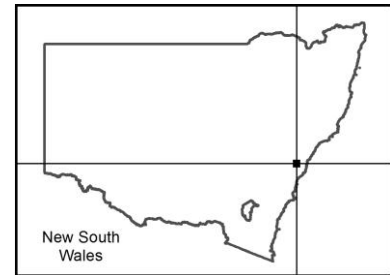


# Statement of Management Intent



## Rouse Hill Regional Park

### 1. Introduction

This statement outlines the main values, issues, management directions and priorities of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for managing Rouse Hill Regional Park. This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the park until a plan of management has been prepared in accordance with the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 \(NPW Act\)](#). The NPWS [Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy](#) states that parks and reserves without a plan of management are to be managed in a manner consistent with the intent of the NPW Act and the [‘precautionary principle’ \(see Principle 15\)](#).

### 2. Management principles

Regional parks are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas in a natural or modified landscape that are suitable for public recreation and enjoyment. Under the NPW Act [\(section 30H\)](#), regional parks are managed to:

- provide opportunities for recreation and enjoyment in natural or modified landscapes
- identify, interpret, manage and conserve the park so as to maintain and enhance significant landscape values
- conserve natural and cultural values
- promote public appreciation and understanding of the park’s natural and cultural values
- provide for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with conservation of natural and cultural values
- provide for sustainable use (including adaptive reuse) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to conservation or natural and cultural values.

Regional parks are established for the purpose of providing recreational opportunities while protecting natural, cultural and landscape values.

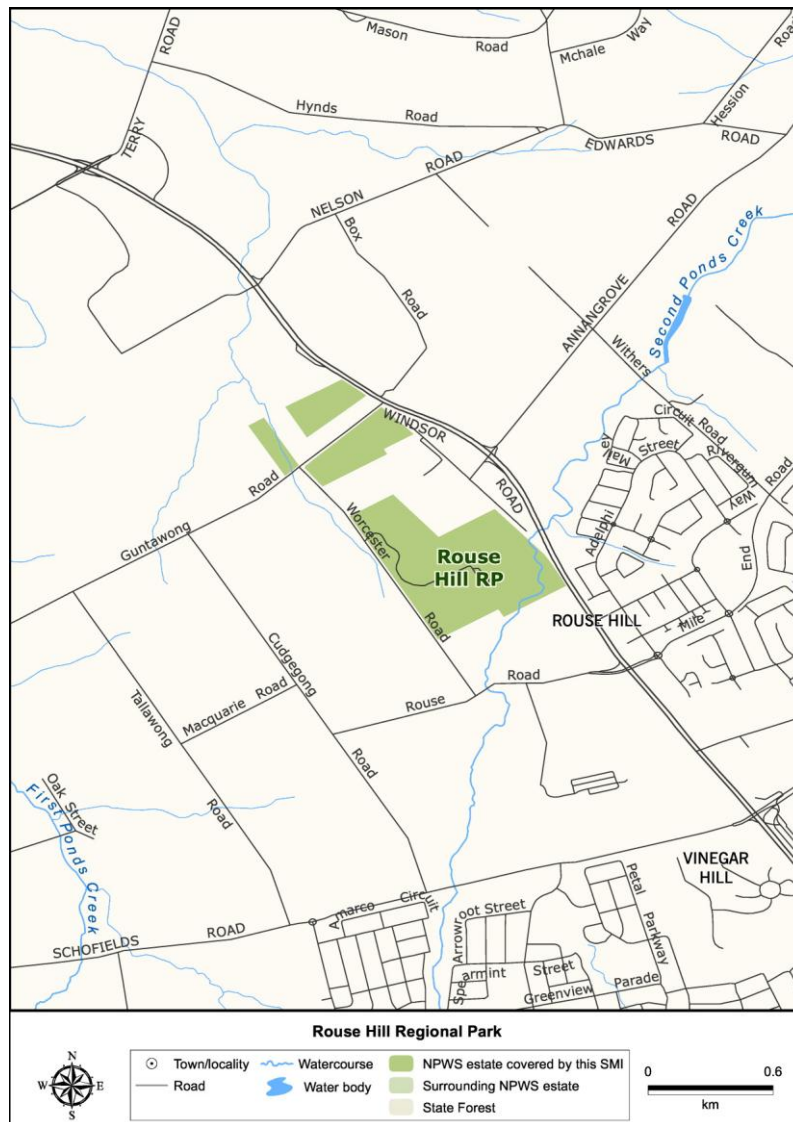
### 3. Context

**Reservation details:** Rouse Hill Regional Park was reserved on 5 September 1997.

**Size:** 43 hectares.

Rouse Hill Regional Park is located approximately 40 kilometres north-west of Sydney in the suburb of Rouse Hill. The park is within the Sydney Basin Bioregion and situated on the northernmost edge

