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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nowra Showground is located on the western edge of the Nowra city street grid and overlooks the Shoalhaven River. This Conservation Management Plan was commissioned by Shoalhaven City Council to establish the cultural significance of the showground and to enable future planning decisions to be made which take into account those elements and aspects of the site which are considered of historic, cultural or aesthetic significance. A Landscape Master Plan was commissioned as part of the brief which also took into account the heritage significance of the place.

The Nowra Showground comprises three distinct areas or precincts, separated by two vehicular and pedestrian entries which extend into the site - Junction and Worrigee Streets. Precinct 1, the Main Showground, was the first area developed. Major items within this area include the Main Oval, the Federation Pavilion, entries to the historic Ben's Walk and Hanging Rock Lookout which has picturesque views over the Shoalhaven River. In 1927 an area was added to the north side of Junction Street. Precinct 2, known still as the Added Area, has a playing field and the Community Youth Centre on its western side. Precinct 3, the Horse and Cattle Area, is to the south of Worrigee Street and was developed in two phases. The first extension was in 1937, while the second was in 1954 when the Council purchased the final area of land extending to Plunkett Street. This precinct is characterised by its rural flavour, with a judging ring and a number of timber and steel horse and cattle stalls. All three precincts have extensive tree and grass cover which contribute greatly to the aesthetic significance of the showground site.

As well as the annual Nowra Show, the showground facilities are used by a number of sporting and community groups including the Nowra Warriors Rugby Club, the Nowra Cricket Club, the Nowra Gymnastics Club, the Nowra Croquet Club, among others. The Federation Pavilion is regularly used for community functions and for conventions. Several buildings are leased from the Trust including the Changerooms, the Poultry Pavilion, the Nowra Croquet Club and the Community Youth Centre. The area around Hanging Rock Lookout and the two entries to Ben's Walk are used on a daily basis by casual visitors and picnickers.

A number of agricultural associations formed in the Shoalhaven area in the last third of the 19th century. These were The Shoalhaven Estate Agricultural Association (1863), The Ulladulla Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1866), The Shoalhaven Pastoral, Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1869), Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1874), Broughton Creek Horticultural Association (1883) and Kangaroo Valley Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1886).

The first show held at the new grounds was the twelfth annual show of the Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association and it occurred on the 25th & 26th of February 1886. In 1903 the Nowra Municipal Council became the sole Trustee of the Showground. The Federation Pavilion was completed on the west side of the Main Oval by 1905 and followed by McKenzie's Gates (Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet) in 1907-08, Monaghan's Memorial Drinking Fountain in 1912, and the Nowra War Memorial Gates in 1931. The Federation Pavilion was enlarged in 1939, the Community Youth Centre constructed in 1972 and the Changerooms in 1985. In 1988 the Federation Pavilion was renovated and in 1993 alterations and additions were made to the rear of the building.

Nowra Showground itself, as well as a number of individual items have been deemed of Local heritage significance in the State Heritage Inventory database. These include Hanging Rock Lookout, the entries to Ben's Walk, the Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet (McKenzie's Gates), the Federation Pavilion and the Victorian Memorial Cast Iron Fountain. The Inter War Castellated Gateway and Sculpture (Nowra War Memorial Gates) has been deemed to be of Regional significance, although the categories now used by the NSW Heritage Office are limited to Local and State only.

Aspects of the significance of Nowra Showground are:

- As a focus for agricultural, sporting and community gatherings since 1886, it is of high social significance.
- The showground is held in high esteem by the district community as a venue for the annual show since 1886, and sporting and social events. The War Memorial entry gates are of special significance as a tangible reminder of Australia's participation in various international war arenas, especially World War One.
- It is associated with early pioneers of the Nowra area including members of the Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association, especially James Monaghan, the first secretary of this association in 1874.
- As a showground complex the aesthetic qualities of built structures such as the Federation Pavilion, the Federation Gothic War Memorial Gates, the rustic qualities of the Horse and Cattle Area, the splendid stands of mature trees and the spectacular views from Hanging Rock Lookout combine to give it landmark qualities.
- The showground with its pavilion overlooking the oval and the adjoining Horse and Cattle area is a fine example of a design of a regional showground. The level of intactness of the pavilion and the war memorial gates display examples of architectural design characteristics of the time.

All these aspects of the significance of the Nowra Showground should be conserved and enhanced in any future developments or changes to the place. Significant fabric and landscaping elements are identified and recommendations made about how they should be treated in accordance with their significance.

