

Ward Oval
Sporting and Community Facilities
Brennan Street, Cobar

Plan of Management / Management Plan

Document Control

Project: Plan of Management Ward Oval Cobar

Title: Plan of Management

Document Reference: POM v1.3

Document Details	Preparation/Reviewed	Client
Draft v1	Draft	11.6.2021
Amendments, Additional Maps	ID	11.7.2021
Amendments Post exhibition	ID	13.9.2021
Amendments post Public Meeting	ID	17.9.2021

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Appendices

Appendix	Title
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1 Introduction

1.1 Summary

Site Details	
Address	Ward Oval, Cobar
Property Description	Lots 13-28 in D.P. 22820 and Lots 7317-7318 in D.P. 1170701 and Lot 1 in D.P. 216151 and Lot 17 in D.P. 213415 and Lot 65 in D.P. 651098 and Lot 1 in D.P. 602398 and Lot 21 in D.P. 837494 in Ward Oval, Cobar
Local Government Area	Cobar Shire Council

General Details	
Proposal	Plan of Management in relation to the operational needs, maintenance, and future vision and development of Ward Oval Cobar's Premier Sporting and Community Facilities.
Application Type	Plan Of Management

1.2 Background

Public land provides the community with a range of facilities and spaces that include parklands, showgrounds, community halls, picnic areas, natural bushland, caravan parks and camping areas. The public land system has developed since the 1850s in recognition of the basic needs of all members of our community to gain access to open spaces for physical, emotional and social development and well-being.

Some public land is State owned and is managed by the New South Wales Government, such as Crown land and National Parks. However, there are also large areas of State owned Crown land that are managed by local councils, either as reserve trust manager appointed under the Crown Lands Act 1989, or because the land has devolved to them under Section 48 of the Local Government Act 1993. Another type of public land is that owned by local authorities/councils and may be managed as community land or operational land under the Local Government Act.

The Ward Oval is public land and well positioned within a network of other council and community amenities. The site offers a mixture of uses and its location is central to the residents and visitors of Cobar.

Cobar offers a good amount of green space and public amenity. Ward Oval is a key part of this provision, and during times of water shortage is the only green space left in the town. Due to this proximity the site has the opportunity to promote walking and cycling for those who live near the centre of town.

Ward Oval is an important public space used by many people, both Cobar residents and visitors, with flow-on social and commercial benefits to the local community. This multi-functional site is of high social value for past and present generations. It contains a number of built structures which reflect changing community needs and interests in the area.

1.3 Purpose

Due to the land ownership, this document part “Plan of Management” under the Local Government Act 1993 – being the areas of the site that are Council owned Community Land, and part “Management Plan” – being those areas of the site owned by the Crown or that area of Council owned land that is Operational Land. The document is collectively referred to here-in as “the Plan” or the “Management Plan”.

It is further noted that whilst this Plan has been prepared consistent with the requirements of also being a “Plan of Management” under the Crown Lands Act 1989, policy directions of the Department of Trade & Investment – Crown Lands Division have changed during the course of preparation and whilst they endorse this document as a “Management Plan” for the purposes of being a management tool to assist the Reserve Trust in management of Crown areas of the site, the consent of the Minister administering the Crown Lands Act 1989 to the document being a formal “Plan of Management” is considered to be unnecessary.

A management plan is a document that provides a framework for how a particular resource or asset, in this case the Ward Oval Sporting and Community Facilities, will be maintained for current and future use. This plan has been prepared to assist the day to day physical management and future strategic management direction of Ward Oval, but should not be confused with a masterplan which guides the future enhancement or embellishment of the land.

The preparation of a management plan allows for an integrated approach to the future development of the Ward Oval which takes into account the needs of all user groups, as well as the wider community and tourists that visit the site. Through this integrated process, it is anticipated that the needs of user groups will be met and, subsequently, well managed.

As part of the planning process for the Ward Oval Sporting and Community Facilities, a review of its current condition and the uses of the site have been completed. This review seeks to identify which uses are sustainable in the long term and to identify the issues and actions that should be addressed in order to benefit both current and potential future users.

