

4. LAND USE

4.01 Present land use

Present land use, tenure and zoning are closely interrelated within the study area and all three may be depicted in a generalised manner as shown in Figure 9. Thus, recreational, tourist and some educational activities generally take place on publicly owned land zoned as reserve or park. Present residential and commercial land uses are mainly on privately owned freehold land zoned for residential and business purposes respectively.

Recreational and tourist activities include a range of organised sports and informal leisure pursuits described below in 4.06 and 4.07.

Developed residential land occupies about 110 ha, 75 percent of which is the older suburban section of Katoomba in the eastern half of the catchment. As mentioned earlier, the newer residential area in the western half has many vacant allotments and a few old homesteads on larger allotments. The largest single area of undeveloped residential land is about 15 ha between Wellington and Stuarts Roads. This was evidently a dairy some years ago and still contains old dairy buildings.

As indicated in Figure 9 the business centre of Katoomba occupies about 14 ha of land in the north-east corner of the catchment. Many commercial activities in this area depend largely on the tourist industry, as exemplified by the many restaurants, cafes, hotels/motels and guest houses. Approximately 7 ha in the study area are used for special purposes, i.e. the TAFE College, schools, a youth hostel and fire brigade.

There are four motor vehicle service stations but no major manufacturing industries in the study area. There is no significant agricultural land use at present but some of the soil erosion problems suggest substantial past grazing in the valley and western section. Nevertheless, as many as five horses are still grazed in McRaes Paddock (see 2.03).

4.02 Present land tenure

Although Frank Walford Park, McRaes Paddock and Katoomba Park Extension are described as public land, the tenure of all these areas is freehold under the ownership of BMCC. McRaes Paddock and Katoomba Park Extension comprise 32 separate allotments purchased or acquired in past years by the Council (B. Riley, BMCC, pers comm). As shown in Figure 9 and mentioned previously, a narrow strip of privately owned freehold land intrudes into the western section of Frank Walford Park.

The 40 ha Katoomba Golf Course is also freehold land owned by BMCC and leased to Katoomba Golf Club. BMCC therefore owns (in fee simple) a total of about 115 ha which is 40 percent of Katoomba Falls catchment.

Katoomba Park is crown land, part of which was gazetted as public park in 1888 and the remainder about 1936. BMCC has the care, control and management of the park under trusteeship from the Department of Lands (Manidis Roberts, 1990).

Most of the Katoomba Falls catchment not owned or controlled directly by BMCC is freehold land in about 600 allotments owned mainly by the occupiers. The owners with the largest private holdings are evidently Mr I. Danziger and Mr H. J. Hammon (both of whom were contacted in the surveys of community opinions).

4.03 Zoning and future land use

Development is controlled in the catchment area by Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plans 4, 39 and 1991. The zoning in L.E.P. 4 applies to all of the area except for Frank Walford Park and the small areas marked A to E in Figure 9.

Under L.E.P. 4, McRaes Paddock, Katoomba Park and Katoomba Park Extension are all zoned Open Space - Recreation 6(a) and 6(b), and described as "reserve". The allotment marked G in Figure 9 is privately owned and zoned 6(b). It is also described as "reserve" in the L.E.P.

Much of the developed residential land and all the undeveloped residential land in Figure 9 are zoned Residential 2(a1) under L.E.P. 4. Some of the older residential area near the business section and along Katoomba and Lurline Streets are zoned Residential 2(b1), 2(b2), 2(c1) or 2(d), permitting wider ranges of land use than for 2(a1). As about 20 percent of the area of residential land consists of vacant or undeveloped lots, some increase in population, housing and impervious surface area may be expected in the future, as mentioned earlier. Most of this will take place in the western half of the catchment area.

In contrast to the residential land, there are no undeveloped areas zoned for business activities in the study area under L.E.P. 4. Future expansion of business activities can still take place, however, through the redevelopment of existing sites in the business zone. This has already occurred during the past decade with the establishment of shopping arcades, supermarkets and other commercial development in and near the town centre.

