Everglades House & Garden, Leura Operational Plan - Temporary Activities



Prepared by two Trees & Co. for the National Trust of Australia (NSW) November 2024

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1. Introduction

This Operational Plan has been prepared for Everglades House and Garden by Two Trees & Co. to accompany a Development Application (DA) to Blue Mountains City Council (Council) for the proposed use of the site on Everglades Avenue for Temporary Activities including small and Performance activities and Open Days.

This Operational Plan has been prepared with reference to the following:

- Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by ptc Consulting;
- Acoustic Impact Assessment prepared by RWDI;
- Bushfire Assessment prepared by Bushfire Consulting Services; and
- Heritage Impact Statement prepared by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) and
- Conservation Management Plan 2010 for Everglades House & Gardens prepared by Anne Higham, Professor Ian Jack and Colleen Morris in association with Rod Howard and Associates Pty Ltd.

2. VISION - EVERGLADES

The National Trust seeks to conserve and enhance the heritage significance of the places and built heritage in which it operates.

A principle objective of the operation of Everglades House & Gardens by the National Trust is to offer an attraction that is viable, sustainable and an essential part of both the local community and tourism offer in the Blue Mountains, collaborating with relevant stakeholders to realise these opportunities.

The day-to-day or business as usual (BAU) activation of Everglades and the use of the site for Temporary Activities will achieve the following objectives. Everglades House & Gardens will be:

- Accessible and welcoming to all members of the public;
- A place for local people to visit often: based on a diverse program of temporary activities as well as providing the opportunity to share public spaces for recreation and enjoyment *during BAU operations*.

3. Purpose of this Operational Plan

The key objective of the Operational Plan (OP) is to ensure that the activation and use of Everglades House & Gardens delivers a safe, enjoyable and practical visitor experience that does not compromise the amenity of neighbours and the wider locality.

The OP focuses on key operational activities that have the potential to impact the neighbours and community in terms of noise, traffic and transport, public safety and amenity. The site's operations will be managed within the parameters outlined in the relevant development consents and in this OP.

The use of the site for Temporary Activities is proposed initially in line with existing operations, with the frequency of activities to rise gradually and incrementally over time. This will allow growth managed by this OP and constrained by the need to conserve the site's heritage significance and the resourcing capacity of the National Trust. It will also permit gradual growth within the physical capacity of the site to sustain activation.

The OP is proposed as the primary governance mechanism to ensure that development over time responds to appropriate heritage policies, environmental and amenity criteria. This will allow the use of the site to evolve over time and accommodate changing cultural and artistic programming while management measures continue to be refined and improved. This will also facilitate operational change to better respond to changing conditions in the visitor economy.

The OP adopts key conservation policies contained in the CMP and additional project specific conservation policies recommended by the HIS.

The OP also adopts the key recommendations from the noise impact and traffic and parking assessments as detailed following, which will help ensure activities meet appropriate environmental and amenity criteria.

The OP will therefore help ensure that the proposed development meets the requirements of clause 5.10(10) and does not adversely affect:

- The site's heritage significance or its setting
- The site's capacity to accommodate ongoing public access through business as usual activities; or
- The amenity of the neighbourhood.

On this basis the OP forms a sound governance regime that allows:

- Stakeholders to be confident of established environmental criteria which need to be met and the mechanisms for managing issues if they arise; and
- The National Trust to
- Respond to changing creative, operational and environmental circumstances (without the need for further development approval);
- Evolve the activation of the site over time and continue to meet and exceed established environmental standards.

4. APPLICATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Operational Plan applies to the operation of Temporary Activities at Everglades House & Gardens Activation Area, which includes only those parts of the site that are currently open to the public and includes access to the Glades, The Grotto, The Lookout and terraced areas of the Gardens as well as the House and surrounds, the Visitor Centre as shown in Figure 1

The locations for Temporary Activities including direction of any stage and speakers, are detailed in Figure 1.

