

## HPG Submission regarding the NPWS Masterplan

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### HEADLAND PRESERVATION GROUP INC.

The Headland Preservation Group Inc. (HPG) was formed in 1996 to fight against surplus military land on Middle Head being sold for residential development. As a result of concerted community action the Commonwealth Government changed its mind and decided to rehabilitate the land and in due course transfer it to NSW for inclusion in the Sydney Harbour National Park.

In 1998 John Howard announced that this land together with land on North Head and Georges Heights (**the Harbour Trust lands**) would be returned to the people of Australia to commemorate Federation. His announcement in part read:

*..... the Government has ..... devised a long-term plan to return surplus military land to the people of Australia.... We're going to establish a Sydney Harbour Federation Trust and the purpose of that trust is to maximise public access to the land being returned to the people and to rehabilitate the natural values.... It will preserve heritage buildings and features of the sites.*

*.... it will ensure that there is maximum weight given to the desire, not only of local residents, but the desire of all Australians that the maximum advantage be derived in open space and recreational purposes in relation to the land.*

*I am immensely proud of the foreshores of Sydney Harbour. It is a great national asset. It is an asset that belongs to all of the Australian people...*

As the Harbour Trust lands are intended to form part of Sydney Harbour National Park, NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife Services who manage the Park) and the Harbour Trust are coordinating their planning activities. In early November 2016 both NPWS and the Harbour Trust published management plans for public comment.

HPG is lodging submissions on both plans. This submission addresses the NPWS Master plan.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife Service) Draft Masterplan for Middle Head and Georges Head<sup>1</sup> “seeks to reconcile their fundamental values with a level of access to increase visitation and usage.” HPG applauds this principle but has concerns about how the proposed increased use of Middle Head will occur.

There are six principal concerns

- Funding for the restoration work required
- Festivals on cleared areas
- Tours through fortifications
- The need for a joint NPWS and Harbour Trust Discovery Centre
- The use of buildings adjoining “Barracks Green”
- Camping proposed for three potential areas

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<sup>1</sup> The Sydney Harbour National Park Middle Head & Georges Head Masterplan - Public Exhibition Draft

This submission examines the Masterplan in the context of the following documents.

- Sydney Harbour National Park Plan of Management Plan 2012 (**PoM**). This is the statutory document on which the Masterplan is based.
- The NPWS Fortifications of Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay - A Strategic Plan, Paul Davies Pty Ltd Architects Heritage Consultants. Final Report July 2007
- Sydney Harbour National Park Middle Head Historic Buildings Conservation Management Plan, Paul Davies Pty Ltd Architects Heritage Consultants. Final Report January 2003

Additionally we have briefly consulted Graham Brooks, Emeritus Chairman of the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) International Cultural Tourism Committee and author of the ICOMOS International Cultural Tourism Charter (1999).

## 1. HOW WILL FUNDING BE ACHIEVED

HPG supports the Masterplan's **Vision for Middle Head and Georges Head**, which says:

*Middle Head is a jewel within the stunning array of open space that adjoins Sydney Harbour. The combination of natural and cultural qualities at Middle and Georges Heads is truly unique to Sydney and indeed Australia. Intrinsic to this is a sense of retreat and release from urban Sydney that is enabled by the place's largely undeveloped and low-key character. This Masterplan seeks to reconcile these fundamental values with a level of access that can increase visitation and usage and enables a broad cross section of users and visitors from across Sydney and beyond to enjoy and benefit from the parklands.*

There is potential conflict between natural, cultural, retreat, release, underdeveloped and low-key character on the one hand **AND** increased visitation and usage on the other.

Sydney Harbour and its unspoilt headlands are unique. The first headland within the harbour an overseas cruise visitor observes is the seemingly undeveloped Middle Head. Yet Middle and Georges Heads are steeped in over 200 years of cultural and heritage significance. And they exist just 6 km by ferry from Sydney's central business district.

