

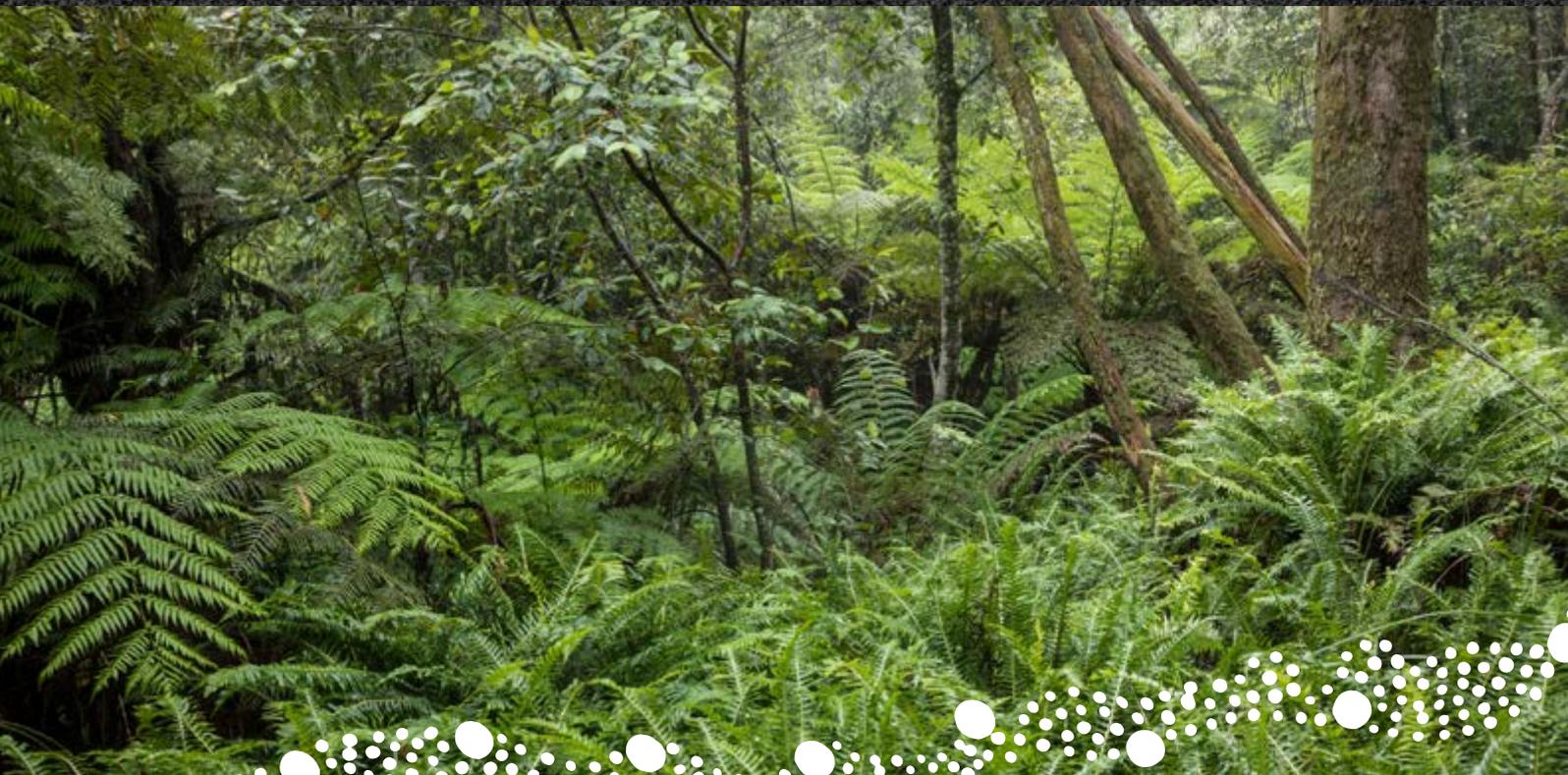
The Gully

Talking with the Community

**Stakeholder Engagement Report
The Gully Aboriginal Place Katoomba**

Plan of Management Review

June 2019





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Executive Summary

Talking to the community is central to the review of The Gully Aboriginal Place Plan of Management. The consultation provided an opportunity for the community to provide input into the Plan, and for Council and The Gully Traditional Owners to understand the values and aspirations of the community. This report outlines the feedback received from former Gully residents and their families, sections of the broader Aboriginal community and people who use the public reserves within The Gully.

While the values and views across all groups was varied, the strong personal and family connection to The Gully held by Gully families was clear. There were strong messages around the importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage in The Gully and the need to protect and celebrate this culture. The environmental values of The Gully was another commonly shared value among many who visit The Gully. The need to protect and restore the natural systems in The Gully was also identified as a key priority.

The consultation identified some of the conflicting values among the community, particularly around dog off leash walking and racing track memorabilia. These issues will require clear direction in their management, and while it will not be possible to appease all who use The Gully, the knowledge gained through this community engagement work will help shape the future of The Gully.



1. Introduction

Communication and engagement with all stakeholders with a connection and interest in The Gully is central to understanding the values of The Gully and establishing the priorities for the management and protection of The Gully at the present time and into the future.

This report outlines consultation with:

- Aboriginal families of former Gully residents and their descendants;
- NAIDOC Week event in The Gully;
- People who visit and use The Gully (site users)

This report covers the first stage of stakeholder engagement undertaken prior to the development of Draft Plan of Management for The Gully.





2. Methodology

The community engagement work undertaken as part of the review of Plan of Management for The Gully included a combination of methods which sought to notify and engage the families of Aboriginal former Gully residents and their descendants, reserve users, the local Aboriginal community and the broader Blue Mountains community.

The 'Have Your Say' page on the Council's website was a central communication tool providing information on the project and the opportunity for stakeholders to communicate with Council on was important to them about the Gully. **bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/gully-plan**

Supporting communications for the project included:

- Written notification to stakeholders;
- Media release (Jan 2019);
- Facebook and Twitter feeds
- Site posters; and
- Surveys and interviews with key interest groups.

Three separate surveys were undertaken as part of the review of The Gully Plan of Management. These included:

- A short questionnaire at NAIDOC Week on 14/7/18 with 10 respondents.
- Interviews / questionnaire with Gully families between 4/9/18 to 22/03/19 with 14 respondents
- 'Have Your Say' online survey from 1/11/18 to 27/2/19 with 93 respondents.

The three separate surveys varied the questions asked to suite the different stakeholder groups, and question were refinement over the consultation period. The core question that was consistent with all 3 surveys / interview, was "What do you value about The Gully?"

The NAIDOC Week survey and the Have Your Say survey both included the questions:

- What do you think should be done to protect The Gully?
- How would you like The Gully to be in the future?

The Gully Family interviews asked a series of more specific question on how the site in managed. These were developed in line with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Guidelines on plans of Management for Aboriginal Places. The responses around site management from all 3 surveys/interview were corresponding, and an understanding of the views off all respondents on how The Gully should be managed, could be made.

Names of respondents have been removed from all survey responses to protect privacy.

3. NAIDOC Week Survey

The NAIDOC Week survey was carried out on the 14 July 2018 at the annual NAIDOC week event held in The Gully. The survey accompanied the promotion of The Gully Plan of Management review at the NAIDOC event, which also used a site poster and a Council Project Officer available to answer question and notify event attendees of the plan of management review.

A total of 10 people identifying as both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal responded to this survey. There were around 150 people in attendance at the event.

3.1 Response

Respondents were asked a series of short questions about what they value about The Gully, and what they felt was the most important in factor looking after The Gully into the future. Figure 1 shows what people valued most about The Gully.

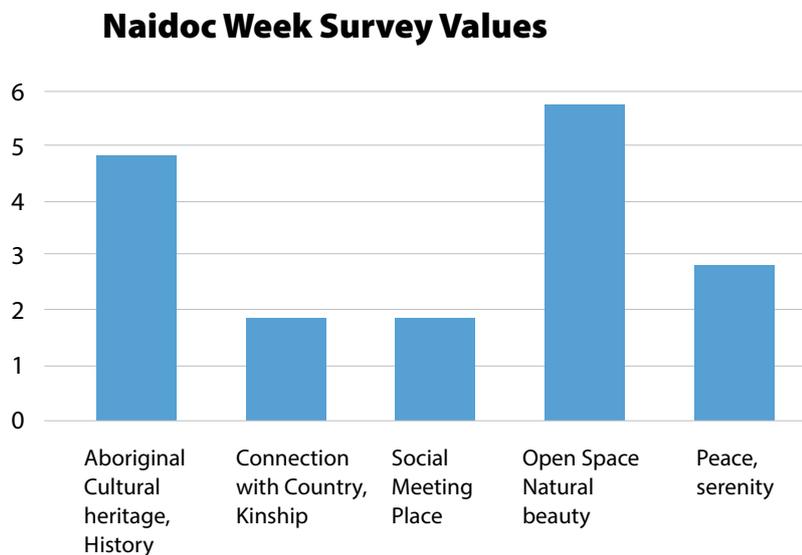


Figure 1. Site values NAIDOC Week Survey

When asked “What do you think needs to be done to look after The Gully?” representative responses included:

- Restore as much as possible to original state;
- Protection of site and sacred keeping place;
- Find a way to have local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples work together;
- Increase biodiversity;
- Removal of weeds;
- Education opportunities for local community including school children; and

- ...enhance the appropriate passive recreation to keep all people continuing to visit.

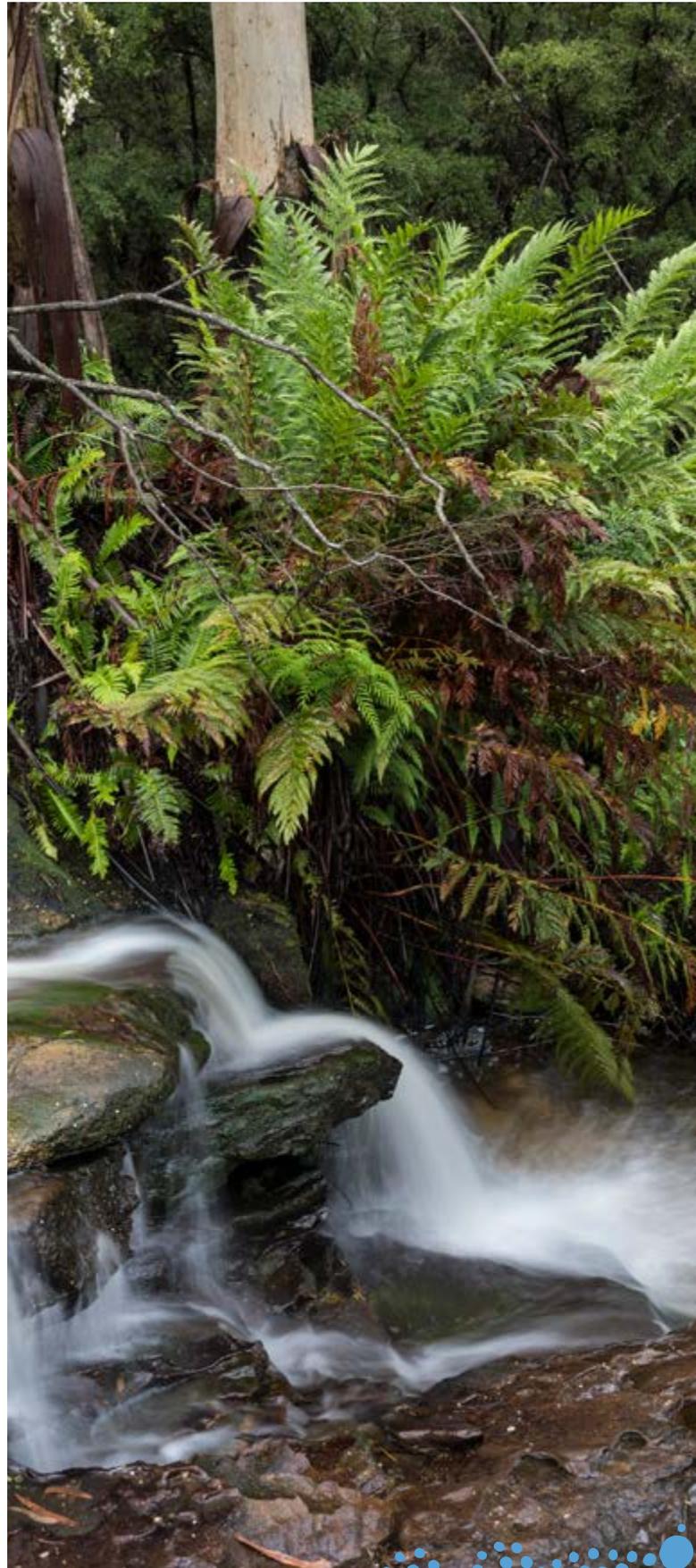
Responses to the Question “How would you like The Gully managed in the future?” included:

- Working together to make a meeting place;
- To remain as it is. Not to be opened up to crass tourism;
- Consultation with all stakeholders including Aboriginal people and local community; &
- Made more well-known perhaps and better used too.

