate banks in this submission. My key point is that the plans for the creek and its banks should be strictly consistent with connectivity principles for nature conservation. This requires a 're-connectivity' approach, since more

than a century of developments at the Creeklands site have to some extent damaged its connection with its up- and down-stream zones.

It is encouraging to see the consultants cite the biodiversity conservation and water management dimensions of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, as well as highlighting the efforts of the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group Creek, and the community focus on 're-naturalisation for improved ecology and biodiversity and flood mitigation' (page 6). It is heartening to see that the majority of the suggestions coming out of the *Blue Grid Ideas Generator* (page 16) relate to the nature conservation values of the Creeklands ('aquatic habitat', 'wetlands', and 'renaturalised creek').

As described on page 7 of the consultants' report, the Creeklands site is not a discrete area of land that can be isolated from its broader geography. It functions as an integrated whole – a continuous, interconnected watercourse of regional importance. Its headwaters are well out of town and it eventually links to streams and rivers far beyond, in the Macleay Catchment. Planning for it must not be indifferent to this context.

Watercourses are famously important for Australian wildlife as refuges and corridors. Since the Creeklands site is relatively high up in the regional catchment into which it flows, whatever happens on the Creeklands site potentially affects the whole catchment downstream, in terms of water quality, water flows, and conservation of ecosystems. Any unsympathetic development at the Creeklands site that causes a radical break in connectivity affects the whole system upstream and downstream.

Consequently, I urge the Council to adopt nature conservation connectivity principles in implementing a masterplan for the Creeklands site. I will not relay the detail about the practical considerations of a connectivity approach, other than to say these considerations relate to plant species choices, reducing exposed distances that wildlife must traverse, managing weeds and unwanted species, and engaging the community in the benefits of a connected ecosystems. There is ample expertise in Armidale – including amongst community groups such as the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group and the University of New England – for advice on these considerations when implementing a masterplan. Indeed, the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group has already amassed a decade of experience implementing connectivity principles elsewhere on the Dumaresq Creek within the town boundaries.

Thanks again for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion of the Creeklands site.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Andrew Lawson

Armidale resident and ratepayer

Creeklands Masterplan Submission

Aim

To make this a really attractive area for all residents, including current cycle-way and sporting users, as well as tourists who will want to stay, enjoy and explore the area.

Progressing the Plan

Page 84 of the Creeklands Masterplan recommends establishing an expanded working group of stakeholders (including external or transient organisations or users) to regularly meet to continue project momentum. This will help ensure that all proposals achieve the best possible outcome for our community. The working group should include representatives of sporting groups, transport groups including cyclists, environmental groups, wildlife habitat groups, indigenous representatives, and users of the SuperPlayground.

High Priority Improvements

1. Display boards showing points of interest, walking and cycle routes, distances to UNE, mountain bike trails, shops, and the history and natural history of the area. It might also be worth considering a phone app with audio descriptions of the points of interest, or one that could display additional information on the phone.
2. The proposed exercise stations, especially if one is located close to the SuperPlayground, to encourage adults and children to exercise together.
3. Extending the cycle-way into a major cycling route that extends from the UNE mountain bike trails to the rural areas to the east. This would attract families who want a half-day activity, perhaps cycling 10 or 20 km. It would work really well in conjunction with the display boards (see priority 1), and small exercise stations or other features located at intervals along the full length of cycle-way to encourage people to go from one area to another.
4. The Interactive technology envisaged on page 75 of the Plan. If the SuperPlayground attracts lots of people to the area, this might be the ideal first location.
5. Residents were surveyed about what else would attract people to the SuperPlayground. The top score was 4.04 for a trampoline, then the mammoth swing (score 4.14) and then the splash water play for toddlers which scored 4.33. All these seem like great ideas that both residents and visitors would enjoy.
6. Some bicycle challenges, e.g 'skinnies' similar to those constructed for minimal cost by the New England Mountain Bikers in the Pine Forest.
7. Electric vehicle charging stations at the visitor and Hydrotherapy/Aquatic centres) and bicycle parking at the SuperPlayground, Visitor and Aquatic Centres.
8. Attractive plantings, including native plantings to provide wildlife corridors from East Armidale to UNE.
9. Funding for the active transport network plan mentioned on p 84 of the Creeklands Masterplan: investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations for precinct, local and regional links and connections for enhanced pedestrian connections and cycle-ways.
10. Information on air pollution levels so that people exercise and enjoy the facility when the air is clean and don't exercise when it would be unhealthy to do so (e.g. before 10 am or after 4 pm in winter).
11. Extending the existing installation of lights and security to cover all areas that need it.
12. Safety improvements to the existing cycle-way along the pavement on the north side of Dumaresq St opposite the Aquatic centre, by removing the poles that narrow the route and providing safe access to Dumaresq St immediately east of the creek crossing (e.g. a pram ramp on to the street, as shown in the New England Greens Armidale Tamworth submission).
13. Cleaning up any contamination and removing rubbish and shopping trolleys.

Not supported

Filling in the Duckpond, removal of existing paths or playground equipment, the avenue of trees dividing the area between Dangar & Faulkner Sts. Any safety issues at the playground north of the creek should be addressed by specific changes to the contours of the creek banks near the playground, or adding dense vegetation or other barriers to enhance the safety of children using the area

Needs investigation

Whether the area should have a permanent stage, or a movable one.

The cost of creek bed and banks reshaping and revegetation works in Curtis and Civic Parks is over \$5 million, including soil disposal. As noted, in Helen Webb's submission, re-shaping and re-vegetation of the channelised section of creek has the potential to greatly enhance visual appeal of the area as well as ecological health, accessibility and safety along this section of the creek. These benefits need to be weighed against the cost and potential difficulty of preventing large scale soil erosion and damage to works if the creek flooded while works were underway.

Further input, especially on priorities, could be provided by the Working Group set up to help progress the Plan.

19-23 Hillview Road
Armidale 2350

Thursday 17th September 2020

emailed to council@armidale.nsw.gov.au on 17092020

Re: Response Draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan (Document: AINT 2020 29791=)

Dear Council

Thank you for the opportunity for comment. I have read the Draft Armidale Creekland Masterplan and several factors come to mind.

There seems to be strategies and recommendations that are proposed in the Draft Armidale Creekland Masterplan that seem randomly selected from a generic list of fashionable and common ideas that are applicable to any city or town. .

The Draft Armidale Creekland Masterplan overall fails to demonstrate to me that its authors have come to grips with the priority needs of the Armidale community. There seems to me to be claims, including some grandiose ones about crime prevention and economic development, but a paucity of evidence or convincing, sound reasoning that the strategy priorities proposed are going to achieve these claims. One would be entitled to expect that the consultants McGregor Coxall who have a multinational footprint in three continents and claims strengths in landscape architecture, urbanism, environment and biocity research to have offered a more tailored response and relevance to the Armidale context.

Armidale is a Council area and community with finite resources. Any strategies for Armidale city improvement should be selected based on reasonable evidence that they will address identified local community need and offer value for money in a reasonable timeframe .

The Draft Armidale Creekland Masterplan fails to convince me it is based on sound understanding of the existing capital of Armidale: its social capital, building fabric, natural capital and the way the community works and moves about now, and what are the best priorities for improvement now and to address likely future needs. It fails to convince me that good data and information has been sourced and analysed and that it was used to identify the strategic priorities this draft plan proposes , nor that the financial and effort investment proposed is the wisest use of funds for the Armidale Council and community.

Importantly the Draft Armidale Creekland Masterplan fails to convince me that the proposed strategies would address a primary concern that is raised again and again in Armidale about the paucity of human movement and the need for greater dynamism into the central Armidale area, especially the thoroughfares along Beardy Street, Munroe St and Dumaresque Street, and between the Jessie Street /Woolworths and Coles/Fawkner St ends of Armidale. While the Draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan

should endorse and support this, it fails to convince me its authors have even considered this important issue thoroughly. Again I believe the Armidale community is entitled to a better response .

The Draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan states that data and community consultations were undertaken but I am disappointed that there is not clarity about how analysis of the findings and this information influenced the strategic priorities selected. The links are not clear.

The document does not indicate to me a careful analysis of data and identification of present and future needs for the community and in particular the needs in relation to passive and active recreation and sports and recreation around the creeklands.

It is important that any strategic priorities draw on a thorough understanding of existing community demographic data, existing behavior (and especially crime and other community safety) data, existing human and vehicular movement, and try to identify future need before selecting priorities for investment to improve things.

The Draft Armidale Creekland Masterplan also fails to convince me it has used data and information that I consider essential to inform any creeklands strategy, especially crime hotspot data and information about the natural habitat. This document fails to come to grips with the existing strengths of the creekland area as wildlife and flora habitat and demonstrate how the recommended strategies will improve the area as a wildlife corridor and improve protection for species.

As one example of the dissonance between the strategies proposed and what need there is for them or what drove them, I will refer to pages 54-57, where it is proposed to turn one creek area into an "Active Family Precinct" . This area is ' *defined by Beardy Street on the south side, Markham Street to the west, and Monckton Aquatic Centre and Dumaresq Street on the north side. The east side of this area is defined by the Armidale Central shopping mall and the retaining wall that constrains the creek. An historic suspension bridge provides pedestrian access across the creek.*'

Firstly, from my observation, and I commonly walk around this area of Armidale, this sector of the creek has little existing flavour nor offers much foundation as an 'Active Family Area' . I believe that making it so would be an imposition and an expensive imposition. Indeed common sense suggests to me it would have little likelihood of success in meeting the objective as an "Active Family Precinct" , and indeed is there any sound, evidence-based, or consultation findings -based reasoning that suggests it should be? I consider that several other areas along the creek are more likely candidates, and more easily strengthened into an "Active Family Precinct" for Armidale rather than this one, and I suspect with far less financial cost and effort.

Again, and as a second example, one proposed strategy is to transform the existing Spanish Mission building near the creek into a ' *Restored and repurposed heritage building into a 'Centre for Earth and Water', building a community around everything from pottery, potting up plants, to pottering around – operating as a ceramics studio, landcare volunteer shelter and classroom for watercolour painting.*'

Again, this strikes me as simply a glib and superficial idea and approach. Indeed is it a feasible, realistic and/or necessary strategy? Have the present users been engaged in a quality consultation process about their ideal priorities for improving their community life in this building? Do the present users of this building and area need this? Does Armidale need a 'Centre for Earth and Water' at all and should it be in this location? Importantly, are all these purposes, and the existing community groups that currently undertake these activities in Armidale compatible, and could or should they be encouraged to co-locate? Alternatively, is this strategy more likely to be a recipe for community disharmony? Where is the evidence or driver that this strategy would or should work?

I suggest that these points I have made, and those of other respondents, need to be collated, analyzed, reported to the community and considered in a review of the Draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan (Document: AINT 2020 29791=)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frances Grindlay". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

Frances Grindlay
Resident at 19-23 Hillview Road, Armidale

Armidale Regional Council Draft Creeklands Masterplan

Comments re Specific Improvements proposed

Precinct 1- Active family

Precinct 2 - Harris Park

Precinct 3 & 4 - Civic and Curtis Park

Precinct 5- Wicklow and Rolagas fields and creek area between Taylor and Douglas Streets.