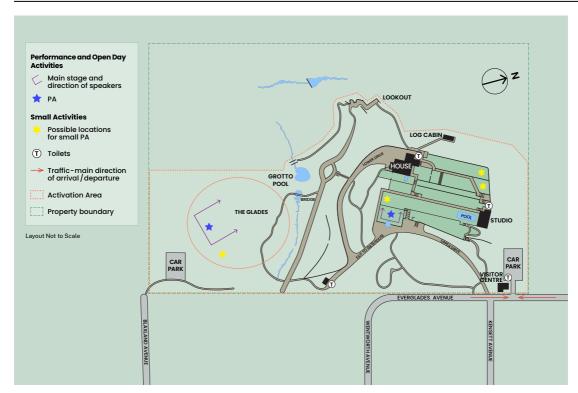


Figure 1: Indicative Activation Area Map not to scale (Source: Graphic/Dimensional 2024)

4.1 TEMPORARY ACTIVITIES

Table 1 – Summary of Proposed Temporary Activities

Description	Capacity	Frequency (maximum only)	Hours of operation
Small Activities	120	90 days per year	9am to 7pm (daylight hours)
Performance Activities	250	20 days per year	9 am – 10.30 pm (amplified sound to cease at 10pm)
Open Day Activity	600	2 days per year	9am to 7pm (daylight hours)

The approved tearooms support visitor's enjoyment of the site and includes light meals and Devonshire Tea. This is undertaken in accordance with Food Safety and Responsible Service of Alcohol requirements and other relevant standards. In addition the proposed development includes ancillary food and beverage components which comprise:

<u>Ancillary Food and Beverage</u> will continue to be provided including approved operation of the existing tearoom and

- Extension of hours of operation for the café/tearooms for use during all activities;
- Retail sale of pre-packaged food and beverages for consumption on site;
- Occasional outdoor coffee cart, food truck and/or popup bar for Performance and Open Day Activities.

5. HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

The site is to be managed in accordance with the Conservation Management Plan prepared by Anne Higham, Professor Ian Jack and Colleen Morris in association with Rod Howard and associates Pty Ltd and the Heritage Impact Statement (Heritage Management Document for the purpose of cl 5.10(10) prepared by the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

The National Trust conserves and enhances the heritage significance of the places and built heritage items in which it operates. Use and activation of Everglades House and Garden will achieve the following heritage objectives:

- The primary use of the site will continue as a National Trust house and garden which is open to the public.
- Any events or uses will be determined by the relevant council approvals in terms of
 capacity and frequency. In terms of heritage impact, the relevant measures should be
 undertaken to ensure the protection of the site in response to the number of patrons
 expected, areas of the property in use, weather conditions expected and duration of
 the activity.
- Any Temporary Activity or use of the property should have a fully reversible impact on the property,

2010 CMP Policy	2024 HIS Policy Framework and Management
Policy 10 An appropriate use (or uses) should be found for the place that does not compromise its heritage significance. Should any further changes of use take place in the future, then these should also be compatible with the retention of the character and significance of the place	Proposed uses should not compromise the heritage significance of the property and should, as far as possible,
Policy 11 Every effort should be made to preserve as much as possible of the components across the site that have been identified as having high and moderate significance, and no intervention should be initiated without careful consideration of the alternative procedures available to accomplish this end. Guidelines In general terms, no activity should occur that would remove or reduce evidence of important historical and aesthetic associations contained within the site, or reduce the intactness of items identified as having heritage significance; Significant internal spaces within buildings and garden areas should be retained and sympathetically adapted to new uses where this will ensure the ongoing conservation and viability of the place;	Any activity should consider the impact on historic landscape and/or building fabric and appropriate measures should be undertaken to minimise this impact. Where impact may be expected to occur (such as degrading of pathways, or damage to lawns) then protective measures are required to be put in place (such as the use of protection mats). Activities should not be undertaken that will cause permanent and irreversible damage to the heritage values of the property.

2010 CMP Policy

Policy 12

Where new services are required, then these should be introduced discretely to avoid damage to significant fabric and avoid visual impact on significant spaces.

Guidelines

- The introduction of new services should be located unobtrusively and ideally confined to parts of the site and building fabric that have already been disturbed wherever this is practicable;
- No significant trees or plantings, including their root systems, should be disturbed by the introduction of new services;

2024 HIS Policy Framework and Management

New services will generally not be required for any of the anticipated activities on the site, as these have generally already been previously installed.

Should any new services be required they should not impact the heritage values of the house or garden.

Policy 13

Existing access to the site should be maintained.

