



Master Plan

Equestrian Park, Yarralumla ACT

Prepared for
Australian Capital Territory Equestrian
Association

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YARRALUMLA EQUESTRIAN PARK

MASTER PLAN

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN

SCALE: Not to Scale

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. PREFACE

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park outlined in this report is an exciting concept with potentially great attraction for local, national and ultimately international horse sports people.

The Yarralumla venue is particularly user-friendly tract of land for equestrian use. It has excellent flat areas, interesting terrain, excellent location, easy access and a superb environment of sweeping vistas punctuated by beautiful established plantings.

There are very few places in the world that allow an equestrian to ride for pleasure in a wonderful environment, take part in enjoyable competition or compete at serious elite level, all in the one site. As such the Equestrian Park should be treasured.

Australians participate in a wide range of horse activities as a part of our heritage. Some horse sports came with earliest pioneers, while others such as camp drafting developed from our way of life. Our romance with the horse has led us to import many other related sports from around the world. Our natural advantages have made us world leaders in a number of horse sports, where other peoples used to think they owned a dominant skill. The Australian Capital Territory is home to a wide range of horse related activity and is central to much of the nation's equestrian activity.

Within this study it appears that Canberra lacks good grade facilities for equestrian sports especially for the prestigious olympic disciplines. Equestrian Park offers the clear potential to stage elite international level contests in at least four official disciplines, Showjumping, Dressage, Eventing and Endurance. It currently hosts an International Endurance Competition 'CIE'.

However Equestrian Park in its present condition offers a modest low to medium competition and training facility to several equestrian disciplines, hosts a pony club and provides a venue for recreational riding. The site has a much greater potential.

At this stage of its development it must be doubtful that Equestrian Park can generate sufficient activity and consequent resource to maintain itself in a good way in the medium and longer-term future. The National Equestrian Centre at "Werribee Park" lay for many years like a sterile white elephant, not particularly useful, under-utilised and under maintained. Today with some more facility and proactive management, it is a hive of daily activity, all its facilities in use not just for the big events but also almost every weekend of the year.

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park challenge is to either develop a vibrant, viable and highly functional equestrian resource or allow the site to drift slowly towards a non-viable and unsustainable use of a truly beautiful and valuable tract of public land.

I am indebted to all of those people who have been so helpful and so generous with their time and expertise in the production of the initial draft master plan and then in its final development. I also note my gratitude to the Managers of the "Werribee Park" National Equestrian Centre and the Albury-Wodonga Equestrian Centre for their assistance

1.2. BACKGROUND

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park is a tract of Territory Land comprising approximately 52ha set aside for public equestrian use. Under the National Capital Plan it is classified as designated Land, which means that any works on the site require Works Approval from the National Capital Authority. Any works proposals need to be consistent with both the National Capital Plan and Territory Plan.

Overall management responsibility for the area within the ACT Government rests with Canberra Urban Parks and Places in the Department of Urban Services. It is currently held under licence by the ACT Equestrian Association, with on site management carried out by the Equestrian Park Management Group.

The equestrian usage of the park extends back to the early 1960s and it has been seriously considered as a venue for a true "National Equestrian Centre" to rival the enormous complexes of Germany or France. However it has developed as a generally open access park for recreational horse riders and grounds for lower level equestrian competitions and training.

In February 2002 the ACTEA commissioned Michael Creber to prepare a Master Plan for the development of the park in a planned and strategic way. This Master Plan represents a developed statement of proposed

directions that remains open for further adjustment as may be recommended by the various stakeholders.

1.3. SITE ASSESSMENT

- The net site area of approximately 52ha, including the area described as the Cotter Plots but exclusive of the 'Tree Surgery Yard' makes this site suitable for a wide range of equestrian activity from recreational to elite levels.
- The terrain is extremely appealing in a world competitive sense.
- The site is exceptionally well serviced and enjoys very good access.
- The surrounding area can provide a wide range of complementary and supporting facilities.
- The park has convenient access the Equestrian Trails.
- The park hosts International level Endurance competition.
- The venue has a proven record of hosting Eventing at elite national level as a result of excellent site use by the designer.
- The grass equestrian grounds beside Yarralumla Creek are extensive and provide a valuable facility although not level enough for top competition.
- The Cotter Plots offer many congenial opportunities but the need to safeguard the trees means that the use of this area must be carefully managed.
- The northern paddock offers a wonderful facility for serious horse exercise, recreational riding and cross-country training or competition.
- The lack of a complete boundary fence poses some serious considerations of safety
- The beautiful and congenial park areas to the east of Yarralumla Creek cannot be accessed rendering them of negative value.
- There is an area of very serious erosion at the northern end of Yarralumla Creek that will devour a significant area of the park if it is not addressed.
- Casual usage is very destructive of the grass surfaces of the riding grounds along Yarralumla Creek.
- The main gate does not identify the Equestrian Park in a good way or make any positive statement about the activities taking place.
- Access points and the main driveway are a difficult challenge, as functional access must be offered to various stakeholders of the park while horses must be prevented from straying onto the Cotter Road.

1.4. CRITERIA OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The various equestrian disciplines are continuing to develop in many countries around the world including Australia. As they grow, their standards become more exacting. Generally, people are not prepared to support, watch or participate in equestrian activities that endanger the health, soundness or welfare of the horses involved. Equally the public do not attend any equestrian events that are not well staged at good standard in congenial venues.

The single most important criterion for a successful horse sport venue in the modern world is **good footing**. Hard going ruins horse's joints, boggy going strains their muscles and tendons while uneven going does both. As horses become more and more valuable good and elite competitors become progressively more reluctant to support venues with footing that is consistently unsatisfactory for them. Amongst others two elite showjumping riders are extremely critical of ground surfaces that have recently been offered in Canberra. The same issue affects the dressage community with the continuing diminution of the "Canberra Classic" despite the considerable strength of active dressage in the ACT

While turf is the perfect equestrian surface its maintenance under heavy usage is extremely demanding making it generally unviable in heavy use situations.