Improvements proposed	Precinct	Comments	In favour	Cost	Scale of work	Priority
Revegetation, fauna connectivity and protective habitat	1	Remove woody weeds and revegetate area between Markham St and the TAFE footbridge.	Yes	Low	Medium	High
Revegetation, fauna connectivity and protective habitat (Note: any revegetation planning beside the creek must take into consideration the high initial weed maintenance required and the need for long term weed management)	1	Weir and island. Apparently the weir was constructed to detain stormwater from a drainage line flowing through town from the vicinity of Armidale High School and to collect silt from a gross pollutant trap just upstream. I am told that the original plan was to clean out the weir on a regular basis to remove silt but that that only happened once. It may be that stabilisation of the pond with bullrush was considered a better option for water filtration. Currently the weir ponds provides habitat for frogs and ducks. Layering causes the water to become anoxic during periods of low stream flow and the anoxic condition tends to persist downstream of the weir. Darren Ryder (UNE) proposed in about 2011 that the existing pipe beside the creek could be used to convey water to the duck pond for aeration and filtration via a vegetated wetland. There may be better strategies to improve oxygenation of the creek. A review of the weir and its function in consultation with relevant experts on riparian vegetation and habitat such as Debbie Bower and Ben Vincent (UNE) would be appropriate. I have been informed that the island was planted out previously but that the planting was destroyed during flooding. Proposal for revegetation needs careful planning in view of flood risk. When planning for re-vegetation, consideration needs to be given to existing habitat value of the weir area for fauna including the Rakali (white tailed water rat), frogs and birds including the reed warbler, a regular spring and summer resident in the reeds which I heard there recently.	Conditional - see comments	Medium	Medium	Medium
Revegetation, fauna connectivity and protective habitat	1	Note that the area on the bank adjacent to Centro car park is difficult to access for removal of woody weeds prior to planting. Vegetation removal will be easier on the other side of the creek. Revegetation with native shrubs and riparian sedges and rushes and appropriate trees such as casuarina strongly supported.	Yes	Medium	Medium	Low
Revegetation, fauna connectivity and protective habitat	2	The creek between Dumaresq St and Dangar Street is used by waterbirds, particularly ducks and also lizards, which appear to like the less frequented location and open water and sheltering non-native vegetation. Ducks with ducklings are often seen there in spring and lizards such as water skinks and water dragons are also seen. The Rakali may use this waterhole. Plans for revegetation need to take into account habitat needs of species using	Yes	Medium	Medium	Unsure

Improvements proposed	Precinct	Comments	In favour	Cost	Scale of work	Priority
		the area. Plant banks with sedges and resilient plants such as lomandra to stabilise banks while allowing water views.				
Revegetation, fauna connectivity and protective habitat	All	It is great to see a strong focus on planting with native species. I strongly support planting of native species wherever possible and appropriate through out the area to enhance connectivity. Further consultation is needed with local experts and Armidale Tree Group to ensure that plants recommended for revegetation are suitable for propagation in our area and are known to grow well on the creeklands. Some of the species listed are not currently propagated by Armidale Tree Group. While it is desirable to expand capability in this area, it is also important not to waste resources on species that are difficult to grow and maintain. The term grasslands should incorporate herbaceous species such as wildflowers as well as grasses.				
Native shade trees	All	I recommend casuarinas as they are beautiful, provide habitat and stepping stones, suited to creekside environment, consistent with planting in Ken Jones Park and do not drop branches. A variety of tree species is desirable and there are several suitable trees to choose from. Tendency of some native trees to drop branches should be taken into consideration in selecting tree species for planting in areas that have ongoing pedestrian usage.	Yes	Low	Small	High
Non native trees	1	Planting of non-native trees. Removal of poplars is supported. I have been told that there are some elms in this area that were planted in memory of soldiers who died in the war and that there is a plaque in the vicinity commemorating this. I support retention and enhancement of big shade trees and seating opposite TAFE.	Yes	Low	Small	Medium
Non native trees - tunnel	3	The concept of an avenue of trees and a crossing to connect the creeklands to the CBD has merit. The problem of connectivity lies not so much with the creeklands but with town planning that has enabled unattractive car based facilities that do not invite pedestrians to link with the CBD and shops. An avenue of trees might enhance the park and invite people in, but does not lead anywhere with the current infrastructure. Additional consideration is needed of options to transform this situation. The avenue could curve around the duckpond and lead to a crossing close to the Dangar St roundabout.	Unsure	Low	Small	Unsure
Grass terracing	2	Could be good. Need to assess possible usage. Consider also planting for shade or native shrub planting along Kirkwood Street to enhance vegetation connectivity	Neutral	Mod	Large	Unknown
Terracing/ benching of creek	2	I do not like the look of the paved terraced area depicted in the plan - it involves far too much paved area and engineering work along the creek. Revegetation involving possibly some low key reshaping of the creek bank and rock revetment at appropriate location/s is all that is needed.	No	High	Large	
Reshape creek channel / at grade creek crossing at Faulkner Street	4	The channelised section of creek currently appears to be reasonably stable and could be left as is with minimal cost. Re-shaping and re-vegetation of channelised section of creek has the potential to greatly enhance visual appeal of the area as well as ecological health,	Yes	High	Large	Unsure

Improvements proposed	Precinct	Comments	In favour	Cost	Scale of work	Priority
		accessibility and safety along this section of the creek. These benefits need to be weighed against the cost and potential difficulty of preventing large scale soil erosion and damage to works if the creek flooded while works were underway. Funding for long term follow up maintenance of rocky zone and planting would be required. A band of densely planted sedges and lomandra would help to prevent access to the creek at selected locations if reshaping of the channelised area does not go ahead High cost of handling and potential disposal of contaminated soil needs to be taken into account.				
Connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle)	1	Bike track on the north side of the creek would be great. Cyclists should be able to walk or ride their bikes across the footbridge towards TAFE	Yes Strongly	Low - med	Small - med	High
Connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle)	2, 3, 4	Proposed connectivity to Kirkwood Street good. I support additional shared pedestrian and cycle paths around the perimeter of the parks, as described in the plan. Landscaping along these paths could be designed to enable some stepping stone connectivity for native species. At grade creek crossing would be good during average creek flow but could create a safety issue during times of high water flow and flooding.	Yes	Low - med	Small	High
Connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle) -bridges	2, 3, 4	I do not consider an additional pedestrian bridge across the creek is needed in the Harris Park precinct. Replacement of existing pedestrian bridges is not currently needed but consideration should be given to consistency of design when replacement is needed.	Yes	Mod	Medium	Zero to low
Connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle)	5	Bike track on north-western side of Dumaresq Creek between Taylor and Marsh streets would allow connection to Kirkwood Street and perimeter bike paths linking Curtis and Civic parks parallel to Kirkwood St on the north side of the creek. These would enable a circular route for pedestrians and cyclists. The path would need to be designed to enable a safe crossing of Marsh Street. The existing vehicle ramp off Marsh St south of the Elite Motor in may be suitable location for the bike track to join Marsh St..	Yes	Low	Small	High
Connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	I support maintenance of the shared paths wherever it is needed. It would be appropriate to widen the section adjacent to the fenced off area west of the Belgrave theatre as this section is narrow. I don't see any benefit in having the metal bar in the middle of the path where it crosses to the west side of Dangar Street. This gutter section is uneven and water collects in the road drain. I support re-routing the bike path south of the creek and west of Stephens Bridge on higher ground as this section of path often has puddles and mud on it. This may be made easier if the children's playground here is removed (a shame in the sense that its location is in a pretty area and is further from the busy noisy road).	Yes	Low	Small	High
Connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle)	5	I strongly support a formalised pathway from the existing path to the pathway adjacent to the Wicklow Hotel and crossing to the information centre. The route of this path needs to take gradient and the location of the existing gross pollutant trap into consideration.	Yes	Low	Small	High
Water quality improvement	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Stormwater treatment / bioremediation is recommended in the plan for all precincts. There are currently gross pollutant traps on some drains - effectiveness and maintenance of these and potential need for more pollutant traps should be evaluated. It may be	Yes	Large	Large	Unknown

Improvements proposed	Precinct	Comments	In favour	Cost	Scale of work	Priority
		possible to achieve stormwater treatment using a more modest, less costly design that requires less engineering works. Council should consult more widely with UNE riparian ecology researchers and with stormwater experts to better assess options that are suited to the local stormwater flows and local conditions. Retrofitting stormwater detention and filtering near the source may be more beneficial. See government water sensitive urban design guidelines. Functioning wetland systems planted with native species do a great job in slowing down and filtering water flow and can be designed to provide habitat.				
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	1	Island sculpture - I strongly support enhancing all precincts with artworks sympathetic to the natural values of the area. Flood proofing and weed control will be a challenge in some areas such as the island..	Neutral	Low-med	Med	Low
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	1	Additional ongoing maintenance needs to be factored in wherever water access is provided. The suspension bridge enables good viewing. Solutions are needed to prevent shopping trolleys and other rubbish being thrown into the waterhole at the weir.	Conditional	Low	Small	Low
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	5	Substantial constraints to the potential for constructed water bodies are identified in the Masterplan. The reference in the plan to high ongoing maintenance costs of constructed waterbodies in urban areas o SE Queensland is highly relevant. The potential site identified adjacent to Taylor St/Donnelly St appears to conflict with established planting of NE Peppermint. Predicted increase in frequency of severe drought and water shortage detracts further from the practicality of constructing and maintaining large water bodies which enable increased evaporation. Alternatively, vegetated wetlands may serve the purpose of filtering and slowing stormwater as well as providing habitat.	No	High	Large	
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Seating / picnic tables - good where they can be constructed to withstand flooding, easily maintained and resistant to vandalism. Some seats at an angle to one another to enhance communication could be good.	Yes strongly	Small	Small	Med
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Exercise stations - great idea, low impact and low cost. Additional community consultation before construction recommended to better identify potential community usage and appropriate number and location.	Yes	Small	Small	High
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	2	Replace clubhouse - appropriate if it meets the level of community demand and benefit gained. Note that the new clubhouse constructed adjacent to Taylor St on the Rolagas fields is particularly unattractive in its design - any new building should also have some public appeal. Nature play elements a good idea - not only at clubhouse but also at a variety of locations along the creek. These could be low key and inexpensive eg logs to climb on. Consideration needs to be given to solid anchoring of any fixtures in the case of flooding.	Neutral	Med	U	U
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	2, 3	One viewing deck would be adequate., I am not convinced that the Harris Park precinct is a good location for it - Curtis or Civic Parks would be better.	Neutral			
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	2	I like the idea of a shady grove, seating and interpretive signage in currently fenced off area adjacent to the Belgrave theatre if the level of soil contamination does not preclude	Neutral	Low	Small	Unsure

Improvements proposed	Precinct	Comments	In favour	Cost	Scale of work	Priority
		this. However, this is a fairly busy roundabout area so would be a bit noisy, and may not get much usage. Interpretive signage is a good idea. Certainly, a few more shady trees could be attractive.				
Human interaction, water viewing and arts	3	Village green with permanent structure for performances, community fitness classes and movies in the park could be good. I am not sure that this should be at the expense of the existing duckpond. I have not observed that the duckpond in its present form, attracts much attention or interest from park users even though water features are called for by some community members. Re-vegetation of the edges and modification of the duckpond to create a more interesting, dynamic and interactive natural area would be also be an option. An island would create safe habitat for ducks, which are frequently seen along the creek. A review as to whether this is the best location for a water feature and whether a different design (eg constructed wetland as proposed by Darren Ryder) would be better / may be appropriate to get the best outcome.	Conditional	Med-high	Med-large	Unsure
Human interaction	3	Meditative precinct, labyrinth. I cannot envisage how the hexagonal stones from the creek channel could be used to delineate a labyrinth - it would be huge. Ask local Aboriginal people what they would consider to be culturally appropriate for this location or elsewhere along the creeklands. Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee chaired by Steve Widders would be an appropriate group to discuss this.	Yes	Low	Small	Unsure
Art	4	I support the concept of sculptures that highlight the broader values of the region over the achievements of one individual and I support relocation of the gorge walker sculpture	Yes	Low	Small	Low
Art	All	Ephemeral art works should be encouraged and outdoor workshops such as weaving using natural fibres supported by council. Willow pods (woven willow cubbies) created by Andrew Parker for the Black Gully Festival in 2019 are a great idea, and much enjoyed by children. I strongly support the commissioning of more murals and artworks highlighting features in our region.	Yes	Low	Minimal	High
Safety and user enjoyment, play equipment, facilities	1, 2, 5	Formalised pedestrian and cycle crossing of Dumaresq St flanked by speed bumps is needed. Need to create traffic calming and central safety zone for safe bicycle crossing to connect new cycle path on north of creek to western side of Markham Street. The same safety provisions are needed to mark a safe pedestrian and cycle crossing north of the Markham St roundabout and on Marsh Street where proposed new cycle path crosses to link with Kirkwood Street Move supporting posts for sign placed in the footpath on the northern side of Dumaresq St opposite Monkton Aquatic Centre so that they do not narrow the shared path. Maintenance work is needed on this footpath.	Yes Strongly	Small	Small	High
Safety and user enjoyment, play equipment, facilities	1	Shading over skate park is a good idea but options for a more low key and less visually obtrusive design should be considered	Yes			Med
Safety and user enjoyment, play	4	The play equipment and picnic area on the north side of the creek are popular and	No			