L.E.P. 39 was gazetted in 1986 specifically for Frank Walford Park. Two main aims are stated: (a) to permit the use of Frank Walford Park for tourist oriented activities, and (b) to protect areas of environmental significance. Under this plan most of the park, including area marked F in Figure 9, is zoned 6(e), described as "Recreation (special purposes)". A range of activities and facilities are explicitly permitted in zone 6(e), as shown in Table 6, but the plan does not give explicit requirements for environmental protection. Several small areas around the periphery of the park are zoned 7(e) Environmental Protection, although these would not be more environmentally sensitive than the swamps in the area zoned 6(e).

L.E.P. 1991 was gazetted quite recently, namely December 1991 (BMCC,1991b). It gives particular attention to environmentally sensitive areas on freehold land, and restricts future development in these with the following special zones:

- Residential Bushland Conservation (Res-BC)
- Recreation - Environmental Protection (Rec-EP)
- Environmental Protection (EP)
- Environmental Protection - Acquisition (EPac)
- Regional Open Space (R).

In addition to general development restrictions with the above zones, specific limitations for particular areas, such as minimum lot size, are indicated by "zone subscripts". Under L.E.P. 1991 there are also "protected areas" with designations that include "canopy conservation", "environmental constraint" and "escarpment area". Each of these imposes other constraints on development.

Areas marked A to E in Figure 9 are controlled by L.E.P. 1991, and some of the types of development permitted under this plan are shown in Table 6. Similar information for areas G and F under L.E.P. 4 and L.E.P. 39 are shown in the same table. There is some doubt about the adequacy of these controls for achieving the required environmental objectives and this issue is discussed in later sections (6.04 and 8.02).