Conservation policies and actions are outlined to guide in any future works or uses at the Nowra Showground site. General policies cover the areas of: conservation management plans, conservation planning, site management and community use, while more specific policies include conserving the setting of the showground, the cultural landscape, conservation and treatment of building fabric, building and landscape management, future uses and new works.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

This Conservation Management Plan was commissioned by the Shoalhaven City Council. A Landscape Master Plan for the showground also forms part of the commission. The Landscape Master Plan as well as considering use and landscape design values has also taken into account conservation issues arising out of the Conservation Management Plan.

2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This Conservation Management Plan aims to be a guiding document when planning or documenting future works at Nowra Showground. It is intended to be a working document, providing information in a readily accessible format.

The primary objectives of the Conservation Management Plan are to:

- ♦ establish the cultural significance of the Nowra Showground site, its component parts and its setting by the Shoalhaven River.
- ♦ formulate appropriate policies for the conservation of the cultural significance of the Nowra Showground, taking into account its historical and social significance, the significant physical fabric including the landscaping, the scenic bushland setting, and the on-going pressure of demand for various sporting and recreational activities at the site.
- ♦ formulate appropriate policies for the long term conservation of the cultural significance of the place. These policies are to include future usage, general conservation, on-going maintenance and management of the buildings and landscape. These policies are to be implemented by the Trustee, Shoalhaven City Council.

2.3 STUDY METHODOLOGY

This Conservation Management Plan was prepared by Otto Cserhalmi & Partners Pty Ltd, and generally follows the format and guidelines set out in *The Conservation Plan* by Dr. J. S. Kerr (2000). The terms *place*, *fabric*, *conservation*, *maintenance*, *preservation*, *restoration*, *reconstruction*, *adaptation* and *compatible use* used throughout this document have the meaning given them in the *Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter, 1999)*. These terms are defined in Section 2.9.

The Burra Charter was revised in 1999. The revised charter has been used in the preparation of this document. A comparison between the old and the new versions is included with the Charter in the Appendices.

The investigation and assessment of significance of the Nowra Showground and the suggestions for the management of that significance generally follow the guidelines and procedures recommended in the *NSW Heritage Manual*.

This Conservation Management Plan includes:

- a review of historical and archival material relating to the site and the analysis of the chronological development of the showground site;
- an investigation of the existing physical fabric including the landscaping to determine the extent and condition of original elements and the nature of subsequent changes; and
- an analysis of the documentary, physical and comparative evidence to establish the nature and degree of significance of the site and individual components. This information is summarised in the Statement of Significance on which the Conservation Policies are based.
- the separate Landscape Master Plan was prepared by James Pfeiffer and Associates who also contributed to landscaping aspects in the Conservation Management Plan.

The Conservation Management Plan seeks to take account of issues such as the constraints and requirements arising from the site's significance. It also considers the general physical condition of the buildings and their setting and any relevant requirements of Shoalhaven City Council and other users of the site in the development of an overall framework for the conservation and management of the place.

The Conservation Policies with specific guidelines for the conservation of the buildings and other physical elements are set out in the document.

2.4 STUDY TEAM

This Conservation Management Plan was prepared by:

Geoff Stennett
Senior Conservation Architect

James Pfeiffer
Catherine Lewis
Landscape Architect

Robyn Florance
Historian

2.5 CONSULTATION AND REVIEW

Otto Cserhalmi & Partners Pty Ltd gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following in the preparation of this Conservation Management Plan for Nowra Showground site.

Comments on the first draft document were made by:
Declan McDonald - Shoalhaven Council Manager Parks and Recreation.

James Harris - Council Recreation and Strategy Officer
Lorraine McCarthy - Council Land Classification Registrar
John Flett - Council Heritage Officer

2.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The historical research undertaken during the preparation of this Conservation Management Plan was to enable the preparation of the contextual and historical outline and for the analysis of Cultural Significance. Copies of historic photographs were obtained for inclusion in the report and to trace the sequence of development of the place.

The historic research undertaken, and the resulting historical outline, is not intended to be a definitive history of the place, rather it is to establish the historical context of the Nowra Showground, in order that a Statement of Significance could be prepared. The J. S. Kerr model of a chronological history, rather than a thematic history has been employed in this case.

In preparing Conservation Management Plans it is necessary to assess the available documentary evidence. Whilst anecdotal information can help establish the broad context, the Analysis of Significance and the Statement of Significance, as set out in Dr. James Kerr's methodology must be based on an analysis of evidence: both physical and documentary.