A number of other matters raised by survey respondents included:

- It will be important that all cultural groups feel welcome to visit The Gully;
- Preserve the local culture and celebrate the future together;
- Do not overdevelop;
- Protecting land and environment; and
- The outdoor pool is a major part of it. There should be a Café for both the pool and The Gully.

The NAIDOC Week Survey was a quick poll to initially gauge the values people associated with The Gully and the start of the engagement process. The survey questions were further refined and extended to develop The Gully Family Interviews and the Have Your Say Site Users Survey.



4. Gully Family Interview

Interviews with Aboriginal former Gully residents and their descendants was carried out between September 2018 and March 2019. Where face to face interviews were not achievable, interviews were conducted over the phone, or a copy of the interview questions was provided with a return paid envelope. Follow-up calls and emails were also made to all family contacts who had not responded within the first 2 months of the consultation period. A total of 14 people responded to The Gully Family Interviews.

Aboriginal former Gully residents and their descendants were asked an extended series of questions on the values of The Gully, what's important and why. They were also asked whether there were activities they felt threatened The Gully and its values, how they thought The Gully should be managed in the future, about the treatment of cultural information and fire management. Questions were based around providing guidance on the future management of The Gully in accordance with the OEH Guidelines for Developing Management Plans and in relation to public use and recreation of The Gully.

4.1 Responses

What is important about The Gully to you?

Overwhelmingly, the importance of The Gully to the survey respondents is the connection to family and place. Personal and family connections to The Gully remains strong.

- "I was there as a child"
- "My Great grandfather lived there and my mother was born there".
- "My great uncles lived there".
- "I was born there".
- "My Grandmother died on the day the bulldozer was to smash her home of forty years".
- "My parents lived there"
- "The Gully is very important as it represents a place and connection with our family history. This is important for handing down knowledge to my daughter..."

Why are these (values/areas/ objects) important to you?

Family connection, and family history are the primary reasons why respondents felt The Gully is important. All cited their memories of The Gully, what it was like, fond memories of family and childhood and the social connection with other families in The Gully.

- "You could go for a walk and get a drink of water in lots of places, it would come out of the sandstone."

- "We used to carry water from the well. Had to watch out not to collect the tadpoles."
- "We went yabbing down the creeks. We made apple pies and blackberry pies. They weren't big apples, they were small apples."
- "We went to the kiosk at Catalina Park for ice cream, and the giggle house and the Catalina plane."
- "We used to get pipe clay and use it on the walls with newspaper on Nannas house"
- "So our heritage isn't lost and we don't forget where we were born, so our descendants know who we are."
- The Sunday School in The Gully holds long and fond memories – it created the lifelong connection to church still to this day.

The hurt and pain created through the development of the race track, particularly the construction, is also a primary reason that continues to resonate, contributing to why this aspect of the history of The Gully is important. The pain of this event is still very present for many former residents and their families to this day.

- "There was no justice shown to the people of The Gully at that time. The Council failed to let those who lived there know what was going on. Work went ahead without regard to these people."
- "Her grandmothers passing at the same time as the loss of The Gully remains with her to this day".

Are there any activities or things that you feel threaten what you value about The Gully?

Most respondents referenced back to what has already occurred and the devastating damage to The Gully with the construction of the race track:

- “Already happened.”
- “They buggered it all up” and
- “It’s not the same now”.

Contemporary issues raised by some included:

- No more houses;
- Ceasing of dog off leash, dog owners cleaning up after their dogs;
- Removing litter;
- The place should not be used for any racing events; and
- Disputes between families was also raised as an issue.

What do you think should be done to protected and conserve what you value about The Gully?

Continuing with Swampcare and Bushcare and community education about the history of The Gully were the main issues raised.

Other matters raised include:

- “Protect the centre where the wetland is, help as a place for breeding frogs. Capture natural drainage to support wetland.”
- “I hope by educating the public about what happened there in 1957, that something like that does not ever occur again”
- “The Gully should be kept the same, just keep it special, left alone”
- Need to have marked walking trails, points of interest; and
- Rubbish bins at certain places.

Again, the historic impacts on The Gully by the race track was raised

- What is important is all gone. You can’t recreate it. The race track ruined everything. Most of the bush is gone compared to what was there.”

How do you think culturally sensitive information should be treated in the Plan of Management and when communicating the significance of The Gully to people who use it?

Two thirds of interviewees responded to this question. A range of views were presented including:

- “With respect”;
- “Not to be given to people who don’t understand and if they haven’t got any respect, other than their own needs”.
- “Sensitive information means a Gully person or descendant should be notified and asked for their permission”.
- “Information on The Gully to be provided by the upcoming (Gully) people, through walks and talks”
- “You can protect this information by working with the Aboriginal community and having them decide what is sensitive and what and how the information is to be distributed.”

What activities do you want to support and promote in The Gully and why?

Education, recreation such as walking, running, bike riding, dog walking on leash, and Bushcare works are commonly supported activities in The Gully.

Suggested activities included:

- “Put in a BBQ to allow picnics”
- “Develop a cultural education and learning program”.
- “Need toilets and a hand basin”
- “Build an Aboriginal Cultural Centre”
- “It should be a place for all people to meet”.
- “A Bush Tucker garden and cooking area”.

One respondent was supportive of some use of the race track for motor sport or go carts in a limited manner.



What activities do you feel are acceptable to occur in The Gully?

There was limited response to this question, and those that did respond provided similar answers to the previous question.

- Walking, remembering our history, cultural tours; and
- NAIDOC Week were nominated as acceptable activities in The Gully.

What activities do you feel to be unacceptable in The Gully and why?

Activities that were nominated as being unacceptable in The Gully included:

- Motor bike riding, cars;
- development of more houses;
- camping;
- dog off leash; and
- disrespecting other people values, (e.g. damage to signs)

Mistreating other people's values and places, not looking after cultural values because they don't consider it anything to do with them was also raised and being unacceptable.

What are your thoughts on the use of fire in The Gully and how do you think fire should it be used in The Gully?

Almost all respondents supported the use of fire, with many citing the importance of using traditional fire practices used by Aboriginal People in The Gully. Using fire for smoking ceremonies was also suggested.

- "Burn the Aboriginal way - small sections at a time."
- "Only common sense that it needs to be done."
- "Fire to clean out the rubbish in The Gully is an advantage. It has been used by Aboriginals for thousands of years."

Do you have any other comments or thoughts you would like to raise regarding The Gully and its future management?

- "All the people in The Gully were battlers, that's why they got on so well, we used the term 'Happy Valley'."
- "In addition to the school program, there is a need for 'Cultural maintenance' ... a documentary on The Gully, to tell the cultural stories. Use the documentary as part of an education program and tool to engage."
- "Trust amongst us and the authority in charge of the management of The Gully."
- "All our family came up from the Burragarong. They were pushed out when the race track went in. We all have our gripes about it, but it is now part of the town so let's make it work."
- "Change the name from Catalina to The Gully. Still have to search that name in Google Maps to locate it. Shouldn't have to use that name. It represents murder."
- "I would like to see it kept and looked after as it is today"
- "The Caravan and Kiosk should be kept as it is now, no sense in changing it."

5. HAVE YOUR SAY SURVEY – SUMMARY RESULTS

The on-line site user survey 'Have Your Say' was open for a period of 4 months, from the 25th October 2018 to the 25th Feb 2019. The survey was established to engage with people who use The Gully and sought to gain an understanding in 4 key areas:

1. How people use The Gully and associated reserves, what reserves, what activities, and how often they use them;
2. What people value about The Gully;
3. How site users think The Gully should be managed into the future; and
4. Demographics of site users.

A total of 92 people responded to the Survey.

The on-line survey was a self-selected survey. The information and statistics generated from the survey are therefore not necessarily reflective all activities that occur on site and may be skewed in terms of representation of the popularity of certain activities, and the views held by site users.

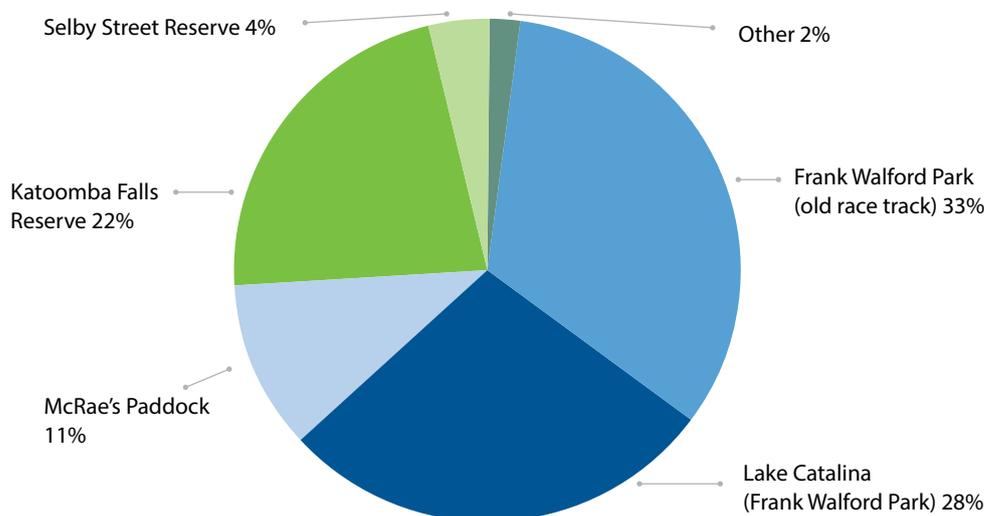
5.1 SITE USE

1. What parts of The Gully do you use? Choose all that apply.

The northern parts of The Gully are the most highly used sections of the overall Gully area with the section that is known as Frank Walford Park and Lake Catalina combined accounting for 61% of use.