The initial needs study identified the wants of the various equestrian bodies and individuals in the ACT. The Master Plan will envisage a wider, more active role for the Equestrian Park to allow it to meet the identified needs of the community and the equestrian organisations. The Yarralumla Equestrian Park must justify the resources required for any upgrading by looking aggressively outwards, encouraging positive needs and greater levels of activity.

Concepts of international or major national standard can be confusing. There are strictly private properties boasting multiple outdoor arenas and huge indoor arenas, surfaced with the most sophisticated and expensive footings available. In France, one of the great, state owned centres has five indoor arenas, about fourteen all weather arenas, over 20 km of all weather riding tracks and keeps over 400 horses in palatial stables all the year. By international comparison the concept of this Master Plan is slender but functional, aiming to meet needs efficiently. However we cannot recommend the use of sub-standard sport facilities. An enhanced facility at Yarralumla Equestrian Park would place members of ACTEA in an exceptionally good position to develop and

promote several major national and international competitions each year, due to the centrally located geographic position of the city and its extensive amenities. The need has been identified to stage significant competitions in dressage, showjumping, eventing and endurance.

The special and historic position of Canberra Lakes Pony Club in the park has been noted along with its expressed wish to maintain its customary usages of the venue and its own exclusive leaseholds. With a decent level of goodwill and cooperation these wants are perfectly compatible to any proposed development. Moreover CLPC and other park users may well be able to achieve worthwhile and mutually beneficial synergies.

If ACTEA and the Management Group are to maintain a decent equestrian park they will require resources that must be raised from its users, therefore access to facilities cannot be universally free. The alternative is that some other body must maintain the park. Unavoidably there are issues of equity to be resolved.

Over recent years the park's operation has relied on the extensive voluntary support and resources of Joe and Sue Johnston. This support has been of great benefit to the park users but cannot be regarded as equitable or sustainable in the longer term.

If as indicated in the Needs Study research the ACT equestrian community wants a decent recreational, training and competition public venue it must support a concept that can maintain itself into the future.

The impact of the Christmas 2001 bushfires and subsequent flooding is considerable and the clean up and general restoration will be the over riding priority.

The restoration of Yarralumla Creek within the park is outside the direct scope of this report although its current condition has a major impact on the use of the venue. Recent indication that Environment ACT will undertake studies directed at the restoration and enhanced management of the watercourse is extremely positive for the ongoing development of Equestrian Park. Various proposals in this document are related to or are dependent on the upgrading of the creek and should be considered in that context.

1.5. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This summary contains the major recommendations deriving from the proposals in this report. These are the key practical facilities and do not include all suggestions.

1.5.1. Proposed Infrastructure

The facilities that are proposed for the Yarralumla Equestrian Park include:

- An excellent low maintenance outdoor all-weather arena.
- A good grade turf playing field.
- A large equestrian playing field
- A sand warm up area.
- A general exercise and training field.
- Wide ranging cross-country infrastructure for training and competition
- Pony Club ground.
- Secured horse accommodation.
- Additional horse yards
- Recreational riding areas

1.5.2. Supporting Facilities

The equestrian facilities will require support infrastructure including:

- Amenities for males and females including lavatories, showers, changing rooms, and facilities for disabled persons.
- Camping and caravan areas with and without powered sites.
- Competition Secretary's office and associated facilities.
- Enhanced competitors' car parking.
- First Aid centre.
- Hose down bays and sand roll.
- Spectator car parking.
- Some replacement planting.
- Upgrading of internal roads.
- Insertion of additional gateways
- Additional boundary fencing
- Establishment of workable creek crossings in Yarralumla Creek
- An enhanced front entry

2. NEEDS STUDY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The emphasis of this study has been to establish the expressed needs of organisations and individuals involved in various types of horse sport and recreation within the Australian Capital Territory. Some consideration has also been given to the potential of an equestrian site in the ACT and its relationship to strong discipline specific equestrian populations in New South Wales and beyond.

Australian equestrian sports are particularly varied. At the specific level horses just do not equal horses; showjumpers do not do the same tricks as cutting horses. As such the different sporting and recreational styles require different infrastructures, especially in tread surfaces.

This study has attempted to identify those groups and activities for which the Equestrian Park is a potentially attractive venue as opposed to those who are already well served by other venues. To this end David Hogg's draft report¹ has been a particularly valuable tool and I note my gratitude to Mr. Hogg for being so generous with his time and resource.

I am particularly grateful to all those people who helped so generously with their experience and expertise in the various meetings and inquiries and look forward to their continuing involvement and help.

2.2. DISCIPLINES IDENTIFIED

These disciplines are existing users of the Yarralumla Equestrian Park

Showjumping	ACT Showjumping Club
Horse Trials	National Capital Horse Trials Association
Horse Showing	Australian Palomino Horsebreeding Association
Dressage & other equestrian activities	Jerrabomberra Riding Club
Recreational Riding	Private Individuals

¹ David Hogg Pty. Ltd. Phase 1 Discussion Paper Strategic Development and Management Plan for Equestrian Sport and Recreation Facilities in the ACT. January 2002

Pony Club	Canberra Lakes Pony Club Zone 16 Pony Club
Endurance	ACT Endurance Riders Association Capital Territory Division ERA

These disciplines can be identified as potential users of the Equestrian Park

Dressage	ACT Dressage Association
Harness	Canberra District Harness Society
Horse Showing	Various Associations

2.3. RESEARCH

Extensive Site Inspection

Meeting with the Yarralumla Equestrian Park Management Group representing all park users and with members present directly representing:

Jerrabomberra Riding Club
National Capital Horse Trials Association
Canberra Lakes Pony Club

Meetings with:

Richard Rand, ACT Sport & Recreation
David Hogg
Tony Sadler, General Manager EPIC
Grant Hughes, ACT Showjumping Club
Rachel Stephen-Smith, National Capital Horse Trials Association
Kay Dahlberg, ACT Dressage Association
Joe and Sue Johnston, Equestrian Park Management
Grant Johnston, Vice President ACTEA
Lynne McWilliam, President ACTEA

Telephone and email consultation with:

Dr. Steve Roberts, Capital Territory Division Endurance Riders Association

2.4. COMPETITION NEEDS

- **DRESSAGE**

Canberra Classic Dressage Championships, (potential International Dressage Competition 'CDI' and/or World Cup Qualifying International Dressage Competition 'CDIW')