These unique headlands, their unsurpassed views and their highly significant cultural and heritage sites are currently protected by legislation. But they remain a developer's dream and governments will always be cash strapped. They will only remain protected if the public insists on it. Unfortunately Middle and Georges Heads are not well known and not easily accessible.

Herein lies the challenge. It is a difficult balance between exposing large numbers of people to the beauty and interest of the headlands while simultaneously ensuring its fragile landscape and built heritage are protected and conserved, and its sense of release and low-key character retained. The PoM makes the observation on Page 127 that

*Visitor numbers and inappropriate behaviour in the areas adjacent to the beaches are having a deleterious effect on the bushland and recreational values.*

Protecting and opening up our fragile natural and built heritage can be done but it costs money to do it properly. Capital is required to build the scenic walks; retain secluded areas for "retreat"; restore heritage buildings and sites to the point where they can generate income; and to establish a comprehensive Middle Head Discovery Centre. If done properly like the NPWS site at [Trial Bay Gaol](#) (South West Rocks), Middle Head will also attract visitors and encourage them to understand and appreciate the importance of this unique place.

Events may fund recurrent expenditure but not the capital works. Without a source of funds to do the necessary restoration work proposed, the Outcomes of the Masterplan will remain a pipe dream. This critical matter is discussed later.

## 2. WHAT IS MEANT BY FESTIVALS, SMALL-SACLE EVENTS, ETC?

The Masterplan proposes that Middle Head and Georges Head be more actively opened up and promoted for various uses. The issue that is the most contentious is the extent to which festivals, tours and other events (public and private) are allowed and/or encouraged on the headlands and in and through its numerous fortifications.

The Masterplan refers to events to be held at the Outer Fort (potential capacity 600 pax) the Armoured Casemate (240 - 600 pax) and many small-scale event areas including the Beehive Casemate, Inner Fort Case Battery Gun Emplacement, etc.

The implication based on past practices and accompanying illustrations in the Masterplan, is that the area described as “Barracks Green” would be suitable for festivals and concerts but no mention is made of the possible size of large-scale events such as a rock concerts or open-air opera.

If large-scale events are to be allowed, HPG considers it essential to restrict the number of such events held over each 12-month period and to restrict attendee numbers to protect the environment. A map as appears for the event use of the Outer Fort Fig 2.17 and Armoured Casemate Fig 2.19 should be prepared for each site.

- a) Ongoing small-scale public and private events, similar to recent custom and practice, are supported. For example, HPG would not object to small events at the Gun Emplacements providing the public is not excluded from the surrounding area. But “small-scale” needs to be defined. Weddings, ceremonies and events that do not detract from or threaten the environment are supported provided they do not materially affect the general public’s enjoyment of the park. These issues require clarification.
- b) In contrast, and as an extreme example, HPG would oppose a rock concert with its associated temporary infrastructure and parking difficulty. There is real risk to the area’s flora from large marquees, toilet blocks, portable kitchens and large numbers of people who may not value and appreciate the natural and cultural significance of the area and the fragile nature of the land and built heritage.
- c) The PoM mentions specific precincts suitable for festivals namely; Nielsen Park, South Head, Camp Cove, Green Point, Shark Island, Fort Denison, Goat Island, and Rodd Island. Middle Head is not mentioned as a festival location, however it is not specifically ruled out. This is a major concern. HPG opposes large-scale events or festivals on Middle Head.

Page 130 of the PoM reads:

*Provide opportunities for the sustainable use and possible licencing of the cleared sections of the precinct for events, functions and appropriate community use.*

This could be taken to authorise exclusive use, which is not consistent with the park’s vision. Clearly small private events deserve privacy. It is an issue of what level of exclusivity is reasonable.

- d) Adaptive reuse of Casemates and Beehive for Events.

These structures are of major heritage significance and listed in the Commonwealth Listing for “Georges Heights and Middle Head” and on the National Estate.

*These casemates once housed some of the largest guns mounted in Port Jackson and were key defensive positions on the Harbour (Mosman Council draft submission).*

However they are in a poor state of preservation with water penetration and structural issues.

The priority for these structures is to stabilise them to ensure they are safe for limited supervised public access. There is very little detail about plans or costing for such essential

repair work. NPWS should be addressing these questions thoroughly.

**Philanthropic Sponsorship** to help fund restoration with appropriate recognition could be explored and is discussed later in this submission.

- e) Every event must require a rigorous process for the assessment and approval and be consistent with the values of a national park (environment, heritage, culture, education, public good, etc.). The criteria for what is acceptable need clarification. The assessment should include;
- A site / heritage impact report
  - A merits-based case by case consideration
  - No head lease or loss of control by NPWS over the site (or any part of it)
  - No exclusive use or unreasonable loss of public access depending on the size of the event and an assessment of what is reasonable.

### 3. TOURS THROUGH THE FORTIFICATIONS

HPG's view is that the forts are fragile, have not yet been properly "conserved" and must be preserved for their historical importance. They should not be adaptively re-used until appropriate protection and restoration is undertaken.

HPG is concerned that NPWS may use claimed budgetary constraints to put off urgent historic site repair work on Middle and Georges Heads historic fortifications to the point where restoration is no longer feasible.

Critical sites because of their undisputed historical and cultural importance must have the necessary funds to cover restoration to the point where paid visitation will cover recurrent expenditure. Unfortunately the condition of some of the historic fortifications on Middle and Georges Heads is distressing. A case in point is the severe concrete spalling in tunnel roofs in the outer fortifications on Middle Head.

HPG supports opening up the fortifications and running small tours **BUT** only after the necessary restoration is complete and security measures are put in place to protect and conserve the fortifications.

There is no debate that Middle Head needs to be better appreciated and understood. It is historically, environmentally and culturally unique. Further, its location in a city of 4.3 million people that hosts over one million cruise ship passenger days a year could allow Middle Head to become a Sydney destination like the Blue Mountains.

HPG considers that Middle Head has the greatest educational and visitation potential of all the NPWS parks once restoration is complete and appropriate transport services are made available such as

- Ferry between Circular Quay and Chowder Bay wharf
- Connecting shuttle bus from Chowder Bay wharf to Middle Head, Georges Heights, Taronga Zoo and Taronga wharf.

**Appendix A - The Middle Head Experience** describes a possible "day excursion" to give visitors to Sydney an understanding of Sydney Harbour and our indigenous and military history. A linked transport service starting with a ferry from Circular Quay is essential to make the whole experience work.

**Appendix B – The Middle Head Military Story** describes how the indigenous and military history story might be told in a graphic way.

## 4. THE NEED FOR A DISCOVERY CENTRE

If ever there was an example of why NPWS and the Harbour Trust need to work together it is the necessity for integrated use of the NPWS buildings and adjacent Harbour Trust buildings. Both the Masterplan and the Harbour Trust's draft Amended Management Plan accept the need for a Visitors' Centre.

However, NPWS proposes that its "**Orientation facility**" could occupy the NPWS Guard house and comprise an internal display, café and deck, while the Trust proposes that its **Visitors' Centre** could be located in its former Guardhouse (the current Middle Head café) or in a readapted pavilion on the eastern side of Middle Head oval.

The **Masterplan** Vision Statement reads

*Middle Head and Georges Head will be an integral component of the Sydney Harbour scenic walk providing cultural events, community activities and facilities. Understanding of the site's natural and cultural values will be encouraged and **visitors will have a seamless experience** with neighbouring parklands.*

The area from Burnt Orange to the Soldiers' Institute is currently the natural visitor hub for the whole headland from Georges Heights to Chowder Bay. It cries out for a "Discovery Centre". Unfortunately both NPWS and the Harbour Trust appear to be planning the adaptive reuse of their built heritage in isolation from one another. What is needed is an integrated "Discovery Centre" located at a suitable arrival point to serve visitors to both NPWS and Harbour Trust lands.

This should be located in a building large enough to accommodate;

- Displays giving an introduction to the whole "**park**" - from the Middle Head forts to Bradleys Head, including Georges Heights and Chowder Bay.
- Visitor information area, including maps, self-guided tour options, guided tours information and bookings.
- Interactive displays and interpretation of the cultural heritage of the park, including - its extensive military history and indigenous heritage.
- Educational facilities for students and visitors.
- Café/s and bookshop/souvenirs
- Small retail or other facilities if appropriate

Neither of the guardhouses proposed for such purposes is large enough or suitable for what is required. The ideal, indeed the only existing building suitable for a Discovery Centre as just described is part of 10 Terminal.

## 5. BUILDINGS SURROUNDING BARRACKS GREEN

The Masterplan suggests various uses for the other five buildings surrounding the Barracks Green.

- a) HPG supports the **Soldiers Institute facilities** being upgraded to modern standards to allow for continued community use so long as there is no alteration to the historic fabric of the building or its external appearance. It should remain as the "home" for volunteers and community gardeners, and for small-scale community use of the facility. Any additional café should be at the Soldier's Institute (the main café being adjacent to or at 10 Terminal) and adjacent to proposed toilet facilities.
- b) **Officers Quarters.** One of the guiding strategies of the Masterplan is to facilitate a sequence or journey through the fort precincts and tell the story of the military presence. The Officers

Quarters should be retained for this use as the most significant historic building on the site.

These Quarters were once the home of Major General Sir William Throsby Bridges KCB, CMG (1861–1915) who commanded the 1st Australian Division at Gallipoli, where he died of wounds on 18 May 1915. He was the first Australian major general, the first to command a division, and the first to receive a knighthood. He was instrumental in establishing the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Of the 136,000 horses sent overseas Sir William's horse, Sandy, was the only horse to return from the First World War

Suitably restored these quarters could also be the starting point for an audio guide that tells the story of the early fortifications

- c) There needs to suitable facilities for **NPWS operations**, ideally adjacent to the works compound.
- d) **Short stay accommodation.** The Masterplan suggests adapting three of the buildings adjoining the Barracks Green for short stay accommodation. Using all of the historic buildings for accommodation would be to the detriment of a coherent military story spanning the whole period of military occupation unless this story can be explained in a Discovery Centre, ideally located in 10 Terminal.

However if one or more buildings were offered for short time accommodation this would ensure that the buildings would have to be maintained in an acceptable state. HPG notes that tourist accommodation is a Special Fire Protection Purpose, which would require the approval of the Rural Fire Service.

One half of the Officers Quarters is currently offered for short-term accommodation by scientific, educational, indigenous, cultural, environmental groups. This is an ideal accommodation use and should be retained in one or other of the NPWS buildings.

- e) The possible **multi-purpose shelter** proposed in section 2.6 of the Masterplan should be omitted. PoM (page 52) states, "*new buildings are only permitted on Goat Island, Shark Island, Fort Denison and Gap Bluff precincts*". Therefore new buildings are not permitted at Middle Head and Georges Heights.

An alternative may be a number of small fixed barbeques and benches as on Trust land, provided that any new structure is in keeping with the heritage status of the site.

## 6. NO CAMPING ON THE SITE

The **PoM**, which is the statutory document on which the Masterplan is based, allows camping on a number of sites but not Middle and Georges Heads.

The park being small and adjacent to an urban area encourages security risks. It would be difficult to police any camping and campers unless there were full time rangers on site. It is understood that NPWS proposes that there will be no ranger resident on the headland. Camping in an unsupervised urban park without a resident ranger is a real security concern. The potential fire risk is also very significant.

At the joint public meeting with NPWS and the Trust (20 August 2015) there was overwhelming rejection of camping on Middle and Georges Heads.

HPG recognises the desirability of providing opportunities for **passive recreation** such as picnics, walking and sightseeing, as well as places for contemplation, in a bushland setting with spectacular views. The provision of "furniture" at selected locations (Page 217 PoM) may be worth considering, however the HPG strongly opposes camping.

## 7. OTHER MATTERS

- a) The current **NPWS works compound** should be fully screened from the surrounding areas with suitable shrubs and trees.
- b) The planned reduction in size and eventual re-location of the works compound is supported in so far that it does not impact on the ability of park personnel to manage the park.
- c) There is presently **no formal public parking** in the park and this should continue. Informal parking does occur on the Barracks Green when meetings occur at the Soldier's Institute. The Masterplan retains the small number of car spots but relocates them to a properly screened area behind the Soldier's Institute. These spaces should be reserved for volunteers and members of the community garden.
- d) It is inappropriate for the proposed **Georges Heights path** to connect directly to Obelisk Beach given the current use of the beach. The path should run at a higher level around the beach and join the Sydney Harbour Scenic Walk at its intersection with the existing track to Obelisk Beach. Clear and appropriate signage is mandatory. The same applies to Cobblers Beach. It is not appropriate for any path to terminate in a setting that could offend many of the public particularly overseas visitors.
- e) The proposed new walking tracks are an excellent initiative subject to minimum clearance of existing bush.
- f) NPWS needs to look carefully at the proposed extra parking on Chowder Bay Road, which encourages greater patronage of the clothing optional Obelisk Beach. This has been a source of concern for the general public for many years.
- g) The Masterplan proposes to have a "street art" program at the Case Battery Gun Emplacement - Georges Head. The HPG believes 'street art' is inappropriate in this environment. Much of the fortification surface has already been defaced. Legitimate "street art" would only increase the likelihood of further damage.
- h) Eradication of weeds and erosion stabilisation is to be commended.

## 8. PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Heritage might be described as understanding where we came from, what we did, how we did it and most important why we did it at the time. It is a significant aspect of our societal culture proven to have positive benefits for individual wellbeing and sense of identity and hence for the wellbeing of the community overall.

Heritage can be best understood by being able to see and experience the built environment of the time. Such built environment may not be aesthetically appealing but why and how a building was designed, constructed and used helps society learn from the past.

Together with the arts, the protection, conservation and interpretation of our built heritage are a cultural good, which require support.

Philanthropic support is a potentially valuable avenue by which to achieve heritage conservation where public funding is unavailable and commercial revenue-raising activities would be inappropriate.

Recognition of philanthropic support for particular heritage conservation actions would be a reasonable expectation of both the donor and the public, provided that such recognition did not detrimentally affect perceptions of the heritage concerned. It would be important for example that such recognition did not convey the impression that the donor exercised ownership or control of public heritage but only that the donor was assisting in achieving a

public good.

In the same way that philanthropic support of the arts is generally recognised by statements of sponsorship or support in printed programs and publicity material for artistic events, recognition of philanthropic support of heritage conservation could be through acknowledgment of support in appropriate ways, such as acknowledgments

- in relevant information brochures and tour guides
- at relevant information displays, whether 'on site' or elsewhere
- in publicity material relating to the heritage elements concerned.

HPG recognises that public funding is not unlimited and believes that there are opportunities for philanthropic support to assist the Harbour Trust in respect of proposals for the Headland Park. HPG would like to work jointly with the Harbour Trust and NPWS to develop projects that might appeal to philanthropic providers.

Although HPG does not itself have the resources to implement such projects, HPG's membership has an existing and potential network of skills, experience and contacts to generate and evaluate proposals consistent with the visions of the Harbour Trust and NPWS for the Headland Park and Middle and Georges Heads and to explore avenues for philanthropic support for such proposals.

Two examples of passive corporate support are described in Attachment C.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

HPG applauds NPWS's vision of seeking increase visitation and usage that enables a broad cross section of users and visitors from across Sydney and beyond to enjoy and benefit from the headland parklands.

However this must be achieved without threat to the headland's fragile landscape and built heritage. Government funding with or without philanthropic support is needed urgently to provide the essential infrastructure; prepare the whole site for greater visitation; and to develop the aids to tell the Middle Head story in a dynamic and appealing way.

### ***Julie Goodsir***

President

***The Headland Preservation Group Inc.***

16 December 2016

### **Committee**

Julie Goodsir – President

Jill L'Estrange – Vice President

Linda Bergin OAM – Deputy Vice President

Eve Bagnall – Treasurer

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## APPENDIX A - The Middle Head Experience

HPG considers the Middle Head destination (Chowder Bay to Georges Heights) would have very significant overseas visitor appeal. With over 1 million Cruise Ship passenger days in Sydney per year the market for Shore Excursions is significant. There is a strong view that a Taronga Zoo/Middle Head day excursion for International visitors docking at Circular Quay could be very appealing. The trip might involve;

- Ferry from circular Quay to Chowder Bay (and/or perhaps Balmoral)
- SIMs Discovery Centre for harbour topography and 3D underwater simulation – a kids favourite.
- Optional shuttle bus to/from Middle Head Discovery Centre, Georges Heights and perhaps Taronga Zoo.
- Arrival at the Middle Head Discovery Centre.
- Military history interpretation – the aim is to give visitors an overview of the site's military history. Perhaps the opportunity to hire an audio guide. It might incorporate the current hospital room.
- Education about how the early Australians lived and survived in an inhospitable environment.
- Aboriginal history – the dancing on Cobblers Beach, etc. Opportunity to see and hear a little aboriginal culture, buy artefacts, etc.
- Optional dining at Ripples, Burnt Orange, East Coast Lounge, Middle Head café and Frenchies.
- Self guided walking for views and ecology appreciation.
- Opportunity to attend events if they coincided with visits.
- Rather than ride the shuttle bus visitors might take Scenic Walk to the Middle Head Discovery Centre. On the way other walks are available.
- Enroute discover the Georges Head fortifications with possible guided tours through the Casemates, Beehive. See the location of boom net important in foiling 1942 Japanese midget sub invasion of Sydney Harbour, WW11 watch tour, etc.
- Walk to the 1801 fort constructed to protect against the French and appreciate its commanding position over entry to the harbour.
- Walk the outer fort and its tunnels and storage areas.
- Optional guided tour through the Tiger cages.
- Option for travel to Taronga Zoo and return to Circular Quay by ferry from the Taronga wharf.

For an example of how shore excursions are promoted see [Activity Tours](#). This site promotes a full day excursion ***“Blue Mountains Wildlife Day with River Cruise”***.

## **APPENDIX B - THE MIDDLE HEAD STORY**

Middle Head is commonly understood to be the area from Georges Heights and Chowder Bay to the headland itself. [That is different from the Harbour Trust's Middle Head precinct, which is essentially limited to the area between Burnt Orange and the ditch at the entrance to the Sydney Harbour National Park.]

Middle Head is recognised as a beautiful oasis in the midst of a city of 4.3 million people. The whole area in some publications (such as the Harbour Trust's Comprehensive Plan) is also referred to as the Headland Park. We are fortunate that, because of its exclusive military use spanning over 200 years, its fortifications and associated military infrastructure has largely been preserved. This offers a tremendous opportunity to tell the indigenous and military story of Middle Head in such a way as to attract many more visitors than at present and preserve its history for future generations.

A key step to achieving this objective is to establish a "Discovery Centre" guiding visitors through the entire indigenous and military history of Middle Head. Such a centre would not set out to be a museum, but would provide a vibrant interesting journey through all aspects of the fascinating evolution and occupation of Middle Head.

The Discovery Centre would provide visitors with an understanding of why fortifications and military infrastructure were first established and how military thinking, technology and use changed over time. This is an essential precursor for visitors before moving onto tours (guided or self-guided) to appreciate the significance of the defensive and support infrastructure they are about to visit.

The indigenous history of the area is also enlightening. It was called Cubba Cubba meaning large head. The Borogegal people lived on Middle Head for 40,000 years – there is still archaeological evidence of their occupation such as rock carvings and middens. Indigenous warriors danced with Captain Hunter and his marines on Cobblers Beach, Middle Head on 29 January 1788. This was the first encounter between white men and indigenous people on the north shore of Sydney Harbour.

Governor Macquarie gave Bungaree and his followers a rowing boat and the first indigenous land grant on this headland. Macquarie appreciated the aborigines' great fishing skill and wanted help to feed the starving colony. The hoped for farming venture failed and the reason for its failure is a lesson in itself. It is first example of how both cultures failed to understand each other. Bungaree's walking track to Chowder Bay is still used.

One of the least appreciated facts of our military history is the large number of aborigines who served in Australia's defence forces over the years and what they achieved. The Discovery Centre is an appropriate place to record and illustrate this.

The history of ASOPA is also an interesting story. Australia after WW2 was charged with the legacy of overseeing PNG as a protectorate, which it we did for 29 years. There is a great history here and a close relationship with our closest northern neighbour. This history and stories need to be acknowledged and told. The ASOPA buildings were also briefly used at one stage as the Head Quarters of ASIO.

There is a fascinating but largely unknown story in the ASOPA buildings of how a varied group of talented intellectuals, in the dark days of 1942, provided high-level policy advice to Australia's most senior soldier, General Blamey, and through him to the Government for the remainder of the war and beyond. This band of academics, lawyers and New Guinea patrol officers formed a unique military unit, the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs, under the command of an eccentric and masterful string-puller, Alf Conlon.

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The Directorate was a pioneer in developing approaches to military government in areas liberated by the combat troops, as demonstrated by the Australian Army in New Guinea, and Borneo in 1945-46. It is an issue of enduring importance. The Directorate established the Australian School of Pacific Administration, and had an important role in founding the Australian National University. Sir John Kerr (late Governor General of Australia) was the Organising Secretary for the Preparatory Conference held at ASOPA in 1947

In the Vietnam War the 10 Terminal base became a training site for **'Code of Conduct'** courses for junior officers and NCOs in the event of capture. The course was based on the terrible experiences of Australian and allied POWs during WW2 and the Korean War. It took place in the 'tiger cages' within the fortifications and can be visited. The chilling and remarkable account of the **'torture training'** of Australian war hero **Captain Barry Peterson** at Middle Head is screaming to be told.

Middle Head was also the base for Australia's involvement in PNG and the Pacific through the activities of ASOPA, and the amphibious transport unit responsible for opening up and annual resupply of Australia's bases in Antarctica.

There is a great opportunity to tell the story of Middle Head together with Chowder Bay and Georges Heights in such a way as to attract visitors and preserve its history for future generations.

The Draft Management Plan and the Conservation Management Plans prepared for the Harbour Trust include a vast amount of history pitted with interesting facts and stories relevant to Middle Head. The key to increasing visitor numbers is to cater for a wide range of interests. Well-presented, historic sites are a proven drawcard for many people. The success of the recently refurbishment Bletchley Park in the UK is a notable example.

Possible steps on how to achieve the vision in the Draft Management Plan for interpreting the heritage of Middle Head and how the story might be told are:

1. Establish a Discovery Centre in part of 10 Terminal taking visitors on a journey in time through the whole of Middle Head's history. This is the logical site for the Centre, close to the entrance to the National Park and the historic fortifications, and with adjacent visitor car parking
2. In part of the Centre, establish a shop selling memorabilia, books and other merchandise relevant to the history of Middle Head
3. Establish a café/cafeteria style restaurant serving a range of reasonably priced food and beverages for visitors to the centre.
4. Locate veterans who have an association with Middle Head during and after WW2 to record their oral history for inclusion in the Discovery centre.
5. Liaise with the Australian War Memorial to borrow military artefacts relevant to Middle Head for use in the centre, and to assist with curating the historic journey. The AWM's Director is on record as saying the Memorial has thousands of items in storage because of limited exhibition space at the War Memorial itself. Most visitors to Sydney, particularly overseas visitors, will not include Canberra on their itinerary and would otherwise miss the opportunity which the Discovery Centre would provide to gain an understanding of this military history.
6. The Discovery Centre would lead visitors through the indigenous and military history of Middle Head in distinct segments:
  - The "first encounter"
  - Colonial military history
  - Post Colonial history to WW1
  - WW1 history

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- WW2 history
  - Post WW2 history including ASOPA
7. Make safe the gun emplacements and tunnels for self guided tours
  8. Recruit veteran volunteers to run guided tours and generally assist the rangers.
  9. Establish education programmes specifically tailored to:
    - Primary school children
    - High School students
    - Further and higher education students
  10. Run paid events relevant to military history such as
    - Middle Head at night tours
    - Middle Head re-enactments (there are National Military Re-enactment Groups who run re-enactments throughout NSW)
  11. Establish a Middle Head Fund to fund stabilisation/restoration of the military infrastructure to progressively open up more of the defensive infrastructure to the public.
  12. Seek sponsorship of restoration work with major companies associated with the defence industry and relevant philanthropic organisations.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Harbour Trust and NPWS have a common objective of increasing visitor numbers to Middle Head. The indigenous and military history of and the extensive defence infrastructure remaining on Middle and Georges Heads represent a tremendous resource to promote the whole area as an important historic precinct. The Harbour and NPWS have committed to work together to achieve a whole of Middle Head approach to the future evolution of the precinct.

There is now an opportunity to capitalise on this immense historic potential to tell the story, attract visitors and preserve the rich heritage of Middle Head for future generations.

**APPENDIX C – Two examples of Corporate Support**

Two examples where the concept of philanthropic support might be duplicated on Middle Head are;

**The [Fairfax Track at North Head](#)**, which was financed by John Fairfax & Sons Limited, to mark the 150th anniversary of the first publication of the Sydney Herald

It offers superb views of Sydney Harbour and its headlands and an enjoyable, gentle walk. This 1.4km paved track starts at the end of North Head Scenic Drive and then loops around the top of North Head.

Google gives this walk a 96% rating from 71 reviews with the most spectacular views east, south and west over the harbour with the city of Sydney in the distance. It has easy motor access via North Head scenic drive with adjacent parking.

Its circuit connects three lookouts, which provide the kinds of views seen on Sydney postcards. It is ideal for families with children and is partially wheelchair accessible. It is also an exceptional walk for whale watchers during the June–July and August–October migration seasons.

Another example, the [Newcastle Memorial Walk](#), is a spectacular coastal walk which was two thirds funded by BHP Billiton.

The walk was built to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli in 1915 and the commencement of steel making in Newcastle. It acts as a magnificent memorial to the men and women of the Hunter who served their community and their country.

The walk features a 160 metre cliff top bridge adorned with steel silhouettes of soldiers inscribed with close to 4,000 family names of almost 11,000 known Hunter Valley men and women who enlisted during World War I. It also links to Newcastle Council's Bathers Way promenade development, a six kilometre coastal walk linking Newcastle's beaches and stretching from Merewether Ocean Baths to Nobbys Beach.

The structure cost \$4.5m to build and is a 450-meter long cliff top walkway that links Newcastle's Strzelecki Lookout to Bar Beach. BHP Billiton committed \$3million and Newcastle Council \$1.5million. It is the concept of corporate philanthropic funding that is significant.