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

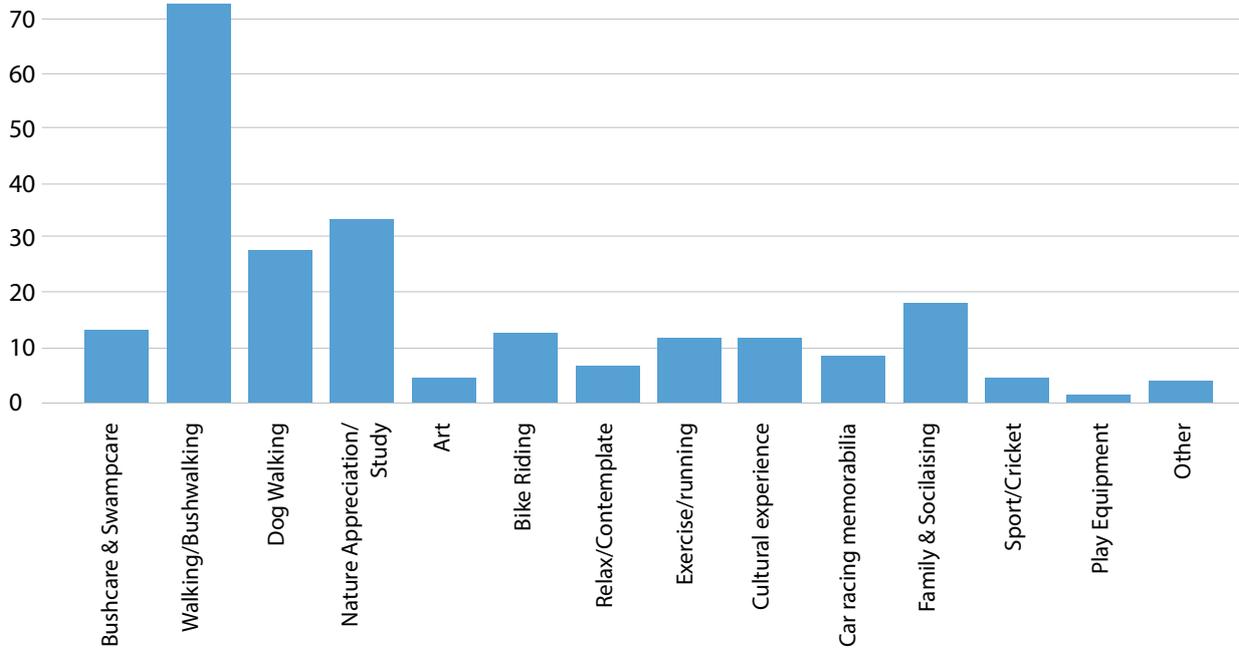
The part that is known as Katoomba Falls Reserve is the second most used site, at 22% based on the site user survey, however from site observation, there is likely a much higher number of visitors at this site, due to the proximity to the nearby tourism precinct. Visitors outside of the Local Government Area were not well represented in the site user survey, therefore the actual visitation numbers (and usage) is likely to be significantly underestimated for the Katoomba Reserve section.



2. What activities do you participate in The Gully?

From analysis of the respondent nominated activities that they undertook in The Gully, (i.e. not a preselected list) the most common activity is walking/bushwalking, followed by nature appreciation, dog walking and socialising. A range of other activities, primarily passive recreation was nominated. Refer to Figure 3.

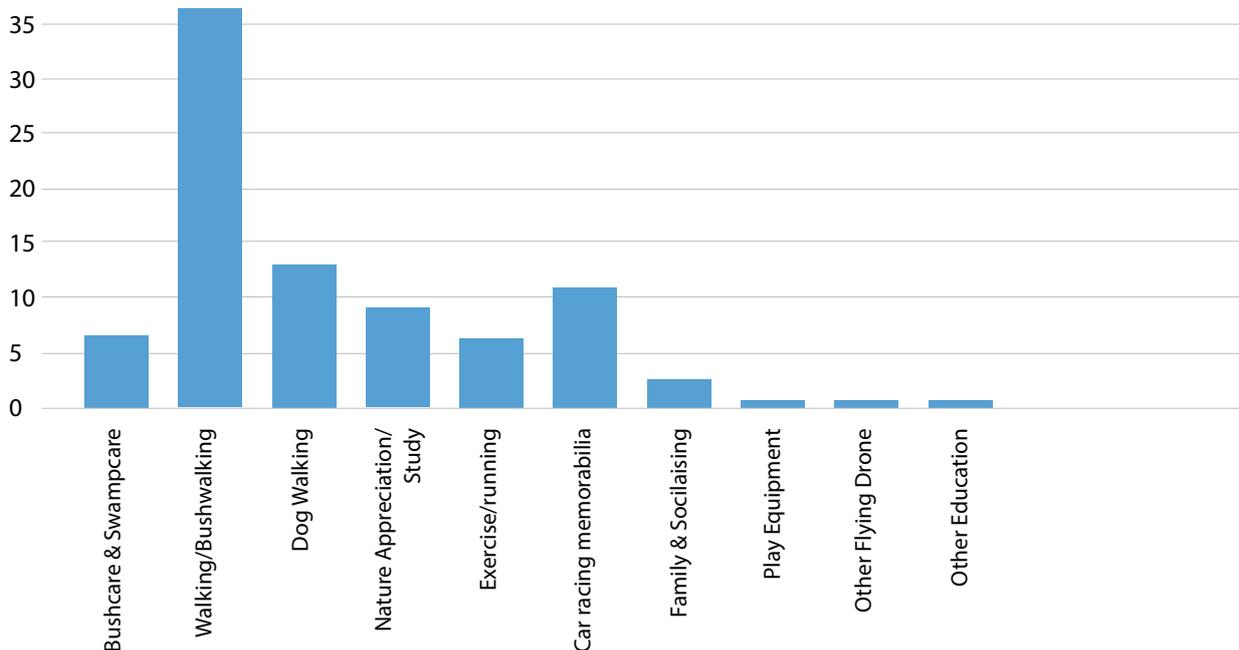
Figure 3. Activities in The Gully



3. What is your main / preferred activity?

When asked the preferred or main activity, a similar pattern of use was demonstrated, with the exception of car racing/memorabilia featured as the third preferred activity above nature appreciation

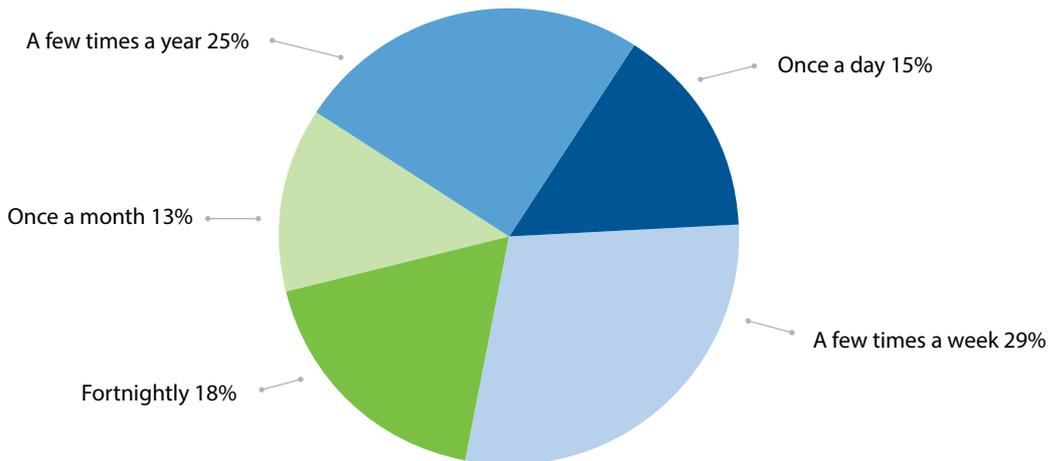
Figure 4. Preferred Activity in The Gully



4. How frequently do you visit The Gully?

Information from this and the following 2 questions sought to better understand site use, and guide any future visitor facility development. Just under half (47%) of survey respondents visit The Gully on a weekly or fortnightly basis, while 15% visit The Gully on a daily basis. 25% of respondents only visit The Gully a few time a year.

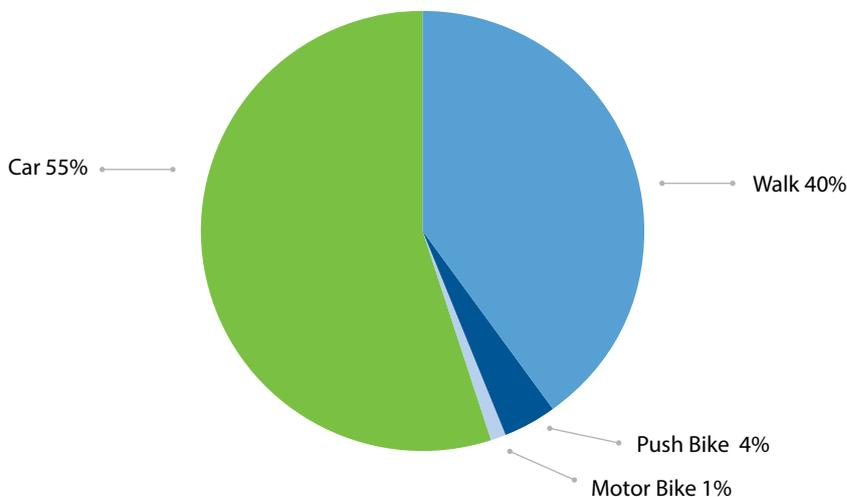
Figure 5. Visitation Frequency



5. How do you usually travel to The Gully?

Car travel accounts for 55% of method of travel, followed by Walking at 40%. These figure correlate with the residential location of site users, shown in Question 14 'Where do you live?' with 42% neighbouring the reserve and 48% being Blue Mountains residents.

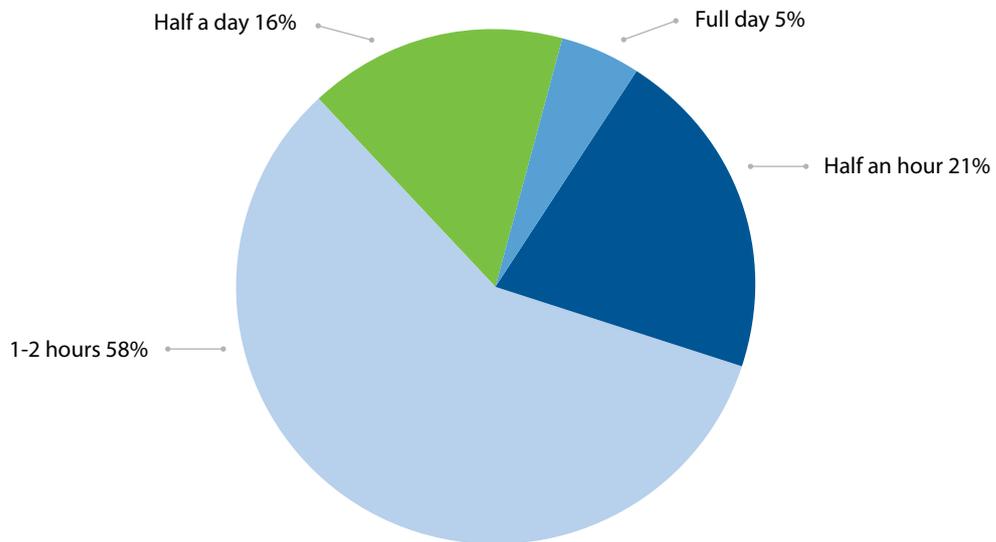
Figure 6. Method of Travel



6. On average, how long do you stay in The Gully?

The majority of visitors (58%) stay between 1-2 hours, with 21% staying half an hour. 16% stay for half a day while only 5% will stay a whole day.

Figure 7. Length of Stay



5.2 GULLY VALUES

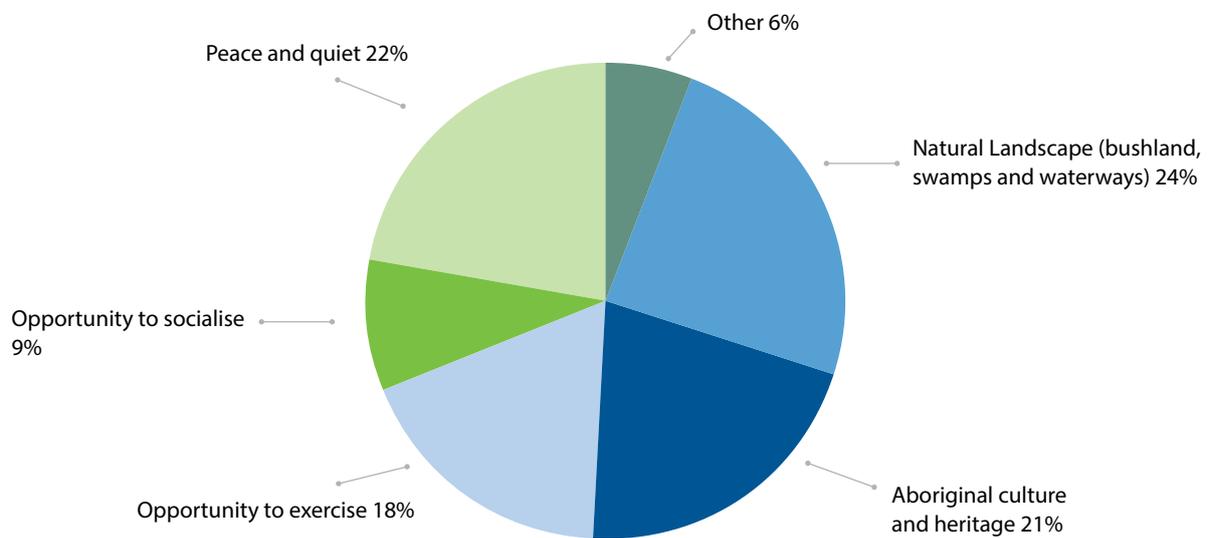
7. What do you value about The Gully and the places within it? Choose all that apply

From a predetermine list of values, survey respondents were ask to select all the values they held for The Gully. The top 3 values included the Natural Landscape (24%), Peace and Quiet (22%) and Aboriginal Culture (21%). The opportunity to exercise was also an important value nominated (at 18%).

