

11th July 2023

Mr Craig Johnson  
Strategic Recreation Planner  
Ku-ring-gai Council  
818 Pacific Highway  
GORDON NSW 2072

E: [cjohnson@krg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cjohnson@krg.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mr Johnson

**Re: Ku-ring-gai Recreation Study and the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion Project**

On behalf of the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc (FOKE), and at the suggestion of Mr Jacob Sife, I have much pleasure in making a brief submission to support the email communications of today's date between Mr Sife and our Acting Chair of the Project Steering Committee, Mr Angus M Robinson.

FOKE is a long-established community group dedicated to the conservation and protection of Ku-ring-gai's built and natural environment. In 2018 FOKE initiated a project to add extra protections to and to increase awareness of Ku-ring-gai's natural and cultural heritage focusing originally on the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. This has since developed into a much broader area which includes other protected areas and most of the suburban areas within the municipalities of Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby, and the Northern Beaches. A peer-reviewed journal paper, *The Natural and Cultural History of the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion*, has recently been published by the Linnean Society of NSW <https://bit.ly/4491ZcN>

The Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion, as it has now been designated, is now one of three approved GeoRegion projects within Australia being supported by the National Geotourism Strategy being implemented by the Australian Geoscience Council Inc. FOKE is now working alongside the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the three Councils (including Ku-ring-gai Council) to develop this GeoRegion as a potential nomination as an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark. Community (including Aboriginal) engagement is regarded as a key ingredient in the furtherment of this process. Geoparks serve to develop a focus on environmental education, protection, and geotourism development. In this regard, FOKE notes the substantial number of schools particularly located in the Upper North Shore that would benefit enormously from gaining access to field located, environmental resources.

It is worth noting that apart from FOKE, community support for this project has been indicated by the South Turrumurra Environmental Protection (STEP), the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators, the National Trust of Australia, the National Trust of Australia (NSW), and the National Parks Association of NSW, many members of which are residents of the Ku-ring-gai Council area.

I understand that Mr Robinson has already provided your office with a present status report which describes the scope and rationale for the development of this project, as well as the substantive level

2016 NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE AWARDS HIGHLY COMMENDED  
2009 NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE AWARDS HIGHLY COMMENDED  
2008 NSW GOVERNMENT HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS AWARD  
2000 FOKE, WINNER, NSW HERITAGE OFFICE CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD  
"HERITAGE WATCH OVER OUR PLACE OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE -KU-RING-GAI"  
KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL COUNCIL (NSW) METRO PRIDE AWARDS.

of technical assessment studies that have been undertaken to date. You will note that in association with the NPWS and your Council, we are focusing on developing a number of initial geotrails (i.e., existing walking tracks which include information about the landscape, geology, plants and animals and aboriginal culture).

I have noted that the current Recreation Study has recognised that Council manages ‘around 1,100 hectares of natural areas of bushland including walking tracks and trails offering a multitude of recreational opportunities. Some of the activities conducted on bushland tracks and trails and within natural areas in Ku-ring-gai include walking, running, and jogging,’ as well a range of ‘soft adventure’ activities. These activities are taking place within what Council is now supporting as the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion.

FOKE is proud to have initiated this truly unique, community-supported project for Australia, which so visibly promotes the wonderful natural and cultural heritage of the Ku-ring-gai area, and submits that it is entirely appropriate that the finalised Recreation Study not only recognises Council’s current support for the project, but also signals the potential opportunity offered for expanded recreational activity (particularly for bushwalkers and naturalists), should the NSW State Government take a decision in the future to nominate this area as an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark.

Your sincerely

*Kathy Cowley*

Kathy Cowley  
PRESIDENT