

THIS STATEMENT OF CONCERN RE. MANNING PARK RESERVE IS DIRECTED TO:

The Hon Stephen Pratt, MLC, Member for the South Metropolitan region,
Australian Labour Party.

The Manning family members give their full support to the “Friends of Manning Park Ridge” (FOMPR) in their efforts to **protect and preserve the natural heritage and integrity of Manning Park Reserve in its entirety**. As well, we make a plea for the historical importance of the whole site.

We, the undersigned, are direct descendants of the original Manning family (Charles Alexander Manning, Lucius Alexander Manning and Florence Augusta Manning (nee Bickley) and their families who, from 1850's onward, owned, built and lived at “Davilak” (the present day Manning Park Reserve). Davilak House was built in the 1860's and Manningtree House (the present Azelia Ley Museum) a little later. C.Y.O'Connor, Engineer-in-Chief for Western Australia, was a close friend of the Mannings. After a morning ride along the beach he would sometimes ride over the hill to breakfast at Davilak. His son, George Francis, married Olivia Davilia Manning, daughter of Lucius and Florence Manning.

We hold a deep connection with the heritage of this area and an ongoing concern for the historical and conservation aspects of Manning Park Reserve.

PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT:

This Statement wishes to convey our grave concerns regarding the City of Cockburn's (CoC) proposal to construct a mountain bike network (up to 21 km) within the **Manning Park Reserve “Bush Forever” Heritage Precinct**.

Historic Ruins: The historic ruin of **Davilak House** (burnt down in the 1960's) is a **State Heritage Listed Site**, under conservation management, and scheduled for protection works in 2025. These listed historic ruins are not even marked on the proposed mountain bike plan as having any importance, and in most drawings, are not even included. The same applies for the **Azelia Ley Museum** and **Colonial Artifacts Museum** on the site. These houses were built on the lee side of the hills to be protected from the weather and winds from the sea. One of the entrances to the proposed bike track is immediately beside the heritage listed ruin, where constant use from both carparking and entry onto the proposed track would seriously impact the area.

Spearwood Dunes: These dunes are specifically identified in the **Bush Forever Plan** for preservation. It is significant that this Plan was a combined effort of bi-partisan State and Local Governments as a plan for the longterm protection of valuable, diminishing natural bushland resources. Prepared with the full co-operation of the Minister for Planning, Dept of Environment Protection, Department of Conservation and Land Management, Water and River Conservation and others, it seems inexplicable to ignore the specific notation that Spearwood Dunes are the **last intact natural limestone ridges** in the metropolitan coastal area. The mixed open native heath vegetation is thick and varied in height and variety which protects the whole ridge from erosion. (Already there are a number of areas of severe local disturbance – poisoned? – from which recovery looks impossible.)

Manning Park: This park, (sometimes called the jewel in the crown for the City of Cockburn) is a well maintained park, with extensive open grassed areas with clumps of trees, walkways around the lake and over the hill, some carparking and public toilets, centered around the Azelia Ley Museum which contains a lot of Manning history. It is enjoyed for recreation by a great number of people. The stairway to the lookouts rival Jacobs Ladder for fitness-seekers, and the walking paths are enjoyed by visitors and locals, running groups (including Manning Park Runners with over 2000 members) and dog walkers. These

currently unobtrusive paths which offer peaceful journeys through the bushland, and extensive views from the lookouts, need careful management.

Parking & Amenities: The proposed mountain bike plan notes: "The current formal access to the site for vehicles is limited to the lake and parkland area however informal parking occurs throughout the park and along adjacent street verges." Parking can already be congested with current recreational use so even considering adding multitudes of bike-carrying vehicles parking randomly in the park and surrounds will be disastrous and completely destroy the peaceful amenity of Manning Park, (and likely the residential neighbours).

The proposed mountain bike plan has **no provision for necessary additional and separate carparks, entrances, service amenities or toilets** located away from the parklands. Incredibly, there is **no allowance for proper maintenance**, servicing and protection of bike tracks, or additional public liability insurance. These costs will be significant and continuous, and without a specific annual budget allocated for these costs, the very structure of the plan is irresponsible and unsafe.

Weather Impact: Rain and wind will constantly erode the tracks under heavy-use bike impact and severely reduced vegetation, rendering them dangerous, and forever destroying the vulnerable limestone ridges and their protective coating of shallow soil and native vegetation. The later stages of the proposed bike routes weave over the whole ridge front and back. With reduced windbreaks from vegetation, due to kilometers of zig zag tracks cut into the ridge, the whole of Manning Park and its current peaceful and environmentally tenuous state use will be seriously impacted.