Dressage Competition Days every second month

- **SHOWJUMPING**

World Cup 'CSIW'

11 Competition Days per year

- **HORSE TRIAL**

National Capital Horse Trials (potential for International One Day Event 'CIC' or World Cup qualifying International One Day Event 'CICW')

Horse Trial for all grades

Pony Club Horse Trial for all grades

- **ENDURANCE**

Primary base for major International Endurance Competition 'CEI'

Base for another major national competition

- **HORSE SHOWS & GYMKHANAS**

Small to medium sized shows and gymkhanas at various levels under the aegis of a range of organisers

- **ARABIANS**

Potential small Arabian Shows

- **ADULT/RECREATIONAL RIDING**

Several events across the range of classic disciplines and gymkhanas

- **PONY CLUBS**

CLPC rallies and intra club events

Possible Zone or State contests for showjumping or dressage or sports

Intra Club competition

2.5. TRAINING NEEDS

- **DRESSAGE**

Possibility of regular clinics
Private training

- **SHOWJUMPING**

Potential for clinics
Potential for training days
Private schooling

- **ENDURANCE**

Convenient entry point to trail system

- **HORSE TRIAL**

Potential for several high profile clinics and extensive lower level training
Private schooling

- **PONY CLUB**

Home ground for CLPC members

- **RECREATIONAL RIDING AND GENERAL EXERCISING**

Daily general use

- **PRIVATE RIDERS**

Safe, attractive area for private schooling and conditioning. Potentially a centre where riders can reach horse health services, chiropractic, physiotherapy, dentistry, farriery and other equestrian resources.

2.6. FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

DRESSAGE

All weather surface. Provision for nine 60m x 20m competition arenas.
A calm ambience. Two warm-up areas. Horse Truck and Trailer Parking.

Substantial overnight stabling for 60 to 100 horses, including an area capable of being readily secured. Stalls or yards for 50 to 60 horses. Onsite camping with power and facilities. Amenities block, Equipment storage. Competition administration area with food preparation capacity and luncheon area. Spectator facilities. Public address system.

SHOWJUMPING

Appropriate competition arena 80m x 60m or bigger, very good grade turf or suitable all weather surface. Final practice area, 40m x 20m minimum. Training/warm-up areas with good footing of at least 10,000m². Horse accommodation including an area capable of being secured for competitions under FEI rules (CSIW). Horse Truck and Trailer Parking. Onsite camping with power, facilities/amenities.

Spectator vantage for a crowd of approximately 3000 spectators. Public facilities. Public address system. Public parking. Appropriate sites and support services to accommodate sponsors, VIPs, and media. Sites and services for appropriate public catering. Competition office and administration facility.

HORSE TRIAL

Cross-country course line potential to include both sides of Yarralumla Creek. Progressive repair, redevelopment and enhancement of pre-existing course infrastructure. Potentially some specific sites for cross-country obstacle teaching. Arenas and general facilities as for showjumping and dressage.

ENDURANCE

Securely enclosed yard and stable horse accommodation up to 200 horses. Competition office. Public address system. Veterinary Inspection area preferably with flood lighting. Function area with catering facilities. Camping area to accommodate at least 100 vehicles. Powered and non-powered camping sites, Toilet block with showers. Horse washes.

HORSE SHOWS & GYMKHANAS

Minimum playing field area of 20,000m². Competitor parking. Horse washes. Loading ramp. Toilets. Canteen, Kiosk, or other catering facility. Secretary's office. Public address system.

PONY CLUB

CLPC leases two specific allotments within the park that accommodate its general arena, sand dressage arena, equipment storages and club house. The club utilises the northern paddock for its cross-country needs and has traditionally enjoyed access to the playing fields for rallies.

For larger inter-club and zone contests facility requirements are similar to those outlined above for the various specific disciplines.

RECREATIONAL AND ADULT RIDING

Facility needs for events and gymkhanas are similar to those described for the specific disciplines.

Day-to-Day Recreational Riding, Horse Exercise and Private Schooling

A substantial pool of riders actually and potentially utilise the public riding facility of the Yarralumla Equestrian Park. The general use areas of the park are a delightful and functional venue in which to work horses and ride for pleasure. The chief facility requirement is to maintain accessibility to the various areas of the site and to maintain good footing throughout the site. Equestrians using the park in this way should also be reasonably secure ensuring that a loose or even a bolting horse is unlikely to escape from the confines of the park and become a hazard to the public at large.

- The park areas should be enclosed.
- There must be access to both sides of Yarralumla Creek

2.7. JOINT NEEDS AND FACILITIES

VEHICLE PARKING *for both equestrian participants and for spectators.*

CENTRE MANAGEMENT OFFICES

COMPETITION SECRETARY'S OFFICE

VETERINARY FACILITY

Quarantine stables and Swabbing box.

An area suitable for Veterinary Treatment, Equine Chiropractic and Physiotherapy. A suitable facility for shoeing horses.

LANDSCAPING

The Park has been significantly effected by the Christmas 2001 bushfires. There is a need for some restorative planting especially at the end of the main driveway for both aesthetic purposes and for shade. The western side of the Cotter Plots would benefit from additional windbreak/screen planting. Several proposed infrastructure developments will require complimentary landscape planting.

DRAINAGE

Storm water run-off from housing developments to the south of Cotter Road drains through the Cotter Plot toward Yarralumla Creek. This run-off should ideally be retarded and certainly the drainage system between the main driveway and Yarralumla Creek must be upgraded as part of any development in that area

2.8. SUMMARY

The investigations have established facility needs that are common to many of the interested parties and organisations.