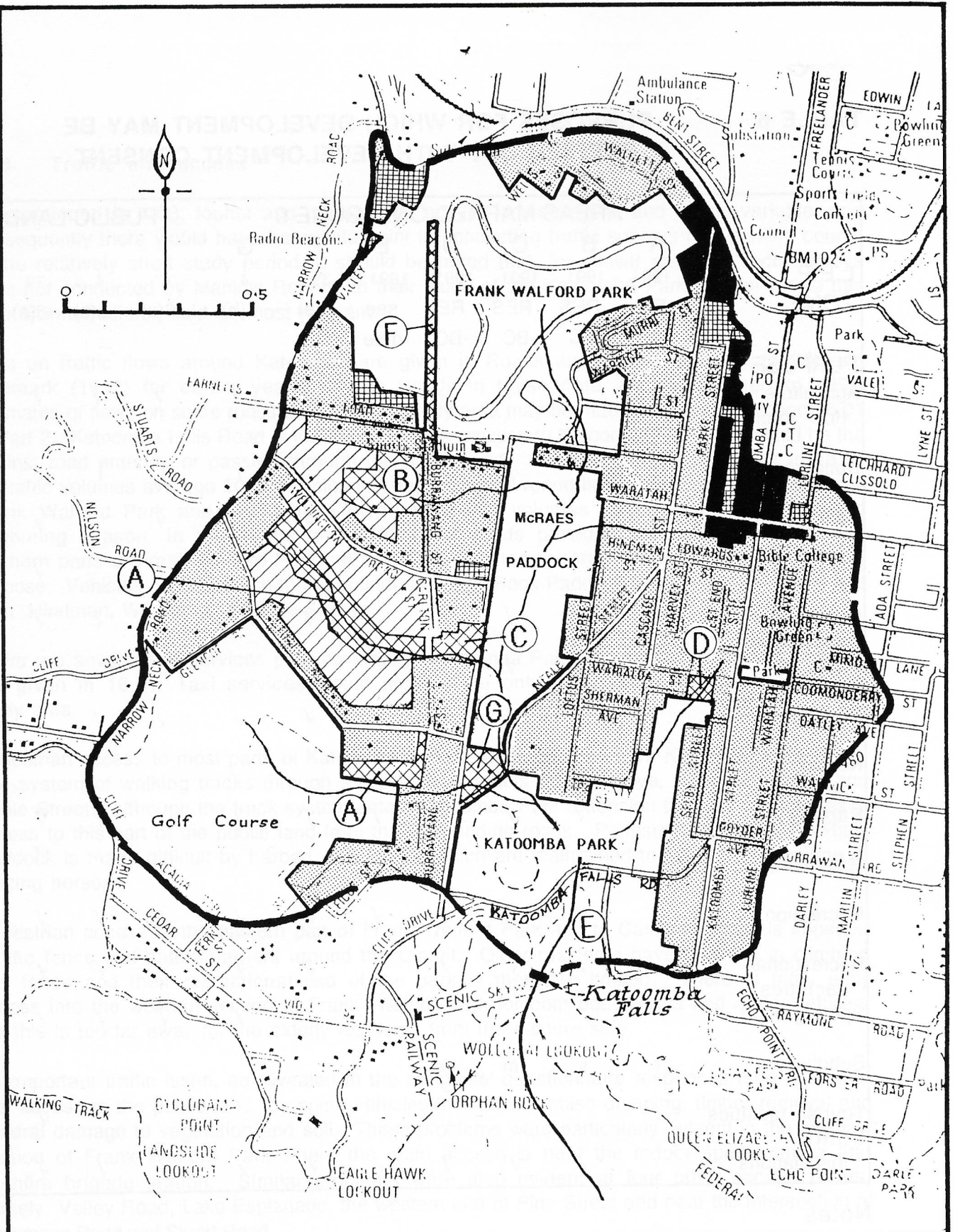


FIGURE 9

LAND USE, TENURE AND ZONING

(Circled letters refer to environmentally sensitive areas listed in Table 6)

Developed residential (private freehold)		Environmental protection/reserve (private freehold) See Table 6.....	
Undeveloped residential (private freehold)		Special purposes (schools etc).....	
Developed commercial/Industrial (mainly private freehold).....		Publicly owned park/reserve etc.....	

TABLE 6

PURPOSES FOR WHICH DEVELOPMENT MAY BE CARRIED OUT WITH DEVELOPMENT CONSENT

L.E.P. ZONE	AREAS MARKED ON FIGURE 9							PUBLIC LAND			
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G				
	1991 EP	1991 RES -BC	1991 RES -BC	1991 RES -BC	1991 see note	39 6(e)	4 6(b)	4 6(a)	4 6(b)	39 6(e)	39 7(e)
PURPOSE											
Agriculture (low intensity)		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Building/house		✓	✓	✓		i	i	i	i	i	✓
Camping area						✓		✓		✓	✓
Caravan park						✓		✓		✓	✓
Childrens' playground		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Dam		✓	✓	✓							
Drainage works	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keeping of hoofed animals		✓	✓	✓							
Parking		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Racecourse								✓			
Recreation	j	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recreational facilities		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sportsground						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Subdivision	✓	k	m	n							
Tourist facilities						✓				✓	
Utility installations		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Notes

- ✓ development may be carried out with development consent.
- i only for BMCC purposes.
- j passive recreation only.
- k maximum of 8 lots/ha.
- m minimum lot size 4000m².
- n not to be subdivided.

Area E is the section of Katoomba Park south of Katoomba Falls Rd. It is zoned 6(a) in L.E.P. 4 but is marked "escarpment area" in L.E.P. 1991.

4.04 Traffic and access

As mentioned in 1.03, tourist and recreational activity are seasonal and highly variable, and consequently there would have been little point in conducting traffic surveys and parking counts in the relatively short study period. It should be noted that, for similar reasons, such surveys were not conducted by Manidis Roberts in their study of the Katoomba Park section where this type of information would be most relevant.