Other nominated values by site users included:

- Land care, repairing mistakes of the past and seeing the gradual eco system recovery;
- Birds and other native animals / bird watching, the opportunity to observe wildlife in a natural environment;
- Walking my dog is my favourite activity. 'I would like to see the off leash area re-instated';
- Racing heritage/ Motor Sport history;
- Scientific study and a place to take visitors to help them understand the local thing;
- Children's play equipment; and
- A way of moving across Katoomba that is off-road.

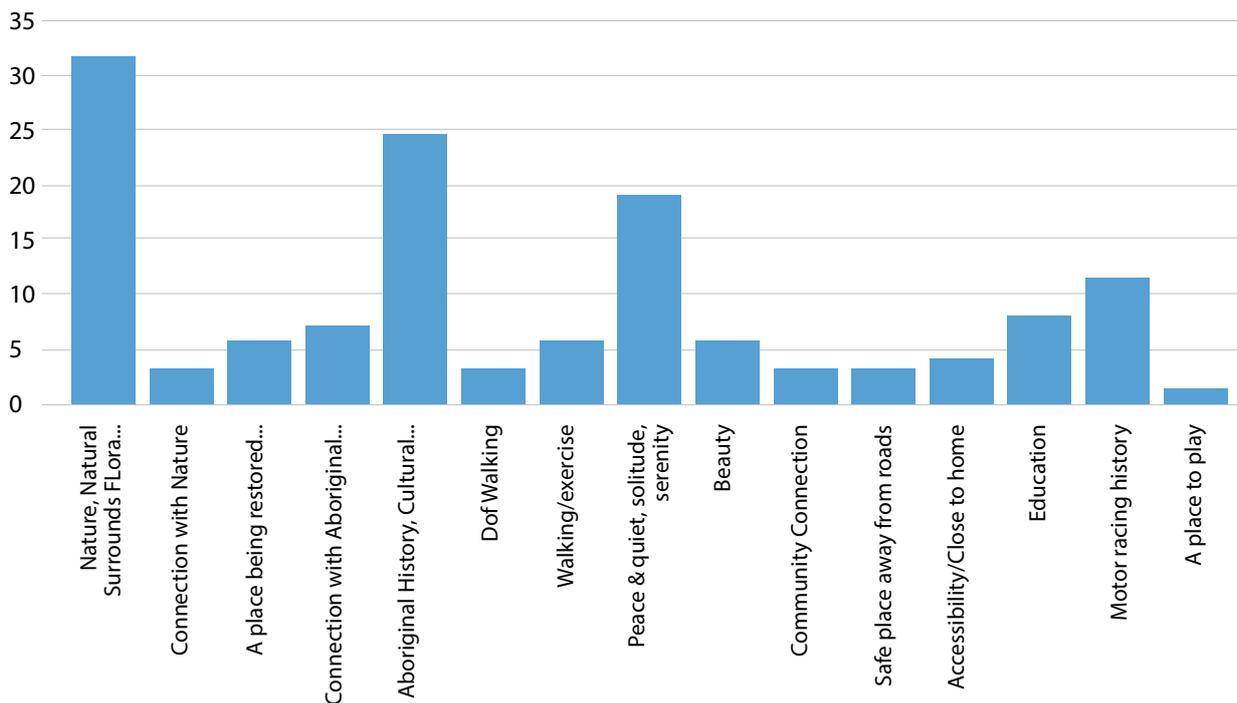
Figure 8. Gully Values site users



8. In your own words, what do you value most about The Gully?

Site users were asked what they value most about The Gully in their own words. A review of the site users nominated values was categorised to identify values based on key words. Figure 9 is a summary of key words nominated by Gully site users as to what they value about The Gully. Nature, Aboriginal culture and peace/quiet / solitude, remain the top 3 values held by site users for The Gully, however a wide range of other values were nominated by survey respondents. A summary of these is provided below with some representative responses. The responses often covered a range of values that are overlapping.

Figure 9. Gully Values - Repondents own words



Nature, Natural Surrounds Flora, Fauna

- "It is a beautiful oasis of native plants and animals and a chance to value and learn about the ancient and ongoing cultures of local Aboriginal peoples."
- "Sightings of black cockatoos, colonies of small native birds, ducks, Mountain Blue Tongue lizards, and even an odd black snake."
- "The active fauna and flora, the hanging swamp/ water source and the general ecosystem."
- "The dense vegetation of much of The Gully makes it a haven for small bush birds - including all the wren species that occur in the Blue Mountains."

Connection with Nature

- "connection to nature & a sacred Aboriginal site"
- "Living place"

- "The mostly harmonious interaction between nature and humans."
- "The variety and beauty of plants and animals. The feeling of connection to nature."

A place being restored - Regeneration

- "The opportunity to repair a very damaged environment and in doing so recreating a beautiful landscape that will benefit the health of future generations and the environment."
- "I love how the plants and the trees have fight back at the race track and are taking over again."
- "The fact of it being itself, a living place which is recovering from despoilment. And it is FREE, in at least two senses of the word."
- "The healthy and recovering waterways and ecosystem"



Connection with Aboriginal community

- "I value the Aboriginal Community understanding and connection that I am able to access and engage with there."
- "The Aboriginal connection and its natural peaceful nature of the reserves."
- "It being recognized as an Aboriginal place, connecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to country and a place of culture and history"

Aboriginal History, Cultural Heritage

- "It's a recognised special Aboriginal place that is being restored and creates stories"
- "The fact that it is owned and valued by Indigenous people. The Gully has a long history and I value that highly."
- "I value the connection with pre-settlement history, including the information bays where you can read about the Aboriginal history of the area."
- "Knowing the cultural significance and history of the area"

Dog walking

- "I love being able to actually walk with my dog not just stand in a park while the dogs play"

Walking/exercise

- "It's a great place to exercise. Isolated from vehicle traffic, quite in a beautiful bush setting."
- "A beautiful place to exercise."
- "Freedom to exercise free from road traffic."
- "I enjoy the quiet walk around the race track and around the old pool"

Peace and Quiet, solitude, serenity

- "The beauty, silence and stillness. Also that historically it has been a valuable place of the Gundungurra and Darug people."
- "Its lovely and peaceful"
- "The serenity"

- "No traffic, quiet, nice people also walking their dogs. Friendly."
- "A place for quiet contemplation"
- "I value the sense of 'getting away' from streets and most noises"

Beauty

- "The natural space and beauty."

Community Connection

- "My dogs and I love the walk and my grandchildren who visit me quite a bit love the area to ride their scooters on the old track and they enjoy the ducks at the pond."

Safe place

- "Safe place off the busy roads to exercise, teach kids to cycle. Katoomba is troubled by steep hills for kids to bike ride or those with mobility issues."
- "I value the opportunity to commune with nature, alone, and feeling secure and safe, walking my dog"

Accessibility /Close to home

- "The fact that it is in the heart of Katoomba and an easy walk on a mostly flat terrain, which makes it great for people of all ages as well as for people with disabilities.)"
- "I value the accessibility and quiet."
- "It is the closest piece of bush to where I live."
- "I love being able to walk from my house through The Gully, to get to both the cliffline and the town centre."

Education

- "The Gully is a fabulous teaching tool. The signage, the native bushland and the nature paths help tell a story of what life was like there."
- "The Aboriginal displays and board walk are fantastic, a great educational space"
- "An opportunity to learn about the local Aboriginal culture and for my children to read and learn about the stories."

Motor racing history

- “Many enjoyable weekends competing safely in one of Australia’s most exciting motor racing circuits.”
- “It was one of the greatest racetracks in Australia, where many of Australia’s greatest racers competed.”
- “The racetracks famous motorsports history”

A place to play

- “Its a place for my child to run and play.”

Other responses reflective of the many values held by site users

- “The Gully is the rare gift of an open space with thousands of years of human history to meditate on as you keep fit and enjoy the seasonal changes in the natural environment. Knowing that the springs feed the wetlands that become the Kedumba River that feeds water to Burragorang is priceless. It where you can observe a natural system at work in an increasingly unnatural world, albeit without the original larger fauna.”
- “A peaceful place close to the centre of Katoomba where you can find a rich variety of native fauna and flora and is a natural migration corridor. This also has a positive affect on the surrounding urban areas, providing open space, views and bringing nature closer to people’s backyards.”
- “The quiet location, with space for individual exercise, quiet reflection on Cultural alters.”
- “It is a quiet breathing space for Katoomba, giving a rural feeling although it is urban.”

5.3 GULLY MANAGEMENT

This section of the survey sought to understand how site users would like to see The Gully in the future and what their top priorities were for the management of The Gully.

9. In your own words, how would you like The Gully to be in the future?

Response rate was very high with 88 out of 92 respondents providing comment. Responses covered people’s vision and desires for the future, but also focussed on things that need to be done or provided.

The written responses were strongly reflective of how people valued The Gully, and the activities they undertook in The Gully. A summary of the main themes and some representative responses is outline below.

Protecting and maintaining natural beauty and peace of The Gully

- “I appreciate The Gully the way that it is now and would hope that in the future the natural and cultural aspects continue to be protected and valued. I would hope that it continues to be a peaceful space for all.”
- “Never to be compromised by developments and install wildlife corridors to join Megalong and Jamison Valleys”.
- “A peaceful place with continued respect to Aboriginal people and the natural environ”
- “The Gully should be a place of contemplation, discovery, surprise and pleasure.”
- “ongoing management of restoring country, more flora and fauna”
- “Pretty much as it is now: unspoiled by major human influence”.
- “Exactly as it is now. We don’t have to change it to improve its inherent qualities, though the weeding has worked great.”

A place of cultural learning and education

- “the opportunity’s for Aboriginal knowledge to be passed through the community”
- “Acknowledging the past and sharing the future re stories and environment”
- “Celebrate our local indigenous culture, educate, inspire and connect the community back to the bush”
- “As an educational facility, to share the unique indigenous history with visitors and school students”

Protecting and valuing the Aboriginal culture

- “a place to visit and recognize Aboriginal culture and history. Improved accessibility through formalization of walking tracks and protecting secret/special areas to aboriginal peoples.”
- “A place for families and the community to enjoy nature. A place where the Aboriginal culture is celebrated and shared with the broader community.”
- “Still a place of natural beauty with recognition of the original peoples”.
- “Cared for as an Aboriginal place, environmental and water protection, local cultural meeting place”

The importance of Aboriginal involvement in management and decision on The Gully’s future

- “Returned as close as possible to its pre-1788 state in consultation with Indigenous Peoples.
- “Cared for and managed by traditional owners”.
- “Fully owned and controlled by the local Aboriginal people”
- “To retain its culture heritage and natural beauty and be accessible to all. This needs to be done in a way that respects the local indigenous people.”
- “Managed in a sensitive way by and with local aboriginal people”

Better facilities - toilet blocks, walking tracks, Cafes

- “Public toilets and signs to them are desperately needed”
- “Updated Children’s play equipment and adults exercise loop.”
- “I would love for McRae’s Paddock to be regenerated, weeds removed and planted with native plants. It could be turned into a walk like the Charles Darwin Walk, providing a link from town to the cliff line that is far more scenic than the streets currently used.”
- “..a true community space. Kids playground, wetlands for birds, off leash dogs (with many more people using the space), a place to buy coffee, a bike circuit for children, people really use the space”.
- “I’d like to be able to have a nice coffee when enjoying my surrounds”

Recreation and exercise

- “A place where health and fitness are encouraged and supported for the whole community and where the history of The Gully can be appreciated by all.”
- “Play equipment for 0-5 year olds and equipment for 10-15 year olds. An exercise route.”
- “Like to see it remain open to dog walkers, joggers, etc.”
- “Work with the Aboriginal community to develop community events like parkrun”.
- “Much as it is now, but more formal tracks (as well as signage, bridges, etc) to allow more people to access the area”

5.3.1 Treatment of the Race Track

- The repair and maintenance of the old race track was raised, not just by motor enthusiasts, but also others who use the site for recreation and exercise. The management of the historic race track has long been a challenging issue. Views were mixed, with some wanting full restoration of the track for car racing, some wanting limited opportunities. Others saw the need to keep for



walking and passive use only, while some felt complete removal was necessary. Some of the view outline include:

- “Restore the motor racing circuit to the pristine condition that volunteers created in 1961.”
- “I would like to see the track cleaned, the fencing restored, and the pit area used for car clubs to have meets and car shows, but all done respectfully to the other history and cultural significance that the area has.”
- “I’d like to see the track maintained and kept as a walking area for people in the area to use”
- “I would like to see the natural environment protected, but also continue to see the historic racetrack - maybe some extra signage about the history of the racetrack also.”
- “I would like to see some major maintenance and repair of the old race track to preserve this part of the history and I strongly believe there would be a huge interest from the public if the old race track were to be repaired to a standard suitable for organised bicycle or billy cart events.”
- “I would like it to remain a quiet place where local people can appreciate the long history of the mountains. However, I feel that the race track is a blight on both the history and the environment of the place, so I would like to see it replaced with walking tracks (and fire trail if necessary)...”
- “More natural - let the road slowly deteriorate”

5.3.2 Dog Walking

Dogs are another challenging management issues for The Gully, with a diverse range of views presented.