2.8.1. Equestrian Facilities

- High grade all weather, low maintenance arena capable of constant usage.
- Extensive soundly pastured playing fields.
- Truck/Float Parking.
- Public Car Parking.
- Horse accommodation of various standards.
- Camping facilities both powered and un-powered along with amenities (showers and toilets).
- Front of House competition facility to accommodate event secretariat, scoring, catering for officials.
- Showers and Toilets

- The ability to access all parts of the site (including the east side of Yarralumla Creek and good footing throughout all the riding areas
- Wash Bays and associated facilities.
- Secure enclosure.
- Club House facility

2.8.2. Engineering Requirements

- Land forming and drainage.
- Ongoing pasture improvement.
- Internal water supply for human and equine requirements.
- Internal water supply for irrigation.
- Provision of electricity and possibly gas to the front of house site and camping site.
- Provision of sewerage and wastewater facilities to both sites and a stables compound.
- Development of all weather competitor vehicle parking
- Development and enhancement of both vehicle and horse access roads within the core area.
- Appropriate complimentary landscaping.

2.8.3. Other Requirements

- Purpose designed cross-country **training** facilities are not generally available. The provision of such a facility and its responsible management deserve further discussion. The site is eminently suitable.

- An indoor arena did not rate highly on anybody's wish list. As there are numerous existing arenas in the immediate area the real usage may be limited.
- Driving/Harness has not been identified as having any positive need but its requirements would be readily accommodated on the facilities outlined above.
- Many of the proposed competition uses will require more or less extensive spectator seating, lavatories, catering and management facilities, which may be best supplied on a temporary/hire basis.
- The same competitions will need quite extensive hospitality areas that should probably be considered in the same way.

2.9. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Canberra Lakes Pony Club is a special stakeholder in the Equestrian Park due to its occupancy of some 20 years and to its exclusive leases on two allotments within the site. CLPC is also a key member of the Equestrian Park Management Group and as such must accept collective responsibility for the general use, upkeep and continuing viability of the venue.
- The general open recreational use of the park is a hugely valuable resource for hundreds of riders who maintain horses in the area. This use also confers a public worth and legitimacy for dedicated equestrian activity on such a beautiful and valuable tract of land.
- General open public usage however has some potential negative aspects
 - The imperative to ensure reasonable standards of safety for users and general public.
 - A need to generate sufficient resource to maintain a splendid recreational facility
- **The Equestrian Park is used for private lessons and private training as well as its regular recreational use.** To achieve this the venue will need to be a great deal more functional for these purposes.
- Regular usage must however be within responsible structured guidelines. **An operation of this sort has a duty of care to all of its users.**

- While the potential for non-equestrian events and activities is limited due to the excellent facilities of the ACT, some events may become feasible over time. My belief is that the centre should be developing its identified facilities, while accepting that they may have other viable uses for the wider community.
- Within the needs of the equestrian events that have been undertaken to date, the existing access has been reasonably adequate. However further consideration must be given to access and egress from/into both Cotter Road and Lady Denman Drive on a normal basis, particularly with the increased traffic flow along Cotter Road.
- For major events the implications of egress for a large number of vehicles into Lady Denman Drive must be considered.

3. THE CONCEPT PLAN

3.1. FACILITY LAYOUT

The effective Core Centre and all its associated facilities will be located along either side of the main driveway between the Cotter Road entry and the turning circle in front of the Yarralumla woolshed.

The initial overwhelming impact of the Equestrian Centre is the breathtaking vista from Cotter Road looking north along Yarralumla Creek. All development should respect this very special landscape and use it to make the casual observer aware that it is an area of top-level equestrian activity.

The immediate features will be the beautiful low-lying number 1 Playing Field with the landscaped central all-weather arena in a vista framed by the Yarralumla Creek, the dense elm trees of the entry and new plantings associated to the proposed all-weather arena.

The adjacent entry point should be developed to modestly compliment the playing facilities. I do not consider that a suitable well defined entry will need to be an "edifice", merely workmanlike fencing and clean signage that remains in harmony with the copse of special clone elm trees on either side of the drive.

The number 1 Playing Field has and will retain many of the intimate spectator qualities of a playhouse theatre. Consideration should be given to the possible development of landscape showjumping features. Recreational riders will be discouraged from tracking across the playing surface by enclosing their access track in a lane parallel to Cotter Road bringing them into the site beside the main drive.

The all-weather arena will be flanked on its long axis by spectator viewing mounds. The south mound also offers vantage over number 1 Playing Field. On the east side existing vegetation will provide a serene and aesthetically pleasing backdrop. There is sufficient area to accommodate VIP marquees and priority viewing for major events on the west side of the arena without impinging on competitor access

To the north of the all-weather arena will be a small sand final warm-up arena. The existing large number 2 Playing Field with an area of some 20,000m² provides a wonderful general facility and should be maintained as such. To incorporate another style of arena in this area would spoil a great facility and reduce the overall utility of the park. The existing

kiosk and lavatories are limited but adequate for all most activities and should definitely be retained.

The impact of the Christmas 2001 bushfire in the area described as the Cotter Plots has been significant. For the equestrian community this may well have been a mixed blessing. The scale of the cleanup is considerable and some replanting for screening, windbreak and shade should be undertaken. Conversely good areas of this complex landscape have been opened up in a way that will allow desirable equestrian infrastructure development in a lovely environment without adverse impact on the enduring values of the former arboretum as identified by Dr. Robert Boden². It will also be very much more feasible to regulate general equestrian use of this area in accordance with Dr. Boden's subsequent management plan³.

The area of the Cotter Plot is sheltered, generally well screened with a really comfortable ambience. Most significantly it offers a good area that is securely enclosed offering a facility to accommodate horses on the site both safely and in accordance with the International Equestrian Federation's rules requiring stable security and exercise supervision at international level events.

Additionally the Cotter Plot offers an excellent area for exercise and training in a naturally undulating terrain.

This area is also congenial to post competition veterinary examinations for both Endurance and Eventing.

It is proposed that the existing road system through the Cotter Plot be enhanced to allow the one-way movement of both cars with floats and horse transports through the area on a one way system allowing set-down/pick-up of horses, access to camp sites and to secure competition parking.

The existing works shed, tearoom (currently a residence) and storage area should be maintained. It is not envisaged that the tearoom should continue as a dwelling but rather as a Park Manager and Event Stable Manager's office. It would fulfil both functions admirably with modest repairs and maintenance.