Data on traffic flows around Katoomba are given in Roads and Traffic Authority (1988) and Milemark (1987) for earlier years. If the trends in these data are extrapolated to 1992, estimates of flows on some roads adjoining the study area may be made as given in Section 16.01 of Part 2. Katoomba Falls Road is the main vehicular access to Katoomba Park, and would be the busiest road entering or passing through the public land. According to the estimates in 16.01 its traffic volumes average 2000 vehicles per day. Gates Avenue is the main vehicular access to Frank Walford Park and would have moderate traffic volumes during peak periods in the swimming season. In the 1960s and 1970s other roads provided vehicular access to the northern parts of Frank Walford Park but these are now too severely eroded to be used for that purpose. Vehicles can be driven to the boundaries of McRaes Paddock from Peckmans Road and from Hindman, Waratah and Neale Streets.

There are several bus services passing through Katoomba Park and further particulars of these are given in 16.01. Taxi services would provide the only other public transport within the study area.

Pedestrian access to most parts of Katoomba Park is relatively easy from Katoomba Falls Road. The system of walking tracks through the park has outlets to Cliff Drive, Cascade Street and Neale Street. Although the track system enters Katoomba Park Extension there is no direct easy access to this part of the public land from the surrounding roads. Pedestrian access to McRaes Paddock is made difficult by barbed wire fences which are maintained to prevent the escape of grazing horses.

Pedestrian access to the eastern part of Frank Walford Park and to Catalina Circuit is impeded by the fence and safety barriers around the Circuit. Older residents have difficulty in climbing this fence and their recreational use of the park is therefore limited. There is fairly easy access into the western section of Frank Walford Park for both pedestrians and motor vehicles but this is too far away for the elderly residents from the eastern side.

An important traffic issue, as revealed in the residents' questionnaire responses (see 5.01), is that access to the public land by some vehicles facilitates rubbish dumping, timber removal and general damage to vegetation and soil. These problems were particularly evident in the western section of Frank Walford Park where the main access is near the indoor sports centre and bushfire brigade station. Similar problems were also evident at four other access points, namely Valley Road, Lake Esplanade, the western end of Pine Street and near the intersection of Peckmans Road and Stuart Road.

No particular parking problems were observed during the study period but residents reported that such problems occur in the summer season near the swimming pool and at Katoomba Falls Kiosk.

4.05 Utility services

Sewerage and water supply services are available throughout the business and developed residential areas. These services are also available in or near all undeveloped residential lots. A major sewer line passes right through Frank Walford Park, McRaes Paddock and the northern part of Katoomba Park.

Public toilets and taps are located in Frank Walford Park and near the ovals in Katoomba Park. Both sets of facilities were functioning adequately and appeared to be well maintained during the study period. The toilet in Frank Walford Park is opened only during organised meetings on Catalina Circuit. It is located inside the Circuit and therefore cannot be reached from outside without jumping over the fence and safety barrier. The toilet in Katoomba Park is apparently inadequate for some school sporting events (see 5.03).

Electricity is available throughout the residential and commercial sections of the study area but there is no supply to Frank Walford Park or McRaes Paddock. Evidently there were lights and functional electrical outlets in Frank Walford Park some years ago but these were all disconnected because of the activities of vandals. Katoomba Park has lighting and electrical outlets at various points such as the caravan park, kiosk and Katoomba Cascades.

4.06 Recreation

Organised sports take place in the study area at the following locations:

- two ovals in Katoomba Park,
- indoor stadium at Frank Walford Park,
- Catalina Circuit.
- Katoomba Golf Course,

Information on the use of the ovals in Katoomba Park was given in Manidis Roberts (1990) and this seems generally consistent with present usage.

