

Timeline for Carol Ridgeway- Bissett's Application for Mambo -Wanda Wetlands to be declared an Aboriginal Place.

2011 – Carol Ridgeway Bissett walks through Mambo & Wanda Wetlands with an officer from National Parks, taking notes as Carol talks about landscape.

2012 – Application lodged with Dept Envir & Heritage, Newcastle by Carol Ridgeway- Bissett

6 - 9 June 2016 Auction 5.6h sold for \$250 000 to Paul Unicomb, developer of retirement villages, Maitland

September 2017 – Carol R-B writes a letter to Newcastle Office E & H enquiring about progress of claim. She is informed that the claim is now with Port Stephens Council.

Jan 2018 – Port Stephens Council unanimously decide to send a letter to NSW Premier asking for a buy back of Mambo. The Motion put by Councillor Jaimie Abbott includes this paragraph:

2) Recognises the need for the proposed declaration of Aboriginal Places at Wanda Wetland and Mambo Wetland to be prioritised and completed as soon as possible (ITEM NO. 1 FILE NO: 17/236390 RM8 REF NO: PSC2017-00019) Provided in the Background Report provided by PSC staff to the motion:

Aboriginal Place Declaration

Council and the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) agreed, circa 2013, that Council would consider four (4) Aboriginal Place nominations in the following order and potentially endorse same after a suitable management agreement had been established for the proposed places:

- a. Priority 1 - Soldiers Point – declared an Aboriginal Place in 2015 – current management agreement in place.*
- b. Priority 2 - Birubi Point – declared an Aboriginal Place in 2007 – management agreement scheduled for completion in mid-2018.*
- c. Priority 3 - Bagnalls Beach – Council received notification of an Aboriginal Place nomination circa 2005.*
- d. Priority 4 - Wanda Wetlands – Council received notification of an Aboriginal Place nomination circa 2013.*

The reasons for this approach were:

- To ensure that Council and the Aboriginal community were fully informed of the liberties and limitations that an Aboriginal Place declaration might have on the land.*
- To make the appropriate plans to resource any changes to land management prior to the Aboriginal Place being declared.*
- To align with advice from OEH and Aboriginal advisors that the cultural values of the sites are most clear and known at this time in the priority order.*

Council is aware that OEH is also in receipt of a nomination for Mambo Wetland and that when prioritised would be assessed concurrently with the nomination for Wanda Wetland. The reason for this approach is due to the proximity of both wetlands to each other and to streamline the consultation process into one Aboriginal Place nomination.

There are no scheduled timeframes or resources allocated within Council to progress any Aboriginal Places until the completion of the Birubi Point Aboriginal Place management plan. The consultation and approvals process for such a management agreement has shown to take upwards of 52 weeks per nomination.

Update Management Plan

The existing Plan of Management (2006) was developed by Council in consultation with key stakeholders being the Mambo Wetland Steering committee, representatives of the local aboriginal community and local Landcare groups. This existing Plan of Management has a strong environmental focus and provides guidance over the state of the environment within the bounds of the site as well as identifying potential threats to the Mambo Wetland area from external forces. The plan as currently adopted provides environmental safeguards relative to the Mambo Wetlands site and an update of the plan has not been identified as a priority to date. At present, Council does not have the resources or funding for the review of this plan within the next 2 years given the existing program of works and review priorities.

April 2019 – MWWCG approach PSC about progress of Aboriginal Place nomination in Mambo Reserve.

June 2019 – Matt Kean and Rob Stokes make a joint statement confirming the buy back of Mambo

June 2019 – MWWCG approach PSC about progress of Aboriginal Place in Mambo Reserve.

June 2019 – Response from Group Manager Development Services.

September 2019 – Emails sent to Kate Washington, MP for Port Stephens, David Shoebridge Greens MLC and the Ombudsmans Office about lack of progress on Carol's claim

27th October 2019 – MWWCG sends an email to Matt Kean Requesting funding for a revised PoM for Mambo Wetlands

30th October – Ombudsmans Office contacts Carol R-B

2nd Nov 2019 – Kathy Brown, Sec MWWCG, speaks with Environment Minister Matt Kean at Nature Conservation Council AGM re funding for a PoM for Mambo Wetlands. He advises that his good friend Ryan should be asked to write a letter requesting funding.

4th Nov 2019 – MWWCG write to Mayor Ryan Palmer advising of conversation with Minister Matt Kean

8th Nov 2019 – Response from Tim Crosdale advising that the Mayor will be requesting assistance from the Minister

26th November 2019 – Letter from Mayor Ryan Palmer to Matt Kean requesting \$80000 for PoM for both Bagnall's Beach and Mambo Wetlands

6th December 2019 – Letter from Sharon Molloy, A/Executive Director, Biodiversity and Conservation Division, Dept Planning, Industry and Environment. To MWWCG Re correspondence to Minister- she advises that a PoM is not necessary to begin the process of determining an Aboriginal Place and that there is an existing PoM, 2006.

15th December 2019 – MWWCG email to Mayor. Expressing disappointment that Bagnalls Beach has been included with the Mambo Wetlands claim and passing on the information from Sharon Molloy.

19th December 2019 – Letter from Katrine O’Flaherty, A/Director Hunter Central Coast, Biodiversity and Conservation, Environment, Energy and Science. (Dept Planning, Industry and Environment) advising the Mayor that request for funds has now been referred to Heritage NSW.

9th June 2020 – Meeting with Mayor Ryan Palmer and 3 members of Mambo Landcare group. Carol Ridgeway-Bissett, Melissa Pond, Kathy Brown. Ryan Palmer, Steve Bernasconi, Communications Section Manager, John Maretich, Assett Section Manager, Paul Burton, Senior Community & Recreation Planning Officer. Conclusion: we have to wait our turn

July 2021 – Letters to Ministers Kean and Harwon requesting information on progress of Aboriginal Place claim, Plan of Management for Wanda & Mambo Wetlands and damage to Wanda Wetlands

August 2021 – Local Land Services, tours Wanda Wetlands with Carol R-B and agrees to contact PSC about Wanda’s current status.

October 2021 – Email to East ward Councillors John Nell & Jaimie Abbott requesting information about current status of Mambo Wanda Plan of Management and Aboriginal Place claim. (see attached pdf)

To Councillors Jaimie Abbott and John Nell,

The Mambo Wanda Wetlands Conservation Group, MWWCG, has been concerned for some time at the delay in the recognition of Mambo Wanda Wetlands as an Aboriginal Place. We now find that Wanda Wetlands has not been subject to a Council resolution classifying it as a Culturally Significant Site under the Local Government Act, even though this was probably Council’s intention back in the 1990’s when PSC decided not to use it as a housing estate.

Please read the letter attached which contains a timeline of activities that show many people over the years have been making efforts to have the issue of Aboriginal Place recognition resolved. We have worked closely with Carol Ridgeway- Bissett to help resolve this issue and to write this letter.

We hope you will be able to assist.

Kind regards,

Kathy Brown

October 2021 – Email re progress of request for financial assistance made by PSC in 2019 for revised PoM for Mambo Wanda Wetlands. She advises that no funds are available at this time.

10th June 2024 – Enquiry to PSC as to progress with the application for Mambo Wanda Wetlands to be declared an Aboriginal Place.

21st June 2024 – Acknowledgement of letter, yes we will enquire, Executive Assistant

8th August 2024 – Follow up email asking about our enquiry in June 2024