² Dr. Robert Boden, Robert Boden & Associates, for City Operations, ACT Department of Urban Services, Planting Assessment Cotter Road Plot Block 668 Yarralumla, ACT, April 1996

³ Robert Boden & Associates, prepared for Canberra Urban Parks and ACT Bureau of Sport, Recreation and Racing, Management Plan Cotter Plot Block 668, Weston Creek, April 1997

Immediately to the north of the tearoom is an area that could offer in the long term a practical site for the approximately 60 stables identified by the Needs Study. The site is easily secured, has immediate access to the readily controlled number 3 field, good access to the competition areas and is easily screened from the main drive and the general public. Stables would be terraced into the existing slope and equipped with manure pits and adjacent wash down bays. Two stables per block of 16 would be set aside for services.

In the interim it will be feasible to hire good temporary stables from Sydney for major competitions. Cost to competitors based on hire cost recovery would be approximately the same as that at EPIC with the great competitor advantage of having everything on site.

Close by there will be adequate angle parking for competitor vehicles along both sides of the existing security fence. This area is recommended as a suitable position for powered campsites. As a camping area it would accommodate approximately 50 vehicles. When demand is sufficient more area can be developed at the northern end of the Cotter Plots. Adjacent to stables and close to powered camping is a suitable position for a competitor specific ablution and toilet block. At this stage in the planning process consideration should be given to maximal financial efficiency by using a permanently placed transportable facility that is well screened from the main driveway.

The Capital Territory Division of the Endurance Riders Association stages the highest profile international equestrian event in the ACT and little of the infrastructure outlined above meets their specific competition needs. It is envisaged that the area previously described as the "cricket wicket pug dump" be developed as an informal non-powered campsite with adjacent horse yards in the shelter of the existing stand of trees along the western side of the area. It is noted that this area contains several valuable trees that will need to be protected. The area also has the remnants of cricket wicket "pug" that will need to be removed.

It is suggested that the narrow open entry point to the northern paddock that is to the west of the woolshed should be further complicated by a "chicane". Alternatively the access may be moved to the east of CLPC's compound allowing all 'day to day' equestrian traffic to avoid the main drive and its potential risks and conflicts.

The principal proposal for this area is that the fire damaged perimeter fence be replaced and extended to provide full enclosure beside the bicycle track above the Molonglo River. There should be a properly constructed gateway allowing access for equines and vehicles out towards the trail system.

As at the time of my site inspection some 30% of the northern paddock was inaccessible due to erosion in Yarralumla Creek and of no benefit to the Equestrian Park or its users. Two crossings are necessary to allow the park to meet the various requirements of the Needs Study. The northern Crossing B is severely damaged and may best be relocated and constructed on a different principle. The southern Crossing A is in better condition and capable of cost effective restoration that is recommended as a high priority. It is recommended that this point should be developed as a double crossing – effectively combining the functions of the old arrangement of crossing points at either end of the paddock. This arrangement can work well for a high level cross-country competition.

Beyond the specific equestrian reference of this study is an area of serious erosion over some 200m at the northern end of the site. This area will continue to degrade and significantly damage the site if it is not addressed.

Spectator car parking for major events is a challenge. At events where spectator numbers are up to several hundred, the main drive and playing field verges are adequate and user friendly. At a somewhat larger event it may be good practice to open an area of whichever playing field is not in use for spectator parking. This arrangement will always require managerial analysis because there is an inevitable impact of direct damage and soil compaction involved that requires repair. For an event of several thousand spectators or for one that utilises all of the playing fields another solution is required.

The isolated block bounded by Cotter Road and Lady Denman Drive was once used as a part of the equestrian park. More recently Canberra Urban Parks and Places have used it as a 'tree surgery yard'. While the site is no longer used for the above purpose it remains the responsibility of Canberra Urban Parks and Places and is likely to be used for some material storage. However it is a feasible place to park spectator cars for major events held in Equestrian Park. With good management the area should accommodate at least 1500 cars.

It is not practical for a crowd to cross the Yarralumla Creek on the Cotter Road Bridge so a pedestrian bridge in the creek would be required for this solution. The creek is well overgrown in this area with a narrow stable watercourse. A pedestrian bridge of similar solid structure to those recommended for the equestrian/vehicle crossings should be feasible in this area. The scene can be developed as a very inviting entry point through the trees leading into the framed expanse of competition fields.

3.2. LANDSCAPING

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park is in essence a wonderful, congenial landscape environment for horses and people. The required landscape work is in bushfire restoration and ongoing maintenance.

The layout of the major playing fields is determined by the line of the creek and the contours and therefore need to be broken into individual sections by the viewing mounds and suggested plantings.

3.3. SERVICES

A full range of services is available within the venue including:

- electricity
- reticulated water
- sewerage
- telephone

All services will be required for the fully developed centre and are available in the Cotter Plot.

A trunk sewerage line runs between the main drive and the various arenas allowing cost effective effluent disposal from all of the proposed facilities. A sewerage line also runs through the Cotter Plots on an east west axis along the south side of number 3 Field.

Telephone service has been connected to the existing tearoom/dwelling.

3.4. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The principal storm-water issue is caused by the runoff from hard surfaces in Weston Creek and up-stream on Yarralumla Creek. It is recommended that the overflow from the Cotter Plot dam be directed to the watercourse through clear and substantial drainage lines.

Run-off from the covered areas could be:

- a. directed to the watercourse as above.
- b. directed to the sewerage line on the east side of the drive.

Run-off from the arenas, car parks and landscaped areas should discharge to the appropriate floodway.

Run-off from the stables and yards should be considered specially. Due to their restricted usage the effluent from the yards is unlikely to be very significant. However it is recommended that effluent from the proposed horse accommodation area be discharged into the adjacent sewerage line.

4. A DEFINITION OF THE FACILITIES

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park facilities are intended for use by a wide range of equestrian interests. Broad-spectrum use is central to the concept of this plan.

Only the cross-country course is discipline specific. Discussions arising from the report should be aimed not at exclusivity but at satisfying the widest possible range of requirements in the most efficient manner.

4.2. MAJOR FACILITIES

The list includes both existing and proposed facilities.