According to information received from residents and sports clubs, competition cricket is played by local clubs and schools on both ovals in Katoomba Park during summer months. Both ovals are also used for school rugby league in winter months. Only Oval number 1 is used by rugby league clubs and this is mainly for practice rather than competition. Touch football is played on Oval number 1 throughout the year on week nights. There is also moderate use of both ovals by picnickers, caravan park patrons and local residents for casual ball games, kite flying and similar activities.

The surveys by Manidis Roberts (1990) indicated that some improvements to the oval facilities are desirable, and similar suggestions were made in the responses of schools and sporting clubs to the surveys in the present study (see 5.03). However, the Manidis Roberts report also showed that there is an excess of playing fields in the Katoomba area and it therefore recommended the closing of Oval number 2. to organised sports. Further comments on these matters are made in 7.09.

Frank Walford Park was originally acquired by Blue Mountains Council in the 1950s for "intensive recreational development" (BMCC, 1982). Consistent with this, Catalina Circuit was completed in 1961, the olympic pool in 1967 and indoor sports stadium in 1975. Various extensions and improvements to the facilities were made in the 1970s and 1980s, including a band hall and meeting rooms which cater for a number of community needs. The stadium has subsequently become an important venue for basketball, netball and gymnastics.



PLATE 13 Aerial view of Catalina Circuit and Lake Catalina during the 1960s when both were regarded as major regional recreational facilities
(photo by courtesy of J. Smith)

As mentioned elsewhere, the Catalina Circuit is now used about once per month by motor clubs for time trials and similar meetings. The number of people attending each meeting may vary from about 50 to 250 or more. Most spectators drive their own cars to the Circuit and over 100 cars from this activity may be parked either within the Circuit or near the main entrance at the western side of the sports stadium. The controversy about the use of the Circuit for these meetings is discussed in 6.03.

A number of other recreational and leisure activities have either taken place or been proposed for Frank Walford Park as outlined by BMCC (1982). These include motor bike, cycling and billy cart racing, go-carts, trail bikes, cross country running, archery, horse riding, hang gliding and model boating (on Lake Catalina).

Katoomba Golf Course is an 18-hole course used by both competitive and casual players. There is a proposal to use part of the course for a tourist accommodation development which would necessitate re-positioning of some of the fairways and greens (see Section 5.04).

As reported in 5.01 and 18.02, about 90 percent of the questionnaire respondents use the public lands for informal recreational activities such as walking, jogging, cycling and family outings. Local residents are the main participants in this type of recreation in Frank Walford Park and McRaes Paddock. However, in the Katoomba Park section more tourists than local residents participate in walking and family outings, as shown by the visitor survey of Manidis Roberts (1990).

4.07 Tourism

Tourism is by far the largest industry in the Blue Mountains. In 1991 approximately three million tourists visited the Blue Mountains and spent about \$174 million. This provided direct employment for about 2850 people representing more than 50 percent of all jobs in the region (R. Giason, pers comm; Blue Mountains Gazette 26/8/92).

Current surveys show the tourist ranking of the Blue Mountains is increasing and the area is now well within the top ten Australian holiday destinations for both domestic and international visitors. Further increases in the popularity of the area may be expected when the implications of a recent investigation by Dr G. Mosley are fully recognised (see Mosley, 1989). This work clearly justifies the proposed World Heritage listing of the extraordinary natural features of the Blue Mountains, comparing them very favourably with similar features of the Grand Canyon in the United States. Formal international recognition as a World Heritage Area through the rigorous accrediting procedure is now likely and this could considerably increase the allure and status of the Blue Mountains to overseas tourists.

Most tourists to the Blue Mountains visit Echo Point and a large proportion of these go to Katoomba Falls on the same trip, as mentioned previously. According to Manidis Roberts (1990), the Scenic Railway and Skyway near the Falls receive more than 750,000 visitors per year, many of whom walk or picnic in Katoomba Park. All the visitors surveyed by Manidis Roberts liked this park and its scenic attractions. However, the same study made a number of recommendations for improving the park's amenities (see 7.09).

