

2. The Gully is Country – knowing the place

2.1 The Gully is ancient Country

For untold millennia the upland wetlands and sheltered valleys of Country in the Blue Mountains, including The Gully, have nourished, nurtured and sustained countless generations of Aboriginal Traditional Owners.

Like other upland wetlands, The Gully was abundant with a myriad of plants, animals and pure water, providing the Traditional Owners with physical and spiritual sustenance. The permanent pure spring fed water through the creeks and wetlands, sustained the trees and plants, attracting birds, mammals, reptiles and insects. This complex web was intensely understood and carefully managed by the Traditional Owners ensuring the Country was healthy and balanced, physically and spiritually.

Traditional Owners used their detailed knowledge and highly developed abilities in managing the intertwined physical and spiritual balance of Country, not exhausting resources in Country, but sustaining it for future generations. Through maintaining this balance, The Gully provided an ideal place for seasonal living, hunting and resource gathering, and spiritual areas for ceremony. The Gully was and is a homeland, intimately known, cared for and respected over generations by Traditional Owners through a holistic and sustainable relationship, maintaining the values, resources, stories and culture that belong to this part of Country. Caring for Country in this way embraces spiritual renewal, ancestral connections, and kinship relationships to each other and to places as well as the basis for everyday life in accordance with traditional lore.

For the Traditional Owners, The Gully, is a living place, related to other living places in Country, interconnected through numerous ancestral pathways, reflecting the seasonal and ceremonial movements of spiritual beings through Country, since the creation time.

Following the arrival of European colonists in the Blue Mountains in the early 19th century the resulting dispossession of the Traditional Owners from other parts of Country, The Gully became a place of refuge, giving The Gully Aboriginal people relief for a period, from the dominant colonial processes.

**'The Gully embodies a very special place in Country
for countless generations of Traditional Owners'**

2.2 Current land tenure

The land tenure enacted on The Gully through the colonisation process is predominantly viewed by government authorities as public land comprised of Council Community land (213 parcels) and three parcels of Crown land dedicated for public recreation. Other land parcels include two parcels of land in private tenure which are wholly or partly within The Gully Aboriginal Place boundary, three parcels of NSW Government land in Sydney Water Land tenure, and a large number of formed and unformed Council and Crown road reserves. Table 1 provides a summary of the land parcels that overlie The Gully Aboriginal Place. The full listing of all public land parcels is provided in Appendix 1.

Table 1 Summary land tenure

Land Category	No. of parcels	Total area in ha
Council community land	213	53.08
Crown land	3	10.09
Private land*	2	0.13
NSW Government land*	3	0.17
Council road reserve	48	8.95
Crown road reserve	7	0.74
Total Gully area	276	73.16

*The Plan of Management applies to Council community land, Crown land and road reserves (Council and Crown). The Plan does not apply to private land and the three parcels of NSW Government – Sydney Water land.