- The Outdoor All Weather Arena, 9600m²
- The small Playing Field 1, approximately 10,000 m²
- The large Playing Field 2, approximately 20000 m²
- The Cotter Plots Field 3, approximately 10,000 m²
- The Cross-country Course, approximately 3,750m in length over varied terrain
- Extensive open areas for pleasure riding, conditioning and hacking out

4.3. SUPPORTING FACILITIES

- Stable area to accommodate up to 60 horses
- Existing yards for 75 horses
- Additional yards for up to 100 horses
- Competitors' parking and camping area with powered sites
- Manager's/Stable Manager's office
- Horse washes and sand roll
- Competitor ablution and lavatory facility
- Kiosk and limited lavatory facility
- Competitor's informal camping areas
- Turn-out yards of 0.2ha in area in open parts of the Cotter Plots

- Spectator car-parking
- Club House

4.4. *ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS*

- Upgrading of the internal roads
- Upgrading of the turning circle in front of the Yarralumla Woolshed
- Perimeter security

5. OUTLINE OF THE INDIVIDUAL FACILITIES

5.1. MAJOR FACILITIES

The combination of proposed and existing fields of play at the Yarrlaumla Equestrian Park is impressive. The total playing surface on the creek flat level will be in the order of 47,000m².

5.1.1. The All Weather Arena

An all weather arena was the most important single facility identified by the Needs Study. It is the focal facility of the whole project.

Why is the All Weather Arena so important?

Quality Footing is vital.

"The horse has evolved to perform best on *good turf* and desert sand. On both of these surfaces there is some cushioning effect to minimise jarring and, equally important, some forward movement of the foot on landing to give some controlled deceleration. Both these properties help to keep the horse sound."⁴

Where turf is overused or used under wet conditions, its protective root growth is destroyed; the ground becomes poached and compacted, in effect destructive and potentially dangerous.

The All Weather Arena projected here will have to be capable of regular use, under all conditions. It must be able to be readily restored and it should be of a quality where every competitor in a competition can be confident of a consistent surface quality.

The suggested site was formerly a useful riding area within the park that has become waterlogged, choked with wild phalaris and poplar trees.

⁴ LODGE R. and SHANKS S. All Weather Surfaces for Horses. J.A. Allen & Co. London, 1994

This area recommended is 120m x 80m. The size is considerable, but necessary to satisfy the requirements identified by the Needs Study. It will accommodate:

- A substantial Grand Prix Showjumping course and a small final practise area.
- Two lesser Showjumping courses.
- Three full size Dressage arenas, *within the rules of the discipline*.
- Specialty horse shows.
- Breed shows.
- Arena Polo.
- Carriage Driving.
- Lungeing.
- All year round training schooling and general riding in all the activities identified above.
- Non-Equestrian activities and exhibitions.

The whole big arena may be used for two or possibly more different functions at the same time. There are various means of delineation between areas such as dressage chain, pot plants, temporary fence sections or hazard tape. One impressive solution used at the Mark Phillips, Gleneagles centre in Scotland was a modular kickboard unit of approximately 1200mm high and a similar length on an A frame.

The arena will have easy access from the stable area and general competitor parking areas. The access will be from the west side through three discrete entrance points. To maximise the full functionality of the arena a sand-surfaced final warm-up arena is proposed immediately to the north

Where competitors require more extensive warm up facilities they would be able to use the playing field in the Cotter Plot or on a dedicated part of the Number 2 playing field.

The arena can be completed with various surfaces requiring more or less maintenance and watering or no watering at all. The last is strongly recommended.

This area is designed for every day use as much as competition use. It should be the most attractive outdoor place to school a horse in Canberra.

The most satisfactory preparation program for this arena will require:

- Clear, bulk level, surface perimeter drain and compact the site
- Import bulk fill to correct fall from an existing grade on the west extremity, compact to approximately 95%
- Add sub-surface layer of recycled concrete or compacted 30 mm minus crushed rock
- Tread layer of sand, or stabilised sand as outlined below

The recommended surface layer is a fibre stabilised wax coated sand mixture that will achieve:

- High level of cohesion
- Excellent shock absorption
- Minimal easy maintenance
- No requirement for watering
- The most technically satisfactory tread surface style currently in general use⁵

Various forms of fibre-stabilised sand have been used for the Olympic Games at Barcelona and Atlanta along with the quadrennial World Equestrian Games at Stockholm, The Hague and this years games in Jerez. Research indicates that a European product called 'Geo Track' was the preferred main arena surface solution of the equestrian footing consultant for the Sydney Olympic Games, Hermann Duckek. However the artificial fibre included did not meet Sydney's express requirement for all-natural materials from local sources. That the showjumping surface especially was embarrassingly less than satisfactory and widely criticised internationally is a matter of record.

Fibre stabilised waxed sand surfaces are widely used in Europe and North America and increasingly in Australia. Venues using these materials include Kerry Packer's Polo centre at Ellerston and the Hayes family's famous racehorse property, Lindsay Park and the Australian Equestrian Academy of Dirk and Sicca Dijkstra.

There are a good number of equestrian surface suppliers around the world but only one Australian based supplier, Pro Ride

⁵ Extensive research in Great Britain and Australia including: Jenny Loriston-Clarke's "Catherston Stud", Richard Hannon's racehorse training track, Mark and Caroline Todd's training yard for showjumpers, eventers and dressage horses. Advice from Capt. Mark Phillips, Mr. Paul Lindsay (General Manager, Gleneagles Equestrian Centre), Maj. Malcolm Wallace (former Director of the British Equestrian Federation) Dirk & Sicca Dijkstra Australian Equestrian Academy, "Lindsay Park" stud and training complex.

Surfaces has access to the suggested fibre stabilised surfaces that are recommended. Two proprietary waxed and stabilised surfaces are suggested for close consideration, Geo Track, which is widely proven in Europe and fully imported, along with a similar locally sourced product called Pro Track. Rubber stabilised sand surfacing is also listed below but is regarded as being more of a private training solution. After consideration of the various product qualities, prices and supply reliability Pro Track is recommended as the preferred surface solution.

A watered sand surface should also be considered however research indicated that to set up a really effective watering system is capital cost comparable to establishing a top grade water free surface before any water or other ongoing costs are factored in. The watering system in Albury-Wodonga is a good solution because it utilised wastewater under pressure from a nearby paper mill.