- “..I would also like it to be made off-leash again for dog owners...”
- “A shared space with being able to walk dogs around the race track”
- Dogs off lead in parts
- “..less dogs”
- “..No dogs”.

5.3.3 Other Views raised

A number of other views raised in this section of the survey included:

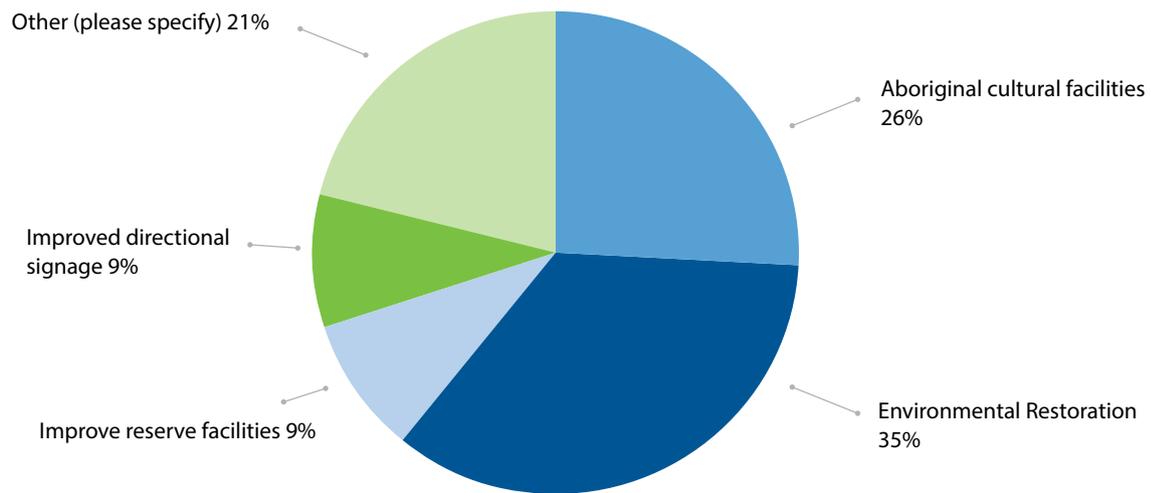
- “A safe place for locals and tourists to enjoy the beauty and historical value of this precious place.”
- “A living piece of history & a welcome natural space”
- “not too different to how it is, just a few less weeds”
- “A well-managed facility that caters both to indigenous owners and motorsport history fans.”
- “recognise what the “Friends of the Katoomba Falls Creek Valley” did for nearly 30 years to protect that facility for future generations”
- “A very good stormwater system that would limit sedimentation and weeds”
- “I would like to see natural rehabilitation continue to remove introduced pests; both plant and animal. I would like to see it preserved as the unique place it is. I hope that everyone can continue to enjoy being in The Gully.”
- “I would like it to remain as it is now but with 100% native vegetation. Also, I would like to see a name change. I can’t see why the mayor who encouraged the destruction of The Gully should be honoured with his name on it.”
- “I would like the bushland setting retained. The accessibility around the old racing track for walking and bike riding to be at least partly maintained. I would also like to see interpretation which acknowledges the non-Aboriginal contributions to maintain the site in some small way, without detracting from the important Aboriginal history.”
- “I appreciate The Gully the way that it is now and would hope that in the future the natural and cultural aspects continue to be protected and valued. I would hope that it continues to be a peaceful space for all.”



10. Please nominate the factors in order from 1 to 5 (where 1 is the most important and 5 least important) that you feel should be prioritised for management in The Gully.

Respondents were asked to rank 1-5 from a preselected list of what should be prioritised for the management of The Gully. Figure 10 is a summary graph of the factors that were rated number one as a percentage.

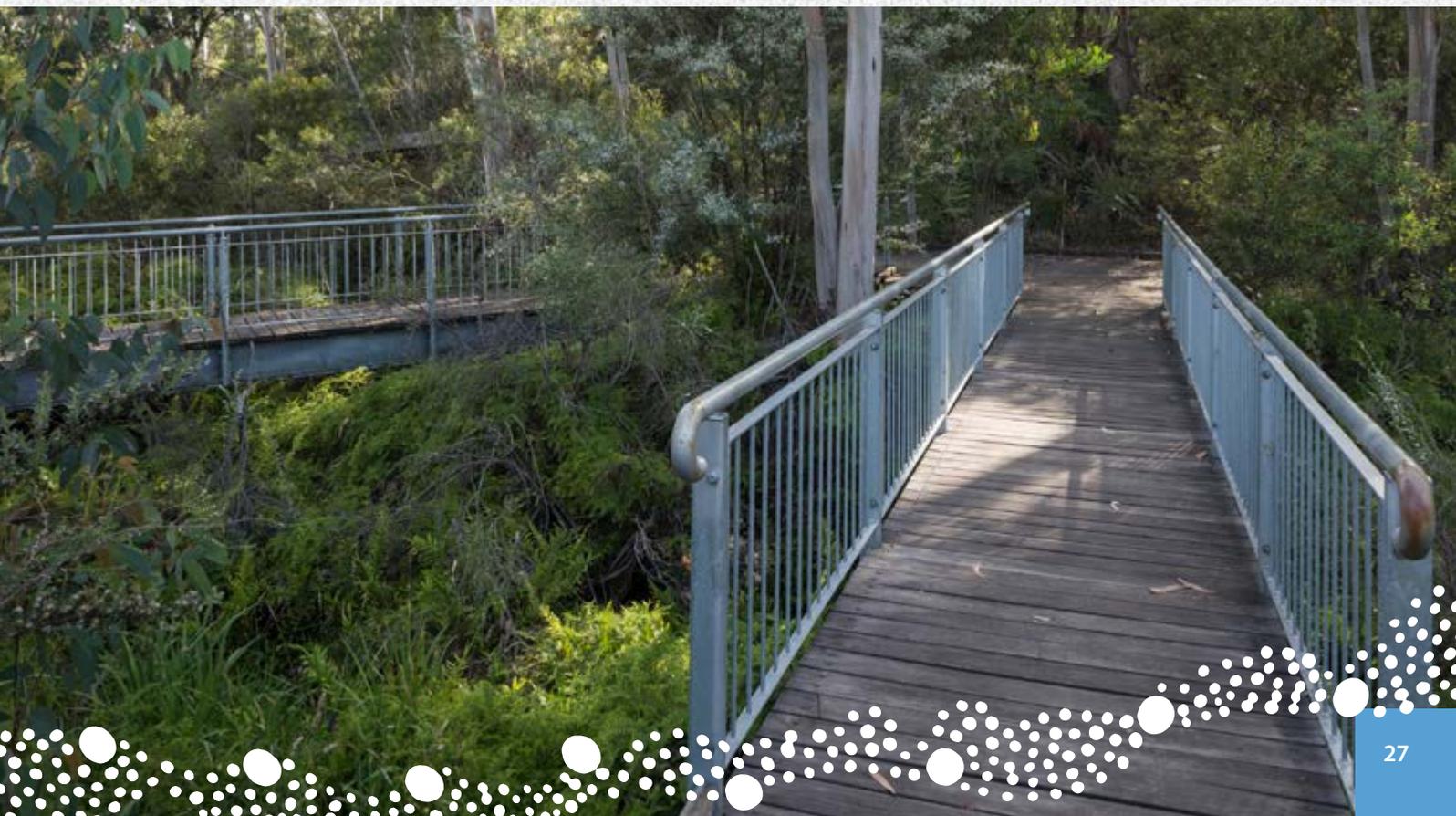
Figure 10. Gully Management Priorities Ranked no 1



Other Priorities nominated for management outlined in Table 1

Table 1. Other priorities management of The Gully

I think toilets and shelters are important and up keep of signage that is already there.
Development for multi-purpose use to include the community as a whole.
Enhance for public recreation use
Make it off leash for dog owners
Maintenance of track
Improve the lake
Being able to share the space with walkers and dog walkers
Restoration of bitumen surface and fencing to enable resumption of motor sport.
The primary management factor is consultation, with First Nations having priority, then other local citizens.
Remove the old buildings and elements that reflect the destruction of the reserve. Remove the dogs so that people can exercise and walk in peace.
The ducks need a home to shelter from the predators
Off leash dog access for racetrack and gully.
A toilet block is essential
Removal of the race track.
A large dog off leash facility was surrendered by Council when the land was handed over and council made no attempt to replace it nearby. This should be rectified in full consultation with the Gundungurra, Darug and other Aboriginal People.



Do something with the place! the weeds all over the track are depressing and the aboriginal info is neat but there nothing unique about it. im not driving 2 hours one way to read the same old sign. im there to re-live racing history.

As above re acknowledgement of Friends of Katoomba Falls Valley

Maintain an original quality without development close to Katoomba

Upgraded tracks to prevent erosion and degradation by walkers.

More diverse play equipment for all ages. Used regularly for locals and tourists daily.

Linkage between reserves and areas of "The Gully". Maybe a gully walk, formalized walking tracks

A bird hide or two somewhere where people could observe the birds and other things would be great

Some boardwalks in muddy areas of McRaes Paddock.