2.3 Natural landscape

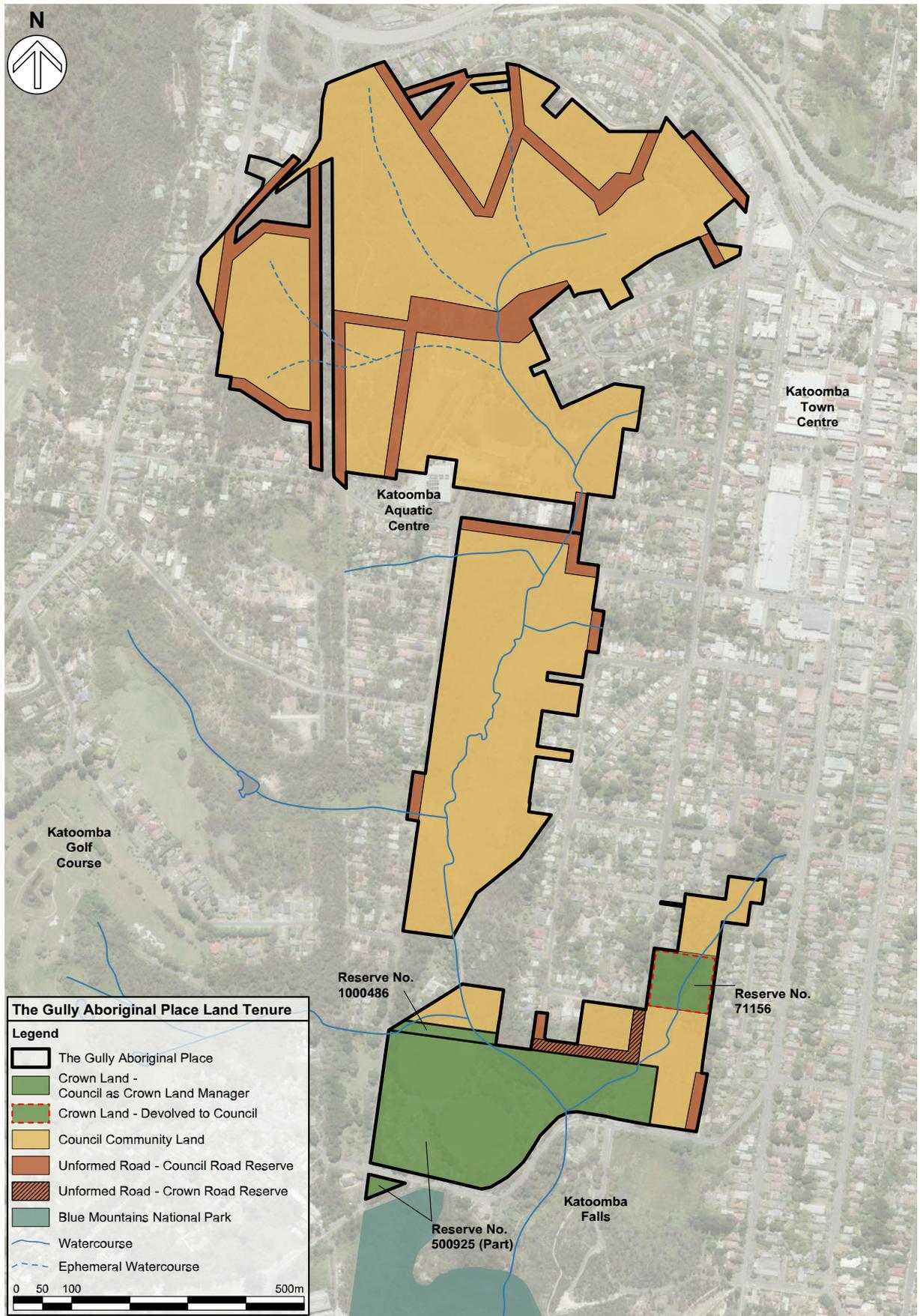
2.3.1 Geology and soils

Two soil types are found in The Gully and are classified as an erosional type (Wollangambi) located predominantly in the lower slopes of the valley, and a residual soil (Medlow Bath) located on the upper slopes. Both soil types are derived from the Narrabeen Sandstone group. (1) The slopes enclosing the north south running river valley are relatively steep and subject to severe erosion in places. Disturbance of these soils has led to erosion and sedimentation of the creek, which in turn impacts on water quality. (2)

2.3.2 Water

Since the time of creation by ancestral spiritual beings, the pure waters of The Gully supported the abundant plants and animals and nurtured Traditional Owners in their seasonal and ceremonial cycle of sustainable movement through Country. The critical importance of this water system was deeply understood and carefully managed by Traditional Owners according to the laws from the creation ensuring this part of Country through its water was healthy and balanced, both physically and spiritually.

Map 2 Land tenure of The Gully





For the Traditional Owners who came to settle in this part of Country that was to become The Gully community, the continuous knowledge of and respect for water and the careful management of this precious resource were deeply imbedded in their complex relationship with The Gully. Over generations this reverence for the pure water in The Gully continued to be deeply ingrained in The Gully people, this was particularly so given that The Gully community had no access to 'town' water, continuing until their forced removal in the late 1950s. Many former residents and those who visited The Gully as children have strong enduring memories of the sweetness and the coolness of the water as well as the rules set down by The Gully Elders on maintaining the purity of water sources in The Gully.

Water is a strong and recurring theme being critically important to all life nurtured within The Gully. The presence of a reliable water supply was highly likely a central reason why The Gully was used by the Traditional Owners and supported their permanent settlement after they were dispossessed of other parts of their Country. It was also key to maintaining the health and sustenance of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in The Gully community from the late 1800s to the 1950s, especially when there was no other clean water supply.

Water has always held a prominent role in The Gully. During the time the community was living in The Gully, the development of an artificial water body known as Lake Catalina, was built in the mid-1940s as a swimming pool and tourist attraction drawing on the much cherished water of The Gully community for its water supply. Carelessly, investment was made on a tourist fun park which impacted on the water in The Gully, instead of the provision of a reticulated water supply for the community living in The Gully.

Water continues to play an important role in the life cycle of The Gully, but also symbolically through the Katoomba Outdoor Pool developed in 1970s, now Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre, located in the middle of The Gully. Significantly, the upland wetland in The Gully are the headwaters that forms the catchment of the Upper Kedumba River Valley, supporting native forests and other wetlands which feeds into the Kedumba River and ultimately into Lake Burragorang, the drinking water supply for most of Sydney.

Water sustains the natural systems within The Gully, with ground water being particularly important in supporting a number of upland wetlands (aka Blue Mountains Swamps) within The Gully providing important permanent water supply to the Upper Kedumba River. The protection of existing upland wetlands, riparian areas and natural bushland is essential in maintaining water quality and stream flow.

The ongoing protection and management of water is one of the major management issues for The Gully due to:

- The ongoing cultural connection to water in The Gully.
- Legal obligation under the *Water Management Act 2004* to facilitate clean water – current standards could be improved.
- Its heritage significance – in particular natural springs.
- Its role in sustaining the natural environment and weed management.
- Requirements to protect endangered and threatened species on site and downstream – particularly the Mountain Dwarf Pine (*Phoradendron fitzgeraldii*) and the Blue Mountains Water Skink (*Eulamprus leuraensis*) and the Blue Mountains Swamp, an Endangered Ecological Community.

