

# 1. Introduction

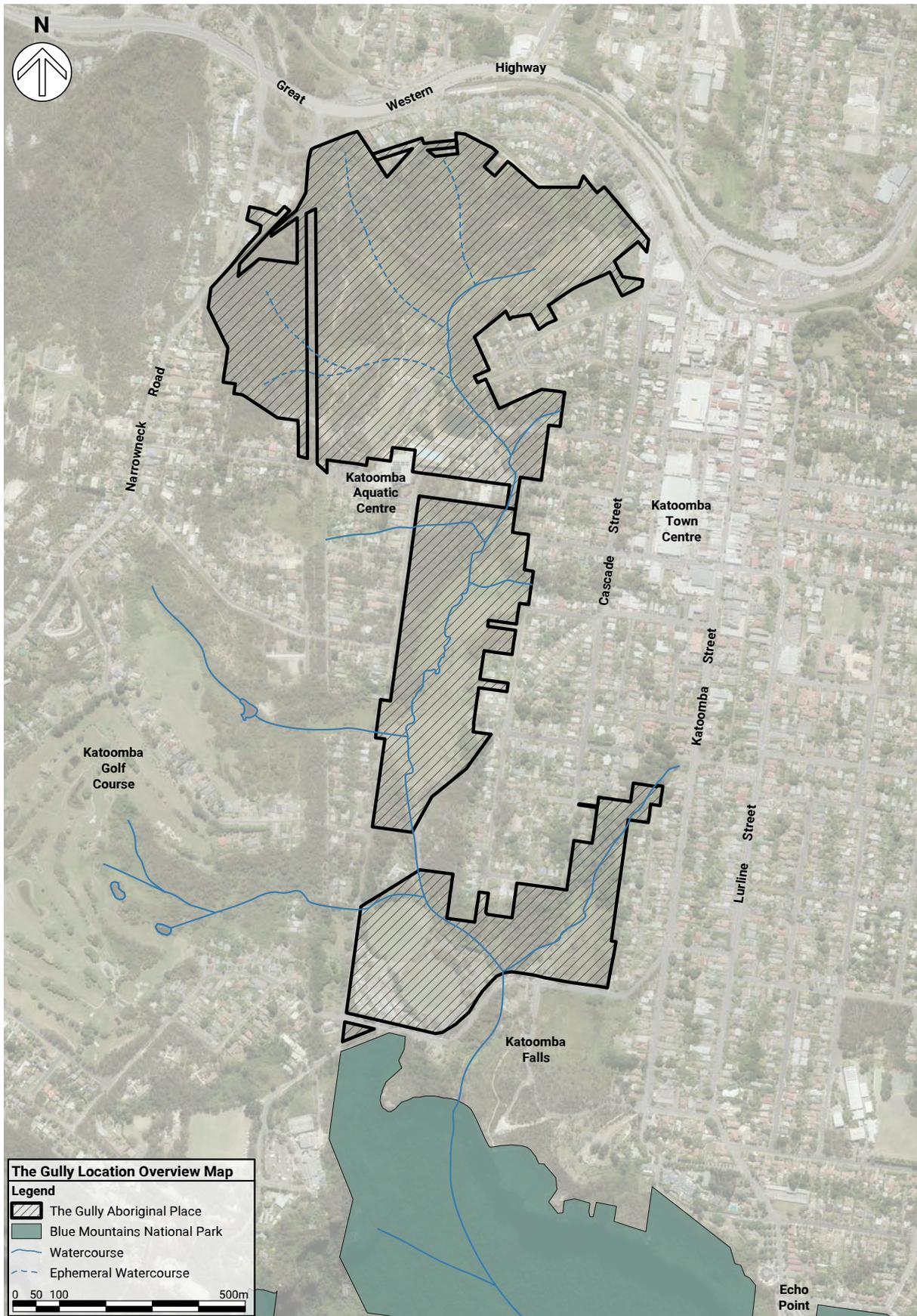
The Gully Aboriginal Place Plan of Management (The Plan) has been developed following a revision of the combined Plans of Management for The Upper Kedumba River Valley, covering the Council-managed community lands within The Gully developed in 2004. The Plan covers the entire Aboriginal Place inclusive of the three main public reserves of Frank Walford Park/Catalina Park, McRae's Paddock and Katoomba Falls Reserves.