The criteria applied to this consideration has been to reclaim a waste area as a vital part of the development at a level of quality that will stamp Canberra as 'the place' for showjumping and dressage in Australia because the footing is the best!

The All Weather Arena will be enclosed on the south side by a long viewing mound of approximately 3m in height, with a lesser mound on the north side. The mound and surrounds should be re-planted with elm or plane shade trees and appropriate shrubs. The creek verges and the west side should be allowed to re-established to the pre-existing vegetation. From the plans supplied I estimate the cross-fall on existing grades to be in the order of 2m or 25%. At this stage the proposed cross-fall would be in the order of 1.15% or 1.2m from west to east sides. This indicates a requirement of in the order of 5760m³ of imported fill.

Equestrian and maintenance access would be through either of three gateways sited on the long western side allowing unimpeded access where the arena is divided for simultaneous activities or multi mené dressage shows.

There will be a drainage swale along the western side to divert run-off coming from the Cotter Plots. This swale will be crossed at 3 culverts aligned to the above arena entry points.

It is assumed that sufficient topsoil will be stripped from the site in the initial bulk earthworks in addition to that already

stockpiled in the site to generously serve the grass restoration needs of the viewing mounds and immediate surrounds.

The costing listed below includes pricing for a variety of surfaces ranging from straight local sand to the most advanced products currently available. It should be recognised that to achieve really good outcomes for dressage and showjumping some kind advanced stabilisation will be needed. The stabiliser products will be substantially cheaper if they were purchased directly and mixed on site than if purchased as a total product.

Several available options are listed for consideration. The upper levels of the arena profile would vary to accommodate various final surfaces with some impact on final costing.

Appreciation is noted to Mark Menheere, who constructed the Spray Farm main competition arena for his help and advice.

5.1.1.1. Indicative Arena Costing

Imported bulk fill	8000 tonnes	\$44,000
75mm Recycled concrete sub-base	1920 tonnes	
or 30mm minus compacted aggregate		\$24,020
Sand Surface	on compacted sand bed 1440 m ³	\$36,000
Land-forming Costs		\$40,000
Fencing	400m - 200mm x 50mm plinth and rail (@ \$6.50/m), 150mm posts (@ 7.50)	\$12,000
		<u>\$152,020</u>

Surface Options Supplied and laid (less sand cost listed above)

Sand/rubber surface – (Flexitrack)	\$100,000
Flexitrack with wax binder (irrigation free)	\$172,800
Pro-Track with wax binder (irrigation free)	\$172,800

Geo-Track – waxed (irrigation free)	\$240,000
Supply of additive and mixing advice:	
Sand cost @ \$2/ m ²	\$ 19,200
Flexitrack additive @ \$8/ m ²	\$ 76,800
Geo-Track @ \$12/ m ² (irrigation free)	\$115,200

Ancillaries

Viewing mounds	
Imported Bulk Fill, 6000 tonnes	\$ 33,000
Formation	\$ 5,000
Landscaping:	
Grass establishment mulched 4000m ²	\$ 8,000
Advanced tree plantings, 20	\$ 3,500

Irrigation

The estimate is based on a system similar to that of Albury-Wodonga Equestrian Centre utilising 8 perimeter-sited water cannon with a radius of 40m based on a ring main connecting to municipal water in the Cotter Plots.

\$120,000

5.1.2. Sand Warm-up

A final warm-up surface of the same quality as the competition surface is an FEI requirement for “international competition”. Within the present plan, it is recommended as desirable but not vital. The reasoning is that for an international showjumping contest there will be enough room to place two final ‘practice jumps’ on the arena and likewise for the premier class of a dressage show the final warm-up arena could be on one end of the arena. Neither is a perfect solution but allows for the letter of the international rule to be met. For all other events the warm-up areas available are luxurious. In any case it is recommended that a sand final warm up surface does not need to have the same highly robust qualities as the main arena. It should only be used for its stated purpose at competitions!

Warm-up arena construction estimate

Sub-grade preparation, drainage and compaction	\$12,000
Compacted sub-tread layer	\$ 6,000
Sand surface only for an area of 70m x 30m @ \$2/ m ²	\$ 4,200
Perimeter fence as for main arena (if required) @ \$30/m	\$ 6,000

5.1.3. The Turf Playing Fields

5.1.3.1. Playing Field Number 1

This field is particularly attractive and is a congenial site for showjumping, two full dressage menéges or other general activities.

Because it is such a good site efforts should be made to protect it from indiscriminate use creating track with the potential to seriously injure horses. The site is flood prone and can become waterlogged in the northeast corner. In the future this field could be developed as a Showjumping Derby course with natural landscape obstacles. With good design the area would still accommodate two dressage arenas and other activities.

5.1.3.2. Playing Field Number 2

This area is appealing and substantial (approximately 20,000m²). The area is well grassed and irrigated. The levels are not good enough for high-grade showjumping or dressage but quite adequate for lower levels. It is flood prone.

This field should be maintained under the present regime for various equestrian shows and competitions requiring a large unimpeded surface area

5.1.3.3. Playing Field Number 3

This is a very beautiful site for equestrian work or training enclosed by striking trees of the Cotter Plot. It is not a suitable place for spectators.

This arena is envisaged as being for:

- Private Competitions requiring a turf surface.
- Clinics and training
- Secure warm-up and exercise for major events
- Supervised schooling during International Events
- Veterinary assessment/management at the end of Endurance competitions
- Veterinary examination at the end of Eventing competitions

Given the adverse impact of horses on turf, the Turf Playing Fields are projected as occasional use facilities.

5.1.4. The Cross Country Course

Yarralumla Equestrian Park has hosted very high-grade top-level horse trials and the venue continues to be eminently suitable for horse trials throughout the full spectrum of grades. Despite the effects of recent bushfires there is a very substantial infrastructure still in place, but there is substantial work to reinstate a full function multi –grade event infrastructure.

On my professional observation a really satisfactory higher-grade course should be developed from the 1995/6 track traversing both sides of the Yarralumla Creek but including a safe and convenient finish point in the Cotter Plots. This outcome requires reinstatement of the two functional creek crossing points.