This management plan recognises that the use of the Ward Oval has changed over its history and that evolution should be allowed to continue in response to changing community needs and desires. The plan aims to protect the significant values while providing for sustainable future use.

Council has, in preparing the plan, and in consultation with the community:

- I. Identified the significant values of Ward Oval, i.e., what’s important about the place;

- II. Established a broad basis for management of Ward Oval to protect and enhance the identified values. This encompasses the core legislative and community expectations for the site and will provide the basis for making further decisions;
- III. Determined appropriate, specific management objectives that will ensure the maintenance of Ward Ovals values;
- IV. Identified issues or problems that may detract from the Ward Ovals values; and
- V. Developed a set of actions that show how each management objective will be put into practice.

1.3 Legislation and Policy Framework

The management of public land requires compliance with existing government legislation and policy. This plan has been prepared according to the provisions of both the Crown Lands Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 1993. The basis for management of the land, as prescribed under these Acts, is further set out in Section 3 of this plan.

In addition to the requirements of these Acts, this plan must comply with all other relevant legislation and policy, across all three levels of government. Examples of other legislation and policies which must be considered include the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and associated instruments such as the Cobar Local Environment Plan 2012. A description of these, and other relevant legislation and policies, is provided in Appendix A.

It is noted that part of the site subject to this plan is Council owned land that is classified as “Operational Land” under the Local Government Act 1993. While there is no requirement for Operational Land to be included in a management plan, this area of land is recognised by the community as being integral to the Ward Oval site and has therefore been included.

1.3.1 Related Planning Documents

A number of important planning documents have been prepared in recent years that inform and effect the management of the Ward Oval. They have provided essential background information and direction for the development of this plan. These planning documents include:

- Ward Oval Masterplan Report, prepared by Dunn and Hillam Architects dated 21 June 2021
- Ward Oval Management Plan 2009-2012, prepared by Cobar Shire Council dated 2012

2. Existing Situation

This section provides background information relating to the existing site and its context.

2.1 Land to which the Plan Applies

The subject site is comprised of a number of allotments owned by either the Cobar Shire Council (Council) or the NSW State Government (Crown). These allotments are Lots 13-28 in D.P. 22820 and Lots 7317-7318 in D.P. 1170701 and Lot 1 in D.P. 216151 and Lot 17 in D.P. 213415 and Lot 65 in D.P. 651098 and Lot 1 in D.P. 602398 and Lot 21 in D.P. 837494 in Ward Oval, Cobar and shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: The lots comprising Ward Oval one of Cobar's premier sporting facilities.

The overall size of the Ward Oval Precinct is over 11 hectares with the areas identified as Crown Land shown below.