2.3.3 Vegetation

The abundant native vegetation communities growing within Country in The Gully, particularly in the upland wetlands, provided Traditional Owners with a vibrant and diverse range of vegetation based resources over countless generations. Traditional Owners held a complex and intimate knowledge of the life-cycle, usage and methods of management of vegetation embodied in the deep relationship between the people and their Country. The reciprocal relationship held with vegetation in Country through respect and careful management ensured that the vegetation resources needed for numerous aspects of physical and spiritual life were continuously maintained, balanced and plentiful.

This carefully balanced natural economy derived from the vegetation communities within The Gully ensured Traditional Owners had an abundance of resources supplying their nutritional, medicinal and material needs.

Although this natural economy was greatly disrupted by European colonisation, Traditional Owners of The Gully retain an unbroken connection to this important aspect of Country. The generation of Traditional Owner that came to settle in The Gully in the late 19th century, following their displacement from other parts of Country, were renowned in continuing to hold encyclopedic knowledge of the vegetation and its many uses in The Gully and its surrounds.

Later generations of The Gully community, until the time of their second dispossession, continued to utilise the natural vegetation in a similar manner to their forebears, though often adapted in contemporary ways, for instance tea-tree brooms used where manufactured ones were unattainable.

The European colonisation of The Gully landscape changed Country, through the clearing and modifying of native vegetation for farming and maintaining livestock, though some areas of The Gully in the upper sections retained their native vegetation. Coincidentally these areas of natural vegetation were also where many of The Gully Aboriginal community made their homes.

This clearing created conditions that promoted the introduction of weeds and exotic vegetation species, and though The Gully community found ways to utilise some of this vegetation, it has left a legacy of Country which is unhealthy and unbalanced which still persists. Though these changes have occurred in The Gully, the Traditional Owners continue to hold a deep and respectful relationship with the native vegetation and through Caring for Country activities are restoring as much as possible this central aspect of their cultural and spiritual existence.

From a scientific biodiversity perspective, the natural vegetation of The Gully comprises four communities of Blue Mountains sandstone forest and the sedge/shrub swamp (Blue Mountains Sedge/Shrub Swamp) (5B) which is listed as vulnerable under NSW legislation and endangered under Federal legislation.

The remaining areas of this natural vegetation are confined largely to the public lands in The Gully. Refer to **Map 3 - Native vegetation communities in The Gully**. Areas in The Gully categorised as community land that do not support remnant native vegetation are typically cleared or disturbed bushland which are now grassland or colonised with introduced vegetation. The main grassland areas includes the modified area of the former McRae's paddocks (Douglas 2001), areas in Country that were formally woodland or open forest and swamp.

Table 2 Native vegetation communities in The Gully

Vegetation community type	Local Environment Plan 2015 schedule 6	BC Act 2016 (State)	EPBC Act 1999 (Federal)
Eucalyptus oreades (Mountain Ash) Open Forest/ Tall Open Forest	2 (7)	-	-
Eucalyptus Radiata ssp Tall open Forest	2 (13)	-	-
Eucalyptus gullickii Alluvial Woodland	4 (1)	-	-
Eucalyptus sieberi - Eucalyptus piperita Open Forest / Woodland	-	-	-
Heath, Scrub and Swamp (Blue Mountains Swamp)	5 (2)	VEC - Blue Mountains Swamp	EEC
Modified bushland	-	-	-
Introduced communities	-	-	-
Undefined Native Community	-	-	-

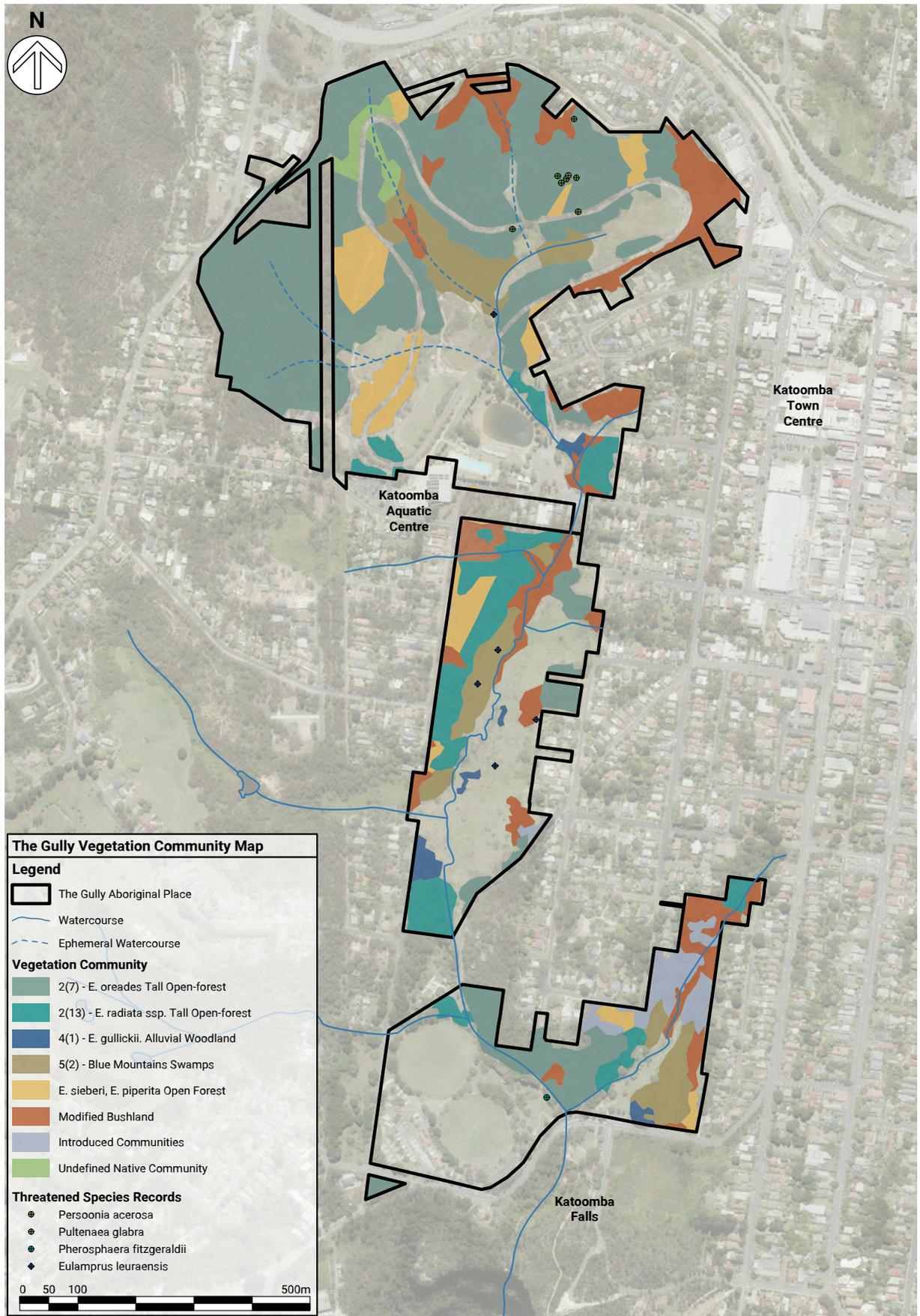
BC Act 2016 *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*