Finally, this document is a Conservation Management Plan for the Nowra Showground and not a series of Conservation Management Plans for individual items within the showground. A detailed analysis of the fabric of the Federation Pavilion, for example, was not carried out. Analysis of building fabric and of the landscaping is carried out to the degree which allows general assessment of significance. An individual Conservation Management Plan of the Federation Pavilion would enable a thorough detailed analysis of building fabric, but could not be prepared within the scope of this study.

2.7 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Shoalhaven City Council Heritage Study 1995-1998 prepared by Peter Freeman Pty Ltd

Nowra Showground Tree Survey and Analysis December 1996
prepared by Open Space Management Students Illawarra Institute of Technology Yallah

Shoalhaven Heritage Inventory
Nowra Showground and Sports Complex
Federation Brick Pavilion
Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet
Inter-War Castellated Gateway & Sculpture
Victorian Memorial Cast Iron Fountain
Hanging Rock Lookout
Ben's Walk and Aboriginal Art Sites

2.8 ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations may be used in the document:

AONSW	Archives Office of NSW
AZP	Archaeological Zoning Plan
BCA	Building Code of Australia
CMP	Conservation Management Plan
DCP	Development Control Plan
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EP&A	Environmental Planning & Assessment
HO	Heritage Office
ICOMOS	International Council of Monuments and Sites
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
NT	National Trust of Australia
PN	Planning NSW
POM	Plan of Management
RAIA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects
REP	Regional Environmental Plan
RNE	Register of the National Estate
SHI	State Heritage Inventory
SHR	State Heritage Register

2.9 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions explain the terms commonly used in Conservation Planning. They have been drawn from the Burra Charter and from the NSW Heritage Office publication, *Heritage Terms and Abbreviations* (1996).

Aboriginal Significance

An item is of Aboriginal Heritage Significance if it demonstrates Aboriginal history and culture. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has the primary responsibility for items of Aboriginal significance in NSW.

Adaptation

means modifying a *place* to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

Aesthetic significance

An item having this value is significant because it has visual or sensory appeal, landmark qualities and/or creative or technical excellence.

Archaeological Assessment

A study undertaken to establish the archaeological significance (research potential) of a particular site and to propose appropriate management actions.

Archaeological Significance

A category of significance referring to scientific value or research potential that is, the ability to yield information through investigation.

Archaeological Site

A place that contains evidence of past human activity. Below-ground archaeological sites include building foundations, occupation deposits, features and artefacts. Above ground archaeological sites include buildings, works, industrial structures and relics that are intact or ruined.

Archaeological Zoning Plan

A graphic plan of a place indicating relative archaeological potential of areas or zones within this. An archaeological zoning plan is prepared by undertaking broad scale archaeological assessment over a large area.

Associations

means the special connections that exist between people and a *place*.

Burra Charter (and its guidelines)

Charter adopted by Australia ICOMOS which establishes the nationally accepted principles for the conservation of places of cultural significance.

Conservation

means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain all its cultural significance.

The earlier version of the Burra Charter noted that conservation includes *maintenance* and may according to circumstance include *preservation*, *restoration* and *adaptation* and will more commonly be a combination of these.

Contemporary Community Esteem

The valuing of a heritage item by a recognised local, regional or state-wide community because it forms a strong part of their cultural identity.

Compatible Use

means a use which respects the cultural significance of a *place*. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

Cultural Landscape

Those areas of the landscape which have been significantly modified by human activity. They include rural lands such as farms, villages and mining towns as well as country towns.

Cultural Significance

means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its *fabric*, *setting*, *use*, *associations*, *meanings*, records, *related places* and *related objects*. Places may have a range of values for different individual components, fixtures, contents and objects.

Curtilage

The geographical area that provides the physical context for an item and which contributes to its heritage significance. Land title boundaries and heritage curtilages do not necessarily coincide.

Development Control Plan (DCP)

A plan prepared by a local council to provide more detailed development controls and guidelines to accompany an LEP. Often used for Heritage Conservation Areas.

Environmental Heritage

means those places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects and precincts, of State or local heritage significance (Section 4 of the Heritage Act 1977)

Excavation Permit

A permit issued by the Heritage Council of NSW under Section 60 or Section 140 of the Heritage Act 1977 to disturb or excavate a relic.

Exemptions

Work on heritage items covered by conservation orders which can be exempted under Section 57 (2) of the Heritage Act from the requirements to obtain the Heritage Council's consent.