Aboriginal involvement in protecting the natural and cultural heritage of The Gully

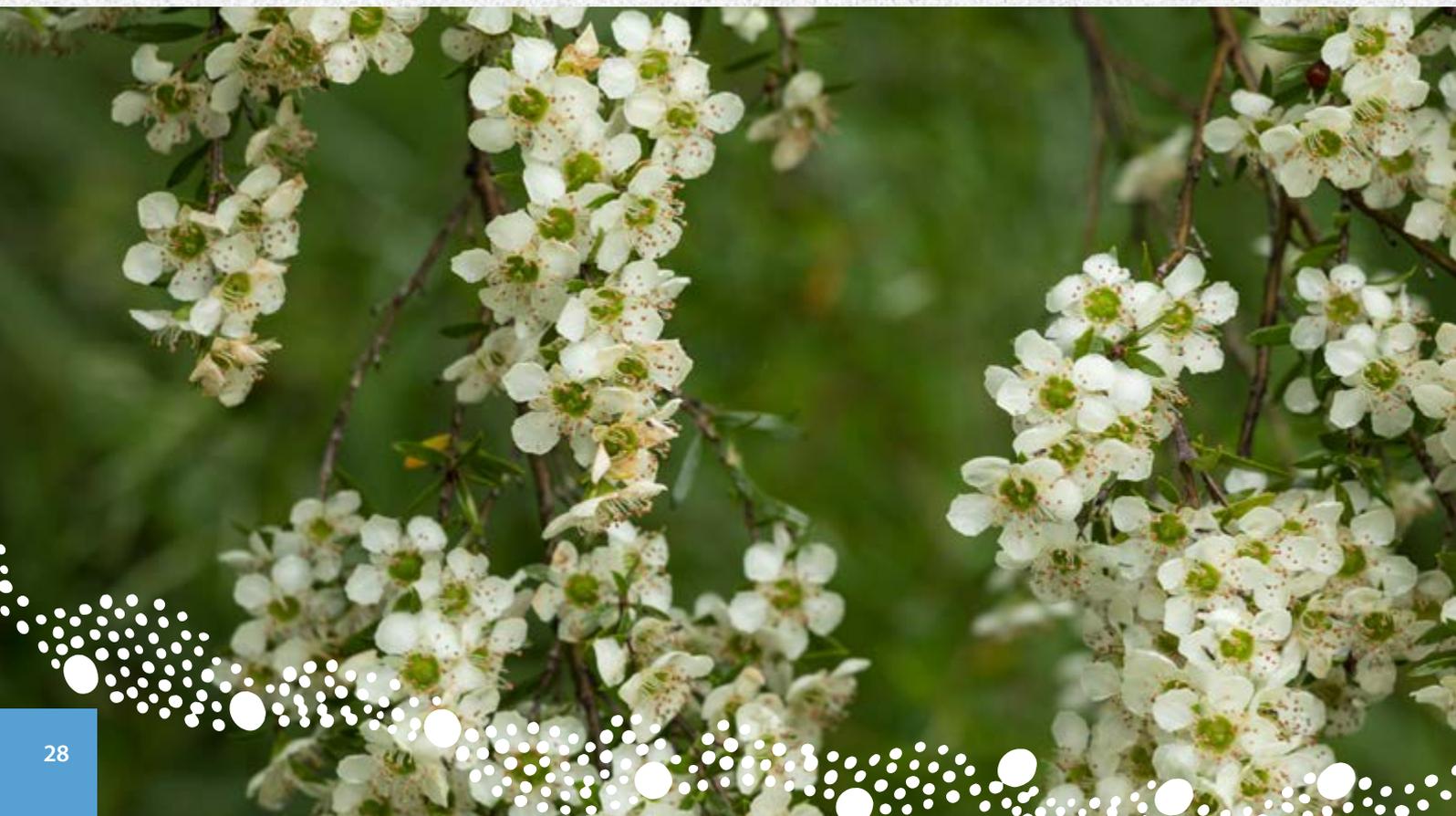
Alongside the Aboriginal cultural learning should be education on geographical/environmental significance of a river source.

The island in the lake idea mentioned in Question 9 could make a real difference for the waterbirds. Two islands would be even better. Could we not get Scenic World to sponsor the idea? We could name an island after Harry Hammon.

A few extra rubbish bins, e.g. close to the benches on the edges of the large meadow west of the Lake, as people tend to leave their rubbish behind.

I can envisage a indigenous cultural centre which includes a frontier war memorial and history of the indigenous peoples.

Passive recreation and re-growth of the natural landscape over the race-track which unfortunately still remains and is a visual that 'whets peoples appetites' to renew use of the track. Any such use of the track would be offensive to nature.



It would be more of a draw and family space to have an outdoor play area for children. Maybe a stage platform for community events, aboriginal dance, ceremony, etc. Also the ducks need a safe haven in the middle of the pond.

Install wildlife corridors, soft engineering to prevent intermittent stormwater damage.

Final decisions on management should be made by traditional owners.

Exercise equipment.

Restoration of track and lake.

There is a lot of potential to improve The Gully and make it easier to use as a teaching tool. From the basics of needing more bathroom facilities to utilising the Aboriginal artefacts in the weatherboard house.

Celebrate the motorsport history! If the track or even just part of the track can be made usable again for a historical event a few times a year then that would be the dream. But at least celebrate the motorsport history, put up some signs with more info.

A bird hive.

Motor vehicle access.

education regarding aboriginal history and customs etc for local school children etc.

Restore the track so it can be enjoyed a little like a museum piece. (not raced on).

Recognise Catalina Parks history as a motor sport site.

To not ignore the significance the race track had on the history of The Gully.

Historical restoration of the racetrack.

Restore the circuit to a usable standard.

Restore the track and make it a tourist destination.



Bbq areas, some exercise equipment, dog friendly.

To preserve the track, and maybe use it limited times a year also if it was restored cyclists could hire it too to race etc.

signage about native species, flora in the surroundings. Signage about not littering. a few more bins. I am always picking up rubbish!

Preserve the Motorsport history of one of the last tracks not in use which are still around from that era.

A proper path thru McRaes Paddock running from town to the cliffs.

Addressing creek erosion.

Maintain track for walking/running.

Stop spraying poisons in our gully which is killing our children!!

To remain a place of peace and quiet away from traffic.

Develop a signed pathway from Katoomba Railway Station to the Three Sisters, using existing informal pathways and some new or upgraded pathways.

A coffee shop or cafe that isn't just hot chips and lollies from the Aquatic Centre canteen.

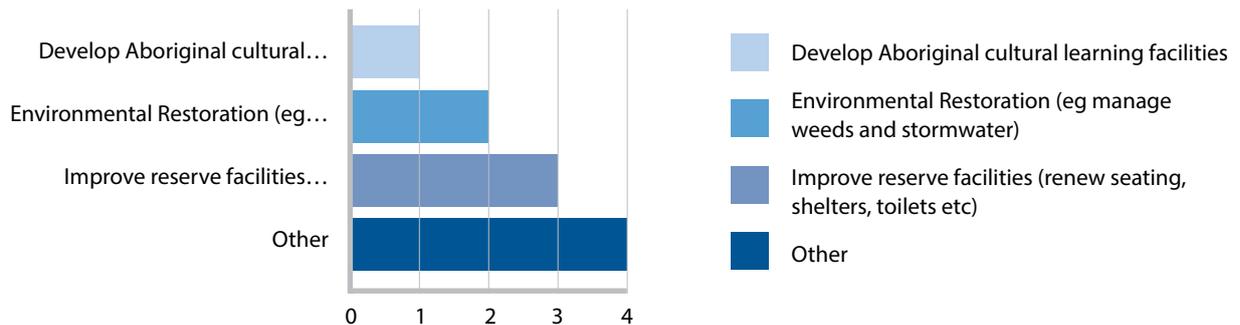
Snake safety.



11. Please nominate the top 3 factors (from 1 being most important to 3 only) that you feel should be prioritised for management in The Gully.

Respondents were asked to nominate their top 3 priorities for management in The Gully. Develop Aboriginal Cultural learning facilities was nominated at the top priority, followed by Environmental Restoration, with improved reserve facilities in third ranking.

Figure 11. Top 3 Factors for Management Action



12. In your own words what do you think should be done to protect what you value about The Gully?

Written responses were analysed and grouped in to the main themes. These are outlined below with representative examples of survey response for each theme.

Continue to support Bushcare, Swampcare and restoration works

- "Please keep it as a natural space."
- "Ecological management — control & possible eradication of pest species."
- "Encourage greater public involvement in groups such as Garguree swampcare."
- "Maintain the area as wild but protect it from weed encroachment."
- "Continued bush regeneration and environmental restoration and continued involvement of local Aboriginal people in the management of The Gully. I would prefer to see The Gully retained as a quiet place without too much development."
- "Protecting and amplifying the natural beauty by removing weeds and restoring swamps and grasslands. Making it even more of a beautiful and accessible place to walk through."

Respect and work with Aboriginal Community

- "Make it clear that it is Aboriginal land and it has to be respected."
- "The story of The Gully needs to be protected and shared."
- "Making sure the local Aboriginal people have a voice and rights over what happens to The Gully."
- "Consult with Elders of the indigenous community. Keep weeds down. Replant." environmental natives to create habitat for wildlife."

Maintain as is

- "Do not develop the site and conserve the nature that is there."
- "Retain peaceful environment where people can relax, walk or picnic. No playground."
- "Keep the bush tracks. Keep the informative Aboriginal signage. Keep The Gully peaceful."
- "Please keep it as a natural space."
- "Do not develop the site and conserve the nature that is there."

Visitor facilities

- "Improve facilities (seats, shelters etc.), add bathrooms, and install dog poo bag dispenser and allow dog off leash."
- "I need more reasons to go there. Now that my kids don't go as much nor do I. I used to go for walks near the falls and have a nice coffee at the kiosk there but that's gone too."

Education

- "Continue the education walks and talks as it will grow over time."
- "Create more activities there including TAFE and universities to do studies there."

Community Space

- "Make it a place where more community events are held to make it a common ground."
- "Creating facilities that support family and community interaction. So people feel welcome and they can have fun and learn."
- "Social events to bring together indigenous and other communities."

Cultural Practice

- "Continued cultural and environmental development and consultation with the Gundungurra, Darug and other Aboriginal People about including facilities that may attract people to the area."
- "Work with the indigenous community and assist in resourcing a cultural learning facility."

Storm Water Management

- "Spend some money constructing proper run-off arrangements near the very tops of all the creeks."

Weed Control in the Catchment

- "I think it is difficult for local people to control weeds close to their homes within the catchment, so some council assistance should be given to assist them in that."

Race track

- "Fix the drainage to stop the race track disappearing and improve facilities."
- "Drainage works around Craven A corner would be a priority to prevent further damage to the roadway."
- "No further demolition of the race track and manage the bush to ensure it can always be walked around."

Renaming

- "It would be great to totally rename all the reserves and update places like google maps."

Funding and Resourcing

- "There should be funding granted to allow the entire reserve to be restored into a set of pathways telling the stories of the Aboriginal people."
- "Spend money on managing stormwater and weeds."
- "Aboriginal green team or a gully focused bushcare or landcare that moves throughout The Gully."
- "More community/indigenous land care activities such as weeding."

Dogs

- "New toilets, off-leash dog area with water and seating and shelter for owners."
- "Stop dogs and bikes from disturbing the bush from regenerating."
- "Don't allow off-leash dogs."
- "Add to and maintain the natural bushland, keep dogs and cats controlled so that more native animals can thrive."

Other initiatives, suggestions and comments

- "I would like to see a community catchment group established and a catchment community conservation strategic plan developed as part of the management of the catchment."

- "I feel there should be very little new infrastructure, buildings etc. added."
- "Transparent process and decision making as well as accountability around Aboriginal custodianship of The Gully."
- "This is an extremely popular area (Katoomba Falls Section) for local but more so tourists. With the play equipment next to the caravan park it is constantly in use as well as during school holidays and cricket season. We need a larger play area with equipment suitable for all ages. There is no other play equipment in the area, closest being Hinkler."
- "NOT spraying with toxic and carcinogenic chemicals that end up in the soil and waterways (and eventually on our plates and in our bodies)."
- "Concentrate on preserving the natural, cultural and historical values of the place. Please do not make it yet another tourist trap - we have enough places in the Blue Mountains where tourist buses take priority over local amenity."
- "The indigenous owners and their history must be preserved and celebrated, but the motorsport history should not be denied. Catalina Park was one of the greatest racetracks in the country and brought all of the great names of the times there to compete. I recognise that the founding of the track involved some very sad history and indigenous rights abuse, but this should not cloud the racetracks importance and historical significance to enthusiasts from around the country. I would live to see agreement met to develop the site and celebrate both the aboriginal history and the motorsport history."
- "Stop inappropriate development in or around the area (e.g. multi stories, conference venues, hotels, anything that will generate high levels of traffic or noise)."
- "Do not develop it. Maintain it as a relic environment where 2 cultures met and can now reconcile that fact. It must remain quiet and accessible to all, especially locals who know the value of open space. Any new facility should necessarily be in the aquatic centre precinct."