EPBC Act 1999 *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

VEC Vulnerable Ecological Community

EEC Endangered Ecological Community

Map 3 Native vegetation communities in The Gully



Ecological communities within the close vicinity of The Gully of local significance include (3):

- Ceratopetalum apetalum – Doryphora sassafras Rainforest
- Eucalyptus gullickii Alluvial Woodland (located Glen Wattle Close West of The Gully)
- Blue Mountains Escarpment Complex (located south of The Gully)

All three communities are scheduled communities on the 2015 Local Environment Plan. The following threatened species have been recorded in the upper Kedumba River Catchment (3).

Table 3 Scheduled plant species of The Gully

Common name	Scientific name	Local	BC Act 2016	EPBC Act 1999 (Federal)
	<i>Acacia pychoclada</i>	(ROTAP)		
	<i>Almaleea incurvata</i>	(ROTAP)		
Dwarf Mountain Pine	<i>Ptherosphaera fitzgeraldii</i>		Endangered	Endangered
Needle Geebung	(<i>Persoonia acerosa</i>)		Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Smooth bush-pea	<i>Pultanaea glabra</i>		Vulnerable	Vulnerable
	<i>Xanthosia scopulicola</i>		Vulnerable	

BC Act 2016	<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>
EPBC Act 1999	<i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
Scheduled	locally significant within Blue Mountains City
Non-scheduled	not locally significant within Blue Mountain City
ROTAP	Rare or Threatened Australian Plant

The following threatened species could potentially inhabit the corridor (3):

- Blandfordia cunninghamii
- Blechnum gregsonii
- Burnettia cuneate
- Carex klaphakei
- Notochloe microndon
- Olearia quercifolia
- Greenhood Orchid (*Pterostylis pulchella*)
- Slaty Leek Orchid (*Prasphyllum fuscum*)

There are significant plantings of introduced species such as *Pinus radiata*, which although classified as a weed, some hold cultural heritage value.

The predominant areas of introduced vegetation are in the northern section of The Gully below Wells, Walgett and Cascade Streets. Weed infestations are particularly problematic along the multiple stormwater outlets flowing into The Gully and along the creek line all the way to the southern end of The Gully in the area known as Maple Grove, along edges of tracks, drainage lines and Gully boundaries with residential properties.

2.3.4 Native animals

The relationship between Traditional Owners and native animals is interwoven through physical, social and cultural expressions and most significantly spiritual beliefs. This complex kinship understanding and dependence on a mutual existence in Country holds true for the Traditional Owners of The Gully.

This relationship between people and animals once existed within many cultures throughout the world, with people simply seeing themselves as being a part of the natural world, not superior to it. This revered relationship with animals continues to be exemplified in Aboriginal culture, being a perspective which would greatly benefit the contemporary relationships held between people and animals.

This intense relationship sustained Traditional Owners when in their ceremonial and seasonal movements through The Gully, providing physical and spiritual nourishment from the diverse animal life in The Gully. The birds, reptiles and marsupials provided not only a balanced nutrition, but often healing and material resources as well as spiritual inspiration and seasonal indicators. The utilisation of animal resources by Traditional Owners was carefully managed and revered in a way that ensured abundance for following generations.