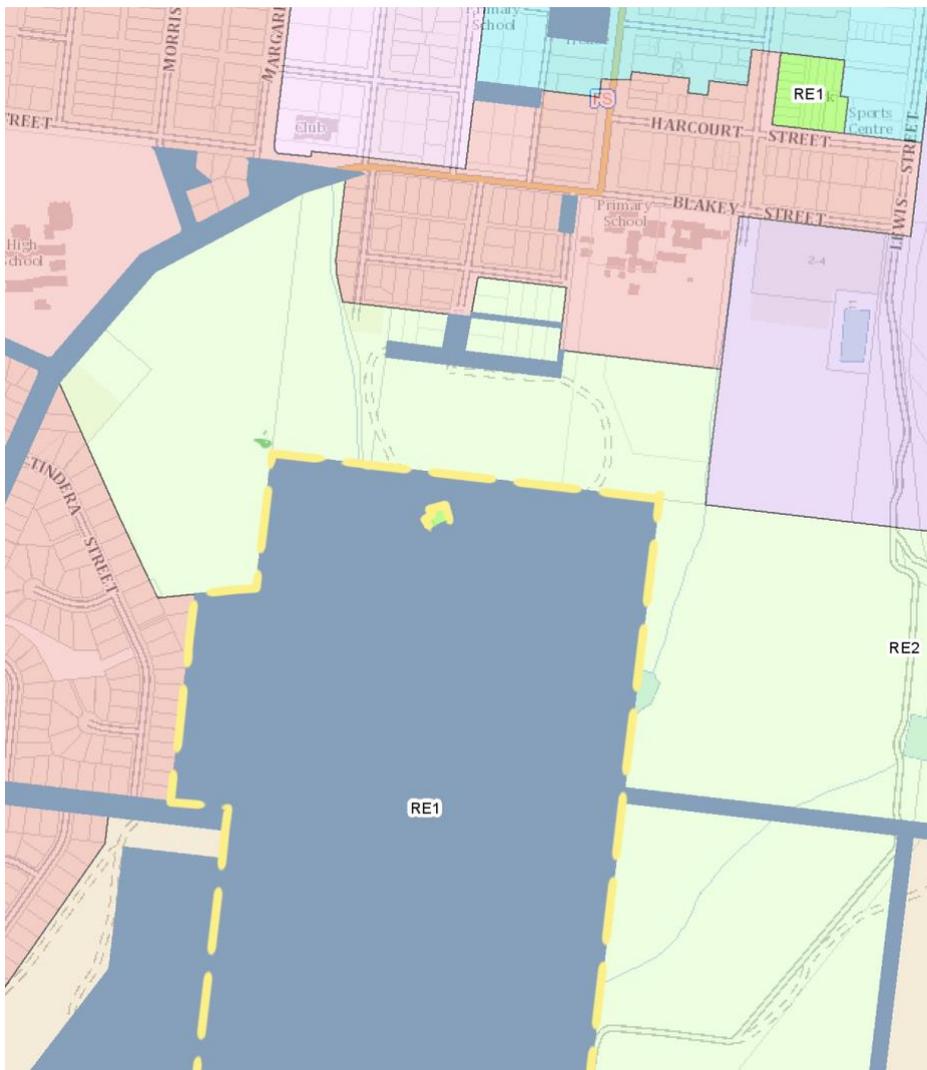


Figure 2: The areas shown in blue is identified as Crown land and principally relates to part of the site to the south and some roads near the entry to Ward Oval.

2.2 Context

The Ward Oval precinct is located 600m off the Barrier Highway / Marshall St. The site is zoned as RE2 Private Recreation (Cobar LEP 2012 map). Adjacent sites to the immediate east and west are also zoned for Private Recreational purposes.

Adjacent buildings include; Cobar Bowling & Gold Club; Cobar Pre-School; Cobar High school ; Cobar Public School.

2.3.1 Landscape and Vegetation

The main landscape elements at Ward Oval include:

- well grassed main sports field (main oval, cricket pitch, athletics area);
- site is largely bordered by mature trees to the east, west, and south, with smaller trees along the northern border of the oval.
- trees run along the western perimeter of the main oval.
- the eastern oval is not able to be irrigated year-round due to water shortages.
- informal open areas.
-

There is a series of significant established green corridors across the site, composed of a selection of endemic and exotic trees .

2.3.2 Buildings and Other Structures

The site incorporates a number of uses and structures including netball courts, two ovals, a grandstand, amenities buildings, Copper City Men's Shed, stables, agricultural sheds, and agricultural show-related halls and pavilions.

2.4 Ward Oval Management

The Ward Oval consists of both Council owned and Crown land that has been dedicated or reserved. The Cobar Shire Council has been appointed by the NSW Government as trust manager of:

- Maidens Avenue, Cobar Lot 737 DP 1170701;
- Newly Reservoir Lot 25 DP837494, being the southern area of the Oval which is Crown land.

Council is ultimately responsible for routine maintenance, taking bookings, setting and collection of fees for use of the Oval and sporting facilities. Council manages the facility for the benefit of the whole community. Through the development and implementation of this management plan, Council is working with primary user groups towards a shared vision for Ward Oval in a manner which preserves its character, meets current and anticipated community needs.

Like many other Council facilities, community stakeholders of Ward Oval are consulted. The Ward Oval Users Group meet once a year or as required by Council.

At present the Ward Oval Users Group has members comprising of different user groups and community representatives. Each formal and informal user may nominate one representative and one alternative member to attend meetings.

This form of management is cost effective for Council, but perhaps more importantly, it allows for the facilities to be managed to their full potential and gives the local community opportunities for developing skills, local ownership and pride in achievement. Council greatly values the voluntary efforts of the community-minded citizens who contribute their time and energy in managing the facilities.

