
8.4 Draft Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study - Update on Independent Peer Review

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Independent Peer Review of the draft Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study.

THIS MATTER WAS CONSIDERED BY THE WINGECARRIBEE LOCAL PLANNING PANEL ON 24 JANUARY 2024

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

- 1. Note the update on the appointment of the Consultant to undertake the independent Peer Review of the draft Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study 2021-23.**
- 2. Note the proposed timeline for public exhibition of the peer-reviewed draft Study in accordance with Council Resolution dated 13 December 2023.**
- 3. Allocate \$22,000 at the next quarterly budget review to fund the heritage peer review.**

LOCAL PLANNING PANEL'S ADVICE

This matter was considered at the Local Planning Panel meeting of 24 January 2024 and the Panel advised as follows:

The Panel endorses the proposed timeline for public exhibition of the peer-reviewed draft Study in accordance with Council resolution dated 13 December 2023.

Staff response:

The Panel's advice is consistent with the Officer's recommendation in relation to this matter. As a result, no changes have been made to the report as considered by the Panel.

REPORT

INDEPENDENT PEER REVIEW OF DRAFT COMMUNITY HERITAGE STUDY

Introduction

The draft Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study 2021-2023 explored places of potential heritage significance through a genuine partnership with local volunteer heritage and history specialists.

The draft Study culminated in identifying potential heritage items and heritage conservation areas and extensions to existing heritage conservation areas.

The draft Community Heritage Study underwent community consultation in October and November 2023. The consultation period included online engagement, drop-in information sessions across our towns and villages, inviting broader engagement and formal submissions.

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Council staff are collating submissions received during this period, equating to approximately 120 submissions. Most of these submissions are expected to be objections to recommended heritage listing, and these items are known as “contested items”.

The remaining 371 proposed heritage items and proposed conservation areas are generally referred to as “uncontested items”.

A report to the December 2023 Council provided options for peer review, including a full scope option and phased scope option to better balance scope, timeframes and costs. The professional officer’s recommendation was for a two-phase assessment peer review, to utilise internal staff resourcing to manage the scope and costs for the peer review.

On 13 December 2023 Council resolved the following:

THAT Council:

- 1. Council receive and note the report and Council Officer's play no further role in the matter.*
- 2. Council support the option for peer review of the Community Heritage Study and all submissions received in response to the public consultation process with the view to the final Heritage Study and Planning Proposal being submitted to the NSW Department Planning Department for Gateway determination no later 30 June 2024.*
- 3. The cost for the independent peer review of the Community Heritage Study and exhibition of same by a suitably qualified heritage contractor reporting directly to the General Manager be considered as part of the December budget quarterly review.*
- 4. In relation to point 2, it will be necessary for the General Manager to prepare a timeline for public exhibition of the final draft study for consideration by both the Planning Panel and Council.*
- 5. The General Manager be delegated authority to place the draft Community Heritage Study, post peer review on public exhibition.*

DECLARED CARRIED BY THE ADMINISTRATOR

This report responds to the resolution of 13 December 2023, to provide a timeline for public exhibition of the final draft study post-peer review.

Operationalising the Peer Review

The timeline required by the Council Resolution of 13 December 2023 is not achievable, based on requests for quotations from suitably qualified heritage professionals and an intensive selective procurement process.

Submission of the peer reviewed Heritage Study for Gateway Determination by 30 June 2024 is not achievable.

The proposed timeline extends the milestone submission for Gateway milestone to December 2024. No further options are known at this time.

Scope of Peer Review

The scope is to conduct a peer review of the draft Wingecarribee Heritage Study and all submissions (approximately 120) received in response to the public consultation process.

The outcome is for the independent peer reviewer to form a professional opinion and provide a recommendation. This professional opinion and recommendation shall be based on the content of the draft Study, community submissions and a site visit of the proposed heritage item or conservation area.

Methodology of Peer Review

The Independent heritage peer reviewer received a documentation package. This project initiation meeting was held in January.

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The documentation included:

- Draft Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study
- Spreadsheet of proposed items and areas
- Evidence Sheets by Locality x 18
- Up to 120 Submissions

After the project initiation meeting, an “ethical wall” between the heritage contractor and Council staff has been put in place to ensure the rigour and independence of the peer review. This “ethical wall” responds to the Council resolution of 13 December 2023 and community expectations for an independent peer review.

Any correspondence from the heritage contractor will be via the General Manager and Executive Manager Strategic Outcomes only, for the duration of the “ethical wall”.

Any conflicts of interest will be declared by the heritage professional. Any conflicts of interest shall be suitably managed by exclusion or variation and can be negotiated with the General Manager and the Executive Manager Strategic Outcomes only.

This approach responds to community expectation and the Council resolution of 13 December 2023 for a rigorous and independent peer review of the draft Heritage Study.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

Timeframe	Milestones
22 January 2024	Peer Review initiated with consultant
15 May 2024	Peer Review Finalised
15 May 2024	Consultant presents peer-review outcomes to LPP
29 May 2024	Extraordinary LPP consider peer-reviewed draft Heritage Study
19 June 2024	Council considers peer-reviewed draft Heritage Study to proceed to 28-day public exhibition
19 July 2024	Peer-reviewed Study exhibition period concludes
31 July 2024	Extraordinary LPP considers outcomes of public exhibition and makes recommendation to proceed to Gateway determination
7 August 2024	Council considers outcomes of peer review and LPP advice and considers proceeding to Gateway determination
14 August 2024	Council caretaker mode commences

DELIVERABLES

The heritage peer reviewer is required to submit three (3) deliverables:

1. Master Spreadsheet summarising professional opinion, under the following explanatory heading tabs:
 - Reference Number from Spreadsheet
 - Suburb
 - Address
 - Item Name
 - Property Description
 - Heritage Item (Council Officer) Recommended – Yes or No
 - Submissions - Objection or Support or Neutral
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- Professional Opinion of Independent Heritage Peer Reviewer – Recommended Listing or Not Recommended
- 2. Summary of methodology and heritage peer review approach to reach a professional opinion and recommendation. A brief explanation shall be provided for any contested matters, where a submission objects to the proposed heritage listing or the peer reviewer disagrees with the recommendation in the draft Study.
- 3. Summary of heritage qualifications and experience of the independent peer reviewer on letterhead.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

Environment

There are no environmental impacts in relation to this report.

Social

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

Broader Economic Implications

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

Culture

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

Governance

The Planning Proposal (will be / has been) processed in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidelines.

COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

It is recommended that a budget allocation of \$22,000 be made at the next quarterly budget review to fund the heritage peer review.

RELATED COUNCIL POLICY

There are no Council policies related to this report.

CONCLUSION

The proposed peer review is a balanced approach to scope, timeframes and costs. It noted the proposed timeframes are ambitious and requires timely delivery of all milestones.

Council is requested to note the update and timeline for the independent peer review of the draft Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil