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Meeting summary

Fernhill Estate community trustee board - Meeting 2, 2025

Date: Tuesday, 29 July 2025

Time: 6:00-7:30pm

Venue: Online

Attendees

CTB members: Shari Driver (Chair), Poonam Naik, Robert Bennett, Peter Harvey, Deputy Mayor Cr Ross Fowler OAM (Observer for Penrith City Council)

GSP staff: Ben Tax, Director Property Services; Lindsay Banffy, Director Community, Engagement and Partnerships

Secretariat: Jenny Gleeson, Community Engagement Manager

Apologies: Mayor Todd Carney

Absent: Nicholas Leech

Topic	Summary
Welcome and opening Shari Driver, Chair, Fernhill Estate CTB	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The meeting was opened by the Chair. An Acknowledgment of Country was given.• No conflicts of interest were declared.• Response to actions arising from Meeting 1, 2025 were noted.
Property and asset renewals update Ben Tax, Director Property Services, GSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GSP provided an update regarding recent property and asset renewal works undertaken at Fernhill Estate, as well as overview of upcoming works, to enhance the usability of the site.• The CTB raised the following comments and questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Regarding the fencing installed near the Biobank area, the CTB request information regarding the recent tree cutting.- Request more information on the long-term plans to restore the interior of the Main House. The CTB noted restoration works will be staged and are contingent on available funding and the balance with concern for potential loss of an important heritage item if repairs are neglected. The CTB



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	<p>requests a presentation on planned conservation and building maintenance works to a future meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why are the sewerage and septic works at the Equestrian Centre undertaken separate to any upgrades the Main House? GSP advised the current system was not coping and the upgrade works were a necessary part of GSP's obligations as a landlord. CTB requested details of septic works to be completed at Equestrian Centre. - Has analysis been undertaken regarding overall anticipated usage for the site in terms of sewerage, septic capacity and potable water, including the Main House and Daughter's Cottage?. Request GSP undertaken analysis of the water and wastewater capacity of the site. - Water supply and infrastructure concerns were raised in context of protecting the heritage item. Concern noted regarding bushfire season preparedness, Western Sydney Airport flight paths, and need for drinking water. Queries were raised regarding whether rainwater is captured from the roof and gutters of the Main House and surrounding structures; and ensuring sufficient onsite water for bushfire fighting purposes. <p>Action: GSP to provide response to the above questions/information requests.</p>
<p>Communications and Marketing update</p> <p>Lindsay Banffy, Director Community, Engagement and Partnerships, GSP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP provided an overview of the communication and marketing plan for Fernhill Estate, that in the immediate focus on generating awareness and driving visitation by building an engaged community and supporters of Fernhill Estate as it opens up as a public parkland over time. This is a similar approach to how audiences for other parks within the GSP estate have developed over time. GSP noted that the communications and marketing plan has been informed by strategic advice from the CTB to the GSPT Board. • The key target audiences for social media are local residents, community groups, families, heritage enthusiasts and nature/outdoor enthusiasts. • Regarding followers of existing social channels (Facebook and Instagram), GSP noted that 80% are female and 17% are from Mulgoa and 7% from Silverdale with the rest from Greater Sydney, including Penrith. • Penrith City Council are advocates for Fernhill Estate and support GSP on cross-promotional opportunities. • GSP's current focus is reactivating the guided tours (following roof restoration works) and the introduction of school holiday programs in 2026. • Wildlife posts receive positive engagement on other GSP channels. • The CTB raised the following comments and queries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In context of the Meeting 1 presentation regarding community programming, schools were noted as an important audience for public programs. GSP will promote community programs to schools and could consider school excursions in the future once access is resolved. - The importance of fostering a connection to place was noted. - Request GSP collect local histories (oral, written and photographic) exploring connections to Fernhill Estate including people related to the site and the Cox family. GSP noted a similar project previously undertaken for Parramatta Park.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will the video about the roof restoration works be used for advocacy, as demonstration of GSP's good management of the estate? GSP noted the video is an example of GSP fulfilling its custodian role and how small changes are enhancing the site over time, starting with heritage management. - Suggestion for post/story about the successful relocation of the Przewalski's horses. - Suggestion for user generated content such as bird watching groups sharing photos e.g. endangered Swift Parrots recently spotted in the Mulgoa Valley. GSP noted similar occurs for Western Sydney Parklands with amateur photographers allowing GSP to share / credit their images. - Garden societies/appreciation groups are a potential target audience. - Suggestion for provision of an audio guide for Fernhill Estate. - If attendance numbers are currently capped, how will GSP manage equity of access to the limited number of tickets for the self-guided walking trail on Sundays if they are allocated on a first come first served basis? All GSP parks have a first come first served basis, however there are wait lists for cancellations. <p>Action: GSP guidance requested regarding appropriate ways CTB members can pass on/promote Fernhill Estate information to their networks.</p> <p>Action: Request consideration be given to enabling vehicle access for patrons between the front entrance and Main House.</p> <p>Action: How does GSP manage booking requests by tourism operators regarding the Sunday self-guided walking trail?</p>
<p>Draft 2024 performance report Jenny Gleeson, Community Engagement Manager, GSP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSP provided an overview of the reporting requirement outlined in the Terms of Reference to evaluate the CTB's performance, including self-evaluation of its level of effectiveness against its purpose and responsibilities on an annual basis. • Members of the previous term were invited to complete the self-assessment survey. GSP provided an overview of the survey findings and next steps for reporting.
<p>Correspondence and other business / Next steps, thanks and close Shari Driver, Chair, Fernhill Estate CTB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Joint Select Committee has released its report into the review of the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i>, including several recommendations regarding CTB operations, membership and recruitment. • Meeting 3 will be held in person; this will be the first meeting with the new members. • The CTB suggested that the combined Meeting 4 could be held at Fernhill Estate.