

Middle Head master plan: questions and answers

Learn more about the upcoming draft master plan for Middle Head and Georges Head.

What is a master plan?

The National Parks and Wildlife Service manages Middle Head and Georges Head in accordance with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act). The objectives of the Act include the conservation of nature and objects, places or features of cultural value within the landscape and the fostering of public appreciation, understanding, enjoyment and use of nature and cultural heritage.

NPWS plans of management are statutory documents that are required by and prepared in accordance with the Act to provide a 'scheme of operations' for a park and no operations may be carried out on a park except in accordance with a plan of management. A plan of management or any amendment to a plan undergoes a rigorous process, including public exhibition.

A master plan is a more detailed document than a plan of management which can address specific management and operational issues at a particular site consistent to other planning documentation. It is not a statutory document.

What will the Middle Head and Georges Head master plan cover?

The Middle Head and Georges Head master plan will look at:

- linkages with neighbouring lands
- community uses at the site
- activity and use constraints and opportunities for the site
- vehicle and pedestrian access, parking and circulation



- the conservation and adaptation of the existing buildings in their historical and contemporary setting
- landscape management, treatments and improvements
- commercially viable opportunities for use of the precinct including events, commercial (corporate) volunteering, use of existing buildings
- attractions, walking tracks and activities
- workshop and office facilities.

Any commercial use of Middle Head must be consistent with the National Parks and Wildlife Act, the **Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management** and the *Sydney Harbour National Park Middle Head Historic Buildings Conservation Management Plan 2003*.

All revenue from the use of buildings within national parks is invested back into park management to support conservation and long-term sustainable visitor facilities.

When will the master plan be exhibited, finalised and approved?

Following consideration of comments received as a result of the **planning information day**, the Middle Head draft master plan is expected to go on public exhibition towards mid-2016. During the public exhibition period members of the public will be able to provide feedback on the draft master plan.

Following exhibition, the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) will consider community and stakeholder feedback, and finalise the master plan.

Why is NPWS working with Sydney Harbour Federation Trust?

NPWS and Sydney Harbour Federation Trust understand that visitors to Middle Head experience the whole landscape regardless of tenure. So we are working together to provide a seamless visitor experience.

How will the heritage values of Middle Head and Georges Head be protected?

Middle Head is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. It is covered by the *Sydney Harbour National Park Middle Head Historic Buildings Conservation Management Plan*.

Any major site works will be subject to rigorous internal environmental planning procedures in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Also, when a place is listed on the State Heritage Register, the formal approval of the Heritage Council of NSW is required for any major work.

What about volunteer programs at Middle Head?

The Middle Head volunteer program is a flagship program for NPWS that we will continue. We will look at the best location and facilities for the program as part of the master-planning.

Will there be any change to the number of buildings at Middle Head?

The Middle Head draft master plan will be a forward-looking document to allow for future land management and use planning. We don't propose to remove or demolish any of the existing historic buildings. The master plan seeks to better present and enhance the existing landscape and buildings.

NPWS is considering how best to locate its own facilities on-site. Consideration is being given to a new workshop and depot in the location of the current facility. This may be a shared facility with the Sydney Institute of Marine Science. Any new building in this location will require a change to the **Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management** which will be done with full public consultation and any new development is also likely to require approval under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977*.

How will the draft master plan affect public access?

The buildings, structures and landscape values that contribute to the state heritage significance of Middle Head and Georges Head will be preserved. We will maintain and improve public access at Middle Head as part of the master-planning process. NPWS would like to improve the entrance way, have greater public access to the buildings, walking tracks, historic features and local beaches.