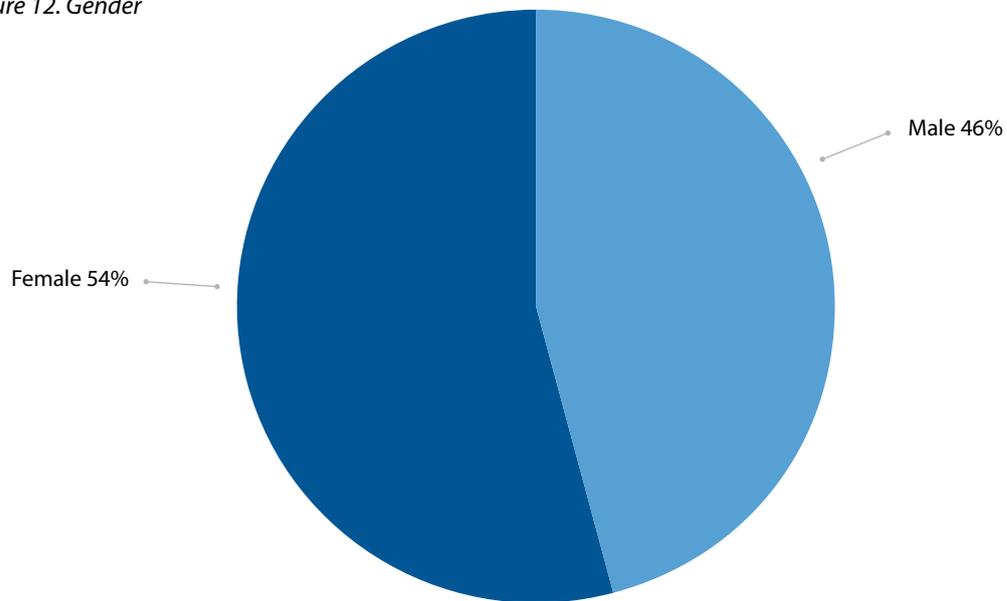




DEMOGRAPHICS

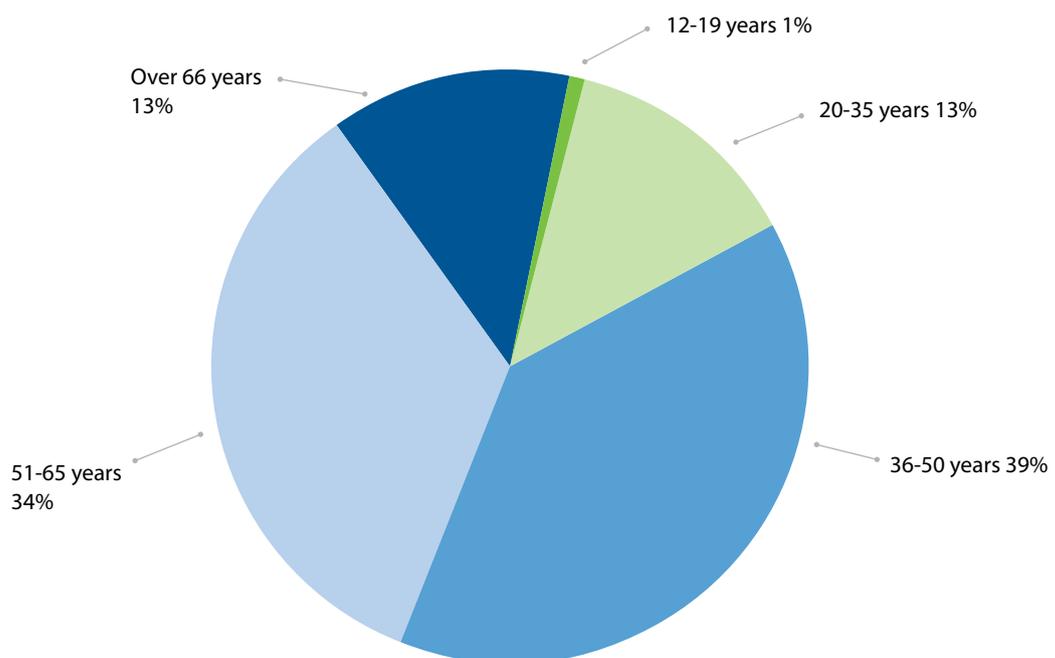
12. What is your gender?

Figure 12. Gender



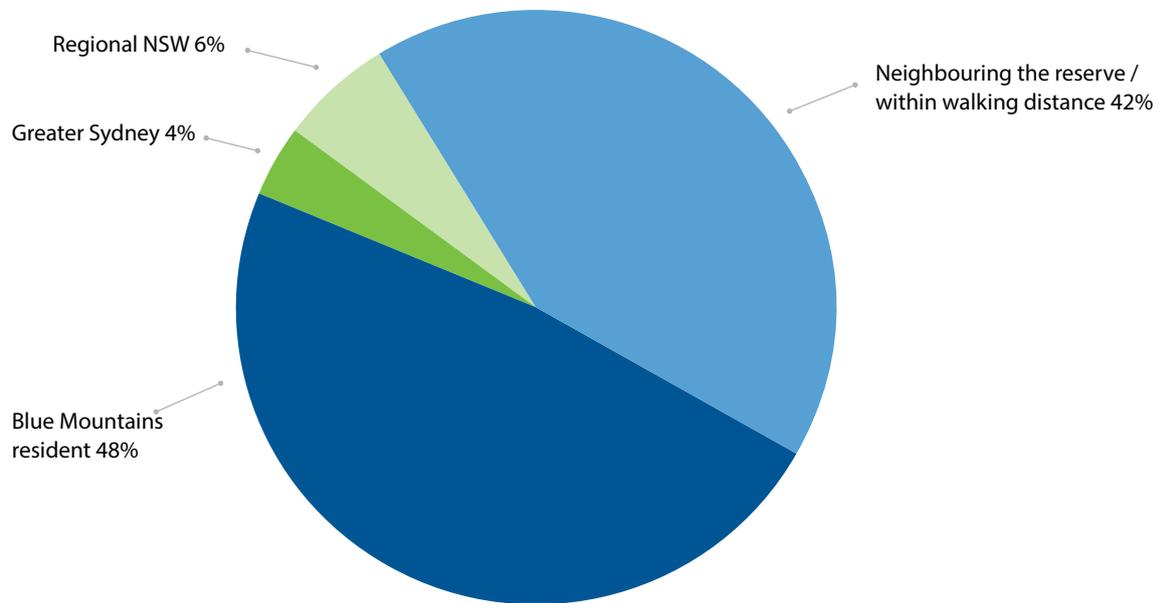
13. Which age range best applies to you?

Figure 13. Age Range



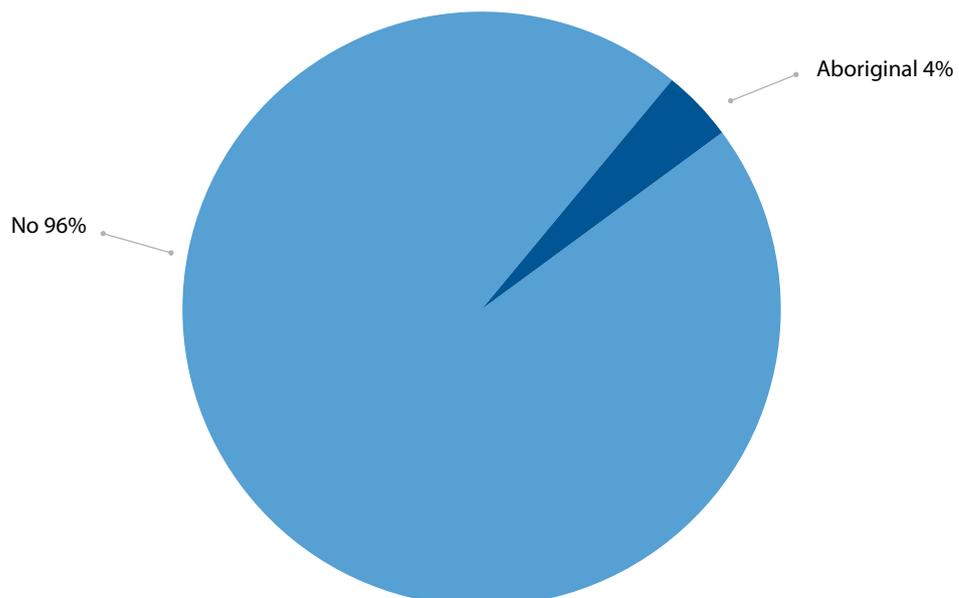
14. Where do you live?

Figure 14. Respondent Residency



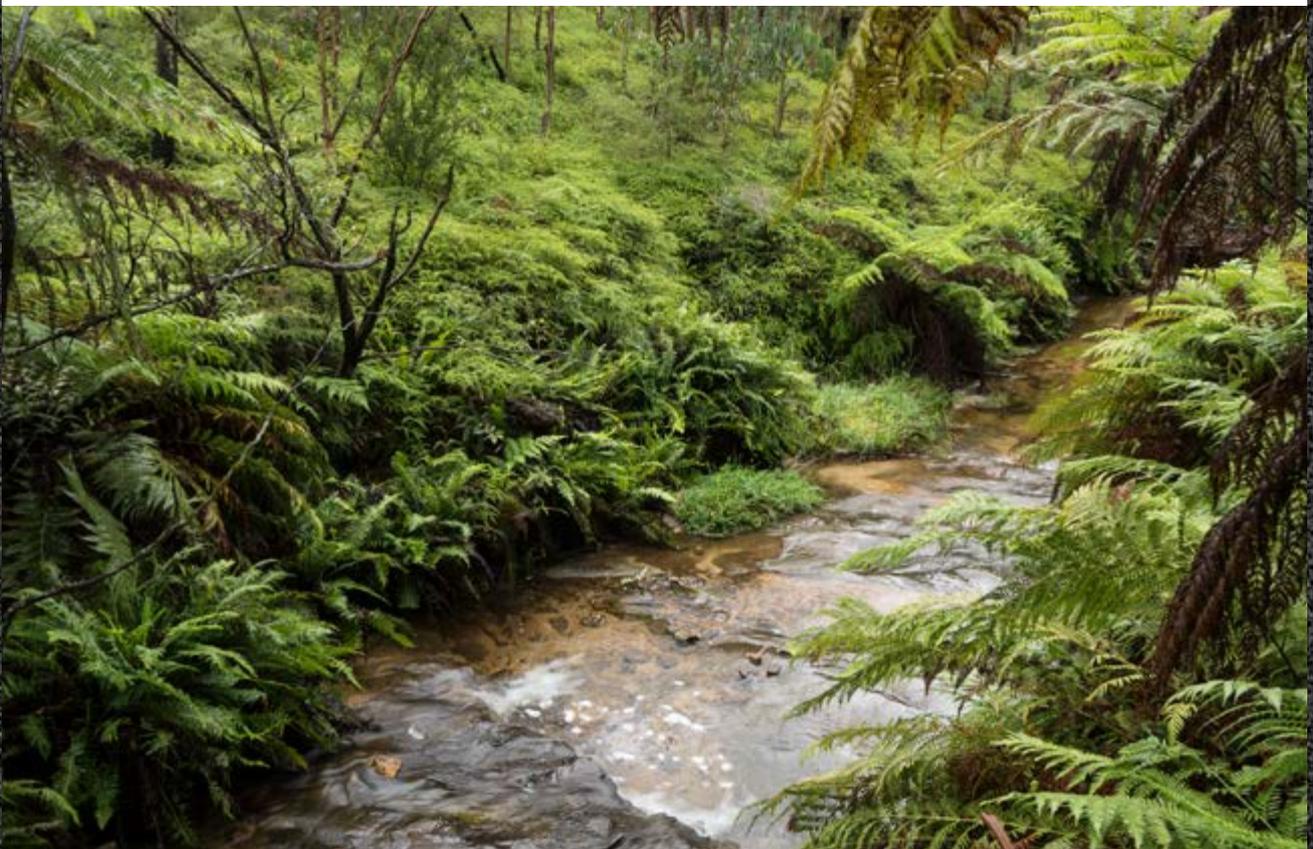
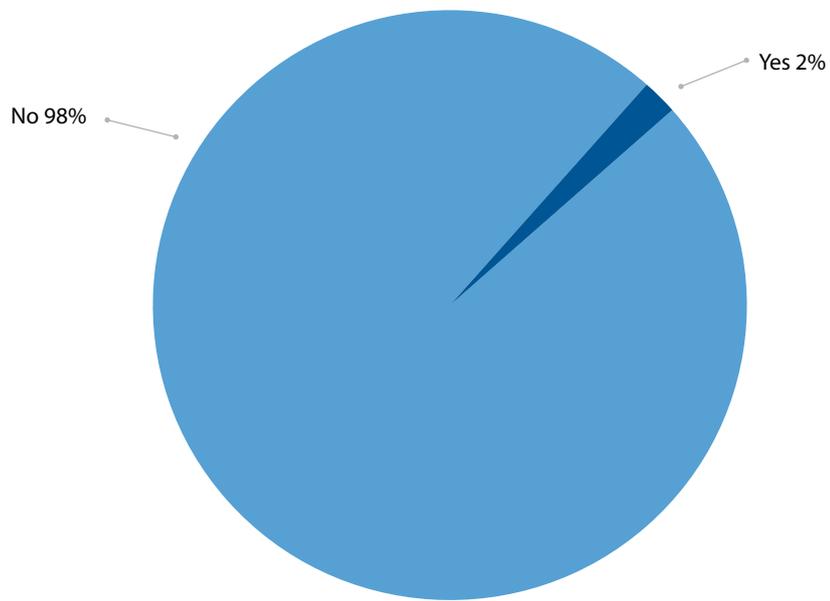
15. Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Figure 15. Aboriginality



16. Do you have a family connection to any former Gully residents?

Figure 16. Gully Family Connection



5.5 FURTHER COMMENTS

17. Do you have any other comments or matters to raise regarding The Gully and its future?

This question was an opportunity to raise any further issues and comment on matters not previously covered. A complete listing of comments is provided in Table 2*.