In addition to walking, picnicking and viewing the scenery, tourists in the Blue Mountains take part in activities such as souvenir shopping and visiting art galleries, gardens, restaurants, museums and cinemas. In the study area there are four or five souvenir shops, two art galleries and at least twenty restaurants or cafes. However, there are no cinemas or theatres near Katoomba, the closest being at Glenbrook and Mount Victoria.

Almost half a million tourists required accommodation for one or more nights in the Blue Mountains in 1991. Many of these stayed at Katoomba which has 3 hotels, 7 motels, 11 guest houses/hostels and a caravan park.

There is a need for more caravan sites and more low-cost, self contained family accommodation for visitors. Manidis Roberts (1990) showed that the present demand for these types of accommodation at Katoomba is not met in holiday periods and justifies expansion of the caravan park. The shortfall could increase greatly in the future if current tourist industry and economic trends continue.

4.08 Significance of walking and backpacking for tourism

The growing popularity of walking and backpacking and their significance for tourist activities in the study area are outlined in 17.01. Although most tourists now spend less than two hours walking per trip, increasing numbers of people from overseas are visiting the Blue Mountains for overnight camping trips and long full-day walks in the National Park.

As detailed in 17.01, recent surveys have shown that 120,000 to 150,000 backpackers visit Australia each year and this is one of the fastest growing components of the tourist industry. Most overseas backpackers stay several days in the Sydney region (which could include the Blue

Mountains). They spend over \$200 million per year during their visits and generally seek "value for money" rather than luxury accommodation and meals. The majority are well educated young people who consider the most interesting attractions in Australia are those related to the natural environment (see 17.02). They give the highest ratings to nature and wilderness tours, long-distance hiking and similar outdoor activities which are now often promoted as "ecotourism" and "adventure walks". There is little doubt that the Blue Mountains is one of the finest areas in Australia, and probably the world, for the experiences and activities sought by such tourists. If the Blue Mountains achieves official World Heritage recognition, as mentioned previously, Katoomba could become a Mecca for quite large numbers of these young and adventurous people from overseas.

Despite the above potential, walkers and backpackers are not well catered for at Katoomba. Although at least one of the hotels and two of the hostels provide inexpensive backpacker-type accommodation, facilities for overnight camping seem unsatisfactory. A token area of about 20 tent sites has been set aside in the caravan park but this is on poorly drained land between the ovals and could not cope with the likely demand. There are apparently no other sites near Katoomba where overnight camping is permitted unless special arrangements are made with private landowners.

A world-class Blue Mountains National Park should have an appropriate visitors' centre and welcoming gateway to stimulate the expectations of ecotourists from overseas. As a large proportion of such visitors travel to Katoomba by train, a convenient location for a centre of this type would be the northern section of Frank Walford Park. This is only about two hundred metres from the railway station and is directly linked to the Blue Mountains National Park through the "green corridor" of Katoomba Falls Creek Valley. The potential of the valley for birdwatching and its Aboriginal and historical features (see Sections 2.09 and 3.06) provide further items of interest to justify a visitors' centre at this location.



PLATE 14 Frank Walford Park: a good location for the type of visitors' centre and gateway needed by a National Park of World Heritage status

The excellent Heritage Centre established by the National Parks and Wildlife Service at Blackheath caters very well for Grose Valley walkers and motorised tourists but not for walkers and train travellers wishing to visit the Katoomba section of the National Park. The latter group would include the majority of backpackers/ecotourists from overseas and interstate. For these people, an inspiring and memorable introduction to the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area could be better provided through the suggested visitors' centre in Frank Walford Park.

