



# KLINGS HILL MASTERPLAN

PLANNING FOR THE WODONGA HILLS

OCTOBER 2017

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## READING THIS MASTERPLAN

- › Master planning for the Wodonga hills has been guided by the eight management objectives and related set of guiding management principles applying to all the hills. See Appendix 1. These establish the preferred approach or “decision framework” to management and use of the hills.
- › The actions identified in this masterplan have been formulated in accordance with these objectives and guiding principles, as well as in recognition of the hill’s particular values and other characteristics (notably proximity to residential areas and accessibility, management track network, terrain, usage patterns, current facilities, biodiversity values, fire hazard management, and management regime).
- › Together the site-specific actions and the overall actions identified for all the Wodonga hills, will guide the planning, use, enhancement and management of the Wodonga hills.
- › Individual actions are described in Section 2.2, and shown in Figures 1 and 2 (along with “typical” or “example” images illustrating each strategy).

# HIGH RIDGELINES AND VANTAGE POINTS OFFERING A RANGE OF NATURE-BASED EXPERIENCES

## 1.1

### KLINGS HILL

Klings Hill is part of the Hunchback Hill Complex located to the west of Wodonga.

The Hunchback Hill Complex is split (as shown on Figure 1) between:

- Wodonga Council lands - principally Klings Hill in the centre and to the north-west, as well as the northern slope of Mcfarlanes Hill in the north-east; and,
- Crown land in the south, reserved for Public Purposes (Regional Parklands) with an Environment Conservation Council (ECC) recommendation of Felldoone Creek Nature Conservation Reserve (known locally as Mcfarlanes Hill in the east, and Swainsona Reserve in the west), which is managed by Parklands Albury Wodonga.

This masterplan only addresses those areas under council's ownership and management - that is, Klings Hill and the northern face of Mcfarlanes Hill. For convenience this masterplan uses "Klings Hill" as the single name covering both these areas.

The need for collaborative management of the Hunchback Hill Complex as a whole - between the council, Parklands Albury Wodonga and DEWLP - is acknowledged. It is essential to providing high quality land management outcomes and user experiences. Key areas for collaboration have been identified.

# THE VISION

## 2.1 THE RUGGED HIGH POINTS AND HABITAT VISION

A fundamental requirement is to ensure a co-ordinated and collaborative approach between Wodonga Council and Parklands Albury Wodonga, and the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP), across all aspects of the planning for and management of the Hunchback Hill Complex as a whole.

The masterplan proposes several actions to provide safer links for cyclists and walkers between West Wodonga and the Hunchback Hill Complex overall, including Klings Hill.

A reduced speed limit along Felltimber Creek Rd, and a series of new shared paths as safer alternative routes to the hill's main entry points along this road, are identified. The possible upgrading of the Ridge Walking Track's eastern trailhead is also flagged.

The intersection of Felltimber Creek Rd and Central Management Track is reconfigured and upgraded - to improve the safety both of users accessing the Hunchback Hill Complex as a whole, as well as for management vehicles entering or leaving this major management track. This will also present the chance to rationalise and improve parking in this area.

To encourage more walkers and cyclists to use the Central Management Track to reach the lower parts of Klings Hill, the masterplan proposes a number of minor improvements, as well as better signposting and promotion, for

this key access. A small low-key rest stop or picnic area envisaged for the saddle between Klings and Mcfarlanes Hills is also intended to encourage or attract users, and act as a minor hub from which people can explore more of Klings Hill.

The masterplan also suggests controlled public vehicle access, on a permit only basis to support occasional special event use, along the Central Management Track.

A small low-key entry node is proposed at the northern end of the Central Management Track, at the existing informal entrance at the southern end of Coyles Rd, to facilitate pedestrian access to Klings Hill from its northern side.

Acknowledging the quieter more "remote" character of the higher parts of the hill, the masterplan only proposes modest initiatives for greater leisure and recreation use of this more elevated area.

Measures are identified to ensure safe shared use of Coyles Track, to the summit of Klings Hill, by both walkers and mountain bikers. The masterplan proposes a dedicated mountain bike track, as an ascent route, to ultimately replace mountain bike use of the Coyles Track - and complete a large anti-clockwise dedicated mountain bike circuit.

The summit of Klings Hill would be marked by a low-key rest stop or lookout facilities, carefully sited to not intrude on the skyline, to replace the existing informal structures, rewarding those that have made the steep climb with a comfortable place to rest and contemplate the stunning views.

In addition to the overall biodiversity and bushland management objectives identified in the strategy, and the ongoing management of several, smaller offset sites, the masterplan proposes specific conservation priority, revegetation and biodiversity enhancement areas across Klings Hill. The extensive area of relatively good quality endangered Grassy Woodland on the hill's north-eastern slopes is proposed as a "Priority Conservation Zone" to maintain its ecological value as well as to protect this area's significant scenic role.