Guidelines

- The principal pedestrian access to the garden should remain via the existing main entrance.
- Existing vehicular access points should be retained;
- A disability access plan should be developed and progressively implemented.

Existing entry and exit arrangements to the site, in addition to existing internal pathways, should be used and retained.

No new paths that would cause a heritage impact should be installed.

All paths should be kept in good repair as far as is practicable to ensure safe access.

Policy 21

Compliance with regulatory ordinances should not compromise the heritage significance of the place.

Guidelines

- Conservation and continuing use should not conform to regulations such as those contained in the Building Code of Australia at the expense of significant building fabric and significant garden elements;
- Alternative approaches to achieving compliance, which may involve discussion and negotiation with the appropriate Council officers, should be considered and the least intrusive approach selected;

Wherever required, measures should be undertaken to ensure safety and compliance throughout the property in a way that responds to the heritage values of the place.

Policy 25

Landscape design: Recognise the exceptional significance of the Studio Terrace (Squash Racquet Court and Terrace) for its position as the first example of Modernist garden design in Australia and the overall original design comprising the main terraces of Everglades with the natural landscape as a foil for its national importance as an example of inter-war garden design informed by garden design practices both from the Edwardian period and Modernist principles.

Guidelines

• Maintain structural elements and spatial planning of the original garden design;

The Studio Terrace is a key heritage feature of the site and is of exceptional significance. Measures should be undertaken (particularly with regard to planting, views and vistas) that help to preserve or reinstate these heritage values.

Activities on the Studio Terrace should respond to and utilise the existing features of the site (such as the elevated "theatre" and the defined "windows" to the valley) wherever possible.

Activities that would cause permanent and irreversible damage to the Studio Terrace will not be permitted.

2010 CMP Policy

- The main terraces of Everglades, particularly the Studio Terrace, form the key element of the exceptional significance of the place and their conservation and long-term management should be given the highest priority in any master plan and maintenance plan formulated for the site.
- Conserve and reinstate designed vistas from the Studio Terrace;
- Conserve and reconstruct, where necessary, elements of the Studio Terrace from the van de Velde period;

2024 HIS Policy Framework and Management

As per Policy 11, appropriate measures (such as protection mats) should be implemented to protect the Studio Terrace.

Policy 28

Views: conserve views and vistas to and from the house, main terraces and lookout including those once a feature and now blocked

Guidelines

Short term

- This should particularly apply to: the vista from the Studio Terrace through the window frames and the views from the main southern windows of the house to the Jamison Valley;
- Selectively prune and thin shrub or understorey planting (ongoing).

Long term

- Careful placement of new or replacement trees;
- Selective removal of trees.

The ongoing management of the main terraces, in particular the Studio Terrace, should be guided by both the short and longer-term conservation guidelines for those spaces in the CMP in terms of conserving and restoring views.

Policy 30

Future uses should not affect interpretation of the buildings and the gardens and grounds

Guidelines

- Careful selection of furniture and design of displays is necessary to minimise clutter within the House other interiors and the grounds;
- Furnishings within the House and Squash Racquet Court should be sympathetic to the second half of the 1930s. Use archival photographs from the 1930s as the basis for selection of furniture design and layout;
- Garden furniture should be based on archival photographic evidence of the furniture of the van de Velde period;
- Allocate an area for storage of loose items used in functions away from the Terraces and Courtyards associated with the House.

Activities within the interiors or grounds should be undertaken in a way that seeks to maintain the heritage values of the place.

Appropriate measures to minimise heritage impact need to be identified as part of any activity plan and may include:

- Locating Temporary Activities in areas to minimise impact on other parts of the site as far as possible (refer plan on p.7);
- As per Policy 25, seeking wherever possible to respond to the heritage values of the place in the setting up or layout of an activity (i.e.: the activity itself should respond to the unique nature of the location, such as by responding to a view or utilising a change in level)

2010 CMP Policy

8.7.2c Use

- May be related to continuing use of Everglades as a National Trust garden open to the public, uses associated with the interpretation of the place or compatible new uses,
- For compatible uses, take action in a manner which follows the Conservation Policy
- Uses which are temporary (less than 6 months) may in some situations be considered compatible due to reversibility of actions and works.

2024 HIS Policy Framework and Management

The primary use of the site will continue as a National Trust house and garden which is open to the public.