Improvements proposed	Precinct	Comments	In favour	Cost	Scale of work	Priority
equipment, facilities		frequently used. I do not support their removal. If this is a safety issue, perhaps there are other options.				
	3, 4	I consider the electronic toilets with recorded voice to be unattractive and offputting. Perhaps they have been chosen to be helpful for disabled people? The suggested design (see photo in plan) of the toilet block proposed for Civic Park is unattractive and inconsistent with Armidale's existing heritage buildings. Vandal-proofing needs to be taken into consideration.				
Interpretation, lighting and directional signage	1	Clearly sign bicycle access along footpath on northern side of Dumaresq Street across from the swimming pool eg with bicycle stencils. The new directional sign on the north-eastern corner of the intersection should direct cyclists to cross Markham St and ride along the western footpath in order to join the shared path to UNE	Yes	Low	Small	High
Heritage items	1	Pedestrian suspension bridge near TAFE appears to need major maintenance including replacement of posts and painting. This quaint and interesting as well as useful historic feature should be preserved.	Yes	Low - med	Small- med	High
Heritage items	1	Ideas for restoration, refurbishment, lighting and repurposing of historic pool entrance are good. Community consultation needed to assess degree of support and community 'ownership' and usage of refurbished building.				Unknown

13 Hilda Ave
Armidale NSW 2350
16/09/2020

Armidale Regional Council
75A Rusden Street,
Armidale NSW 2350

Submission re Draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan

Thankyou for the opportunity for community feedback regarding the 2018 Armidale Creeklands Masterplan prepared by McGregor Coxall.

Overall, it is great to see the initial ideas gathered from the community engagement incorporated into the overall Masterplan - the consultants have done this well.

Please see attached table with comments regarding specific improvements proposed and additional comments included below.

Important information omitted from the Masterplan which needs to be considered / included: The habitat value of the riparian zone.

The 5 precincts identified in the Masterplan are considered as though they are distinct units separate from the rest of the creek. Connectivity is only referred to in the context of linking the precincts rather than the creeklands as a whole.

The essence of the creeklands is the connectivity it provides across the full extent of the Armidale urban area (the creek itself as well as the reserved open space lands) as well as at a catchment level. This is particularly important in the context of riparian zone fauna and habitat. Riparian areas and their associated watercourses are 'keystone' ecosystems, with the health of ecological communities elsewhere in the landscape dependent on the health of riparian areas¹. Riparian areas form natural corridors linking habitats and provide routes for dispersal or migration of terrestrial and aquatic animals. The role of riparian areas as corridors has become increasingly important as surrounding ecosystems are modified for urban and agricultural purposes.

Much has been accomplished by community groups working to remove woody weeds and re-establish native vegetation along the creeklands.

The area considered in the masterplan comprises a significant gap in habitat connectivity. Options to enhance habitat and connectivity should be one focus of the plan. Rehabilitation and native species restoration of the riparian vegetation along the creekland is recommended in the Masterplan as a specific improvement for the active family and Harris Park precincts. Additional native planting, possibly using stepping stone planting, is needed particularly in the Curtis and Harris Park precincts. Gaps between stepping stone plantings should be less than 100 metres as wider gaps deter the passage of small birds.

Protection of habitat for existing native species should be taken into account in any planned revegetation or creek reconstruction. Previous studies identified that precinct 1 (or 2?) was home to the Rakali or White-tailed water rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*), an aquatic mammal with webbed feet that lives in the vicinity of permanent bodies of fresh water. I have personally seen a dead rakali on the Dumaresq Street creek crossing. Koalas occasionally disperse into central Armidale. Additional suitable trees to assist them to move safely through the creeklands could be of benefit.

Flying foxes have used revegetated areas of the creek adjacent to Taylor Street in recent months and many birds use the area, including, in summer 2020, the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo.

The high value of riparian areas for native fauna and potential to further enhance connectivity should be clearly identified in the plan.

A fauna survey along the urban length of the creek to better understand its existing habitat values and changes that may have occurred due to revegetation should be commissioned as a priority.

Planning to control feral predators such as cats and foxes would enhance survival of waterbirds and other fauna. Island can be helpful in this context.

1 Environment and Recreation Territory and Municipal Services 2007. Ribbons of Life. ACT aquatic species and riparian zone conservation strategy. Action Plan No 29.
https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/576317/Action_Plan_29_Vision_and_Contents.pdf

The long term effects of predicted changes in climate, hence creek flow and ability to maintain parklands should be considered and planned for in the Masterplan. Riparian areas of Dumaresq Creek may provide refuge for fauna in times of drought.

Yours sincerely,
Helen Webb.



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September 16, 2020

To: council@armidale.nsw.gov.au

cc interimadministrator@armidale.nsw.gov.au

Dear Council,

Our association is delighted to have been given access to the draft Creeklands Plan so we can provide a considered response; it is indeed a pity that the draft Plan was withheld by Council over two years.

Executive Summary

- We are delighted with the release of the draft Creeklands Master Plan and we congratulate the authors on creating a comprehensive compilation of the background, the consultation and the interesting concepts put forward in this professionally prepared document.
- The best features were the detailed figures and maps of the many features of the creeklands environment and the extensive consultation with most groups and individuals with interests in the creeklands.
- The levels and extent of soil contamination from past industrial activity is described well and should result in plans being made for its remediation.
- As soon as resources permit, the scope of planning needs to be extended beyond the limited geographical area covered by the draft Master Plan and should also include exploring how the original natural flow rates along the creeklands can be restored through water engineering.
- As plans are developed for future improvements, more engagement with the Aboriginal community, the University of New England and Armidale's sporting bodies would assist in improving plans.
- We approve the recommendations and our association would especially like to be part of any working group that might take this exciting plan forward towards refinement and implementation.
- This submission has the support of all members of our association. Our desire to see the draft Plan include the further investigation of safe instream water bodies along the city's creeklands also has widespread support from hundreds if not thousands of members of the broader community (see Evidence below).
- We trust that Council will revise the draft Creeklands Master Plan in response to submissions before it is adopted - and advise the community of the changes made.

The Good Points:

- The draft Master Plan is comprehensive, provides much useful background material, puts forward a wide array of worthwhile concepts and has drawn on a successful process of engaging the community and especially key groups with interests in the creeklands. We congratulate the authors.
- We especially liked the figures showing detailed maps of the many features of the creeklands environment.
- We are very interested in the suggestion made under Place Principles (p25) of a “waterway link to Dumaresq Dam”.
- We appreciate the detail provided around p30 on soil contamination. Our view is that soil contamination from any sources (e.g. gas works, tannery, pole treatment, etc.) needs to be addressed as an important matter for the community. It was pleasing to read the consultants’ view that “... soil contamination is not considered an insurmountable barrier to landscape works and use of the parklands ...”
- The description of the various community groups interested in the creeklands is a valuable section. We hope that these groups will work together to ensure that the many valuable ideas in this Master Plan move towards realisation.
- We particularly like the idea of replacing foot bridges with new bridges to ‘match design aesthetic’ (p63) and other imaginative design ideas.
- We like many of the images used to indicate the types of improvements envisaged by the consultants.
- The estimates of possible costings provide a valuable insight into the levels of funding that will need to be sought for various project components.
- The listing of references (p108) is valuable as it clearly identifies the wide array of individuals and groups with interests in the creeklands. Perhaps one of the last sentences of this Master Plan (“We acknowledge the efforts by the community and that the masterplan was driven by the community”) would be better inserted into the very front of the Master Plan?

Points of concern:

- Given the size of the document (114 pp) and the limited time frame for responses (28 days), we fear there might not be sufficient time or opportunity for many in the community to provide their opinion on the plan.
- We are pleased to have found a number of mentions in the draft Plan of the indigenous people of the region and the need for recognition of their perspectives. We wonder if sufficient has been done to seek their input? Our association has met a number of times with representatives of the local Aboriginal community and we believe that they have much to offer during both planning and implementation. Aboriginal representation should be part of any working group.
- As we noted in our original submission to the consultants (April 2018), the limited scope of the study to the area between Markham and Douglas Sts means that important factors have

not been adequately addressed. We continue to believe that a further study of broader scope is warranted to build onto the strengths of this draft Plan. Specifically, we would like to see exploration of sources of water to see the natural rate of flow of Dumaresq Creek restored to pre-Dumaresq Dam levels, through diverting other sources of water and/or through recycling perhaps using solar powered pumps. This would help ensure stream health is maintained even in dry times.

- The risk of flooding is discussed on p29. We fully appreciate the reality of flooding in Armidale and consider it an issue of major importance. Our submissions to Council have always stressed that any of our suggestions for water bodies and greater flows of water must NOT exacerbate flood risk. We believe that, with careful design, that is feasible and therefore this should not be an argument against well-designed instream water bodies.
- On page 42, a case is made against online artificial water bodies. In our view, there is insufficient recognition that well-designed instream interventions are possible. Examples include Inverell, Walcha, Bingara in northern NSW and Toowoomba and Stanthorpe in southern Queensland. Words used in the Plan suggest negative impacts: 'small lakes', 'weir', 'embankment', 'raise flood levels', 'expensive', 'soil contamination', 'difficult to manage', 'eutrophication', etc. We ask why not use some words such as 'billabongs', 'constructed wetlands', 'lagoons', 'pools, riffles and streams' the latter terms reflecting the natural watercourses of our Tablelands environment. We accept that options may well be restricted within the limited area of this Plan – but Armidale deserves to see some discussion here of other locations such as upstream from areas of soil contamination, downstream of Douglas St such as near the Cookes Rd bridge, and other creeks and tributaries where instream interventions have already been successfully constructed (e.g. dam in Mike O'Keefe woodland which has over time become 'naturalised' and the pools created in Black Gully Creek behind NERAM – at the instigation of members of our association as well as others from the community).
- Although reference is made to the highly relevant 1999 symposium on in-stream interventions in Dumaresq Creek (which includes many papers by specialists), no mention is made of the statement in the executive summary of that symposium which states: "Constructed wetlands, ponds and paths and bridges were rated highest for improving the recreational value and constructed wetland highest for improving the environmental value of Dumaresq Creek and its surrounds." The fact that this symposium was held some 21 years ago does not diminish the value of the considered opinion of the authors of this report (<https://www.armidalecreeklands.org.au/history-reports>)
- Whilst we are interested in the possibility of interactive technology and public art, we caution that the value of such features are 'in the eye of the beholder' and so the community should be involved in deciding what is desirable with any such proposals.

Opportunities

- The scope of planning for water along Armidale's creeklands needs to be expanded to include areas both upstream of Markham St, downstream of Douglas St and also tributaries of Dumaresq Creek such as Black Gully Creek and Martins Gully both of which flow through parts of the city.

- We note that the NSW Government's New England North West Regional Plan 2036 aims in part for "A healthy environment with pristine waterways". Surely this should encourage our community to strive to overcome legacy issues that have led to significant contamination in our creeklands environment - and help strengthen applications for funding from the State Government.
- As the Master Plan moves into planning and implementation phases, better outcomes could be realised if there were to be greater engagement with staff from the University of New England. In addition to the submissions to this Plan made by UNE experts in aquatic ecology, there would be benefits from input from senior management as well as disciplines and units such as geography, urban planning, crime prevention, hydraulic modelling, SportUNE, UNE Life, soil contamination, postgraduate students, UNE Landcare, etc.