2.4.1 Funding Sources

Funding for Ward Oval maintenance and improvements comes from a variety of sources. Monies for the oval playing fields and general maintenance come from Council's annual maintenance budget for parks. Some of the expenses incurred by Council are recouped by charging some users for certain uses of the facilities. Fees and charges applicable to the facilities are set each year in Council's Fees, Charges and Rentals. Minor improvements and major capital works items are often funded in partnership with user groups, Council and other levels of government.

The NSW Government has established a Public Reserves Management Fund Program (PRMFP), which provides loans and limited grants to reserve trusts. These funds are available for improvement works to Crown reserves and provide for both capital development and maintenance projects. Under the program, application can be made for the balance of the cost of projects beyond the extent of funds available locally. The program requires a local contribution, whether monetary and/or in-kind.

The PRMFP Assessment Committee is responsible for reviewing applications for financial assistance and making recommendations to the Minister administering the Crown Lands Act on the proposed allocation of funds for showground improvements. Both grant and loan funds are available through the program.

2.5 Uses of Ward Oval

The Ward Oval, including sporting and community facilities is utilised by a range of users. These include formal and casual users of the site, organised group sports and community functions,

the Early Learning Precinct and ticketed events. These user groups are categorised into formal (maintain and operates facilities), long standing (variety of sporting and community groups using various facilities) and casual users (one off, irregular). The following are the formal and long standing users:

Organisation	Facilities
Copper City Men's Shed	Shed Building
Cobar Netball Association	Netball Courts, Netball Association Clubhouse
Cobar Show Society	All grounds and facilities
General Sporting and Community Groups	Ovals 1, 2 & 3/ Amenities

2.5.1 Community Use

The Ward Oval is a substantial multipurpose community facility used by many people, both Cobar residents and visitors. Ward Oval is well recognised as a focal point for community interaction, relaxation and celebration.

The site provides for a range of community activities including:

- Organised events such as the Cobar Show;
- Organised sporting and health activities including touch football and fitness training;
- Men's Shed a community-based, non-commercial organisation undertaking skills and activities to improve health and wellbeing of members in a safe and included environment.
- Regular use by various other community groups.
- Early Learning Precinct that supports Early Childhood Services in Cobar and surrounding areas to ensure adequate supply of quality childcare to meet the community's needs and expectations.

The grounds are also enjoyed for casual use and provide active and passive recreation opportunities such as:

- Walking and other exercise;
- Travel breaks / rest stops;
- Car parking for the town centre;
- Picnics;
- Play activities include at the playground;
- Walking of dogs; and

- Sitting and relaxing.

As well as being diverse in their nature, the uses of Ward Oval vary in intensity. There are regular frequent users throughout the year, there are seasonal users and there are irregular casual users. Some users are present every day while others are weekly, monthly or annual activities.

There are a number of pre-emptive existing uses of Ward Oval facilities that always need to be taken into consideration when new bookings are taken.

2.5.2 Commercial and Corporate Use

Ward Oval facilities are used from time to time for a number of commercial activities. These include for example weddings, functions and events.

Council's policy on use and hire of community facilities for commercial activities applies to all Council managed/owned building and reserves. The policy provides that, prior to approval there be adequate consultation with other users of the community facility and potential businesses that may be affected by the proposed commercial activity. Proposals will not be supported for a commercial activity that may conflict with the normal function of the community facility or if the proposal contravenes the provisions of the Cobar Local Environment Plan 2012.

Any use of the site should also be consistent with the gazetted public purpose for the site.

Commercial fees, in accordance with Council's adopted Fees, Charges and Rentals, shall apply for each day the community facility is required for setting up and dismantling of structures. Appropriate insurance and a bond are required to protect the community facility from damage or necessary clean up following commercial use.

Advertising signs on fences on public land are exempt from requiring development consent if they meet certain criteria. The criteria include that signs are required to face inwards towards a playing field and are not visible beyond the site, and that the content does not relate to alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or like products.

2.5.3 Insurance

All Ward Oval users must have appropriate current public liability insurance policies of no less than Twenty Million Dollars. Copies of the policies must be lodged with Council at the time of application for the use of the facilities.

