



# Worimi Conservation Lands Draft Plan of Management

## Frequently asked questions:

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### ***Who owns the Worimi Conservation Lands?***

The Worimi Conservation Lands are owned by Worimi Aboriginal Owners. The park is managed by a Board of management who are legally responsible for the care, control and management of the lands. Fundamental to this responsibility is the preparation of a plan of management.

Under direction of the Board, the National Parks and Wildlife Service will implement the day to day operations on the lands of the approved plan.

### ***Does the draft plan allow driving along Stockton beach?***

Yes. The draft Plan provides for more than 22 km of continuous beach driving between the Gan Gan 4WD beach entry at Anna Bay to the Sygna Wreck. Vehicles must be registered and have a valid Beach Vehicle Permit.

### ***Does the draft plan allow dune driving?***

Yes, 350 hectares of dunes are available for 4WD's , and conditionally registered vehicles, such as quad bikes, in the recreational vehicle area south of Lavis Lane entry.

### ***Does the draft plan allow for access to the high dunes?***

Yes. Pedestrians will still be able to access the high dunes in the Worimi Conservation Lands, however, under the draft plan vehicles will not be permitted, due to possibility of damage to Aboriginal cultural material, which the Board is committed to protect.

People can still experience the high dunes on a commercial tour operated by The Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council – a totally separate organisation from the Worimi Board of Management – on their privately owned freehold land in the high dunes adjacent to the Lavis Lane entrance of Worimi Conservation Lands.

These operations are conducted under licence to avoid damage to cultural heritage sites, and to the natural heritage values of their land. There are also a number of commercial tours that access high dunes in the north of the lands south of the Gan Gan entrance.

### ***Does the draft plan allow driving along the back track from Anna Bay to Tin City?***

No. This area has a high concentration of significant cultural artefacts. Previous vehicle access throughout this area has resulted in damage to sites. The draft plan proposes this area remain closed to vehicles.

### ***Does the draft plan allow campfires?***

Yes. The draft plan of management proposes to allow wood fires in fireplaces only, at designated campsites.

### ***Does the draft plan allow for dog walking?***

Yes. The draft Plan proposes the 3km area of beach at the Anna Bay end of the park, for leashed dog walking. Dogs can transported by vehicle to the dog walking area via the Gan Gan 4WD entrance only, or walked on lead from Birubi Point

The draft plan proposed dogs will not be permitted elsewhere in the Worimi Conservation Lands, including camping areas or outside the dog walking area..

### ***Does the draft plan allow horse riding?***

Yes. The draft plan provides for more than 22 km of continuous beachfront riding between the Gan Gan 4WD beach entry at Anna Bay and the Sygna wreck. In addition, the draft plan proposes 350 hectares of dune riding in the recreational vehicle area, south of Lavis Lane.

### ***Does the draft plan provide for overnight fishing?***

Yes. Under the draft plan night fishing is allowed, and people are permitted to drive along 22.5 kilometres of the beach front, although driving at night with shifting tides and sand is inherently dangerous. All recreational fishing must be licensed in accordance with NSW Fisheries regulations.

Camping will only be permitted within designated pre-booked camping sites. Sleeping in or on vehicles overnight, or in swags or other structures outside the designated camping area will not be permitted.

### ***Does the draft plan propose an increase to beach vehicle permits?***

The cost of Beach Vehicle Permits has not increased since 2007. The draft plan provides for a periodical review of beach vehicle permit fees to assist with management costs.

### ***Does the draft plan allow for camping?***

Yes. The draft plan proposes the development of up to 30 designated sites, for a maximum of eight people per site. A camping strategy will be prepared. 30 well managed camp sites will allow a good number of visitors - up to 240 people - to enjoy sand based camping on the Worimi Conservation Lands.

But camping can no longer be a free-for-all. Camp sites will be clearly marked; access will be along marked routes and sites will need to be booked in advance as happens in other in-demand camping locations in National Parks.

### ***Why is the draft plan proposing camping restrictions?***

The draft plan of management identifies the serious problems with the damage to dunes and coastal vegetation that arose from the rapid rise in unregulated camping between 2009 and 2011. The 2012 storm event demonstrated that this number of campers was simply not safe, sustainable or responsible.

Concerns over the rubbish and toilet waste impacts from the huge increase in unregulated free camping were a key concern raised by the local community.

Moving to designated managed camping sites allows the Board to try and respond to community interest in camping on the lands, but with plans in place to manage all these concerns. Providing 30 sites "sustainably" will still be a significant and expensive challenge, but the Board is determined to do its best in providing a unique and quality beach camping experience.

### ***Will I be able to camp this summer?***

Camping remains closed until the draft plan is finalised.

### ***I thought the storm closures were temporary, but now you are making them permanent...***

The June 2012 storm caused extensive damage to the beach and dunes. In re-opening the areas for vehicles, the Board had to ensure that areas were safe, and that the large numbers of freshly exposed Aboriginal sites would be protected from further damage.

While this was achieved for the dunes in the recreational vehicle area, it was not possible to ensure public safety and protection of the large numbers of freshly exposed Aboriginal sites in the northern areas of the Lands, so the draft plan proposes the existing measures become permanent.

The huge amount of work involved in recording and protecting the Aboriginal sites in the recreational vehicle area was the catalyst for the Board's decision to keep the majority of the dunes north of Lavis Lane closed to vehicle access in the draft Plan.