Comments on recommendations:

We agree with all of the recommendations but make the following comments:


- Before the draft Creeklands Master Plan is endorsed by Council, we trust that it will be revised after consideration of the feedback received from the community during this public exhibition period.
- We agree with the proposal for a working group "of stakeholders (including external or transient organisations or users) to regularly meet to continue project momentum". We trust that our association, Visions for Armidale Creeklands Inc, will be invited to have a 'seat at the table' together with many other interested parties. This is part of the solution we seek for a more transparent approach to planning issues that affect the community (we are pleased with the recent examples of a more consultative approach taken recently by the current Administrator of Armidale Regional Council).
- We suggest that, as Council develops proposed plans for implementation, that community meetings be held to ensure that the community is brought along on what hopefully will continue to be a shared journey.
- Regarding Recommendation 9: In December 2019, our association made a carefully prepared and detailed submission to the Armidale Regional Plan 2040 which was seeking to take a broader and longer term view of the future directions of the city and region. We understand that this planning process has been curtailed, perhaps for good reason. However, in the interests of transparency, we suggest that Council make available (perhaps via the Council website) copies of all submissions made to the consultants so that these past efforts of many in the community - developed with great commitment and energy - are not discarded/wasted. This would allow all those interested to get a more holistic view of what the Armidale Regional community aspires to over a 20 year horizon and the importance of the creeklands to the city and region.

Evidence in support of our submission

We have had valuable feedback from members of our association who have endorsed a draft of these responses.

In addition, we sought responses from the community Facebook audience.


The following Facebook post of September 9, 2020 (results at September 16, 2020) revealed a very high level of positive sentiment from the community that the draft Creeklands Master Plan has been released for comment. As shown in the image below, zero negative feedback was received to this post. Of course, that does not mean that respondents had read the draft Plan, rather that they liked the fact that a draft Plan had been prepared and released for comment.






Visions for Armidale Creeklands
Published by Jim Scott [?] · 6d · 🌐

⋮

Have you commented on the 114 page draft Creeklands Master Plan for Dumaresq Creek yet? If you don't have time, why not join our association to add your voice as we prepare our responses by September 17? We will send any new members our draft for you to comment on. We aim to develop a consensus of Visions from ALL parts of the community. If not you, who? If not now, when?
<https://www.armidalecreeklands.org.au/joinus>



Performance for Your Post

7,700 People Reached

115 Reactions, Comments & Shares 📊

41 Like	19 On Post	22 On Shares
7 Love	1 On Post	6 On Shares
64 Comments	8 On Post	56 On Shares
3 Shares	3 On Post	0 On Shares

3,000 Post Clicks

1,602 Photo Views	120 Link Clicks 📄	1,278 Other Clicks 📄
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

0 Hide Post **0** Hide All Posts

0 Report as Spam **0** Unlike Page

Insights activity is reported in the Pacific time zone. Ads activity is reported in the time zone of your ad account.

7,700
People Reached

3,115
Engagements

Boost Again

Boosted on Sep 9, 2020 Completed
By Jim Scott

<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> People Reached 1.1K </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> Post Engagement 193 </div>
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[View Results](#)

Colette Morrissey, Ian Smith and 18 others

1 Comment

3 Shares

Like

Comment

Share

Our association’s Facebook post of September 12, 2020 (results at September 16, 2020) specifically sought feedback on our concerns about the lack of support in the draft Plan for any instream water bodies.

Post Details
✕

Visions for Armidale Creeklands

Published by Jim Scott (?) · 3d

To save you the read of the 114-page draft Creeklands Master Plan, your community group has prepared a response. Whilst we think it is commendable and comprehensive, we question the lack of support for any instream water bodies.

Our association wants to see the investigation and design of safe instream water bodies along the creeklands. Armidale already has examples of successful constructed instream water bodies such as the wetland in the Mike O’Keefe woodland (cnr Kentucky and Kennedy Sts) which has become wonderfully ‘naturalised’ and also the pools created in Black Gully Creek behind NERAM (see images).

With careful design, and water engineering to restore the original water flows, we reckon that instream billabongs, riffles and wetlands can be created to provide healthy water flows along our extensive creeklands – without causing erosion or making flooding worse – and so enhancing the environment, recreation and economy for all in our city.

Please give us a Like if you agree with these sentiments.

Performance for Your Post

1,693 People Reached

86 Reactions, Comments & Shares

71 Like	62 On Post	9 On Shares
1 Love	1 On Post	0 On Shares
10 Comments	9 On Post	1 On Shares
4 Shares	4 On Post	0 On Shares

384 Post Clicks

186 Photo Views	0 Link Clicks	198 Other Clicks
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NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

0 Hide Post	0 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

Insights activity is reported in the Pacific time zone. Ads activity is reported in the time zone of your ad account.

1,693

People Reached

470

Engagements

Boost Again

Boosted on Sep 12, 2020

By Jim Scott

Finishes today

People Reached

1.3K

Post Engagement

175

View Results

62

8 Comments

4 Shares

Like

Comment

Share

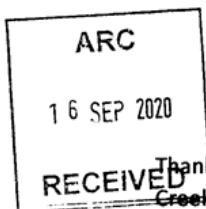
This confirms very strong community support for our proposition and zero negative feedback.

Some of the comments made by the community include: “What a difference water makes, so harmonious with the plants and wildlife. Water in the Creeklands is a must.”; “The instream water bodies you have mentioned are wonderful.”; “The MO’K woodland is wonderful. It would be terrific to see something like that in the creeklands”.

We trust that Council will therefore take heed of this community feedback and modify the draft Creeklands Master Plan to incorporate our suggestion in this post, namely:

Our association wants to see the investigation and design of safe instream water bodies along the creeklands. Armidale already has examples of successful constructed instream water bodies such as the wetland in the Mike O’Keefe woodland (cnr Kentucky and Kennedy Sts) which has become wonderfully ‘naturalised’ and also the pools created in Black Gully Creek behind NERAM (see images).

With careful design, and water engineering to restore the original water flows, we reckon that instream billabongs, riffles and wetlands can be created to provide healthy water flows along our extensive creeklands – without causing erosion or making flooding worse – and so enhancing the environment, recreation and economy for all in our city.



ARMIDALE CREEKLANDS MASTERPLAN SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to make some comments on the recently released Dumaresq Creeklands Masterplan.

I have no doubt that this project can totally alter the whole Armidale "picture", bring the community together, provide employment opportunities in the sector that needs them the most and finally begin to realise Armidale's unique potential to be a truly beautiful regional city, able to build on its already imposing list of attractions.

THE MASTERPLAN SCOPE.

We were surprised to see how confined the study was in the boundaries it drew, and if the consultants were working to a limited terms-of-reference, that is unfortunate. We would like to offer the following comments :

- The area under consideration between Markham and Douglas streets suggest that the study was confined to that area under crown management, effectively removing those portions of the creek owned privately. The overall health of Dumaresq Creek must be considered, as each portion affects the whole waterway.
- We were disappointed that there were not more external conceptual images provided by the consultants, who have an excellent record in bold major projects. Perhaps they were limited by cost to basing most of the report from locally developed input. A compelling reason for using outside consultants is to provide a "fresh" set of eyes.

OPPORTUNITIES.

- The Masterplan makes very little mention of the crucial need to create and maintain consistent water flow, or for reticulation. The condition of the creek itself is dependant on running water. The concept of piping water back upstream for rotation is surely fundamental, and it would be helpful for any future working party to consult hydrologists and engineers to gather some background ideas on this.
- We fully support the Masterplan's suggestion to investigate a waterway linkage to Dumaresq Dam. This would effectively replace the point above if it were to provide a constant water flow.
- If a constant water flow was to be made possible, it would be foolish to disregard online water intervention points such as small weirs to assist stream consistency.

STRENGTHS

- There exists an enormous resource for this project – the Armidale community itself. As the report suggested, some 1,400 volunteers represent a massive resource to put towards the upgrading of the whole creekland.
- The Creeklands project encompasses each area of the bottom triple line – environmental, economic and social. There are huge tourism opportunities, and the chance to establish some significant recreation areas for community use. Community cohesion would be enhanced through a big lift in morale.

NEXT STEPS

- We strongly agree with the Masterplan recommendation to immediately establish a Working Party to advance a stepped approach with Armidale Regional Council towards a major upgrade of the whole Creeklands area. Much expertise already exists with which to put together a very strong group.
- A strong strategy for advocacy should be among the priorities.
- As the report is almost three years old, it would be useful to refresh, without replacing, community views already obtained.
- We are not at all dismayed by the estimated cost – by now probably around 16 million dollars. Here lies a further opportunity – an opportunity that would require some speedy initial planning. There seems to be almost universal agreement that the roadway to economic recovery in Australia will lie in large infrastructure projects with the ability to provide widespread local employment opportunities. This would surely fit the bill.

In summary, we enthusiastically support any Creeklands upgrading project. The planning should include a total scope as referred to in earlier comments. The Masterplan is a very useful document to use as a starting point, and much of the information contained in it will be valuable to incorporate in forward planning.

Thank you.

John Wearne AM



Wendy Wearne



42 Kirkwood St.

Armidale. NSW.

0418-419684 (J) 0418-119906 (W)

Good afternoon,

I've had some input to the Armidale Tree Group Submission and to the Armidale Vision 2030 Submission.

However there is one area which I feel needs to be considered as a high priority from a risk assessment as well as a general public safety matter.

There is one thing that I think Council needs to consider and possibly seek funding for and that is the installation of automated sensor boom gates like those at railway crossings; on Taylor Street, Faulkner Street and Niagara Street. When these roads flood, the council erects mobile road closed signs which are often ignored. I suggest that they would pay for themselves over time vs overtime to council workers. I've seen the tail of a small sedan start to drift when it crossed at Niagara Street quite a few years ago.

The reason I raise this is due to lives lost in Toowoomba in Queensland when they had a deluge in January 2011 – a suspected 300mms in a short period of time. The topography of Toowoomba is very similar to Armidale but a bit more pronounced with a bigger catchment area. However the same consequences could arise with a major downpour and a full soil profile. Certainly worth consideration.

Regards,
John Lemon.

John Lemon
JML Environmental Consultants Pty Ltd
16 Illallangi Close
Armidale. NSW 2350

jml.enviro@gmail.com Mobile: 0427414871

Dear Armidale Council,

I am delighted to see that the new Armidale Creeklands Masterplan has included a suggestion for a permanent labyrinth in Civic Park, as part of a proposed "meditative precinct" (page 67, No. 9): *"A meditative precinct in the southeast region of Civic Park by establishing a permanent labyrinth and an Aboriginal ceremonial space, adjacent to the existing Judith Wright memorial garden. The landscape design reflects Aboriginal land stewardship with small copses of native peppermint trees connected with open grassy areas. The stones removed from the creek channel can possibly be used to form the labyrinth, set so that they are flush with the grass (hexagonal side up), to minimise maintenance considerations."*

As the originator of the vision for a community labyrinth in Civic Park, I can imagine there has been some careful deliberation about the proposed relocation of the labyrinth to the south-east corner of Civic Park. I would like to share some thoughts about the proposal.

Traffic noise concerns

The new site proposed for the permanent labyrinth in the Armidale Creeklands Masterplan, being adjacent to Dumaresq Street, rather than Dangar Street, means that the labyrinth would be closer to busy morning and afternoon traffic noise, not as conducive to relaxing meditative walking. I think there would still be space for the labyrinth to remain in its current location, even with the proposed new Village Green area.

Obstruction of the vista

The proposed area for the labyrinth in the 'meditative precinct' in the diagram on p 66 (copied below) looks rather hemmed in by the 'tunnel of trees'. It also looks as though when you enter the labyrinth you will be facing towards the street. If the labyrinth has to move to this area, it would be much more relaxing if the entrance was facing north-north-east into green expanses, as per its current orientation. Having one's back to the traffic would make it easier to ignore the noise. If I were to include the labyrinth in this 'meditative precinct', I would position it about where the number '9' is placed, and enlarge the Aboriginal ceremonial area, or have two, one for women, one for men.