Any events or uses will be determined by the relevant council approvals in terms of capacity and frequency. In terms of heritage impact, the relevant measures should be undertaken to ensure the protection of the site in response to the number of patrons expected, areas of the property in use, weather conditions expected and duration of the activity.

Any Temporary Activity or use of the property should have a fully reversible impact on the property, and result in no permanent actions or works.

6. PARKING, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT

Pedestrian access is the only means of public access to the site and controlled via the Visitor centre on Everglades Avenue as illustrated below.

Vehicular access to the site is obtained from Everglades Avenue into the site and the car park at the site frontage and Blaxland Avenue for staff parking and other services vehicles.

There are two on site car parks which accommodate 29 cars. 14 onsite parking spaces accessed from Blaxland Avenue are used for staff parking and 15 on-site parking spaces are available to visitors and the public from Everglades Avenue. Most patrons park in the vicinity of the House & Gardens where there are at least 120 – 200 legal, safe and publicly available parking spaces within the walking catchment of the site.

Loading and servicing of Everglades House and Garden is currently undertaken by a variety of light commercial vehicles ranging in size from vans to 6.4m long small trucks. In this regard, deliveries will be scheduled to arrive outside of busy periods when the visitor levels on site are minimal.

Private coaches bring visitors to the site during BAU and Temporary Activities, particularly special interest and elderly groups. These range in size from 13-20 seat mini buses to 28-71 seat coaches. Coaches will be managed in accordance with this Operational Plan to utilise the designated space at the front of the site for intermittent Coach stopping to minimise potential impact on traffic flow and parking.

In this regard coaches are required to turn off their engines while passengers embark or disembark, then drivers must remove the vehicles to park in an alternate location and return as arranged when visitors ready to depart.

On a maximum of two days per year, it is proposed to host Open Days with a maximum capacity of 600 visitors spread throughout the day. To ensure this visitation is spread across the day, shows/activities would be repeated throughout the day and publicised as such.

7. SOUND MANAGEMENT

Amplified sound is proposed to be used in some Temporary Activities as follows:

- Performance Activities and Open Days (with the proposed sound source being a main stage either in the Glades or in the outdoor theatre as illustrated in Figure 1.
- Small Activities small PA for wedding celebrant or small ensemble or background music in one of three terrace locations or in the Glades as illustrated in Figure 1.

Measures to ensure compliance with the required noise limits are the nearest affected receivers relate to speaker and stage orientation, and the inclusion of a noise limiting device during Temporary Activities to ensure specific sound pressure levels are met. These measures are detailed in the Table following.

Table 2 – Recommended Project Noise Limits and Sound Management

Event Type	Noise Limit	Noise Management
Open Day (600 patrons)	45 dBA, 55 dBC (LAeq 5-minute)	The speaker system/stage should be orientated as shown in Figure 1. There should be a noise limiting device fitted to ensure that the sound power level of the speaker system is below 97 dBA or less than 69dBA/79 dBC at 10m. Alternatively, monitoring needs to be conducted during every Open Day to ensure that the measured sound pressure Levels at 10m from the speaker are less than 69dBA/79 dBC
Performance Activity (250 Patrons)	45 dBA, 55 dBC (LAeq 5-minute)	The speaker system/stage should be orientated as shown in Figure 1. There should be a noise limiting device fitted to ensure that the sound power level of the speaker system is below 97 dBA or less than 69dBA/79 dBC at 10m. Alternatively, monitoring needs to be conducted during every performance activity to ensure that the measured sound pressure Levels at 10m from the speaker are less than 69dBA/79 dBC.
Small Activity (120 Patrons)	40 dBA (9.00am to 6.00pm); 35dBA (6.00pm – 7.00 pm)	There should be a noise limiting device fitted at Front of House or noise monitoring performed during small activities to ensure that the sound power level (SWL) of the small PA system is: no greater than 94 dBA during the day time; no greater than 90 dBA during the evening/night time
Bump In and Bump Out		To assist with managing impacts, potentially impacted residents will be informed of likely noisy bump-in and bump-out activities, expected noise levels and duration, as well as contact details.

8. FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Parts of the site are identified as bushfire prone land. The site is predominantly managed lands and well maintained, with the National Trust providing the means to maintain the property in the future. This Operational Plan adopts the following requirements in relation to the maintenance and management of Everglades to protect it from the potential impacts of bushfire.

8.1 LANDSCAPING

Everglades House & Gardens is to continue to be maintained in perpetuity as managed grounds in accordance with the recommendations of the Bushfire Assessment Report prepared by Bushfire Consulting Services in 2023.

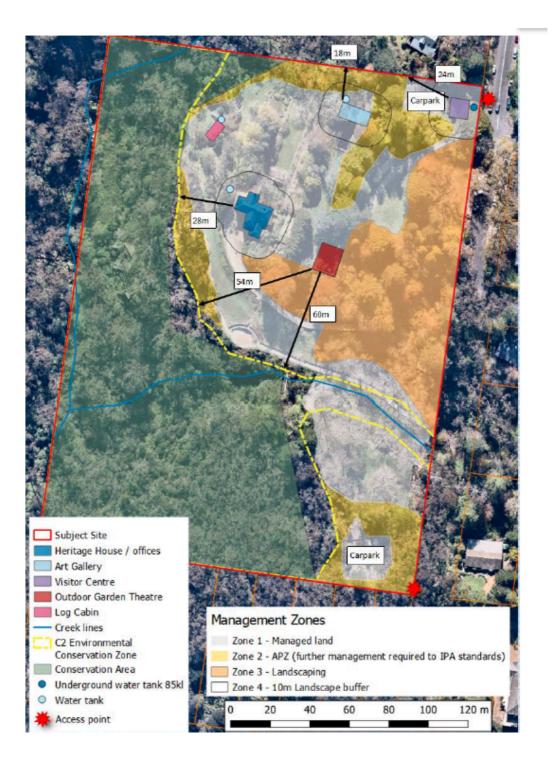


Figure 2 - Management Zones (Source: Bushfire Consulting Services Pty Ltd Report No. J23/0004 page 37 of 56

Zone 1 – Managed land

This includes existing mown and managed land with canopy trees only. It is recommended that these areas maintain existing management regimes with additional considerations for the 10m landscape buffer (refer below).

Zone 2 – APZ

It is recommended that further management is undertaken to comply with the standards of an Inner Protection Area (IPA). These areas are confined to the site boundary in the north and to the C2 zone line and/or conservation area to the west. It also includes the existing landscaped area to the south of visitor centre to provide clear access / egress for patrons and firefighting operations. The following standards apply for Zone 2, except for a few trees very close to buildings that cannot be removed or hard pruned due to conservation value. These are located at the Log Cabin, Gallery and Visitor Centre.

Trees

- canopy cover should be less than 15% (at maturity)
- trees (at maturity) should not touch or overhang the building
- lower limbs should be removed up to a height of 2m above ground
- preference should be given to smooth barked and evergreen trees

Shrubs

- create large discontinuities or gaps in the vegetation to slow down or break the progress of fire towards buildings
- shrubs should not form more than 10% ground cover
- clumps of shrubs should be separated from exposed windows and doors by a distance of at least twice the height of the vegetation or regularly pruned and replaced with low flammability species progressively over time.

Grass

- should be kept mown (as a guide grass should be kept to no more than 100mm in height)
- leaves and vegetation debris should be removed.

Zone 3 - Landscaping

This heritage landscaped area does not comply with the standards required for an IPA as outlined above. This is due to canopy connectivity and shrub layer. It is recommended that fuel loads in the landscaping area are reduced by ensuring leaf and vegetation debris are removed, removal of lower limbs of trees (up to a height of 2m above ground) and limiting planting around the base of trees to minimise potential for vertical spread of fire.

Zone 4 – 10m Landscape Buffer

Landscaping within 10m of the heritage house, visitor centre and gallery must follow the principles below.

- trees should not touch or overhang the building
- clumps of shrubs should be separated from exposed windows and doors by a distance of at least twice the height of the vegetation or regularly [pruned and replaced with low flammability species progressively over time

- Planting is limited in the immediate vicinity of the building
- Planting does not provide a continuous canopy to the building (i.e. trees or shrubs are isolated or located in small clusters)
- Avoid species with rough fibrous bark, or which retain/shed bark in long strips or retain dead material in their canopies
- Avoid climbing species to walls and pergolas
- Locate combustible materials such as woodchips/mulch, flammable fuel stores away from the building
- Locate combustible structures such as garden sheds, pergolas and materials such as timber garden furniture away from the building
- Low flammability vegetation species are used.