4.09 Significance of the green corridor and open space to local residents

Although the green corridor of Katoomba Falls Creek Valley is potentially valuable for tourism it also has much significance for local residents, as outlined previously in 3.04 and 4.06. Such corridors are not uncommon in urban areas. As in the present study, they are usually the valleys of watercourses regarded as unfavourable for development in the past and now forming relatively natural strips surrounded by buildings and roadways. The environmental and social values of these strips have received recent recognition by the Department of Environment and Planning (1985). In addition to the space they provide for local residents to enjoy informal leisure and recreational activities, green corridors provide the following:

- a) improved aesthetic settings for homes and working places through landscape diversity and visual contrast with the developed areas,
- b) zones that enable the clear separation of urban areas into different communities, facilitating the development of a distinctive character and ethos for each community,
- c) space for dispersing and diluting air pollution from motor vehicles, factories etc,
- d) habitats and migration corridors for plants and animals, enabling people to readily interact with and appreciate the natural world,
- e) refuges from the noise, restrictions and stresses of living in a complex modern society.

All the items (a) to (e) above apply in varying measures to Katoomba Falls Creek Valley, some having been mentioned previously in sections 2 and 3.

Items (a), (b) and (d) above were given particular attention in the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No.10 (Blue Mountains Regional Open Space) of the Department of Planning (1989). This identified and zoned 17 areas of largely undeveloped land in the Blue Mountains as "Regional Open Space" and specified development controls to protect their environmental and scenic qualities. All 17 areas were regarded as having "Regional and State significance" for maintaining the outstanding natural values of the region. Katoomba Falls Creek Valley was not included in these areas, apparently because its relatively disturbed condition was inconsistent with the pre-determined selection criteria. Katoomba Falls Creek Valley should therefore be regarded as "local urban open space" rather than "Regional Open Space".

The position and accessibility of urban open spaces are important aspects of their community values. As expressed by Smith (1986), there should be "..... enough strategically located places that will allow *everybody* daily contact with nature." (p.140). In this regard, the green corridor of the study area should be able to meet the needs for accessible open space by the elderly, young, and disabled residents in the older western and southern parts of Katoomba. Such needs cannot be adequately satisfied by any of the other parks or open space in the area. The Blue Mountains National Park and Kingsford-Smith Park both involve long distances to walk and tracks with too many steps. Hinkler Park is too small and often too crowded.

At present the green corridor of the study area does not meet the above community needs as well as it should. As pointed out earlier, pedestrian access to Frank Walford Park and to McRaes Paddock is poor, especially for elderly and disabled residents. Improvement of this aspect would significantly increase the social value of the area. Better walking tracks and attention to some of the environmental problems identified in Section 5 would also increase the social value of the area and thereby assist in improving the quality of life of local residents.

4.10 Summary of most relevant aspects of land use

1. About 20 percent of the currently zoned residential land consists of undeveloped land or vacant lots. Significant increases in population and housing (and area of impervious surface) are therefore expected in the future.
2. Development in the catchment area is controlled by L.E.Ps 4, 39 and 1991. These all allow certain developments and land uses that may be detrimental to environmental aims.
3. Tourism is by far the most important industry in the Blue Mountains and it is likely to become even more important if the Blue Mountains achieves official World Heritage recognition. Marked increases in the number of visitors to the area could therefore be expected in the future.
4. Backpacking and ecotourism by young overseas visitors are rapidly growing and valuable components of the tourist industry. These overseas visitors favour nature and wilderness tours, long-distance walking and similar activities, and are likely to seek such activities in the Katoomba area.
5. Accommodation in Katoomba for overnight walkers, ecotourists and touring family groups is inadequate to meet likely future demands. More tent sites, caravan sites and low-cost, self-contained cabins are needed in the caravan park or elsewhere in the area.
6. Frank Walford Park is a good location for the type of visitors' centre and National Park gateway that would be desirable if the Blue Mountains receives official World Heritage recognition.
7. The green corridor of the public land has the potential to satisfy community needs that cannot be met by other parks or open space in the area. However, to fulfill this potential, better pedestrian access, improved walking tracks and attention to the environmental problems are all required.