The impacts of European colonisation of The Gully and its Traditional Owners brought about catastrophic impacts on the native animals. The clearing of native vegetation, the eradication of species perceived by the Colonists as inconvenient and the introduction of exotic animals greatly altered the lives of native animals in Country. Today the diversity and abundance of native animals in The Gully is sadly just a shadow of the vibrant, thriving and prominent place they held in Country, with survival for many species threatened or endangered, while others have entirely disappeared.

Though the native animals were greatly impacted, The Gully community respected and understood the significant roles that these animals held in their lives, such as tadpoles indicating the health of the communities supply of water. Despite the loss of many species, particularly the smaller marsupials, The Gully people also continued to rely on native animals to supplement their diets and even utilised the ever increasing introduced species, rabbits being a memorable favorite. Today The Gully community continue to cherish and respect the role that the surviving native animals hold in The Gully and through Caring for Country approaches and activities aim to protect, restore and regenerate the balance of these animals in Country.

The Gully is an important wildlife corridor between the Jamison and Grose Valleys. Despite the impacts on colonisation, some native animals such as the Echidna and Swamp Wallaby can still be seen in The Gully, with the open forest and swamps providing important habitat functions. A wide variety of birdlife have been observed, many of which have been confirmed to be breeding in the area. (C Proberts in Bell Report)

Based on the Bell Report and the South Katoomba Vegetation Management Plan, the following animals scheduled as Endangered or Vulnerable under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (2) are known to inhabit the corridor.

Table 4 Scheduled fauna

Common Name	Scientific Name	State BC Act 2016	EPBC Act 1999 (Federal)
Dasyurus maculatus	Tiger Quoll	Vulnerable	Endangered
Eulamprus leuraensis	Blue Mountains Water Skink	Endangered	Endangered
Tyto tenebricosa	Sooty Owl	Vulnerable	–

BC Act 2016 *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*

EPBC Act 1999 *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

The following threatened species could potentially inhabit the upper Kedumba River (Draft South Katoomba Vegetation Management Plan 2002).



Barking Owl (*Ninox maculatus*)

Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*)

Masked Owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*)

Yellow-Bellied Glider (*Petaurus australis*)

Squirrel Glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*)

Large Eared Pied Bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*)

Common Bentwing Bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*)

Eastern False Pipistrelle (*Falsistrellus tasmaniensis*)

Giant Dragonfly (*Petalura gigantea*)

Littlejohn's Tree Frog (*Littoria littlejohni*)

Giant Burrowing Frog (*Heleioporus australiacus*)

Red-Crowned Toadlet (*Pseudophryne australis*)

Southern Emu-Wren (*Stipiturus malachurus*)

Lewin's Rail (*Dryolimnas pectoralis*)

Buff-banded Rail (*Gallirallus philippensis*)



2.3.5 Fire

Fire is one of the principal ways Gundungurra and Darug Traditional Owners managed Country in the Blue Mountains. Traditional burning practices, often referred to as 'firestick farming' ensured that The Gully was healthy and vibrant for all beings dependent on this rich part of Country. This practice looked after the land, waters and plants within Country providing a highly productive source of food which underpinned an abundance of wildlife. This provided Traditional Owners fulfilment of their needs while also sustaining resources for future generations. Fire in Country holds a spiritual importance continued through the physical relationship held by the Traditional Owners with their ancestors and ancestral beings that shaped and re-shaped Country.

With the arrival of colonists in the Blue Mountains in the early 1800's and the increasing establishment of settlements and corresponding dispossession of Gundungurra and Darug Traditional Owners, traditional burning practices ceased. In the time since, the Country has increasingly changed, becoming unhealthy and out of balance, with a legacy today leaving places in Country vulnerable to invasive weeds and animal species while significantly increasing the fire risk to surrounding properties and bushland.

Former Gully residents who were spoken to during the preparation of this plan, had no recollection of a fire in The Gully. The last recorded fire in Gully was in 2003 where the Explorers Road Fire spotted into The Gully burning approximately 1 ha of bushland.

The exclusion of fire from The Gully for the past 60+ years, coupled with the effects of urban runoff has favoured the establishment of exotic vegetation and environmental weeds in the many areas within The Gully. The risk that wildfire poses to life and property in The Gully is considered to be high to extreme as classified in the Blue Mountains Bush Fire Risk Management Plan.

2.4 Recreation

Recreation has always been a feature of the communities that found home in The Gully. During the period that the Traditional Owners of The Gully were more permanently settled there until the 1950's, recreation played an important family, cultural and social bond amongst those lived within The Gully and the community from the surrounding regions.

The opportunity for recreation continued the long established role that recreational activities held in Aboriginal cultures including local Traditional Gundungurra and Darug cultures. As the need for acquiring resources, particularly food and water only took a portion of any given day for Traditional Owners, these communities had a lot more time to partake in activities that were both secular and spiritual in nature, much more in contrast to today's time poor communities.

These activities often were age or gender specific and included physical activities corresponding to sports, creative festivities such as art, dance or song and other pursuits including those that connected the people spiritually to Country and spirit ancestors.

As part of the engagement with The Gully community, many of The Gully families recount vivid memories of their time in The Gully playing or undertaking other types of recreation.

Many of The Gully community today, recall with great fondness the range of activities that not only provided forms of entertainment, exercise or relaxation, but also the fact that these activities strengthen the social cohesion of the community interwoven with close kinship and camaraderie. The many other recreational pursuits among The Gully community, included boxing, cricket, gambling and music, with many Gully community members being noted accomplished musicians. (5) In some respects the pursuits such as gambling, particularly 'two-up', provided opportunities for much need additional income for Gully families, which often assisted with other aspects of their lives.

As much as recreation was important within The Gully community, ironically it was the recreation pursuits of the mainstream community that adversely affected and ultimately destroyed the community in The Gully. Following European colonisation the introduction of some species for recreational hunting such as foxes and rabbits over time impacted on Country, including The Gully, though not in a way that severely impacted the community. However the developments of the tourist 'fun' park and the subsequent Catalina Race Track in the interest of recreation led to devastating and ongoing impacts in The Gully and on the community who lived there.

Today The Gully still supports a diverse range of recreational and sporting activities, including many of those undertaken by The Gully community. The Gully contains two district sporting facilities (The Sports and Aquatic Centre and Katoomba Falls Sporting ovals), is part of the popular tourist precinct of Katoomba Falls, and provides for a diversity of local residential recreational use.

The northern part of The Gully is the most highly used section of The Gully for independent recreational activities such as walking, dog walking, and nature appreciation. Much of this activity is focused around the old race track and the lake. While formal recreational activities such as swimming and basketball are concentrated within the Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre.

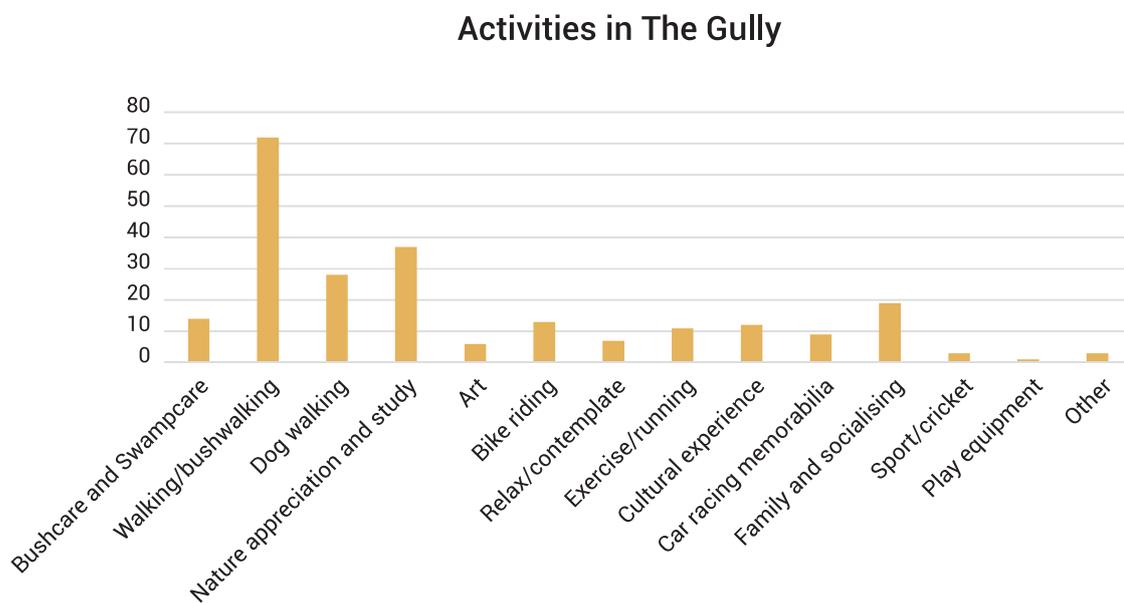
The central section of The Gully (McCrae's Paddock) is predominantly used by local residents for passive recreation, primarily walking and dog walking. The level of use is generally low compared to northern and southern sections of The Gully.

The southern end of The Gully, being part of Katoomba Falls includes two sports ovals and is the primary sporting facility for local sporting competition in South Katoomba. The ovals are used for local cricket competitions, AFL and Frisbee. The surrounding parkland of Katoomba Falls supports a high number of visitors. Although these site visitors were not reflected in the online site user survey, the recreational

facilities provide for local use, and are regularly utilised by domestic and international visitors associated with sightseeing at Katoomba Falls and the Blue Mountains National Park.

In the 2004 Plan, the community identified the importance of the Upper Kedumba Valley corridor for local open space and recreational usage to benefit residents of the district. The Have Your Say Site User Survey in 2018/19 reinforced the importance of The Gully as a place for recreation and identified a range of recreational activities undertaken in The Gully. Respondents from the survey showed that recreation in The Gully is predominantly local use, with 90% of respondent being Blue Mountains residents, 43% of which live neighbouring the reserve.

Figure 1: Recreational activities in The Gully*



*Activities and reserve use based on self-reporting in the Have Your Say online survey

A number of endurance events also utilise The Gully, primarily the Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre and Katoomba Falls Reserve have been used as staging grounds for these events. These include:

- Ultra-Trail – Annually in May.
- Trek for Timor – August/ September annually. Using Peckmans Road, and Katoomba Oval as a check point.

Other events in The Gully include NAIDOC Week managed by the GTO and the Council and other cultural heritage events including Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage events organised by National Parks and Wildlife Services.

2.5 Visitors to The Gully

A long established cultural practice when visiting another community or going into the Country of another community was to undertake a series of reciprocated protocols between the host community and the visitors. In south-eastern Australia, including in Gundungurra and Darug Country, a visitor when coming into Country followed these protocols and established their relationship to the people of that Country and the nature of the business they wished to undertake. If they were given permission to enter the Country of that community, they were shown hospitality, given a physical and spiritual covering and incorporated into the network of that community. They were also expected to follow the rules of that Country and take on certain responsibilities for the period of their visit. This cultural practice has continued today, though has changed over time, being the basis of what is now known as a 'Welcome to Country'.

This process of visiting the Country of other communities occurred through well-established linking pathways, frequently based on time honoured ceremonial movements as well as extended kinship ties. For visitors that came to the area of Country known as The Gully the same rules would have applied, with Traditional Owners showing the same welcoming response to accepted visitors.

These rules established by Traditional Owners formed the underpinning bond that extended the kinship relationships and respect for Country to visitors in The Gully, particularly those who became more permanent residents, bringing those visitors into the Traditional Owners responsibilities but also a sense of belonging for the visitor.

There are many examples of visitors acknowledged in the history of The Gully community illustrate how these visitors that came to The Gully took on roles in the community primarily intrinsically linked to existing relationships or through the formation of kinship bonds following traditional cultural practice. Sadly the devastating impacts brought about by the race track not only severely damaged Country in The Gully but also fractured the generational kinship bonds of the community, with the legacy of this still reverberating for Gully people today.

Outside visitors to The Gully, particularly visiting through tourism is not a new occurrence, however with the marginalisation of Traditional Owners or ignorance of Aboriginal culture business interests overrode long held Aboriginal cultural values and protocols. Business ventures, such as commercial tourism bringing outside visitors into The Gully, commenced with the development of the lake and the Catalina plane joy ride in its centre through the actions of Horace Gates in the mid 1940s. This was part of the fun park aimed at attracting visiting tourists and was an early intrusion of such business interests which impacted on The Gully community.

This development also paved the way for further ideas to generate business from visitors to Katoomba, thereby exploiting the land in The Gully. The goals of these business interests culminated in August 1949 through the decision by the then Council to support the local Chamber of Commerce to construct a racing track circuit in The Gully. (D Johnson. 2000) This decision, it would seem, was driven by the belief of local business and the Council that a car racing circuit would attract visitors to the mountains and therefore bolster the local economy.

However, this major construction dispossessed the Traditional Owners from within The Gully community for the second time, forcing them from their homes, families and Country. This business decision in the interest of tourism and the subsequent devastating actions still adversely affect Gully people to this day.

Today, most visitors to The Gully are local residents. Respondents to the Have Your Say Site User Survey were dominated by Blue Mountains Residents (90%). This included local residents either adjoining or in walking distance of The Gully (42%), and Blue Mountains resident at 48%. The self-selecting survey had little representation of outside visitors to the Blue Mountains (10%).



Katoomba Falls is a popular tourist destination, and being adjacent to the Blue Mountains National Park and close to Scenic World, there is a high level of tourism traffic at Katoomba Falls Reserve. Visitation data from Katoomba Tourist Park for 2017/18 financial year had 19,787 guest stays, with an average length of stay of 1.97 days. Day trip visitation to Katoomba Falls is expected to be much higher than this, however there is no current data on this.

Although Katoomba Falls is part of The Gully, and is also on the tourism circuit, the upper part of The Gully, where many of The Gully community lived is not. The relatively recent construction of an easy grade interpretive walk on the history and story of The Gully community does not appear to have resulted in The Gully being known as a designated tourist destination.