Types of trees planted near the labyrinth

Care needs to be taken when choosing the trees to be planted near the labyrinth, if it is going to be relocated. Trees like peppermint gums may drop gum-nuts, leaves and resin on the labyrinth, and deciduous trees would likely drop leaves in autumn that would obscure the labyrinth.

Concurrent use of the labyrinth and the Aboriginal ceremonial space

Having the labyrinth next to the Aboriginal ceremonial space as proposed would likely preclude both spaces being used at the same time. I cannot envisage a labyrinth meditation walk going on at the same time as an Aboriginal ceremony in a space right next to it. If there is serious intent for either space to be used by people for meditative practices, there needs to be more space between them. I think it would be better for the labyrinth to stay where it is currently located near Dangar Street.

Help with creation of the permanent labyrinth

I would very much like to be involved in the orientation and choice of design of the new permanent labyrinth.

Since the existing labyrinth in Civic Park was installed in 2014, the Australian Labyrinth Network has been established as an incorporated body. I am a member of the ALN, and there are many resources available, including access to other people who have built permanent community labyrinths. I would be delighted to assist Council by making contact with any of the creators of the Sydney Centennial Park labyrinth, the National Arboretum Labyrinth Garden, and the Toowoomba labyrinth, all of which are outstanding examples of beautiful permanent community labyrinths.

For a map locating all the labyrinths in Australia, please go to <https://aln.org.au/find-a-labyrinth>

Looking forward to the next steps in implementing the Armidale Creeklands Masterplan, and being part of finding the ideal location and orientation for the labyrinth in Civic Park.

Warmly,
Joy Bowles

Labyrinth Armidale
37 Hargrave Street
Armidale NSW 2350
mobile +61 403 966 517
email ejoybowles@gmail.com

Draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan

17 September 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan.

As the Armidale Regional Council is aware and the consultants, McGregor and Coxall have highlighted in their report, the Dumaresq Creek and surrounds are very important to the residents of Armidale. This is well demonstrated in a practical way by the numbers of volunteers who clean up rubbish and work to rehabilitate sections of Dumaresq Creek.

I hope to see the Dumaresq Creek restored to a state that is as close as possible to the original condition, shape, riparian and terrestrial habitats.

It would be wonderful to once more see platypus using the creek as their home and for native fish and other aquatic species to flourish.

It is vital to regard Dumaresq Creek as an integrated whole rather than being compartmentalised into separate areas within the town boundaries. Indeed the 'connective spatial network' requires the whole of landscape connectivity. There is a need for recognition of the role of the creek in the wider catchment context as well as the more urban setting of parklands, city streets and recreational areas.

The construction of artificial lakes is a poor idea, but areas of natural wetlands could be beneficial for riparian ecology as well as for other species such as birds, reptiles and insects. These areas may also be beneficial for flood mitigation if the water 'drain' through Civic and Curtis parks is restored to a natural creek again.

Infrastructure such as tables, seats, playgrounds, sculptures and buildings should be designed and constructed so that they blend with the natural creekland, native bushland surroundings. The tribute to Judith Wright is a good example.

Good examples of seating and artworks exist east along the creekland pathway east of Taylor Street. The retention of heritage infrastructure is recommended, such as some of the bridges eg the suspension bridge near TAFE.

Clearing work and revegetation must be done in consultation with local professionals and volunteers who have expertise in recognising and choosing the most appropriate methods and native plants that are site specific.

These groups include the Armidale Tree Group and the Armidale Urban Rivercare Group, as well as UNE and self employed botanists and ecologists.

Recommend that Council puts a levy on Coles and Woolworths with regard to abandoned shopping trolleys. The system that Aldi uses re coin operated trolleys seems to result in retention of their trolleys at the store. Apart from multiple discarded trolleys in the creek, trolley-litter is a very ugly addition to our streetscapes.

The Creeklands Master Plan is an ideal opportunity to create and restore aquatic and riparian corridors to complement the terrestrial corridor.

This will enhance ARC's Greenprint for a Sustainable Future linking in with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals especially Biodiversity and Water elements.

Instead of Dumaresq Creek in the form of Dumaresq Drain as it now appears through Civic and Curtis parks, return Dumaresq Creek to as natural and original shape, course and form as possible.

This will require a thorough plan to consider the ecology and especially how it can be achieved and the cost involved – perhaps it would be judicious to proceed a small section at a time in order to stabilise each section with appropriate bank-stabilising native plants.

With regard to specific objectives in the Draft Plan:

Agree with suggestions to clean up the whole creek through town, remove weeds and exotic trees along the waterway and to plant more native shrubs. Groves of casuarinas provide beautiful shade, as well as delightful soft sighing sounds when windblown. These species could also be used as avenue trees.

In other parts of town there are attractive non-native trees that provide beautiful viewing in autumn and shade in summer.

Area 1. Agree with the aim to revegetate to provide protective habitat and fauna connectivity

Area 2. This area is favoured by water birds such as ducks and numerous reptiles, mainly lizards. Clearing up this section must proceed carefully to minimise disturbing wildlife and to ensure that the correct plants are chosen.

Areas 3 and Area 4. As above plus re-naturalise the course of Dumaresq through Civic and Curtis parks by converting the 'drain' shape to a natural waterway again.

Areas 2,3,4. Agree with connectivity idea to Kirkwood Street and extra walking paths around the parks with appropriate native plantings. Also a bike track on north-western side of Dumaresq Creek could connect Kirkwood Street through Civic and Curtis parks to make a circuit.

In Armidale there are many individuals and groups working on creating natural habitat corridors for koalas and other mammals and bird species. Landcare and rivercare groups have also achieved wonderful environmental and recreational outcomes. I heartily endorse these endeavours and wish to express my gratitude to the

many people who have worked, often voluntarily and tirelessly over many years to enhance our environment. ARC and formerly Armidale and Dumaresq Councils are also to be congratulated in their support for many of the groups and environmental endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Hosking

47 Kirkwood St, Armidale NSW 2350

“The Armidale Creeklands Masterplan will offer a narrative vision guiding the development of a restorative and connective spatial network linking social, environmental and operational ecologies into Armidale’s civic fabric The Armidale Creeklands masterplan will integrate the cultural, social, recreational, environmental and tourism potential of the entire precinct, while addressing the key issues of environmental and hydrologic impact, public safety, flooding, social infrastructure and maintenance. The project is an opportunity to deliver a wide range of public benefits to enhance liveability through integration of water and urban design. The masterplan can also deliver value to the region across a broad range of economic, social, and environmental areas using sustainable water management as the driver. By collaborating with local government, state agencies and communities through governance co-ordination, this project can deliver wide ranging aspirational benefits for Dumaresq Creek. Establishing pathways to the procurement of infrastructure providing enhanced flood control and reduced impact on public and private property is also an ambition of the project. These initiatives can also unlock substantial opportunities for funding, support and collaboration, with regional, state and national agencies encouraging regional development across the country. Council is now developing their Greenprint for a Sustainable Future, linked to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, the BioDiversity arc and Water arc from the UN criteria are highly relevant to the Creeklands and have been closely considered throughout the development of the masterplan. Concurrently, Council is also working on a series of city revitalisation plans, investigating initiatives in urban design, park hydrology, municipal ecology, creek flooding and wildlife corridors.

These plans and concepts have been integrated into the contextual analysis and strategic framing of the Creeklands Masterplan. “

SUBMISSION RE CREEKLANDS MASTER PLAN- ARMIDALE REGIONAL COUNCIL

DATE: 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

MARGARET O'CONNOR (ARC COUNCILLOR UNDER SUSPENSION ORDER)

The Masterplan document in general realises the overall input that was given to the consultants over a range of creek walks and other community consultation processes they undertook as part of their brief. (This was in distinction to the later city " Masterplan" process with different consultants that was much less inclusive and transparent.)

The focus on safety, on more family recreation spaces and understanding of the hydrology concerns of the creek lands being a flood way for the city is commended.

What is pleasing is the observation of a need to turn the commercial centre of Armidale towards the Creeklands so that there is more physical and emotional connectivity between the grassy fields and and water way and the main CBD.

Two aspects appear to have been overlooked in the draft masterplan.

1. Access issues for disabled people and seniors. During the last term of the elected Council prior to merger (2012-2016) we worked hard to have a footpath built to connect the disability services centre in Dumaresq St (western end) with the CBD by means of a footpath that allowed wheelchairs and mobility vehicles to have a smooth surface access all the way into town. Specific attention needs to be given to ensuring there is adequate connectivity between this disability precinct and the planned upgraded Creeklands area, including wheelchair access to the proposed viewing platforms and some of the viewing and passive recreation areas that, without this thought, may not be able to traverse roughed surfaces like grass, gravel and rocks. Tourism destinations for people with disabilities including mobility limitations(and older aged people who may need mobility scooters etc) are growing segments of the visitor economy, even more so now, post Covid 19 when regional tourism will be a safer option than overseas travel, especially for disabled and older visitors with special health needs.

2. Ecotourism. The Draft Creeklands Masterplan makes reference to the Dumaresq Creek's ecology. A vision I have always had is that the urban portion of Dumaresq Creek would fit into a larger project to restore the entire length of Dumaresq Creek between the Armidale urban area and Dumaresq Dam. This is one of the most degraded waterways in Australia, but in being so is typical of a post contact, European process of settling townships on waterways as part of the colonial experience from the 1840's until now, establishing what we now see as an unenlightened urban ethos, which turned waterways which were the lifeblood of colonial towns into drains. The phrase "our town/city's waterway should be " a vein not a drain" is one worthy of consideration. The 21st C re-framing of our waterways as part of a life giving stream reach, part of a complete river system, part of a catchment and part of a multi catchment headwater area (our LGA hosts three major catchment headwaters) would suggest that signage should incorporate and anticipate this scale of eco tourism understanding of the urban section of the water way. Council has an MOU with Southern New England Landcare who are the " full bottle" on advising how to expand the scope of the ecotourism potential of the creek lands restoration and re-interpretation, to make this stage one of an much larger eco tourism destination.

3. Aboriginal consultation; this is not mentioned in the Draft Masterplan. Our Aboriginal community could tell the designers where the original billabong was on the Creeklands, that formed a special place for their pre contact and early European contact cultural practices. This should be done and form part of the design of the new creek lands precinct. Additionally there should be Aboriginal cultural content in the art work, signage and other infrastructure on the new creek lands precinct.

4. Regent Honey eater: this is a our most seriously endangered local native bird - estimated 400 only left, but well represented in captive breeding programs. A special interpretation area, with art

work, and plantings of natural habitat trees for the Regent Honey Eater should be a priority inclusion, to focus local and visitor attention on the critical problem of species extinction rates and what we are doing locally to save our own seriously endangered Regent Honey Eater.

Margaret O'Connor

New England Visions 2030 Institute

25th August 2020

Exploring major issues influencing the future of our wider region.

Mr John Rayner
Acting General Manager
Armidale Regional Council
Civic Administration Building
Rusden St
Armidale NSW 2350

7th September 2020

HAVE YOUR SAY SUBMISSION – ARMIDALE CREEKLANDS MASTER PLAN

1. We believe that this Master Plan is an excellent start to the redevelopment of the Creeklands but it needs to be extended at both the western and eastern ends so that it links in with the UNE environment plans, tree planting and rehabilitation works by Armidale Urban Rivercare Group and Black Gully Reserve where some environmental work has already been completed by the Armidale Tree Group and NERAM.

P28 A review of literature and site inspection revealed the condition of the riparian and aquatic communities of Dumaresq Creek is poor. Past and present land use practices within the City Parklands area have resulted in significant alteration and severe degradation to the aquatic and riparian ecosystems of Dumaresq Creek. Surface water quality in the creek is degraded and typically has low oxygen, elevated nutrients and turbidity and bacterial contamination (White 2009), results which are common to urban waterways. Contaminated soil from a historic gas works was dumped in a section of the creek bank and may contribute contaminated leachate to the creek in wet periods (White 2009).