The Board has a responsibility to protect these cultural sites, and the draft plan documents the Board's proposal to meet this challenge.

The past 12 months has shown that large numbers of people and vehicles can still use the lands, drive on the beach and the southern dunes, and enjoy the experience, while the remaining evidence of our Worimi ancestors' use of the landscape in the north is protected.

***Does the draft plan allow commercial tours?***

Yes. The draft plan of management provides support for on-going commercial tourism activities on the Worimi Conservation Lands.

***Why are the Worimi Conservation Lands so important to protect?***

The Worimi Conservation Land is a significant cultural and natural landscape to the Worimi people, as well as the broader community. The park is rich in cultural artefacts, middens and burials, and provides important opportunities to protect, maintain and learn about Worimi culture. The park is also extremely popular with over 250,000 visitors per year.

***How does the draft plan propose to protect Aboriginal culture?***

Aboriginal sites are fragile, and easily damaged. Aboriginal sites are protected by stopping the impacts that cars and people can have.

The park contains large areas of dunes with a high density of Aboriginal sites which are not suitable for vehicle access due to the certainty of damage to sites.

In the south of the Worimi Conservation Lands where there are fewer sites due to the impacts of previous land uses, vehicle access can be accommodated. Where sites occur in these areas, protection measures such as fencing are put in place.

***If the area is so significant, why are they allowing sand mining?***

There is no sand mining or quarrying anywhere in the Worimi Conservation Lands.

There are numerous sand quarries neighbouring the Worimi Conservation Lands, where in some cases sand has been removed since the 1960s. These quarries are on either privately owned or crown lands that are not part of the Worimi Conservation Lands.

The Board of Management has no control over activities outside the Worimi Conservation Lands.

That the Stockton Bight sand dunes are being targeted as a critical source of sand for the NSW construction industry means that those Aboriginal sites protected within the Worimi Conservation Lands are even more important. This is the only place where the Traditional Owners can ensure Aboriginal sites on the dunes are protected in the long term.

The national park status of the WCL means the area is very different to the private lands nearby. This is why the Board has to take a very careful approach to balancing visitor use and conservation of cultural sites in the draft plan.

***Is the draft plan about it to locking people out?***

No. The WCL Board of Management has spent over \$1.1 million to improve vehicle access to the Worimi Conservation Lands, and the Plan provides for an extraordinary range of access opportunities. The Board is committed to providing for safe and sustainable recreational and commercial use of the lands.

Further improvements are planned to the Lavis Lane entry, and will include sealed access to the carpark and the construction of a small entry station shelter. This upgrade is planned for after the summer holidays. A gate has been installed to enable contractors to efficiently and safely complete the works.

This upgrade work is not specifically related to the Plan of Management, but is part of the Board's ongoing investment in ensuring safe and effective access to the WCL.

### ***How was the draft Plan prepared, and who prepared it?***

The WCL Board of management are responsible for preparing the Plan of Management. The draft Plan was prepared following extensive consultation including public meetings with Aboriginal owners, park users and other stakeholders.

### ***When will the draft plan come into effect?***

Once all submissions about the draft plan have been received they need to be considered. Any changes that result from this consultation will then need to be incorporated, before the plan can be adopted and implemented. Given the expected number and scope of submissions, this is likely to take some time. Once the Board has finalised the plan, it will be announced.

### ***How can I see what's in the draft plan or get a copy of the plan?***

The draft plan of management, summary brochure and videos can be viewed at [www.worimiconservationlands.com](http://www.worimiconservationlands.com)

The plan and brochures will also be on display at:

- Port Stephens Council, 116 Adelaide Street, Raymond Terrace
- Port Stephens Visitor Information Centre, 60 Victoria Parade, Nelson Bay
- Newcastle City Council, 282 King Street, Newcastle
- Maitland Council, 285-287 High Street, Maitland
- Newcastle City Library, Laman Street, Newcastle
- Stockton Library, King Street, Stockton
- Raymond Terrace Library, 18a Sturgeon Street, Raymond Terrace
- Tomaree Library, Town Centre Circuit, Salamander Way, Salamander Bay
- Maitland Library, 480 high Street, Maitland
- Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2163 Nelson Bay Road, Williamtown
- Karuah Local Aboriginal Land Council, 16 Mustons Road, Karuah
- National Parks & Wildlife Service, Level 1, 12B Teramby Road, Nelson Bay
- National Parks & Wildlife Service, Level 14, 59-61 Goulburn Street, Sydney

### ***How can I make a submission?***

Only written or online submissions will be accepted - **until 17 February 2014**. To be most effective, your written submission should give the Board suggestions on how the draft plan could be improved. Submissions are the Board's invitation to you to offer feedback and suggestions on your values of the Worimi Conservation Lands, that they should consider.

Online – visit [www.worimiconservationlands.com](http://www.worimiconservationlands.com)

Email – [draftplan@worimiconservationlands.com](mailto:draftplan@worimiconservationlands.com)

Post - The Planner

Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management  
Locked Bag 99  
Nelson Bay 2315

### ***What happens to my submission?***

All written submissions are carefully reviewed and considered by the Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management. This is the opportunity for the Board to make any necessary changes to the draft plan.

### ***Further info:***

For further information, people can email the WCL Board of Management on [draftplan@worimiconservationlands.com](mailto:draftplan@worimiconservationlands.com)