



Better by Bicycle

Safer, sustainable streets for Port Macquarie

Manager, NPWS Planning and Assessment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

1/2/2026

Dear Planning & Assessment team,

SUBMISSION Re: The Lake Innes Nature Reserve, Innes Ruins Historic Site and Lake Innes State Conservation Area draft plan of management

Better By Bicycle Port Macquarie is the bicycle user group (BUG) for the Port Macquarie-Hastings area. Our primary role is to advocate for bicyclists and cycling infrastructure within our region. We also organise regular events for cyclists including organised group rides along the wonderful Googik Track, mentioned in the above plan. Our perspective, then, is particular to public access to and use of the area in order to both enjoy the natural environment and to link safely and efficiently to the wider active transport network.



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What we would like to see:

1. An enjoyable experience of being active and contemplative within the beautiful natural environment of Lake Innes.
2. Connection to and ownership and conservation of that environment by our community.
3. An opportunity for safe, healthy activity for people of all ages and abilities, from fitness enthusiasts to family outings.
4. A safer and less stressful active transport route for journeys, including regular commutes, between Port Macquarie and Lake Cathie
5. An additional resource for tourists and one which may, in its own right, attract tourists to our area and allow them to enjoy the above benefits.

We are excited by the prospect of an extension of the Googik Track through to Lake Cathie. Although we very much support it as beneficial for those walking, running or in disability chairs, we would particularly like it to enable bicycle use. The Bells Fire Trail gets little mention in the draft plan but its inclusion as part of an active transport network could greatly add value to such a network and mitigate against its unplanned usage as more members of the public access the conservation area. To achieve the above aims, we make the following recommendations, most of which are included in your exhibited draft:



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Our Recommendations:

1. Renaming the Googik Track by removing the specific descriptor of “walking track” as suggested in the Draft Plan
2. Building and maintaining a surface that is fine and firm enough for bicycle tyres down to 32C diameter without undue risk of ‘bogging’ in mud or of tyre punctures from sharp stones.
3. Ensuring there are no blind corners and that line of sight across any corners is adequate to enable cyclists and walkers to safely travel in opposing directions at varied speeds.
4. Design, particularly of drainage, to minimise significant inundation. If cyclists can’t be reasonably certain they can reach their destination they will choose, instead, to use the road and, even, the car.
5. Linkage, through multiple access points, to the existing or proposed bicycle network of quiet roads, shared paths and cycle lanes that is clearly signposted. Investment, however well intentioned, in a gold-standard trail will be largely wasted if cyclists and walkers are put off by a short stretch of busy road at the ends.
6. Clear signage, particularly at junctions.
7. Ideally infrastructure providing shelter, seating, drinking water and toilets on the longer stretches of trail.
8. Work with Council to ensure a safe route from the caravan park to the Googik is promoted and signposted - to encourage tourists and locals ride to the starting point - rather than parking on Lake Rd.
9. Install proper signage both on Lake Rd, Crestwood, SCAS, Jindalee Drive and The Ruins Way entrance visible from the road. Currently, the signage is so small you cannot see it from the road.

We note that the Googik Track already extends to The Ruins Gate and the Ruins Way but is not signposted as such or advertised as such. In fact, the NPWS website says it only extends to SCAS and is only 2 km long.



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Updating signage and the website to reflect its actual extent will make it a worthwhile tourist attraction in its own right even before the track is extended.

Community Support for Extending the Googik Track

Better By Bicycle Port Macquarie [social media](#) promoted the extension of the Googik track on 3 occasions in January 2026 - drawing a very strong positive response. The following table outlines the community sentiment from the 3 posts. You can see from the table below that community support for the extension of the Googik Track is overwhelmingly strong and positive - with our 3 posts on the extension garnishing only positive or neutral feedback. We expect that the number of submissions received on the Draft Master Plan would have peaked on Jan 19 -21 as per Table 1 results below. Click on the links in the table below to see the posts/reels and people's responses to the posts/reels.

Table 1: The response to BBBPMQ posts promoting the possible extension of the Googik Track.

Date	Post	N of likes	N of shares	Views	N people saying completed submission as a result	% positive or neutral comments
10 January	Post	124	17	21 K	2	100
14 January	Reel	279	26	21 K	4	100
19 January	Reel	93	16	9.6 K	19	100



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As you can see - the sentiment was very strongly in favour of extending the track.

Thank you very much for developing this draft plan and prioritising engagement with the public in both plan and, ultimately, in better access to our wonderful native environment. Please contact us if we may be of further support in this endeavour.

Yours faithfully, on behalf of Better By Bicycle,

Derek Archer
President

Tonia Woodberry
Secretary

Felicity Forth
Treasurer