2. We believe that water quality and eradication of any residual chemical contamination in the soils including gasworks waste should be a priority **and be dealt with as a matter of urgency**. Much of this contamination has been spread downstream during periodic flood events. The Master plan has downplayed the extent and seriousness of this contamination which we find unsatisfactory.

3. We are calling on Council to begin a **staged plan of development beginning with the Active Family Precinct**. This plan of development should follow the recommendations and guidelines presented in the Creeklands Master Plan subject to any modifications as a result of the community consultation.

4. Vegetation: The following species should be excluded from the planting strategy.
Acacia melanoxylon is a heavily suckering species.
Exocarpus cupressiformis is a parasitic plant requiring a host.
Bursaria spinosa is very prickly and seeds prolifically setting up impenetrable thickets. It is an important species on the Tablelands but not for public areas.

Yours sincerely,

Think Tank Team
New England Visions 2030 Institute

W. <https://newenglandvisions2030.weebly.com/>E. newenglandvisions2030@gmail.com

From: Maryann K [<mailto:maryann572@gmail.com>]
Sent: Saturday, 29 August 2020 7:32 PM
To: Council
Subject:

Public Exhibition Armidale Creeklands Masterplan

Dear Mr May,

I have read almost all of the master plan. The various areas have extensive plans.

However the needs of Eastern Creeklands have not been addressed.

This part of the cycle way/walking track has a very large through flow of pedestrian and cycle traffic.

Many of these are elderly or old, there are a lot of young mothers with prams and small children, also a lot of dog walkers of all age brackets and physical abilities. Mobility scooters frequently use this area coming from Ken Thompson Lodge to CBD.

Essential Needs:-

- Solar lighting on all of cycleways from University to Cooks' Road
- More rubbish bins to decrease pollution in creek
- Increased number of dog bag bins.
- Seating provided East of Taylor St to McDonald Dr.
- Upgrading of track surface

Your consideration of these matters would be greatly appreciated by the whole community.

Yours sincerely

Mary Ann Krug

<https://armidale.nsw.gov.au/public-exhibition-armidale-creeklands-masterplan>

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All the best,
Maryann

Armidale Regional Council
75A Rusden Street
Armidale NSW 2350
Email: council@armidale.nsw.gov.au

17th September 2020

Submission on Draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan

I have reviewed the draft masterplan of the Armidale Creeklands and hereby make my comments for consideration. As a resident of Kirkwood Street and a daily user of the creeklands, I would like share my thoughts on the document, which I realise is only a draft and not intended to be a final construction plan.

1. The masterplan is a great initiative by Council and is a big step towards improving the aesthetics and functionality of the creeklands. I find the current creeklands stark and lacking vitality. I would like to see more gardens and gradually replace the willows and poplars with a variety of large trees, particularly other deciduous species.
2. I welcome the flattening out of the creek profile to make it accessible to the public. The steeping stone crossings will make it easier to cross the creek. Many people attempt to jump the creek, often to their detriment.
3. The flattening of the profile will make it easier to access and enjoy the creek, as well as remove garbage and debris to keep it pristine. I encourage the planting of native shrubs to make it more attractive for birds and fauna.
4. I do not agree that flattening out the cross sections will significantly improve the flow of water, because the downstream road culverts are the governing factor. Currently, debris often becomes trapped at the culverts and causes the water to back up.
5. The frequent flooding is a major problem that renders the creeklands largely unusable for several days afterwards. Therefore, I believe enlarging the road culverts to at least a 1 in 20 rear flood capacity and raising the road levels should be a primary consideration. The cross roads of Jessie Street, Faulkner Street and Taylor Street have high volumes of traffic. Flooding divides Armidale and creates huge traffic congestion. Armidale Regional Council would not tolerate any new developments to have such small culvert capacities, and therefore, improving the drainage at the creeks is simply bringing the drainage up to current standards.
6. Another primary consideration will be the improvement of paths and cycleways. The widening and extension of paths and cycleways will be a great improvement. However, there are no footpaths along Kirkwood Street in an east west direction, between Markham St and Taylor St, which is used by many people to access the Creeklands or the Armidale CBD. Kirkwood St is relatively narrow, but many people, particularly mothers with strollers and people with disabilities are forced to walk along the road, which is dangerous. I therefore urge Council to provide more footpaths in the east-west direction to link the north-south footpaths.



Lack of footpaths in east-west direction (intersection Kirkwood & Faulkner Sts)

7. The Harris & Curtis Park precinct (Heart of the Creeklands) plan shows a perimeter footpath around the park (item 6). Consideration needs to be made to its location, as along the southern road verge is clearly not practical due to the presence of trees and the steep crossfall. Therefore, a winding path closely following the contours would be more practical. I also suggest that the proposed footpath on the north side of the Rologas creeklands be extended under Marsh St bridge to avoid forcing pedestrians across the busy Marsh Street. Traffic is often backed up across the bridge in morning peak hour. (See attached plan)

8. Parking for the new superpark should be considered. There is not much available parking during the working week either in Faulkner St or at the Visitors Info carpark. Also, on market days, the Faulkner St carpark is either full or not available. Kirkwood St has kerbside parking, but the street is very narrow and dangerous. Cars driving northbound on Faulkner St often have to turn around due to the lack of parking, to look for 45 degree parking on the opposite side of the road. They often turn at the intersection of Kirkwood and Faulkner Sts, which is dangerous. I recommend that additional 45 degree parking be provided on the western side of Faulkner St for the convenience of northbound traffic. (See attached plan).



Vehicle carrying out a dangerous U-turn at the intersection of Faulkner and Kirwood Streets.

9. Council has just spent a lot of time and money improving the Curtis Park playground, including a large shade structure. I note that the masterplan proposes to remove the existing playground (Item 14). This seems complete folly, not just because of the waste of money, but also because the playground is a good alternative to the superpark. The circular swing is very popular, particularly with teenage children, and the playground is also used by visiting families stopping to use the toilets and picnic/bbq facilities.

10. The viewing platforms proposed for Harris Park (item 7) seem impractical. They need to be sufficiently far back from Dumaresq Creek to not impede the flow. Most structures are required to be constructed 0.5m above the 1:100 year flood level. If they are in the flood zone, then they will need to be strong structures to resist the impact of floodwaters and debris.

Yours faithfully



Neil Pullar
M 0427 715 885
117 Kirkwood Street
Armidale NSW 2350

CIVIC + CURTIS PARK PRECINCT



Ideas & suggestions - Creeklands Masterplan from New England Greens Armidale Tamworth.

Vision

The Green Heart of the City - an attractive area enjoyed by locals and tourists.

Updates to the 2018 Plan

The Hydrotherapy Pool Complex has been approved and funded. The SuperPlayground is being constructed.

Enhancements to attract more people to the area

Additional play equipment for the SuperPlayground. The top rankings in ARC's survey were: A) trampoline (highest score: 4.04), B) Mammoth swing (score 4.14), C) splash water play for toddlers (score 4.33). What would it take for Armidale's SuperPlayground to rival the one Tamworth?

Site one of the proposed exercise stations near the SuperPlayground to attract even more people and encourage adults and children to exercise together.

Construct some bicycle challenges, e.g 'skinnies' similar to those constructed for minimal cost by the New England Mountain Bikers in the Pine Forest

Include electric vehicle charging stations (e.g. at the visitor and Hydrotherapy/Aquatic centres) and bicycle parking at the SuperPlayground, Visitor and Aquatic Centres.

Attractive plantings

Create a sense of place by installing display boards showing points of interest, walking and cycle routes, distances to UNE, mountain bike trails, shops, the history and natural history of the area, and the features of each 5 precincts and also more distant walking or cycling destinations.

Ensure the central Civic Park area is designed to be flexible and accommodate current and future uses - sports, recreation, markets and festivals. The performance stage need not be permanent

Extend the cycleway into a major cycling route from as far east as possible to the CBD and UNE, with links to the rest of the city and provide information on the mountain bike trails. This would attract tourists as well as people cycling for transport.

The Interactive technology envisaged on page 75 of the plan seems like a good idea. It could be trialled at the SuperPlayground site.

Have appropriate security and lighting. Display PM_{2.5} pollution levels at several points along the cycleway to encourage people to exercise when the air is clean and not when it would be unhealthy to do so (e.g. when PM_{2.5} exceeds the standard of 25 µg/m³).

Include indigenous artwork/sculptures/features in each of the 5 precincts.

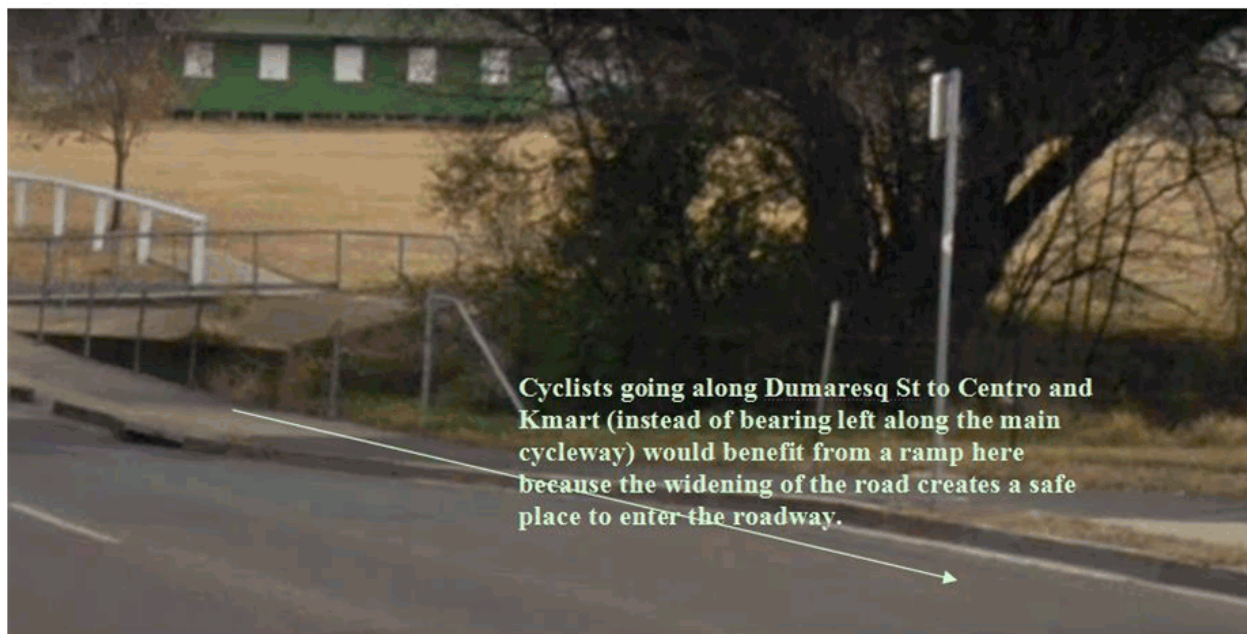


Connectivity

1) Improving pedestrian connectivity between the CBD and the Mall is a very good idea, but the proposed pedestrian crossings connect with the eastern side of the Kmart car park and the Coles car park entrance. This is impractical and undesirable. For the connections to work, the crossings should link into nice walking routes to the CBD. Connectivity proposals should therefore be delayed until appropriate plans are available showing the best routes and the desired focus (which might turn out to be the SuperPlayground).

2) As the major cycling route in Armidale, cycling connections into the area should be developed. ARC's funding applications for cycling routes should be revised and submitted to encourage more cycling in the area. Extending the cycleway to the maximum distance east and showing how it could link in with the Mountain Bike Trails at UNE would be an excellent way to attract tourists. Cyclists of all abilities would be catered for, from families interested in a 10 or 20 km route across town and back, to the more arduous mountain bike trails within 5 km of the visitor centre. Plans to make better use of these features could encourage many day and overnight visitors and are likely to attract more cyclists than the proposed rail trail. It would also encourage many more local residents to use bikes for transport.