Comments largely reinforced or repeated what had been previously cited by survey respondents. However, some additional matters were raised. This being:

- Questioning/ challenging of the rightful Aboriginal representation for management of The Gully.
- Suggestion of lemon trees and herb garden
- Urging that on ground action be generated from the Plan of Management, not just a document on the shelf.

Table 2. Further Comments

**Editing of some comments has been done to remove personal reference to protect privacy.*



FURTHER COMMENTS

I think it is great that this is happening.

I would hope the wishes of all Australians are considered in future planning decisions.

I'm happy as Katoomba resident to see a new POM being formed that reflects contemporary views.

The more public can be involved, the more they will understand and respect this unique area.

It's quite a good place as it is. An amenities block could be an improvement but might also be an expensive liability. Hopefully it continues as a shared space and a spirit of harmony and inclusivity is fostered and built upon.

I feel the WHOLE Gully history needs to be preserved and strongly believe the community as a whole should have access, use and involvement in the upkeep and care of this amazing area.

I feel the ongoing cultural connection needs to be retained and the area as a whole is of such high biodiversity and importance that it really should have a very active, full time manager to coordinate it's future.

I hope that my comments are listened to and note that I respect the rights of the Aboriginal people to have title of the area, but hope we can all use it and respect each others needs of the area.

Promote what is being achieved and the importance of this area.

School group involvement would also be great to see.

The community will tell you that the Aboriginal Place should be preserved intact. Aunty..... before she died, told me that we "should let nature take back the track and all that remains".

Keep it as a reserve so everyone can enjoy. Prefer off-leash dog walking.

No, just that traditional owners should have final say and control over all activities.

The surveys of archaeological, heritage and ecological values identified as high priority in the previous POM would be a good start. Then the local community, Indigenous & otherwise, could make more informed decisions.

I would hate to see any urban or sub urban development occur there. I feel it's important for people to understand the Aboriginal history of the site, but also for it to be a place where locals can commune with nature, including walking their dogs.

I would like the actual true Aboriginal owners to be in charge.. currently there is a corrupted system in place where people not born nor bred there are in charge of The Gully and receive status and apparently funds for it. The seven remaining elders who actually were born and bred in The Gully are sidelined by the people who council has installed in the management team. The council rep for Aboriginal community is weighted by several connections not based on fairness.... There are some blurry lines and it would be good to really work to find a solution that places the seven elders in a decision making position.

Please please please let it be made into a dog off leash area. As a resident of Katoomba, the only off leash area that I know of is Leura Oval, which is riddled with bindies and has zero shade for myself or water for my dog in the summer months, and a single, uncomfortable bench to sit on and the land floods in the wet months. Or I could drive to Pitt Park in Wentworth Falls for small area with no shade or seats or water. The racetrack and gully is a perfect area to exercise, socialise and stay cool and out of the burning sun in summer. When I walk my dog there on the leash, I hardly see anyone using the space. I know personally of dozens of dog walkers who would put the lovely area to use and who would be respectful of the flora and clean up after their dogs. If you want this space to benefit the community, allow dogs off leash.

Bushcare need more staff on volunteer days.

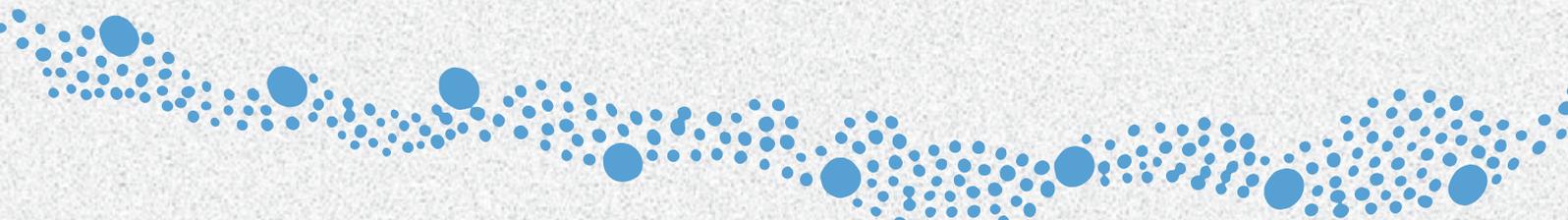
Paid aboriginal rangers.

Paid aboriginal bush regen

Paid aboriginal workers to develop community plan.



More planting of trees on pool side is needed.
A possible island in the middle of Catalina lake.
A toilet block.
More flora and fauna.
More facilities needed to increase public visits to the area. These may include (if acceptable to the Gundungurra, Darug and other Aboriginal People) picnic area, dog off leash area (DOL) to replace the abolished one (perhaps around the existing racing track?). The DOL abolished by Council should be reinstated at another nearby site if necessary.
Please make The Gully a safe haven for people, native flora and fauna. BMCC has multiple sites for other activities. Can you build some toilets near the cul de sac? Can you place fresh water drinking fountains at the site? Can you place bins in the cul de sac? Can you Change the signs to dog on lead are only? Can you send a ranger down daily to fine all the dogs off leads?
What ever is decided, proposed, suggested or discussed needs to be translated into real meaningful actions backed up by internal and/or external funding to translated into on ground and community outcomes. Not just another thick document that sits on a self.
What was the results from the last plan of management, what was achieved what wasn't whats still valid today etc..
Has analysis from the last PoM taken place?
What about a few lemon trees up on the hill in the clearing known as the 'former' off-leash area?
Can we also have a series of raised beds for herbs and vegetables near on the eastern side of the old Start/Finish area? There is plenty of room for emergency vehicles to pass here as the racetrack is wide at this point. There should be enough light and heat to grow some edibles.
Volunteers- that is, The Gully's regular visitors - could make this happen.
I would like to see The Gully area extended where possible. My concern is that there might be attempts to break up The Gully and sell it to private interests.
I think you have done a good job keeping up the maintenance on lawn and rubbish collection, maybe a sign would be good explaining to people what is acceptable to feed the ducks and birds.
Why is it so hard to organise events there?
Keep this area free from development including tourist infrastructure
Not at the moment however turning the 'lake' into a proper big watering hole I see as critically important
The Aboriginal information boards have enhanced the value of The Gully as a public space.
I will be creating a major artwork on The Gully, McRaes Paddock and the Katoomba Falls reserve at the BMCC Gallery in Katoomba in October 2019. It will be a significant promotion of the area. If there is any way I can participate in some of the conversations it would be helpful for the project.
I am also willing to be involved in community responsibility for weed control and management.
The current work that is being done by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal locals to protect and restore the natural and cultural environments is incredibly valuable. I hope that the local Aboriginal involvement can be further supported to continue, e.g. traineeships in Bush Regeneration for local Aboriginal young people, maybe training in guiding visitors around the site and in the management of an Aboriginal Place also.
I feel that the desecration of The Gully that occurred in 1957 obligates us to show appropriate care and respect to this place now and into the future for all of us whatever our cultural background. I am an ageing white guy who has loved this site for a couple of decades, and I can't begin to imagine what places like this mean to the first Australians who needed them and enjoyed them for tens of thousands of years.



As a school teacher I would like to see investment in sharing the site's historical and cultural heritage with the next generation, especially for our local children. Students from my school have visited the site but educational programs and resources could be further developed to strength our community's knowledge of The Gully as a significant place for Darug and Gundungurra people.

I intend to contact Councillors directly to ensure that what I have heard about 'antique car clubs' wanting to r e-use the race track under the guise of fundraising never occurs.

Regardless of how this goes please do NOT lose the history of the Motorsport. We have any many Aboriginal reserves etc. but Motorsport precincts are rare, so please give us a reason to frequently visit and spend our money.

I have supported the traditional owners of The Gully since the initial assessment and declaration and will continue to support them. Having this natural area in the centre of Katoomba is a valuable resource and should be preserved as a natural area.

I would simply like to reiterate that, despite my own or others' preferences, I strongly believe that planning for, and management of, The Gully should be the responsibility of traditional owners.

It would be lovely to have off-leash morning and arvo hours for dogs! And what I have previously mentioned as to play equipment and toilet facilities.

This very special place should be protected forever. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

more education to dog owners regarding dogs being walked off leash.

Stop weeds and trees taking over the race track.

I fully understand the nature of the area with regard to Aboriginal heritage and culture, however there is also a rich Motor Racing history which from my perspective seems as though it is being erased or even disrespected.

Yes - please address council's current poor practices of using heavy herbicides and insecticides to poorly control the current obnoxious weeds - mainly blackberries which is a health risk to our community and native wildlife.

I wish to preserve the track, and maybe use it limited times a year also if it was restored cyclists could hire it too to race etc.

The Gully is a fantastic resource for Katoomba and it would be great to see it better utilised.

Should be restored to indicate and remember its previous uses, not just aboriginal. Old track could be used for many events, such as walks, running & cycling sports and possibly demonstration car racing from years gone.

I would like to be contacted to be informed about at each stage of development.

Please keep the serenity of The Gully. Keep the old race track for bicycle riders.

Do not 'improve' it to the extent that it is just another park. It is important to keep in mind the aboriginal heritage of the site.

This great space is hardly used.

More weeding is needed to maintain it.

I would like to have pathways developed as noted earlier. I think this would be most welcome for tourists who currently get off the train and end up going down Katoomba Street on a rather miserable walk to get to the Three Sisters, as they get directed by current maps. They could be given a number of alternative options for this journey. For example, go down the first part of Katoomba St to access shops and cafes, then head down Waratah Street to access McRaes Paddock and through the cricket ovals, past the Kiosk (hopefully soon reopened) and on existing tracks to the Three Sisters.

6. Summary

The NAIDOC Week survey and the Site User Survey provided common responses in term of how people value The Gully, and what they thought was a priority for management. The Gully Family interviews provided a very different, and personal perspectives of the value of The Gully. While these values do not necessarily conflict with one another, it is important to recognise that they are uniquely different, and recommended actions for the future management of The Gully must understand and be responsive to the very personal relationships held with The Gully by Gully family members in contrast to the values of site users.

Findings from the Have Your Say survey documented two known issues of conflicting views among stakeholders. These being dog off leash and use of race track for motor sport memorabilia. The Have Your Say survey also demonstrated strong and commonly shared values of the Aboriginal heritage and culture of The Gully, and the importance of protecting environmental values of The Gully. The survey also demonstrated an acknowledgment and respect among many site users, for the will of the Aboriginal community and Traditional Owners to be given precedence in decision on the future management of The Gully.





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The Gully Traditional Owners