The key driving factors for the revision of the 2004 Plan and the development of the revised Plan are:

- The 2004 Plan is largely outdated and is not reflective of the cultural values of The Gully or the contemporary vision for the management of The Gully held by The Gully Traditional Owners Inc. (GTOI), The Gully Community and the Council.
- NSW Legislative requirements for Aboriginal Places under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, specify a need for a contemporary Plan of Management, especially in locations where public works are required, being an underpinning foundation to accompany an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit application.
- Provision of forward planning and design work to support the future cooperative management of The Gully between the GTOI and the Council.

**NOTE:** The name 'The Gully' refers to the entire Aboriginal Place, but is also commonly used to refer to the section of Frank Walford Park/Catalina Park, where the former residents lived before construction of the race track. Preference will be given to use the term 'The Gully' over the non-Aboriginal place names, however the European place names will be used where needed for clarification on localities within The Gully Aboriginal Place where alternative Aboriginal place names are not currently known, or commonly used or understood.

## Map 1 Site location





## 1.1 Plan area

The Gully Aboriginal Place is located to the west of the township of Katoomba, within the Upper Kedumba River Valley. The Gully covers an area of 73.1 hectares (ha) and is bounded by residential areas to the north, east and west, and is bordered by Katoomba Falls and Blue Mountains National Park to the south.

The Plan includes the reserves of Frank Walford Park, McRae's Paddock, and Katoomba Falls Reserve. These sites are collectively referred to as The Gully.

The 2019 Gully Plan of Management includes the addition of Crown land within The Gully Aboriginal Place. This includes the Caravan Park (Katoomba Falls Tourist Park), Katoomba Falls Reserve sports ovals, play equipment, picnic shelters and toilet facilities.

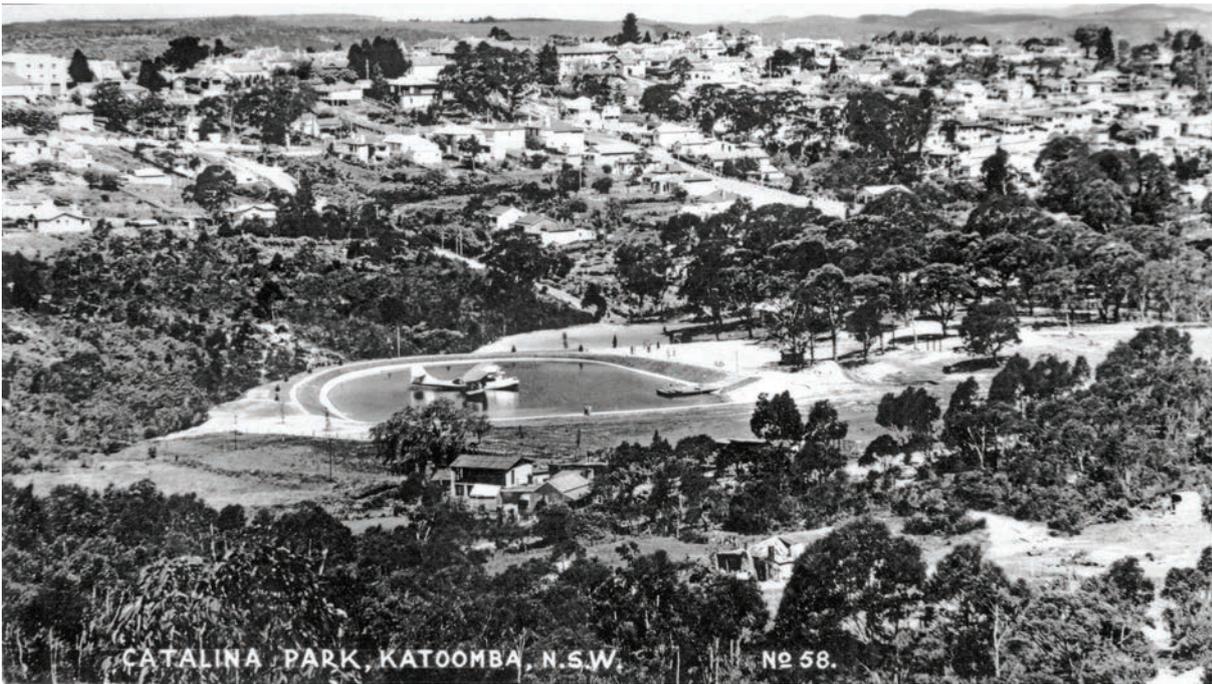
## 1.2 Cultural significance

The cultural significance of The Gully is recognised with the nomination and Gazettal of The Gully as an Aboriginal Place in 2002, stating:

The Gully is a former Aboriginal fringe camp/settlement. In the pre-1788 era, The Gully was an important meeting and camping place for Aboriginal people.

Gundungurra people established a permanent residential settlement in The Gully from at least 1894. The Aboriginal settlement at The Gully was outside the control of the NSW Government's Aboriginal Protection Board, which meant that residents were relatively independent, built their own huts, and established a strong community. A culture of sharing was an important feature of life in The Gully: residents shared resources and helped each other, especially during the Depression in the 1930s. Lyn Stanger remembers the Mission Church, which members of the Aboriginal community helped build in 1910, as being 'very important in the community life of The Gully'. It was a meeting place for local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

In 1957 the residents of The Gully were forcibly evicted to make way for the construction of a car racing track. The eviction caused emotional distress and upheaval for the local Aboriginal community.



*Catalina Park*

Local Gundungurra and Darug ex-residents and their descendants continue to visit the former settlement because many of their relatives were born, grew up, or lived at The Gully. Dawn Colless, a Gundungurra woman, who lived at The Gully as a child, describes her relationship to the place: 'when I go there, I feel the people who have lived there... it is such a special place - a sacred place'.

The Gully remains a highly significant place to the families of former Gully residents, as well as the broader community. The Gully exemplifies Aboriginal cultural survival in the face of dispossession from both traditional Country in the broader sense and the ongoing displacement of Aboriginal families across generations, resulting from intervening government policies. Although the scars of the forced eviction of The Gully community in 1957 remain raw for individuals and families, the healing of the land through shared current community efforts, demonstrates that The Gully also is a place of reconciliation and healing.

For former residents who grew up in The Gully and their descendants, the connection to family and their family history is vitally important to them. The Gully is central to their personal and family identity. The Gully is highly valued by the local community for its Aboriginal cultural history, and as an access point to learn about and engage with Aboriginal culture. This was clearly evident from community feedback in the site user survey. The Gully is also highly valued as a place of learning and cultural awareness, for both the local community through events such as NAICOC Week, cultural and sporting events as well as being regularly used by school groups and part of curriculum on Aboriginal history and culture.

The values of The Gully reflect the strong and ongoing relationship held to this important place in Country by The Gully community. These values guide and intimately shape the themes and directions for the present and future management of The Gully Aboriginal Place.

The central values recognised in The Plan for The Gully have been established through consultation and engagement with many members of The Gully community, being Gully families that have lived in The Gully, their descendants, Gundungurra and Darug Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community.

## 1.3 Values of The Gully

The values of The Gully for the purpose of The Plan have been established from speaking with the community and the previous social and cultural research undertaken on The Gully. The values of The Gully are interrelated and overlapping, however have been broadly categorised as cultural, educational, a shared space, natural and recreational values.

### Cultural

- The Gully embodies a sense of belonging interwoven through personal family histories, cultural connections and spiritual health and wellbeing for former Gully residents and their descendants.
- A place in Country for connection to and continuity of culture – transmission of cultural, social, historical and spiritual knowledge across generations of The Gully Aboriginal community and the opportunities provided for continuity of traditional and contemporary culture, languages and cultural maintenance.
- A place of healing intergenerational trauma and ongoing pain and hurt experienced by The Gully people resulting from the past forced removal of The Gully community.
- Spiritual wellbeing through the connection with spiritual values held by Aboriginal people, particularly former Gully residents and their personal connection to The Gully.

