

Monday 13 October 2014

LOOKING GLASS BAY PATH UPGRADE Ryde River Walk Final Stage Construction

Construction of new path works at Looking Glass Bay Park get under way this week, marking the final stages of construction of the Ryde River Walk, the 10km pedestrian pathway along the northern shore of the Parramatta River.

The path upgrade, along the creek line in Looking Glass Bay, will provide path users all-weather access through one of the most picturesque sections of the park, with minimal impact on the endangered seagrass and saltmarsh vegetation communities on the water's edge.

The upgrade replaces a dirt track and includes a new non-slip concrete path with defined edgings, turf and comfortable seating. New stairs, a new bridge and transformed entry points with signage will finish the work due to be completed by February 2015.

Local residents have been notified that there will be no access to sections of the pathway during the period of works and park signage also details closure dates and alternative routes.

Looking Glass Bay at Gladesville is a classified bird sanctuary with open bushland areas and is well known to locals as a great spot to relax and take in the area's natural beauty and colonial history.

This tiny bay is acknowledged as the site of the earliest recorded contact between Europeans and local Aboriginal people. The event is recorded in the Diary of Lt William Bradley and took place on Friday 15 February 1788, twenty-two days after the arrival of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove when Captain Arthur Phillip's river exploration party "...stopped at a neck of land to breakfast. We were soon met there by a Native ... He laid down his spear as soon as he joined us ... he examined everything attentively and went into all our boats from one to the other ... The Governor gave this Man a looking glass*". There is a plaque commemorating this event (near rowing shed) and a bronze memorial in adjoining Banjo Paterson Park (site of Rockend Cottage where celebrated poet A.B. "Banjo" Paterson lived as a boy).

The park offers views along the River to Parramatta from a sandstone lookout with directional wheel. It contains an oak tree grown from an acorn collected from Captain Phillip's farm in Hampshire, England. It was also the site of Harold Meggitt Limited, a leading producer of the edible vegetable oil industry from 1923 to its closure in 1973.

* <http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/landscape/discovery/display/21251-captain-arthur-phillip>

Ryde River Walk along the northern foreshore of the Parramatta River linking a network of beautiful parks, playgrounds, sites and natural areas. It was created to improve the community's enjoyment of the unique attractions along the waterway with easy public access and enhanced recreational facilities.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: Ground Breaking Ceremony – start of new work on Ryde River Walk at Looking Glass Bay. Friday 17 October, 10.00am. Meet at Banjo Paterson Park carpark, Punt Road, Gladesville (past Police Station).
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