of the Cumberland Plain. It falls within the administrative areas of Blacktown City Council, Greater Sydney Local Land Services and Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council.



Rouse Hill Regional Park is located in Sydney’s North West Growth Centre, an area which has experienced significant residential and commercial growth and development from early 2000. In 1989 the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 19 Rouse Hill Development Area identified a site of approximately 115 hectares for a regional park that would ensure the rural setting of the State Heritage-listed Rouse Hill Estate was retained, and also provide recreational space for the new development area. In 1996 43 hectares of land surrounding Rouse Hill House was transferred from the then Department of Urban Affairs and Planning to NPWS. In March 1999 a further 2 hectares was reserved. It is intended that additional land located to the north-west of the park will be included in Rouse Hill Regional Park as it becomes available.

The largest section of the park surrounds the historic Rouse Hill House and Farm, which was established in 1813 and is one of the oldest continually occupied homes in Australia. Windsor Road forms the eastern boundary of the park, and surrounding the remainder of the park is a mix of rural residential and residential land, including land zoned for medium and low-density residential development to the south of the park.

Rouse Hill Regional Park is dominated by land cleared of its natural vegetation. The cleared land offers a large open space for visitor enjoyment. Also present is remnant native vegetation including

endangered ecological communities. Native vegetation within the park is mostly associated with Second Ponds Creek in the east, which is part of an important local vegetation corridor connecting Rouse Hill Regional Park through to more extensive habitat corridors along Caddies and Cattai creeks.

#### 4. Values

- Rouse Hill Regional Park provides a large open space for recreational activities within a developing urban centre. Facilities and opportunities available within the park include children's play spaces, picnic and barbecue facilities, shelters and a network of trails suitable for cycling, horse riding and dog walking.
- The adjacent Rouse Hill House and Farm is one of the oldest continually occupied homes in Australia and provides a rich and extensive glimpse of past rural life in New South Wales from 1813. Built on the crown of a low hill, Rouse Hill House once commanded a view over undulating rural farmlands. Rouse Hill Regional Park provides the setting for Rouse Hill House and protects views to and from the house.
- Three items of potential heritage significance have been identified within the park: Rouse Hill House curtilage, the timber dam on Second Ponds Creek, and windmill ruins.
- A number of Aboriginal sites have been recorded within Rouse Hill Regional Park, providing evidence of past land use by Aboriginal people.
- Rouse Hill Regional Park protects remnant Cumberland Plain vegetation including areas of three endangered ecological communities: River-Flat Eucalypt Forest on Coastal Floodplains of the New South Wales North Coast, Sydney Basin and South East Corner Bioregions; and Shale Gravel Transition Forest in the Sydney Basin Bioregion are listed as endangered ecological communities under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act). Cumberland Plain Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion is listed as critically endangered under the TSC Act, and Cumberland Plain Shale Woodlands and Shale-Gravel Transition Forest is listed as critically endangered under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Across western Sydney these vegetation communities have undergone a significant reduction in geographic distribution since European settlement as a result of urban development, land clearing and grazing.
- Rouse Hill Regional Park protects habitat for threatened animal species including the endangered Cumberland Plain land snail (*Meridolum corneovirens*) and vulnerable southern myotis (*Myotis macropus*) and powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*). The yellow-bellied sheath-tail bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*) has been recorded within 100 metres of the park and it is very likely that the species uses the park.
- The park contributes to an important local corridor of vegetated riparian land along Second Ponds Creek and Caddies Creek. The park also connects with open space networks through the Blacktown City Council area (along Second Ponds Creek and Killarney Chain of Ponds) and the Hills Shire Council area (The Greenway linking Rouse Hill House to Bella Vista Homestead).