### Education and learning

- Educational opportunities that provide Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people with an understanding of the historical narrative of The Gully as a significant place in Country.
- A place that enables teaching and learning of traditional and contemporary cultural knowledge for and from Aboriginal people, particularly Gully Aboriginal people.
- A place for the broader community to access and engage with Aboriginal culture-teaching from Aboriginal people to non-Aboriginal people.

### A shared place

- The Gully is a place to broaden the wider communities understanding of the significant and ongoing impact of colonisation on Aboriginal communities through historical and contemporary cultural context to engender respect for The Gully as an Aboriginal Place.
- 'Meeting places' within The Gully are to be used by The Gully community, Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community.
- The opportunity provided by the shared space that allows Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people to engage with this place in Country and with one another.
- The opportunity afforded through programs such as Garguree Swamp Care to work together, and build a shared understanding and mutual respect.
- Community social interaction, events and celebrations.

### Nature and environment

- The ecological health and diversity of The Gully is a significant part of Country (and all this encompasses) for Gundungurra and Darug Traditional Owners, and the importance of health of this Country to the broader ecologically diversity of the Blue Mountains.
- Natural beauty abounds in The Gully, with emphasis on indigenous native plants and animals found there.



- The opportunity to connect with nature, in close proximity to a town centre.
- The peace and serenity of The Gully, which holds a deep spiritual presence.
- The opportunity to protect and restore a damaged environment.

#### **Recreation and tourism**

- Social interaction and sense of community.
- Opportunity to exercise in a safe and beautiful environment free from traffic.
- Respectful recreational spaces conducive to sustainable and vibrant community social interaction.
- The opportunity for culturally focussed and respectful tourism.

### **1.4 Plan purpose**

The purpose of The Plan is to provide a contemporary and culturally referenced guide for the management of The Gully that is reflective of the values and aspirations of Traditional Owners and the broader community.

Following this purpose, The Plan aims to:

- Provide support for and promote the long-term protection of the cultural heritage values and sites within The Gully.
- Enable the Aboriginal community to manage the cultural values of The Gully (place, areas and sites) that hold special significance for them.
- Align the values and aspiration of Gully families with the legislative requirement for The Gully.
- Enable Aboriginal communities, particularly The Gully Aboriginal community to discuss issues and reach agreements with the Council about site protection and management;
- Improve the regulatory and management outcomes for The Gully Aboriginal community, landowners and other stakeholders in protecting cultural values.

- Provide guidance through policy and recommended actions in a manner that is aligned to the cultural values of The Gully for:
  - Strengthening Aboriginal cultural practice in The Gully.
  - Meaningful reconciliation and healing.
  - Cultural education and learning opportunities.
  - Culturally led environmental protection and restoration works.
  - Culturally led fire management.
  - The ongoing provision of public recreation, through a revitalised recognition of the underlying cultural value of the Aboriginal Place.

## 1.5 Principles for management

The Gully Plan of Management has been developed in line with the following guiding principles:

- The values of The Gully Aboriginal Place, and the perspectives held by Aboriginal people, will guide how The Gully is protected and managed, being central to decision making on managing existing and future site use.
- The Plan supports Aboriginal culture; being on Country and practicing culture including the value and principals of the Connecting to Country program notably:
  - Recognition and practice of cultural protocols. (1)
  - Providers of cultural activities are sourced from respective Traditional Owner groups, particularly those from The Gully community. Where this is not possible, other Aboriginal knowledge holders are sourced, and/or in agreed circumstances, non-Aboriginal expertise is drawn on. (1)
- The development of new facilities is informed by the site's cultural values as well as the environmental values, and the principles of social, ecological and economic sustainability.
- Opportunities for intergenerational cultural connection within The Gully community, are incorporated into decision making processes on the future management of The Gully with a view towards decolonising methodologies.

## 1.6 Future vision

The future vision for The Gully is that it continues to be and grow as a place of refuge, healing, reflection and learning, where Country is respected and cared for by the Traditional Owners, supported by the broader community.

It should remain a place of passive, open-space recreation for the whole community, with experiences that respond to the wishes, needs and aspirations of the Traditional Owners. In particular, their desire to help Country recover and heal.

The Gully also offers an inspirational venue for appropriate events, celebrations and organised cultural tourism activities. Similarly, the nature of such activities should be prescribed by the vision of this plan.