3. Basis for Management

The “Basis for Management” is what underpins the way Ward Oval is managed. The basis for management describes stakeholders’ fundamental expectations and provides directions for making decisions. Stakeholders include resident and visiting community members, community organisations, Council and Government agencies. The basis for management is therefore derived from:

- community values; and
- legislative and policy requirements including:
 - o Crown Land Management Principles; and
 - o Local Government Act Classification Core Objectives.

The basis for management culminates in the overarching management objectives for the site that aim to protect and enhance the Ward Ovals values. Management objectives, community values, and legislative requirements relating to management of the site are identified in this section. Text relating to key management considerations have been highlighted within boxes for ease of reference.

3.1 Management Objectives

In a holistic sense, the management objectives for the Ward Oval should seek to preserve and manage the identified values of the site both now, and into the future. This should entail the development and maintenance of the site as a multi-functional facility based on the principles of sustainable land use and management practices.

The following management objectives aim to achieve this direction whilst complying with relevant legislative and policy requirements:

- I. To provide for a range of community recreational activities, Early Learning Precinct and ancillary uses of Ward Oval and to balance potentially competing uses.
- II. To protect and enhance views to and from the site, and visual amenity within its boundaries, that comprise the unique visual character of the reserve

- III. To maintain the facility to a high standard, commensurate with available funding and community expectations
- IV. To minimise physical and health risks to users of the reserve

The community and legislation/policy requirements that form the basis for management and the Management Objectives above are further articulated in the following sub-sections. Key areas are highlighted to assist in identifying key aspects of these sections.

3.2 Community Values

Ward Oval is a key community facility in the area, providing a public open space for formal and informal use, as well as meeting, event and activity spaces. The buildings and open areas continue to be used for community purposes and private community-based functions, as intended when first established. It is clear that Ward Oval is valued greatly by the community.

3.3 Crown Land Management Principles

The Crown Land Management Act 2016 (CLM Act) commenced on 1 July 2018, introducing a consolidated, modern piece of legislation to govern the management of Crown land in NSW. Parts of the area covered by this management plan are dedicated under the Crown Lands Act 1989, and which therefore require that Ward Oval be managed for the benefit of the people of New South Wales according to set principles.

- (a) that environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crown land,
- (b) that the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible,
- (c) that public use and enjoyment of appropriate Crown land be encouraged, (d) that, where appropriate, multiple use of Crown land be encouraged,
- (d) that, where appropriate, multiple use of Crown Land be encouraged.
- (e) that, where appropriate, Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity, and
- (f) that Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licensed or otherwise dealt with in the best interests of the State consistent with the above principle

In 2021, the Crown Land Management Amendment (Plan of Management) Regulation 2021 (CLM Regulation 2021) removed a requirement for councils to complete Plans of Management

by 1 July 2021. This change is aimed to provide councils greater flexibility in the development of Plans of Management for Crown reserves.

The Crown land is dedicated for the purpose of Public Recreation*. This must be a primary consideration that guides future management.

3.4 Local Government Act Classification and Core Objectives

Those parts of the Ward Oval that are not Crown land are Council owned operational land or Council owned community land categorised as sportsground and general community use.

Division 2 of the Local Government Act 1993 deals with the use and management of the Council owned community land and include core objectives for management of such lands according to their various categorisations.

3.5 Other Policies

Council has a number of policies that are relevant to the site under various circumstances.

These include:

Development Controls Plans (DCPs) - that provide advice and requirements for development
Consideration of relevant policies of Council should be applied to any proposed activities or development.

Council additionally maintains a Management Committee Guidelines that assist in the operation of the management committee and is a useful tool to further understanding the management of Ward Oval for prospective users.

3.6 Development Consent and Leases/Licences

If a proposal is consistent with all of the above and with this management plan, then there are two further processes may still determine if uses can and cannot be approved in the reserve:

- Some uses of the reserve will require specific approval from Council in the form of development consent under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979; and
- Some uses of the reserve will require a lease, licence or temporary licence under the Crown Lands Act 1989 or the Local Government Act 1993.