Fabric

means all the physical material of the *place* including components, fixtures, contents and objects.

Heritage Act 1977

The statutory framework for identification and conservation of heritage in NSW. The Act also describes the composition and powers of the Heritage Council.

Heritage Item

A landscape, place, building, structure, relic or other work of heritage significance. See also the *Heritage Act 1977*

Heritage Significance

of aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, natural or aesthetic value for past, present or future generations.

Historical Significance

An item having this value is significant because of the importance of its relationship to the evolving pattern of our cultural history.

Interim Heritage Order (IHO)

An order made under Part 3 of the Heritage Amendment Act 1998. The Minister may make an interim heritage order for a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct that the Minister considers may, on further inquiry or investigation, be found to be of state or local Heritage Significance.

The Minister may delegate the power to place IHOs to local councils however in general the orders will be made by the Minister, following recommendations by the Heritage Council.

Integrity

A heritage item is said to have integrity if its assessment and statement of significance is supported by sound research and analysis, and its fabric and curtilage are largely intact.

Interpretation

means all of the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.

Local Environmental Plan (LEP)

A statutory plan prepared by a local council in accordance with the EP&A Act. An LEP regulates the carrying out of development within a local government area and controls the use and development of land and the conditions under which change may occur.

Local Significance

Items of Heritage Significance which are fine examples, or rare, at the local community level.

Maintenance

means the continuous protective care of the *fabric*, contents and setting of a *place*, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.

Meanings

denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

Moveable Heritage

Heritage Items not fixed to a site or place, for example, furniture, locomotives and archives.

National Parks and Wildlife Act (NPWS Act)

Statutory Framework for the care and control and management of natural areas and Aboriginal cultural relics in New South Wales. European cultural relics on sites owned by the NPWS also come under the jurisdiction of the NPWS Act.

Oral Histories

Historical research carried out by interviewing people associated with a heritage item, in a planned manner to answer questions which is archivally recorded on audio equipment so that it can be transcribed and analysed.

Place

means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

Permanent Conservation Order (PCO)

An order made under Section 44 of the Heritage Act to protect a significant heritage item in NSW. The order remains in place indefinitely unless revoked. Under the 1999 changes to the Heritage Act PCOs have been replaced by inclusion on the State Heritage Register (SHR).

Preservation

means maintaining the *fabric* of a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

Rarity

An item having this value is significant because it represents a rare, endangered or unusual aspect of our history or cultural heritage.

Reconstruction

means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and it is distinguished by the introduction of new material into the *fabric*.

Regional Environmental Plan

Prepared by the Director-General of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and made by the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning following public exhibition. It deals with matters important to a specific region such as land use, development and the conservation of heritage places.

Related Object

means an object that contributes to the cultural significance of the *place*, but is not at that place.

Related Place

means a *place* that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.

Representativeness

Items having this value are significant because they are fine representative examples of an important class of significant items or environments.

Restoration

means returning the existing *fabric* of a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Section 60 Application

An application made under Section 60 of the Heritage Act, for approval to make changes to an item covered by a PCO. Routine maintenance, and other works which do not affect the significance of an item are exempt for Heritage Council Approval.

Section 170 Register

Section 170 of the Heritage Act requires each NSW Government Agency to prepare and maintain a register of heritage items in their ownership or under their control. This provision continues under the amended act, with extended responsibilities for Government Agencies.

Setting

means the area around a *place*, which may include the visual catchment.

Social Significance

Items having this value are significant through their social, spiritual or cultural association with a recognisable community.

State Heritage Inventory (SHI)

An inventory of places of heritage significance maintained by the NSW Heritage Office. It includes items of state significance (see below).

State Heritage Register (SHR)

This register, required under Part 3A of the Heritage Amendment Act 1998, lists items of State Heritage Significance. It is maintained by the NSW Heritage Office and is available on the internet at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au. Part 3A notes *the automatic listing of items that were formerly the subject of a Permanent Conservation Order, or that are owned by Government Instrumentalities and identified as being of State Heritage Significance*.

State Heritage Significance

in relation to a place building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to the State in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of an item (Section 4A (1) of the Heritage Act 1977).

State Significance

Items of heritage significance which are fine examples, or rare, at a state community level.

Statement of Heritage Impact

Analyses the impact of proposed works on the significance of a heritage item.

Technical/Research Significance

Items having this value are significant because of their contribution or potential contribution to an understanding of our cultural history or environment.

Use

means the functions of a *place*, as well as the activities and practice that may occur at the *place*.