- 3) Exercise stations are a very popular feature elsewhere along cycleways. More frequent stations along the cycleway with one or two exercises could encourage people to walk, jog or ride from station to station, attracting people to a much larger area. As well as a major exercise station at the SuperPlayground, this idea should be considered – see picture (left) of low-cost exercise stations along Newcastle’s Fernleigh Cycleway.
- 4) The path from the intersection of Dangar and Kirkwood Sts south-east to Dumaresq St near the roundabout at Faulkner St is a valuable connection that should not be removed.
- 5) The official cycle route from Markham/Dumaresq to the Belgrave Cinema is the footpath on the northern side of Dumaresq St. It's not particularly safe because vehicles often enter from the driveways without looking for cyclists. In the absence of any other solutions, prominent cycle logos across all driveways (perhaps also 'Look out for cyclists' signs) would improve safety and perhaps prevent a serious injury.
- 6) Two other much-needed low-cost improvements are: a) a 'pram ramp' for eastbound cyclists to dismount from the pavement just after the Creek Crossing near the cinema, to facilitate travel along Dumaresq St to Kmart, Coles and the CBD(see photo below). b) safety could also be improved by removing the supporting posts for the sign on the shared path opposite the Monkton Aquatic Centre; these posts narrow the path and create an obstruction.
7. Forming the bike / walking track into a circular track with creek crossings as in Inverell would be beneficial. The path would pass sculpture exercise stations , play equipment etc, adding interest by making a circular walk /bike ride, returning on the opposite side of the creek. This is likely appeal to families and walkers looking for a short walk.



Wildlife Connectivity

As noted in Helen Webb’s submission, the 5 precincts identified in the Masterplan are considered as though they are distinct units separate from the rest of the creek. Connectivity is only referred to in the context of linking the precincts rather than the creeklands as a whole.

The essence of the creeklands is the connectivity it provides across the full extent of the Armidale urban area (the creek itself as well as the reserved open space lands) as well as at a catchment level. This is particularly important in the context of riparian zone fauna and habitat. Riparian areas and their associated watercourses are ‘keystone’ ecosystems, with the health of ecological communities elsewhere in the landscape dependent on the health of riparian areas¹. Riparian areas form natural corridors linking habitats and provide routes for dispersal or migration of terrestrial and aquatic animals. The role of riparian areas as corridors has become increasingly important as surrounding ecosystems are modified for urban and agricultural purposes.

Planting native trees amongst the tall trees south of Kirkwood St in the Curtis Park area would enhance its attractiveness to wildlife and the connectivity of the area.

The creek should be viewed as one precinct. Creek flows, bank management and vegetation should have a continuous plan throughout the project, integrated in the five zones.

1 ACT aquatic species and riparian zone conservation strategy. Riparian Fauna.

Wildlife- birds and lizards require a continuous corridor, as would the occasional koala moving along this corridor of continuous vegetation through town.

Flexibility

1) The current flexibility is an advantage on market days and during the Autumn Festival and other events. Removing the path from Kirkwood/Dangar to Dumaresq St near Faulkner will reduce flexibility, as will planting an avenue of trees to divide the southern half of Civic Park (between Dangar and Faulker) in half. The best way to create a focus is to create attractive pathways from the CBD to the Creeklands. The current proposals start at a rather unattractive car park, so need revision to create the desired focus. If the SuperPlayground is successful, and expanded as suggested above, it could become the focus, so it might not be wise to make too many costly changes that reduce flexibility

2) Filling in the duckpond, and removing existing playgrounds before the end of their useful life, seems like unnecessary changes. We therefore strongly recommend retention of these facilities. Any safety issues concerning the playground north of the creek can be addressed by changing the contours of the slope to the creek, or adding dense vegetation or other barriers to enhance the safety of the area for children.

Value for money

1) Cost estimates of the proposals are on pages 88-89 of the plan. The total is about \$13.5 million excluding the playground (already funded and under construction). The cost of creek bed and banks reshaping and revegetation works in Curtis and Civic Parks is over \$5 million, including soil disposal. As noted, in Helen Webb's submission, re-shaping and re-vegetation of the channelised section of creek has the potential to greatly enhance visual appeal of the area as well as ecological health, accessibility and safety along this section of the creek. These benefits need to be weighed against the cost and potential difficulty of preventing large scale soil erosion and damage to works if the creek flooded while works were underway. Other competing uses of the available funding include the Mall Vibrancy Plan adopted by ARC in March 2017, upgrades to facilities at Dumaresq Dam and high priority cycle routes listed in the 2012 Armidale Bicycle Strategy that could not be constructed because of a lack of funds.

2) At \$250,000, the village green bandstand is cheaper than many other proposals, and with a small amount of landscaping, could create the village green amphitheatre shown in the plans. However, the portable stage used for previous festivals has worked well, and might be a better low-cost option with even greater flexibility.

Funding

Interim Administrator Viv May has expressed concerns about finances. ARC is applying for funds from the NSW Government's Public Spaces Legacy Program. Only a tiny fraction of the total costs will be available. Other projects will compete for the limited funding, including upgrading facilities at Dumaresq Dam, the original Mall Vibrancy Plan (adopted in March 2017) and high priority cycle routes in the 2012 Bicycle Strategy.

Super Playground Area

1) The SuperPlayground, with its central location close to the Visitor Centre, will attract many people to the area. Its attractiveness could be enhanced by building new shared paths into the area, as well as within it. Ideas for making this a real tourist feature could include extending the cycleway to the maximum distance east, and building additional walking and cycling paths into the area. A sense of place could be reinforced by attractive signs showing the exercise sites, connections to town and other features.

2) Council's survey showed considerable support for additional play equipment for the SuperPlayground. Top rankings were: A) trampoline (the highest score: 4.04), Mammoth swing (score 4.14), splash water play for toddlers (score 4.33). Additional equipment (especially a toddlers' paddling pool) could represent one of the best ways of attracting people to this area and making it more popular. Funding for these enhancements might be available under the NSW Government Public Spaces Legacy Program.

3) The plans include several exercise stations - at the Skate Park, Harris Park and near the Visitor Centre. Each is costed at \$40,000, for 4-6 pieces of equipment in a group with soft fall. Locating the station nearer to the visitor centre could attract even more people to this area and perhaps encourage adults and children to exercise together.

4) In keeping with the cycleway theme, the area would benefit from some other cycling features, e.g. 'skinnies' - planks a few inches off the ground that test cyclists' skill in riding along them. The New England Mountain Bike Club has constructed these and other attractive features at very low cost in the Pine Forest. NEMB may have some good low-cost and interesting ideas that would fit in well with the SuperPlayground theme.

Concerns about Contamination, maintenance and removal of shopping trolleys

These need to be addressed.

Composition of the Working Group

The Creeklands Masterplan recommends establishing an expanded working group of stakeholders (including external or transient organisations or users) to regularly meet to continue project momentum. This should include representatives of sporting groups, transport groups, wildlife habitat groups and indigenous representatives, and users of the SuperplayGround including early learning specialists and a representative from the arts community.

Russell Evans
Armidale NSW 2350
17 September 2020

Armidale Regional Council
(council@armidale.nsw.gov.au)

Submission on draft Creeklands Masterplan

I thank the Armidale Regional Council for affording citizens with the opportunity to comment on the draft Creeklands Masterplan.

As an overall comment, I consider the goals of the plan would lead to aesthetic improvements to the Creeklands area and the improved amenities should be enjoyed by local residents and tourists alike.

There are however a number of concerns I have with the draft Masterplan. These concerns are:

1. The potential for children to drown.

In 2016 a 3-year-old child drowned in Dumaresq Creek. The resultant Coronial Inquiry led to recommendations to improve signage and clear reeds in the Creek. While the Council implemented these recommendations, they should be viewed as steps which would not substantially reduce the danger of further drownings in the Creek.

The above incident followed another in May 2012 when a child drowned in a private swimming pool in Armidale. That incident initially led to a neighbour being charged with manslaughter (the charges were later dropped). But, the Coroner (Karen Stafford) called for legislative changes which would see persons imprisoned where a child drowns due to their carelessness. At the time the observation was made that a child could drown even in an inflatable pool with a mere 30cm of water (see: <https://samuelmorrisfoundation.org.au/manslaughter-charges-following-toddler-drowning/>).

The draft Armidale Creeklands Masterplan provides little which would indicate that serious consideration has been given this issue. Page 3 of the draft Masterplan almost brushes the issue aside with the simplistic comment that "additional consideration was necessitated after a coronial inquest into a drowning in Curtis Park". This is then followed by noting on page 64 that:

"The depth of the channel and steep drop-off from the bank are a public safety hazard, particularly for small children. Sediment build up in the channel has resulted in a dense stand of cumbungi between Faulkner and Marsh streets."

Council could be exposed to an action in negligence if it moves to change the existing creek flow arrangements and a child drowns or is injured as a consequence. There is a difference between a council (or another public body) not taking action to change something and where it takes actions which then prove to be negligent in their design, construction or operation.

Here, the known drowning exposure has not been addressed in a way which could reasonably provide comfort that the proposed changes will not at least ameliorate the potential for child drownings.

The “mitigation measure” relating to the drowning potential are inadequately addressed by 3 points on page 76 of the draft Masterplan which merely say:

- Elimination of deep channel section reduces water depth and velocity
- Gentle transition to waterway eliminates steep drop-offs
- Sloped banks improve surveillance from multiple vantage points

No empirical evidence is adduced to support these statements; and nothing in the draft Masterplan discusses design principles which could be seen as showing a depth of thought which is likely to reduce the drowning exposure. Indeed, given the observation above that a child can drown in a mere 30cm of water, it is arguable that the present proposals could increase the potential for drownings given that the surface area of water would be increased and the apparent ease for a child to amble into the water.

In my submission, this aspect of the draft Masterplan needs to be re-worked and resubmitted for community comment. Until such actions are taken, no work should be permitted to proceed which would in any way change the present shape, form, or flow of Dumaresq Creek.

2. Proposals for shops and eateries to front onto the Creeklands area

It is my understanding that the present view of Planning NSW is that no actions should be taken by Armidale Regional Council which would see a further disaggregation of the present Central Business District. It is plain to see that the present Mall area, being in essence the heart of the CBD, is not as viable as it should be given our present population size. Ideas within the draft Masterplan which could see businesses located facing the Creeklands area for reasons of aesthetics should not be countenanced by Council.

3. Proposed “at grade crossing” along Faulkner Street

The present flooding issue at the low level crossing along Faulkner Street is inadequately addressed in the draft Masterplan.

The present draft of the Masterplan acknowledges that the existing culverts present a flooding issue. At page 64, it states: “Channel modifications and undersized culverts at the road crossings result in frequent minor flooding experienced in the area.”

Elsewhere the draft Masterplan proposes that this low level crossing be replaced by an "at grade crossing". The use of such a crossing would increase the occasions during which vehicular traffic will not be possible along Faulkner Street. In the event of the Marsh Street bridge (Stephens Bridge) being impassable during a flood incident, traffic, especially emergency vehicles, could utilise Faulkner Street. To have that become impassable for perceived aesthetic considerations is not tenable.

In my submission, the draft Masterplan should be amended to include provision for a bridge crossing Faulkner Street at around the same height as the present pedestrian bridge, indeed the two could be combined into one bridge.

4. Inability to responsibly fund the works envisaged

It is apparent that the scope of the proposed works is well beyond the ability of Council to sustain the projected level of expenditure given the extremely poor budgetary position of the Armidale Regional Council. What cannot be allowed to occur is for our rates to be increased to fund projects such as this, projects which do not make a substantial improvement to the economic viability of our region. Under these circumstances, the Masterplan needs to be reworked and more modest proposals included to the extent that these can be funded solely through State Government Grants without any requirement for co-contributions by local residents. That reworked plan should then be subject to a further period of public exposure.

