

Proposal for a Illawarra Foreshores Regional Parklands

In response to widespread community concern about loss of open space, residents of the Northern Illawarra propose that a Regional Park be created along the foreshores from Thirroul to Kiama.

- Sydney has 11 open space areas managed as Regional Parks. The Illawarra currently has none.
- The Illawarra Foreshores Regional Parklands would be formed by a string of "pearls" linked by the existing and extended cycleway/walkway.
- The proposal would incorporate existing public open space areas, with a need to acquire additional land in some key areas.

Benefits of a Regional Park

- The Regional Park has the potential to provide open space and recreation opportunities for the people of the Illawarra and south-western Sydney, as well as attracting NSW, interstate and international tourists. If fully implemented the concept would provide significant direct and indirect local employment opportunities and economic benefits.
- Many of the open space areas also have special significance to the Aboriginal people. Protection of such sites would provide a tangible example of reconciliation to the local Aboriginal community.
- The Park would provide protection and enhancement of sensitive areas through active management of wetland habitat, endangered ecosystems and threatened species.
- Implementation of the proposal would maximise the potential of the unique natural attributes of the Illawarra without lowering environment values.
- Open space parkland is the most appropriate use for floodprone land. Suitable sites could be also utilised to resolve many flood and water quality issues.
- Regional Parks are funded by the State Government. This funding would provide resources for maintenance, security, park rangers, and infrastructure such as picnic facilities, play equipment and boardwalks.
- The proposed Regional Park would be jointly managed by the State Government (NPWS) and local councils, allowing greater community say in the management of open space through participation in the planning and design processes.
- A key component of the proposal is to link the existing cycleway/walkway to public transport hubs such as Thirroul, Wollongong, Albion Park Rail, Warrawong and Kiama. Links would also be provided to shopping centres and heritage sites.

Dedication of the foreshore lands as a Regional Park would ensure that these open spaces are available to all people now and in the future.