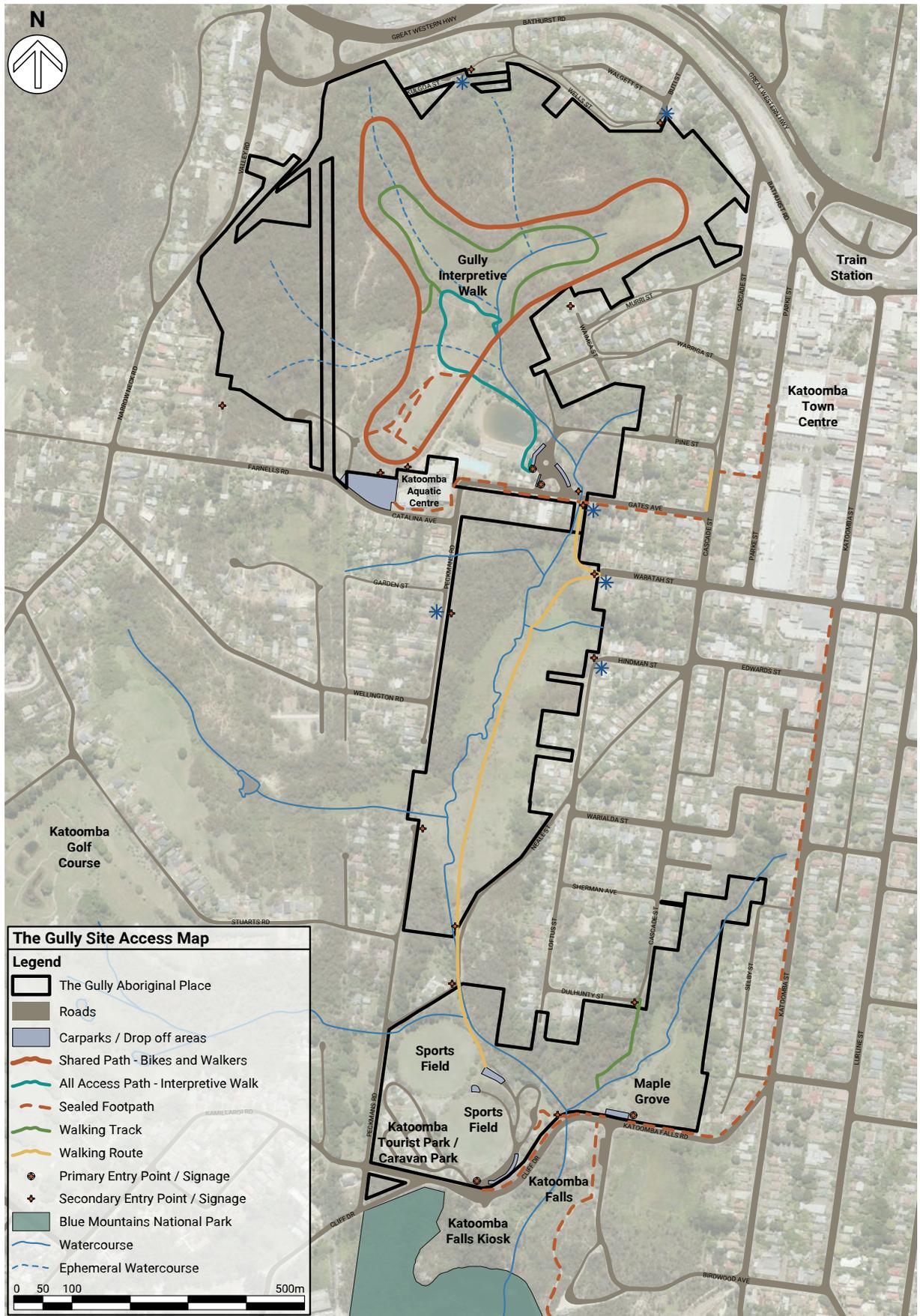
2.6 Access

The Gully, as a living place is interconnected to innumerable other living places in Country through a web of pathways interwoven with the seasonal and ceremonial movements of ancestral and spiritual beings since the time of creation. The Gully contained many pathways which connected The Gully community to each other, to what became the township of Katoomba, but also importantly to other places in Country that held significance for the Traditional Owners.

The many pathways that connected The Gully community were permanently impacted through the destruction caused by the race track, with only a few remnants of the existing network surviving today. Many of the access points that connected The Gully community to other places of importance still exist but have been overlaid by formalised roads. Many of the other connecting pathways in Country which lead to other importance parts of Country including in the valleys below have also been colonised, transected or impaired in sections due to the urban growth around The Gully.

The Gully covers a large extent of Country and is made up of an extensive number of reserves with a large interface with residential areas of Katoomba, with multiple access points as discussed that exist in both a formal and informal state. The primary and secondary entry points are outlined in Appendix 2 and Map 4 The Gully site access.

Map 4 Site access



Uncontrolled access by vehicles is no longer a significant management issue for The Gully. However, there is still a number of unformed paths which generate a range of issues relating to erosion, inappropriate use and access to sensitive areas which should be rationalised and upgraded through the master planning process.(2)

The formal entry points into The Gully have improved with the development of The Gully Interpretive walk, however there is no formal definition of entry and access into the central (McCrae's Paddocks) and southern section (Katoomba Falls) of The Gully. These areas remain a very separate place to the northern section of The Gully, and there is no signage or other reference to indicate that it is part of The Gully Aboriginal Place.

2.7 Buildings

At the time the race track was constructed, there were numerous buildings in The Gully, many were the small handcrafted homes of The Gully community often made through utilising what materials they could access, though some homes were more substantial. Though basic in nature, these homes were much loved by their occupants, with many descendants of these residents remembering these homes with great fondness. Sadly however, due to the disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal people living in The Gully these home were often very modest, providing limited protection from extreme conditions.

The construction of the race track resulted in the destruction of most of these homes, with the other homes in The Gully being impacted over time by the operation of the racing circuit. Today little remnants of these homes in The Gully exist.

The Gully community was also very proud of and connected to the Church building that was established by the Aboriginal Inland Mission of which many Gully families regularly attended services. There are many Gully Elders that hold closely the memories of their experiences with their families from the Mission church, which also no longer exists.

There are a number of other buildings that remain within The Gully Aboriginal Place that are associated with the former fun park or the race track, including the buildings near the Catalina Lake, some toilet facilities and the buildings The Gully Heritage Centre is located in. It should be considered, though, that these buildings represent actions from the past that symbolise the forced removal of The Gully community, and may continue to hold painful memories.

Under the *Local Government Act 1993 Sect 36*, Plans of Management for community land must include a description of any building or other 'improvements' on the land (Section 36 3A (a) (i) and the use of the land and any such buildings or improvement (ii).

The listing of existing buildings and other assets is outlined in Appendix 3 and documents the current condition of these built structure within The Gully. The permitted purpose and use of these built assets is summarised on Appendix 5.