The steep northern face of Mcfarlanes Hill is identified as an important landscape protection and revegetation area, within the limits required by fire management considerations. Elsewhere, revegetation and biodiversity enhancement measures are proposed for land stabilisation and/or erosion remediation. As described in the overall actions for all the Wodonga hills (in the strategy), the council will liaise with the Country Fire Authority regarding mitigating bushfire risks around revegetation and biodiversity enhancement areas.

If mountain biking continues to grow in popularity, and local participation, Klings Hill holds potential to further accommodate this activity if this demand cannot be met elsewhere (in terms of track capacity, safety, trail types, skill levels required, or experiences sought).

## 2.2 SPECIFIC ACTIONS FOR KLINGS HILL

A total of 21 actions to enhance the enjoyment, conservation, landscape value and management of Klings Hill into the foreseeable future are described below. These actions and directions are specific to Klings Hill, however the 45 overall actions applicable to all the Wodonga hills - as described in the strategy - will also apply.

All actions are shown on Figure 1 along with a “typical” or “example” image to further illustrate the intent, appearance or scale of each of the proposed actions.

<b>ACTION 1</b>	<b>COLLABORATIVE LAND MANAGEMENT</b>
Work collaboratively with Parklands Albury Wodonga and the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) to co-operatively plan for and collaboratively manage the Hunchback Hill Complex as an integrated whole, maximising biodiversity, user and fire management outcomes under a consistent and co-ordinated approach as well as to provide a high quality “tenure blind” experience for users.	
<b>ACTION 2</b>	<b>THREATENED SPECIES HABITAT ENHANCEMENT</b>
Develop and implement a program of conservation works specifically designed to identify, protect and enhance habitat for threatened species known, or likely, to occur within the Hunchback Hill area. Provide for involvement of the local community in conservation surveys, monitoring and works.	
<b>ACTION 3</b>	<b>REDUCE SPEED - FELLTIMBER CREEK RD</b>
Investigate reducing the speed limit or the introduction of traffic calming measures on Felltimber Creek Rd (to finish west of the junction with the Central Management Track) to improve the safety of access to the Hunchback Hill Complex as a whole for walkers and cyclists and users arriving at the site by car.	
<b>ACTION 4</b>	<b>INTERSECTION SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS - FELLTIMBER CREEK AND THE CENTRAL MANAGEMENT TRACK</b>
Relocate/rationalise and upgrade the junction of Felltimber Creek Rd and the Central Management Track. Formalise an intersection to provide for safer access for vehicles turning off or on to Felltimber Creek Rd - both for users of Klings Hill (and the wider Hunchback Hill Complex) and access for management or emergency vehicles. Although mostly within council-managed road reserves, formalising and improving this vehicle access is likely to require co-operation with Parklands Albury Wodonga and DELWP regarding possible use of adjacent Crown land areas. Reconfiguring this intersection would also offer the opportunity to improve the provision of parking at this site. A cleared and grassed flatter area here could also provide a space for temporary event staging, on a permit/approval basis with appropriate conditions.	
<b>ACTION 5</b>	<b>SAFER ROUTE (SHARED PATH) FROM WODONGA WESTERN OUTSKIRTS</b>
Provide a safer shared path route from the western outskirts of Wodonga towards Klings Hill (and the wider Hunchback Hill Complex) to avoid parts of Felltimber Creek Road. Establish a shared path (compacted gravel or concrete) from the existing southside Felltimber Creek Road shared path (east of the Felltimber Creek bridge) along the drainage reserve to the end of Lambourn Drive, then along Lambourn Drive (as a low-traffic and low-speed route) to Felltimber Creek Road. A shared path may be required at the western end of Lambourn Drive (and a short bridge, possible high cost item) approaching the intersection with Felltimber Creek Road. (See action 6 below for a possible westward continuation of this route).	