#### 5. Issues

- The setting for Rouse Hill House is threatened by increasing urban development in the local area. Rouse Hill Estate requires a rural context to protect its heritage value. The regional park should protect the context of the house by selectively maintaining both an open rural character and areas of native vegetation that reduce the visual impact of future urban development.

- The riparian habitats in the park provide shelter, foraging and breeding area for native animals, however there are major weed infestations in the alluvial woodlands along the Second Ponds Creek corridor, and minor infestations in the other communities. Of most concern are the climbing weed species, including cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*), madeira vine (*Anredera cordifolia*) and bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*) which are preventing regeneration and smothering canopy trees. Removal of these weeds will improve habitat.
- Other weed species known to occur within the park include African olive (*Olea europaea* ssp. *cuspidata*), African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), camphor laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*), stinking Roger (*Tagetes minuta*), salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*), privet (various species) and mixed exotic grasses and vines.
- Animal pest species recorded within Rouse Hill Regional Park include foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), feral cats (*Felis catus*) and European bees (*Apis mellifera*).
- Threatened species depend on the remnant vegetation within the park for refuge. These remnants are becoming increasingly isolated as local habitat corridors are impacted by urban development. Urban development also increases urban runoff into the park and threatens water quality and habitat values, particularly along Second Ponds Creek.
- Increasing urban development in the local area increases the demand for recreational facilities and opportunities within the park.
- The close proximity of Rouse Hill Regional Park to urban centres results in occurrences of vandalism of park infrastructure.

## 6. Key management directions

- Fire is managed in accordance with the Rouse Hill Regional Park [Fire Management Strategy](#).
- Pest management programs will be implemented in accordance with the NPWS [Regional Pest Management Strategy](#): Metro South West Region.
- The visual curtilage around the historic Rouse Hill House will be protected by maintaining both an open rural character in the Rouse Hill Regional Park and areas of native vegetation that will reduce the visual impact of future urban development.
- NPWS will work with Sydney Living Museums (Historic Houses Trust of NSW) in the development of the visitor master plan for Rouse Hill House and Farm, and the development of the plan of management, to ensure integrated outcomes. Outcomes should include an interpretation and education program that includes the park's Aboriginal history, post-European and pastoral history and integrates the story of the park and Rouse Hill House and Farm. Visitor facilities should be complementary, and tracks and trails should provide a seamless opportunity to engage with both properties.
- Cultural and historic sites within the park will be identified and interpreted.
- Recreational facilities appropriate to the park's regional role will be provided. Existing recreational facilities will be maintained according to relevant Australian Standards or removed where necessary.
- Suitable stormwater management techniques will be identified and implemented within the park to manage eroded stormwater channels and reduce damage to play facilities.
- The riparian habitat of Second Ponds Creek within the park will be protected and restored, and protection of corridors and linkages beyond the park encouraged.
- Law enforcement and patrols will continue, to deter illegal activities occurring within the park.

- All management activities will be preceded by the preparation of an environmental assessment or heritage assessment where this is a requirement of NPWS policy or legislation.
- Environmental repair and threat management programs, such as erosion mitigation measures, pest management, and activities arising from threatened species requirements may be implemented in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures.
- Non-intrusive works may be undertaken where necessary to protect cultural heritage items from further deterioration, to ensure the safety of visitors, to protect wildlife or to prevent damage to park assets.
- A plan of management will be prepared to set out the ongoing management objectives for the park. The plan of management is a statutory document under the NPW Act which will be available for public comment. NPWS will also encourage the community to contribute to the ongoing conservation of the park by promoting and raising public awareness of its special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of this park or this statement, contact the NPWS Cumberland Area Office on (02) 4572 3100 or Scheyville National Park, Scheyville Road, Scheyville NSW 2756.

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**Disclaimer:** This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the park prior to the development of a plan of management. Any statements made in this publication are made in good faith and do not render the Office of Environment and Heritage liable for any loss or damage. Provisions in the final plan of management may vary from those identified in this document as a result of new information and community consultation. The maps in this statement are intended to show the park's location and basic features only, and are not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within parks.

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