Hornsby Shire Council,  
PO BOX 37  
Hornsby NSW 1630  

28th March 2017

RE: Hornsby Parkland Project

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute ideas on the expansion of Hornsby Park. We commend Hornsby Council on this redevelopment of 50 hectares of public open space for the use and benefit of the Hornsby Community.

Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) Health Promotion is committed to ensuring that the built environment has a net-positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals and the wider community.

The development of this site is a golden opportunity to ensure that this public open space is well designed and as such enhances physical health and wellbeing and contributes to the social connections that promote a sense of community.

Some ideas we would like to contribute to the planning for the park development are around active travel, access to healthy food and drinking water, design for users of all ages and abilities and sustainability.

Active Travel

NSLHD suggests that Council supports active travel as a key objective in planning for the parkland and that the planning frameworks prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over motor vehicles in access routes to the parkland as well as within the park. Neighbourhoods that are ‘walkable’ and ‘cyclable’ including the provision of highly connected pathways are associated with higher levels of physical activity in the community.

Specifically, our ideas to support this vision are:

- Installation of bike parking on the perimeter and throughout the parkland at key destinations eg. children’s playground and at the new ‘quarry crusher’ facility
- Ensuring that sufficient way-finding signage is installed to guide pedestrians and cyclists within the area towards key sites and entrances to trail paths
- Provide footpaths and shared bike paths to the parkland to encourage walking and cycling
- Increase safety by provision of separated pathways and create linkages to the park from Hornsby Station, Hornsby CBD and local residences

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- Traffic calming through built design features (i.e. Street trees, traffic islands etc.) on access routes to the park

- We note that the parkland is 800 metres from Hornsby Railway station and while this is a reasonable household distance for commuting, 400 metres is considered a more comfortable walking distance to shops, parks etc. In this respect, we suggest Council consider provision of a community shuttle bus during peak usage periods.

**Design for users of all ages and abilities**

NSLHD commends Council in that the stated objectives are planning for a broad range of activities e.g. bushwalkers and trail bikes in the Old Man’s Valley area. NSLHD also suggests that a key concept in the planning incorporates design for those of a range of ages and physical and mental abilities to enjoy.

Some additional ideas that support this aspiration throughout the parkland are:
- Provision of outdoor gyms that also incorporate design elements to accommodate seniors
- Provision of safe, well designed, level walking paths that are suitable for wheelchairs and people with walking aides
- Accessible play equipment that engage those with physical and mental disabilities
- Provision of seating near play areas so grandparents and carers can sit comfortably while they supervise children
- Provision of baby change facilities near or within the playground area.
- A variety of play areas that provide opportunities for a range of ages to participate from those aged under 4 to youth

**Access to healthy food and drink**

NSLHD suggests that the Parkland includes features that support healthy living by the following inclusions:

- Installation of water fountains at regular points in the park and in key areas such as the children’s playground to encourage water consumption
- Drinking fountains are placed on accessible paths and are at a height that can be reached by wheelchairs and children under the age of four

**Ideas: Quarry Crusher Plant**

NSLHD supports the idea of including a cafe in the disused Crusher Plant, as providing attractive and inviting destinations will encourage use of the Park and enhance social contact and interaction. We would also recommend that if this idea is adopted, Council consider the following:
Adoption of Healthy Food Procurement Guidelines in Council managed facilities. Healthy Eating Guidelines are found on the Australian Governments *Eat for Health* Website (www.eatforhealth.com.au).

We would also like to suggest that space be allocated in the Parkland for holding a regular Farmers’ Market for the Hornsby Community. Council can play a role in improving the availability of healthy food and making ‘healthy choices easy choices’. Farmers markets have a dual benefit. They both support local food production and are proven to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among their customers.

**Sustainability**

NSLHD suggests that Council considers the expansion and redesign of the parkland in accordance with the *Green Star Communities Rating Scheme* which will drive development towards sustainable practice.

NSLHD Health Promotion appreciates this opportunity to provide ideas in the first-stage planning for Hornsby Park and looks forward to further opportunities to have input on this exciting parkland redevelopment.

For further information about this submission, please contact Susan Dumbrell on Phone 8877 5330 or Email Susan.dumbrell@health.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

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References