<b>ACTION 6</b>	<b>SHARED PATH ALONG FELLTIMBER CREEK ROAD</b>
<p>To provide safe access for walkers and cyclists to the western-most entrance to the site, establish a shared path connection between Lambourn Drive and the Central Management Track entry point. Due to the constraints of the narrow road reserve and the adjoining creek this link may be along the southern shoulder of Felltimber Creek Rd and could include the upgrading of parts of an existing track or sections of new path within the Crown lands along the road's northside, or a combination of both. This path should be separated from the Felltimber Creek Rd carriageway and provide direct and easy access to the site from the urban area. Pedestrian and cyclist warning signs would be required at any Felltimber Creek Rd crossing point. (See action 5 for a possible eastward continuation of this route.)</p>	
<b>ACTION 7</b>	<b>SHARED PATH LINK TO RIDGE WALKING TRACK (EASTERN TRAILHEAD)</b>
<p>To improve access to the Hunchback Hill Complex generally, including to Klings Hill, from West Wodonga extend the existing shared path on the southside of Felltimber Creek Rd along the road's southern side to a crossing point opposite the start of the Ridge Walking Track. Pedestrian and cyclist warning signs would be required on Felltimber Creek Rd on the approaches to this crossing.</p>	
<b>ACTION 8</b>	<b>PRIORITY CONSERVATION ZONE - NORTH-EAST KLINGS HILL</b>
<p>Prioritise conservation management and protection of the existing remnant vegetation on the more rugged north-eastern slopes of Klings Hill, an area of high biodiversity and scenic value. Prioritise continued control measures for blackberry and other noxious or environmental weeds on the margins of this area, especially in locations accessed by visitors or vehicles. Close and rehabilitate existing unauthorised or informal tracks and trails within this bushland zone, and monitor for the creation of new unauthorised tracks and trails. Preventing fragmentation of this zone is a high priority.</p>	
<b>ACTION 9</b>	<b>LANDSCAPE PROTECTION ZONE</b>
<p>Regeneration of endangered Grassy Woodland community (through grazing management, weed control, fire regime, etc.) across the northern face of Mcfarlanes Hill, on council-managed land east of the Central Management Track. Regeneration efforts should be focused on the western end of Mcfarlanes Hill, and seek to improve habitat to complement adjoining Crown land. This must be undertaken with consideration to limiting bushfire risk to adjoining rural residential areas along the hill's northern margin, and avoiding revegetation of ridgelines and crests to decrease the potential to become an ember source. This will occur in consultation with the Country Fire Authority and must be consistent with relevant fire management plans. Recreation activities will not be promoted in this area and the creation of new unauthorised tracks and trails will be monitored.</p>	
<b>ACTION 10</b>	<b>REVEGETATION AND CREEKLINE STABILISATION - UPPER FELLTIMBER CREEK</b>
<p>Continue fencing and revegetation of the eroded sections of creekline and extensive land slip and slump areas (mainly on the southern slope) along the western drainage line and valley (a northern tributary of Felltimber Creek). Undertake weed control along the creek corridor, targeting willows and woody weeds. Revegetation will be undertaken in consultation with the Country Fire Authority and consistent with relevant fire management plans.</p>	
<b>ACTION 11</b>	<b>RESTRICT PUBLIC ACCESS ALONG NORTHERN MCMARTINS TRACK</b>
<p>Discourage visitor access along the northern sections of McMartins Track, due to proximity of the adjacent Wodonga Rifle Range.</p>	
<b>ACTION 12</b>	<b>SHARED ACCESS TO SUMMIT LOOKOUT VIA COYLES TRACK</b>
<p>Promote, signpost and manage the Coyles Track (to the north-western summit and vantage point on Klings Hill) as a shared route available to both walkers and mountain bikers. For walker safety this track will be managed as an "up" route only for mountain bikers (forming an anti-clockwise circuit for riders in conjunction with the completed section of downhill single track between Vearings Track and the Central Management Track). Should a separate "up" route for mountain bikes be established along this spur (see action 14) this track will be restricted to walkers only and signposted and managed accordingly.</p>	

<b>ACTION 13</b>	<b>LOW-KEY LOOKOUT - KLINGS HILL SUMMIT</b>
<p>Reinforce the north-western summit of Klings Hill - now the site of an existing ad hoc tin-roofed shelter and fireplace - as a low-key but spectacular vantage point. Accessible to walkers and riders but not users' vehicles. Provide seating, shelter and orientation and interpretive information, remove fireplace and ad-hoc and informal structures and locate built elements to avoid intrusions on the skyline.</p>	
<b>ACTION 14</b>	<b>COMPLETE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRACK LOOP</b>
<p>Establish a new section of single mountain bike track, from the upper saddle on the Central Management Track to the Klings Hill summit, to complete a loop with the downhill single track. This will be an ascent only route, separating riders and walkers currently sharing the Coyles Track (see action 12). The proposed alignment is via an area supporting little native vegetation or habitat, allowing the final alignment selection to avoid impacts on biodiversity values. The route will also be chosen to minimise visual impacts. Provision of this track should be accompanied by targeted plantings to assist in slope stabilisation and to partially screen the track from other parts of the hill. Safety signage and active implementation of a code of conduct will be required to avoid conflict between users.</p>	
<b>ACTION 15</b>	<b>REST STOP AND PICNIC AREA</b>
<p>Provide low-key picnic and rest facilities on the flat area west of the Central Management Track at the southern entrance to Klings Hill reserve.</p>	
<b>ACTION 16</b>	<b>NEW LOW-KEY REST AND PICNIC SITE - CENTRAL/COYLES TRACK JUNCTION</b>
<p>Provide limited low-key rest/picnic facilities (platform tables or seating, and orientation information if required) near the management track junction on the saddle between Mcfarlanes Hill and Klings Hill. At the top of a very steep climb this site should incorporate existing mature trees and additional screen and shelter plantings.</p>	
<b>ACTION 17</b>	<b>UPGRADED LOW-KEY ENTRY NODE - RIDGE WALKING TRACK (EASTERN TRAILHEAD)</b>
<p>Collaborate with DELWP and Parklands Albury Wodonga to provide an identifiable and easily accessed entry point to the Hunchback Hill Complex generally, including to Klings Hill, from the urban edge. Provide a small roadside parking area on the northside of Felltimber Creek Rd (within the road reserve) at the start of the Ridge Walking Track. Provide orientation information for the Hunchback Hill Complex generally, including Klings Hill. Liaise with Parklands Albury Wodonga to investigate whether the adjacent Crown land area, under their management, will provide a superior design for this low-key entry node (including the possible provision of a shade shelter and additional seating or improved orientation information). Implementation of this action is contingent on Parklands Albury Wodonga upgrading and managing the Ridge Walking Track as a safe, well-maintained and clearly marked route free from encounters or conflicts with mountain bikers.</p>	
<b>ACTION 18</b>	<b>EROSION REMEDIATION AND REVEGETATION - NORTH-WEST KLINGS HILL</b>
<p>Fencing and revegetation of an eroded section of creekline, and surrounding major gully erosion and minor land slumps (including erosion of a section of the McMartins Track), in the perched valley in the north-west of Klings Hill. Revegetate using endangered Grassy Woodland community species. Revegetation will be undertaken in consultation with the Country Fire Authority and consistent with relevant fire management plans.</p>	