Yours sincerely,

Russell Evans

Wildlife Habitat Group of



Sustainable Living Armidale, P.O. Box 85, Armidale NSW 2350

Submission to Creeklands Masterplan Armidale Regional Council 17 September, 2020

Wildlife Habitat Group of Sustainable Living Armidale would like to take this opportunity to comment on the nature play possibilities presented by the Creeklands and suggest ideas to enhance connectivity of habitat.

Part 1: Nature Play Possibilities

Background

Our group has recently developed and launched a website to promote outdoor play in natural environments around Armidale. This has been in part a response to COVID-19, but also aligns with a growing awareness of the importance of outdoor play for children's well-being, learning and development. See our website: www.habitatarmidale.com

Nature play possibilities

Natural play possibilities as pockets along the tracks offers a wide range of play opportunities and would enhance the connectivity between the precincts. The focus can be physical, creative, social and sensory play. This offers greater learning and developmental benefits for children and a more inclusive setting for all ages, abilities, and cultural differences. Such pockets are dynamic due to seasonal change, therefore each new visit brings new discoveries and learning for children. Invariably as such spaces offer diverse play opportunities and loose materials such as twigs, leaves and stones to incorporate in play, there is more for children to do and families are likely to stay longer, with more opportunities for all family members.

The notion of nature play pockets is advocated as a number of smaller spaces along the various pathways and builds connectivity akin to wildlife corridors for connectivity. My experience shows there is value in creating pockets that appear along pathways to engage children and offer an opportunity to rest or withdraw as needed. This approach was developed at Healesville Sanctuary in Victoria, and was successfully implemented at low cost. Our suggestions include:

- Use of natural materials – logs for balancing, rocks/boulders to clamber over , earthworks (mounds or slopes), coppices of tress eg casuarina that offer pods and leaves for play
- Plantings – trees to climb, bushy places to hide, natural shade.
- Locally created artistic features – climbable sculptures, willow cubbies (NERAM, sensory pathways.
- Slightly elevated bird hides as evident as Kings Park WA Rio Tinto nature playspace
- The terracing also offers play possibilities in precinct 2 for climbing and jumping
- Sculptural elements or climbable artworks e.g. local animal sculptures; Indigenous features such as sensory murals/mosaics/carvings and regional high altitude plants including Indigenous food plants and climbable or cubby like weeping trees. Overall, this supports our regional biodiversity and there is an opportunity to offer local artisans employment. For example, the willow pod cubby located behind NERAM and

made by Andrew Parker would be a unique feature. along the pathways would also add interest

- Maintaining the play equipment on the northside of Curtis Park with reshaping of the contours down to the creek water. As a deep steep sided creek bordered by vegetation it is currently a hazard for children, a risk that children cannot perceive. However, with sloping edges vegetation removal and boulders children's active risk management is promoted. Many public playspaces designed for children currently include water features with successful risk management eg Melbourne Botanic Gardens, Kings Park WA, Wild Play Sydney. If attention is given to design features and how children read landscapes to promote safer play.
- Maintaining the pond in Zone 3 is advocated some additional sculptures or interactive features could encourage play eg Darling Harbour water playspace. Planting around the edges of native plants such as callistemons, banksias to add loose plant materials for play in water, think Wombat Stew.
- Thick vegetation between the newly installed super play park and the adjacent roadways is suggested to deter children walking onto roads

Community health and well being




Natural play settings are more likely to engender mental health and well-being for all visitors. They are less likely to be hot in summer as they can include shade trees, pergolas with creepers, less UV reflective equipment and surfaces, less heat retention due to lack of synthetic surfacing and are cooler overall. Cancer Council advice can be sought re various approaches to shade beyond automatic installation of shade sails with high installation and ongoing maintenance costs.





Additional Resources

- Play Australia www.playaustralia.org This is a long-established national organisation, with branches in all states, supported by over 70 local government bodies and advises such bodies regularly. We suggest Armidale Regional Council could be inspired to develop a 'state of the art' nature play pockets as unique to this state, incorporating contemporary understandings about design, play, playspaces and risk management as well as showcase the regional New England cultural and environmental heritage, and create a 'destination play pockets'. A newly established NSW state group of Play Australia would be an excellent course for advice and consultation.
- Examples of nature playspaces:
Centennial Park Wild Play <https://www.centennialparklands.com.au/wildplay>
Rio Tinto Playspace <https://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/kings-park/area/naturescape>
Wombat Bend <https://www.manningham.vic.gov.au/finns-reserve-including-wombat-bend-playspace>
The Quarries <https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/facilities/quarries-park>
Ian Potter Children's Garden <https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/visit-melbourne/attractions/children-garden>

Images to support SLA WHG submission to Armidale Regional Council Master Plans

(Provided by Dr Sue Elliott, sue.elliott@une.edu.au)

Image	Caption
	<p><i>Image 1</i> Connecting pathways and sub pathways can in parts offer close vegetation to offer different sensory experiences and a sense of adventure for children and adults alike.</p> <p>Image taken by S. Elliott at the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden Playspace, Melbourne Botanic Gardens.</p>
	<p><i>Image 2</i> A pocket playspace with log rounds for seating/resting are also an invitation for children to balance, leap between logs and count steps.</p> <p>Image taken by S. Elliott at the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden Playspace, Melbourne Botanic Gardens.</p>
	<p><i>Image 3</i> This willow pod cubby at NERAM by Andrew Parker can be part of a pocket playspace, perhaps a smaller version to invite dramatic play and or hiding games. This could be supported by in situ construction workshops for children and adults and offers a valid repurposed use for removed willow tree weeds.</p> <p>Image taken by S. Elliott at NERAM, Armidale.</p>

	<p><i>Image 4</i> A pocket playspace with a large flat rock for seating/resting is also an invitation for children to play, when a rock hollow is available for mixing dirt, collecting rainwater, collating stones or leaves.</p> <p>Image taken at the Rio Tinto Children’s Playspace, Kings Park WA.</p>
	<p><i>Image 5</i> A pocket playspace with some branches available for construction of cubbies.</p> <p>Image taken by S. Elliott at the Rio Tinto Children’s Playspace, Kings Park WA.</p>
	<p><i>Image 6</i> A pocket playspace log for seating/resting are also an invitation for children to balance and to test their physical skills at low heights.</p> <p>Image taken by S. Elliott at Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre Nature Playspace, Armidale.</p>
	<p><i>Image 7</i> A bird hide along the pathway offers a viewing point with some elevation and possible interpretive materials inside re local birds. The slatted timber bird hide is in the background here.</p> <p>Image taken by J. Thomas at at the Rio Tinto Children’s Playspace, Kings Park WA and retrieved from https://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/kings-</p>

	park/area/naturescape/places-to-explore
	<p><i>Image 8</i> A bird, bat or possum boxes in forested areas might offer viewing opportunities and talking points with children.</p> <p>Image taken by S. Elliott at Tamworth Wildlife Park.</p>

Part 1: Dr. Sue Elliott, on behalf of SLA’s Wildlife Habitat Group.
Dr. Elliott is a Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education (UNE), a Life Member of Play Australia, and a member of SLA’s Wildlife Habitat Group.

Part 2: Wildlife Habitat Connectivity

WHG encourages the vision of the Creeklands as part of an interconnected ribbon of wildlife habitat crossing the Armidale urban and peri-urban area. To this end we would like to make some observations on the possibilities of the Masterplan to create corridors to facilitate movement of terrestrial and aquatic animals.

a) Riparian zone

As has been noted in other submissions e.g. that from Helen Webb, the area considered in the Masterplan ‘comprises a significant gap in habitat connectivity. Gaps between stepping stone plantings should be less than 100 metres as wider gaps deter the passage of small birds.’

The Masterplan offers and opportunity to develop the work of community groups which have removed woody weeds and re-established native vegetation along the creeklands.

b) Plantings of larger native trees

WHG suggests the removal of the poplars opposite the TAFE (Precinct 1) and their replacement with native trees.

The opportunity to plant larger native trees (including perhaps eucalypts favoured by koalas) exists in a number of places along the southern side of Kirkwood on the northern boundary of the Creeklands. WHG suggests the ‘Avenue Plantings’ referred to in the Masterplan be plantings of Australian natives.

c) Terracing and benching

The terracing in Precinct 2 appears unnecessary; a more aesthetically pleasing and less costly alternative would appear to be minor reshaping of the creek bank and revegetation.

d) Water quality

WHG considers that stormwater treatment/bioremediation be a concern along the Creekland. It may be possible to utilise less 'engineered' solutions with judicious natural systems filtering through wetlands revegetation.

e) Retention of current native trees

The site of the constructed water body adjacent to Taylor Street/Donnelly Street appears to require the removal of established New England Peppermint- WHG urges that the trees be retained.

f) The duckpond (Precinct 3) should be retained with revegetation and perhaps some additional sculptures or interactive features to encourage play Planting around the edges of native plants such as callistemons, banksias to add loose plant materials for play in water

Part 2: Elizabeth O'Hara
for Wildlife Habitat Group of Sustainable Living Armidale

What a relief to see a coherent, well researched and relevant consultants' plan.

I think it is, overall, well worth aiming for. It should be accepted and then completed as possible. It would obviously have to be staged financially. Everything won't please everyone but that is inevitable. Do the do-able first.

There is one important omission and that refers to the archeological history of the area. The Great North Road e.g. runs across beneath part of the new playground (where artifacts were unearthed and undocumented during both recent hydrological and playground work). We had to move the Signor Vertelli sculpture to accommodate the position of the road and Council seems to have forgotten its obligations.

Surely park furniture and signage should be run before the Arts, Cultural and Heritage Advisory Committee for overall approval?

Susie Dunn
Armidale

To Whom It May Concern,

Please consider the following comments from the Sustainable Living Armidale Transport Group on the Draft Creeklands Masterplan.

General Comments

The SLA Transport Group fully supports the expression on p56 that development of a "city-wide strategy for non-vehicular movement" is a key consideration. Related to this, it is essential there is at least one community representative focussed on Active Transport within the proposed Work Group (p84).

Development of a new "city-wide" Bicycle Strategy and a Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) are required. This is not only for the Creeklands Masterplan, but will assist with the detailed planning of the proposed paths contained within it. This will greatly assist to address the numerous matters raised in the "Connectivity" section on p34. Whilst this section does a commendable job of describing the existing situation, it does not adequately address these issues raised with Masterplan proposals. However, this would clearly be challenging without the city-wide active transport planning that is required

There is little mention of bicycle parking facilities and key locations (for example, the playground under construction) which need consideration. The Masterplan needs to consider locations in at least a broad sense with details to be determined by the Working Group, with reference to the needed Bicycle Strategy. Other details relevant to shared paths that need to be considered in relation to this Bicycle Strategy include locations of wayfinding signage and lighting.

Specific Precinct Comments

Active Family Precinct

The proposed shared-use path connected to the existing cycleway on the north side of Dumaresq St is supported. However, we encourage the Masterplan to "think bigger" and consider the following:

- Enable shared path to reach Beardy Street pedestrian crossing opposite Armidale TAFE (whilst maintaining the unique character of the existing heritage suspension bridge)
- Continued shared path on east side of Markham Street to Dumaresq Street to form loop with existing cycleway.

Harris Park Precinct

We support the new shared path to connect with the existing cycleway on Dumaresq St to the footpath connecting Dumaresq to Jessie/Kirkwood Streets.

Also, that existing footpath should be widened to become a shared path of standard width.

Civic and Curtis Park Precincts

Proposed removal of any footbridges and paths is supported only if considered in relation to new city-wide active transport plans.

We are generally supportive of a new shared path on the north side of the creek. Since there is an existing cycleway on the south side, this is a lower priority than other items (such as new paths in Active Family Precinct). These must be considered in relation to new city-wide active transport plans.

A prominent electric vehicle charging station should be installed at the Visitor Information Centre at Curtis Park.

Rologas Precinct

We are generally supportive of a new shared path on the north side of the creek. Since there is an existing cycleway on the south side, this is a lower priority than other items (such as new paths in Active Family Precinct). These must be considered in relation to new city-wide active transport plans.

A bicycle hire facility is supported.

Thank you for taking the time to carefully consider our submission.

Kind Regards,

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