8.2 GAS SERVICES

- Where applicable, reticulated or bottled gas is installed and maintained in accordance with AS/NZS 1596:2014 The storage and handling of LP Gas and the requirements of relevant authorities, and metal piping is used.
- All fixed gas cylinders are kept clear of all flammable materials to a distance of 10m and shielded on the hazard side, connections to and from gas cylinders are metal.
- Polymer-sheathed flexible gas supply lines are not used, and above-ground gas service pipes are metal, including and up to any outlets.

8.3 WATER SUPPLY

The existing tanks are to comply with the following:

- A 65mm Storz outlet with a ball valve is fitted to the outlet
- Ball valve and pipes are adequate for water flow and are metal
- Supply pipes from tank to ball valve have the same bore size to ensure flow volume;
- Underground tanks have an access hole of 200mm to allow tankers to refill direct from the tank
- Above-ground tanks are manufactured from concrete or metal
- Unobstructed access is provided at all times
- Tanks on the hazard side of a building are provided with adequate shielding for the protection of firefighters
- underground tanks are clearly marked
- All exposed water pipes external to the building are metal, including any fittings
- Where pumps are provided, they are a minimum 5hp or 3kW petrol or diesel-powered pump, and are shielded against bush fire attack
- Any hose and reel for firefighting connected to the pump shall be 19mm internal diameter
- Any fire hose reels are constructed in accordance with AS/NZS 1221:1997 Fire hose reels, and installed in accordance with the relevant clauses of AS 2441:2005 Installation of fire hose reels.

8.4 EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PLANNING

A Bush Fire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan is prepared consistent with the NSW RFS document: A Guide to Developing a Bush Fire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan. The Bush Fire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan should include planning for the early relocation of occupants. Note: A copy of the Bush Fire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan should be provided to the Local Emergency Management Committee for its information prior to occupation of the development.

8.5 NOTIFICATION

The RFS are to be notified prior to the conduct of Performance Activities and Open Days.

9. AMENITY OF THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOOD

Operation in accordance with this OP will help ensure that the operation of Everglades delivers a safe, enjoyable and practical visitor experience that does not compromise the amenity of the locality. Activities on the site may change from year to year and management measures will continue to be refined and improved. By applying adaptive management techniques to accommodate operational changes which are low impact and similar in nature and scale to those approved, the National Trust can evolve the activation of the site over time and continue to meet and exceed established environmental standards.

Implementation of this OP will lead to:

- Improved and sustainable site management;
- Meeting the needs of visitors, neighbours and stakeholders through the provision of suitable and agreed facilities and services; and
- Capacity to address continually evolving community, regulatory and environmental requirements.

The objective of Everglades House & Gardens is to welcome all members of the local community into the site on a regular basis. It is intended that this will provide opportunities to develop strong relationships with the local community.

Liaison and regular communication with the community are an important ongoing element in managing the site. Information regarding the site is provided to neighbours and stakeholders as required in a dynamic process that allows for the adjustment of management and operational methods for the benefit of all parties.

In addition the National Trust maintains a webpage where the community can obtain up-todate information about the site and which provides email and phone contact numbers that create a direct line of communication. In this way, issues can be addressed as they arise.

Complaint handling procedures will include maintaining a register of:

- Register of nature of complaint;
- Name telephone number or email address of complainant (if available);
- Action taken and resolution of complaint; and
- Feedback to complainant and any ongoing management review action required.

10. AMENDMENTS TO THIS OPERATIONAL PLAN

This OP shall be reviewed from time to time, as required to take account of changes in the operational, creative or environmental impacts of the activation of the site. The updated OP shall be provided to Council and all other relevant stakeholders.

The OP will be updated regardless of the need to seek further development approval to:

- Take account of changes in site management and operational practices;
- Address any new environmental impacts arising out of these changes;
- Identify any additional performance standards or mitigation measures necessary to offset residual impacts and ensure the amenity of the locality and surrounds are protected; and
- Address the outcomes of any monitoring or compliance activity.