CONCLUSION:

We believe the proposed development will cause inevitable, irreparable destruction and irreversible loss of natural and cultural heritage. We call on the City of Cockburn and Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to recognize and acknowledge the substantial efforts made by the FOMPR and work with them to develop and implement a future-thinking, ongoing, ecological management plan for the Manning Park Reserve as it exists.

Please **protect the wonderful amenity of Manning Park** the City of Cockburn currently offers to us all.

Signed:

Elizabeth Jane Manning:

Tony Manning:

Deirdre Susan Stephenson (nee O'Connor).....

Jacqueline Gail Sprogoe (nee O'Connor)

Frances Davilia Bleckly (nee O'Connor)

Carolyn Yelverton Knight (nee O'Connor)

Susan Margo Eldridge (nee McDaniell/O'Connor).....

Sandra Kathleen Scopa (nee McDaniell/O'Connor).....

Alexander James Leonard McDaniell.....

Charles Christian Sprogoe (of O'Connor).....

Annemarie Roloff Dembo (of O'Connor).....

Dated: 22-03-2022.

Contact Details for this Statement of Concern:

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This Statement of Concern is also directed to:

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MANNING PARK RESERVE – Proposed Mountain Bike Trails:

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Manning Park is steeped in history, not only the Manning family colonial era 1852 – 1960, but with Aboriginal occupation and spiritual heritage spanning many thousands of years. The Aboriginal name for the lake was Dgilgie's Lake, which was changed to "Devil's Lake" by L. A. Manning. Descendants of the Manning family say the name of the lake came from local Aborigine people's fear of a "devil" living in the lake on their land, and the local Aborigine people's pronunciation of Devil's Lake was the origin of the estate name Davilak.
- Manning Lake and its surrounding vegetation is a place of special beauty and an important wetland, providing critical refuge to a significant number of native birds, reptiles and small animals. However, increasing visitation to Manning Park is putting pressure on the natural ecosystems. The FOMPR are working hard to advocate a sustainable balance between public usage and the health of the natural environment. An enormous amount of work has been done by FOMPR to identify birds, plants and animals within Manning Park Reserve to showcase it as an area of natural beauty and abundance. It is NOT a "patch of scrub" and should NOT be considered for an activity likely to irreparably damage the delicate environment.
- Australia's landscapes have been evolving for millions of years, along with its native plants and animals. European input into, and impact on, our local landscapes over the roughly 200 years contributes a very small part of the story. These landscapes and the Aboriginal cultural connection, knowledge and wisdom go back tens of thousands of years. Indigenous land practices are the oldest in history. There is a tremendous opportunity to enrich our own learning and understanding of the ecological tenacity and cycles of our indigenous landscapes. The history of our land holds the answers to questions we do not yet know how to ask. Bush care is a perfect way for city dwellers to bond with the landscape around them. The Australia-wide education curriculum deems it imperative that children connect to the science and nature of the land around them fostering an ongoing and hopefully lifelong connection to their country, and caring for it. How can the City of Cockburn support stripping a rare natural oasis at a time when the rest of the country is asking us to cherish and protect areas like these?
- The Proposal clearly threatens the integrity of the natural landscape, flora and fauna as well as the current benefits for recreation available to the public. The pressure of bike tyres will churn the loose soil and accelerate erosion. Once native vegetation is lost on these unstable soils it is extremely difficult, even impossible, to restore. Damaged bushland and introduced soils, are prone to weed invasion, with dieback a real threat, and can quickly decimate large numbers of plant species and communities. Habitat loss leads inevitably to decline and disappearance of wildlife.
- Mountain bike activity is not compatible with walking activity, where speed and exhilaration is the primary focus. The Proposed Plan shows riding trails crisscrossing with current walking pathways which could be the cause of accidents or confrontations.

- Manning Park Ridge and the Spearwood Dunes (reserved as Bush Forever) is a precious remnant in a diminishing natural landscape, surrounded by dense residential development. Looking at the map contained within the Mountain Bike Proposal it is easy to see that Manning Park Reserve is the last large tract of land in the area, surrounded with dense residential development and, on that account alone, should be preserved as natural bush for future generations. If our leaders are responsible, proactive and future thinking foresight is needed to preserve Manning Park Reserve in its entirety for present and future generations. It is a legacy to be protected.
- In the early days of Western Australia settlement, an act of great foresight set aside a large tract of natural bush that is Kings Park, virtually in the centre of the city, probably quite unique in the world. Since then Kings park has been developed in part as a botanical garden with open areas, and part retained as natural bush. It is enjoyed by thousands of locals and visitors each year, both the formal gardens and the natural bush. This was long before the Bush Forever Plan was created to ensure that bushland protection and management issues are appropriately considered and addressed. Manning Park is already a smaller scale of this foresight, parklands around the lake and natural bush with walking paths.
- What a wonderful legacy the City of Cockburn has in its care.

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Dated: 22-03-2022.