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**ACTION 19****SPECIAL-EVENT PUBLIC VEHICLE ACCESS**

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Provide for occasional temporary public vehicle access - in association with sporting, community, environmental or other organised events - from the Felltimber Creek Rd intersection, (when improved see action 4), to the saddle between Mcfarlanes Hill and Klings Hill. Public vehicle access, and special-event use, would be by permit only and with appropriate conditions. Parking would be on the existing cleared and grassed sites only. Developed parking areas or visitor facilities would not be warranted due to the likely irregular and flexible use of this site. Undertake minor improvements as required to enable safe (occasional) public vehicle access along the Central Management Track - and support this track's use as a walking and cycling route only at other times (with improved signposting and promotion). Care must be taken to ensure any minor improvements or maintenance do not disturb the high quality vegetation occurring adjacent to parts of the track and permanent protective fencing may be warranted. Install lockable gates at the saddle to prevent public vehicle access (but permit management access) downhill to the north.

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**ACTION 20****SMALL LOW-KEY ENTRY NODE - COYLES ROAD NORTH END**

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Improve existing small low-key entry node with a better defined and contained parking area and orientation information within the existing road reserve and current informal entrance at the northern entry to Klings Hill (just beyond the reserve's margins, at the current "road closed" point at the south end of Coyles Rd). This low-key entrance would offer pedestrian and bicycle access only. Retain unobstructed management and emergency vehicle access to the reserve, with a lockable gate to prevent unauthorised access.

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**ACTION 21****EXPLORING FUTURE MOUNTAIN BIKING OPPORTUNITIES**

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If there is demonstrable demand for mountain biking experiences that cannot be met elsewhere across the wider Hunchback Hill Complex, or if other council-managed mountain bike tracks reach safe capacity, there is potential to extend mountain bike tracks into the north-west sector of Klings Hill. It may be a location in which to offer further cross-country or downhill riding opportunities. This perched valley offers a diversity of terrain in close proximity, is mostly cleared or sparsely vegetated, is generally well-drained, and does not have an established usage profile. Providing mountain bike tracks in this area would be subject to the site assessment, planning, design and approval requirements set out in overall actions applicable to all the Wodonga hills.

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## APPENDIX 1

# OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Master planning of the Wodonga Hills has been guided by the seven management objectives and related set of guiding management principles applying to all the Wodonga hills.

As described in the strategy, the eight objectives that shape planning for the Wodonga Hills encompass:

1. Sustainable management and enjoyment;
2. Biodiversity and habitat values;
3. Aboriginal cultural heritage values;
4. Visitor, neighbour and community safety;
5. Landscape and scenic values;
6. Accessibility, connection and integration;
7. Leisure, recreation and tourism; and,
8. Awareness, appreciation and understanding.

Each of these eight objectives, supported by a set of guiding principles, establish the preferred approach or “decision framework” to management and use of the hills.

A set of overall actions provide directions and guidelines for key planning and management challenges or issues that are likely to be common across all hills.

These are detailed in full in the strategy.

This Planning for the Wodonga Hills - Klings Hill Masterplan for the City of Wodonga was prepared by Gondwana Consulting Pty Ltd.

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