It must never be imagined that this venue can produce the long easy lines of English three-day event venues at Badminton or Blenheim, but this in no way diminishes the validity or excellence of the venue. Simply it is more compact and makes its own specific, suitable and fascinating test for horse and rider.

It is however be practicable to recommence eventing at a lower level almost immediately without crossing the watercourse to maintain activity, enthusiasm and turnover. Good course lines for all classes up to Pre-Novice level can be prepared on the western side of Yarralumla Creek

The average unit cost of good quality cross-country infrastructure for advanced and intermediate level contests is estimated to be in the order of \$2,600 per jumped element. This is inclusive of professional design, experienced labour,

responsible machinery usage and sensibly purchased materials. It includes no allowance for decoration, which in this venue should be minimal. The above unit cost is a good budget basis allowing for reductions such as given in machinery, voluntary support, and readily available materials.

My observation is that there is a large quantity of sound fire damaged timber on the site that could provide a valuable resource for course restoration.

There are several severely damaged structures that pose a discernable public risk that should be demolished as soon as possible.

Genuine cross-country schooling sites are a rare and valuable resource. It is strongly recommended that the site be further enhanced to this end. The challenge is to regulate such use so as to ensure that it is responsibly safe and generates an equitable return to park management.

The cross-country site may easily accommodate *cross-country carriage driving*.

5.1.5. General Riding Areas

As noted the areas for general riding are a great facility. They do however require continual maintenance and a degree of upgrading. Currently the riding areas are seriously compromised by an inability to access the eastern side of Yarralumla Creek due to the failure of crossing points installed in the mid 1990s. This renders a large and beautiful area of the park effectively unusable. Some equestrians have been crossing the creek at the degraded southern crossing point (Crossing A, General Layout Plan). Given the state of the crossing with unprotected sharp edges there is a real risk of incident. Maintenance efficiency would be significantly enhanced if the creek can be crossed internally for mowing and general works.

The safety of the park is compromised by the lack of any enclosure on the western boundary.

5.1.5.1. Creek Crossings

The recommendation is that two crossings be placed in the area of Crossing A mentioned above to allow:

- Safe and effective passage for recreational riding
- Ready efficient access for normal maintenance works
- Safe and effective access to the eastern exit point leading to the riding trails
- Safe two-way high-speed crossing point for cross-country competition or training

Based on experience in a flood prone creek at the Albury-Wodonga equestrian facility the recommendation is to span the watercourse with preformed box culverts with preformed concrete headwalls. The structure would be filled with recycled concrete or stabilised crushed rock. The structure would be completed by a 200mm timber plinth and deformable guardrail.

Unit Cost Estimate:

Including: concrete footing, 6 box culverts (1200mm x 900mm), matched pre-formed headwalls, guard rails, plinths, stabilised end-fill, stabilised tread layer, excavator cost and labour.

\$9545

The similar solution can be applied to the proposed pedestrian creek crossing at the Cotter Road end of the watercourse. It would be on a reduced scale with a significant reduction in the unit cost estimate to

\$5255

5.1.5.2. Western Boundary Fence Reinstatement

It is recommended that normal general stock-proof boundary fence with a top white sight wire is a responsible and satisfactory solution. Given the established fire risk standard concrete posts and end assemblies are suggested. The cost estimate can be based on \$11/metre on a length of 550m.

\$6050

There is approximately 150m of very dubious quality boundary fence along Lady Denman Drive that should also be considered for early replacement.

5.1.5.3. General Works

Fire damaged cross-country structures should be progressively dismantled at the earliest opportunity

Fire damaged sub-divisional fencing to the east of the creek is a real hazard for equestrian users and should be removed as soon as possible with special attention to burned out post holes. Some useful materials can be salvaged.

The Cotter Road boundary adjacent to playing field 1 should be fenced to form a lane with a chicane at either end as indicated in the general arrangement plan to ensure a much greater level of safety for park users and the general public. Estimated cost \$1500.

Yarralumla Creek and the thick trees along its banks form the only sub-division between the equestrian park and the "tree surgery yard". Consideration should be given to the eventual construction of a perimeter fence along the creek line as shown in the accompanying site plans.

5.1.5.4. Indoor Arena with associated Facilities

An indoor arena has not been identified within the Needs Study and is in consequence outside the scope and projected timeframes of this report. It is however noted that a structure of this nature could be introduced into the park without adverse impact on the proposals outlined. It is noted for reference that Werribee Park National Equestrian Centre experiences such a level of general demand for its indoor arena that the construction of a second indoor is a high priority in that venue. If an indoor arena were to be contemplated at some time in the future it can be assumed that the working area will be at least 80m x 40m with the probability of an end gallery and a 10m skillion structure to one side.

There are several possible sites for a structure like this, all require a significant change to any present concept of the park and all will be the subject of considerations of lost utility as opposed to potential gains. All require some significant earthworks. These sites are the front Playing Field 1, the north-western part of Playing Field 2 running back to the present kiosk probably including it and the northern or western side of Playing Field 3 in the Cotter Plots.

5.2. SUPPORTING FACILITIES

5.2.1. Horse Accommodation

The existing functional public equestrian centres at Werribee and Albury-Wodonga regard their horse accommodation facilities as among their most productive assets. At Werribee stable hire alone generates an income stream for the centre that is in the order of 10 times the current total budget of Equestrian Park. The experience of Albury-Wodonga is that when people bring horses to the centre they desire the safest degree of accommodation available for their horses – *on the venue*. The stable facility is in much greater demand than either the open or covered yards.

The stables proposed for Equestrian Park are to fill a specific competition related need identified in the Needs Study phase. However there may be additional opportunities in this area.

Having regard to the attached Facility Brief – Stables the structures are based on that of Albury-Wodonga. The stables are in low cost single gable steel framed sheds in modular groups of looseboxes 3.6m x 3.6m. The chosen site is convenient, congenial and readily securable. It is recommended that as these stables are not for continual use they should be on a compacted gravel base.

For a major event stables can be hired from John Walker who constructs for and hires to the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW and big events around Australia. The quotation envisages a cost of \$70/roofed unit and \$50/unroofed unit plus transport ex Sydney of approximately \$2000, plus erection and dismantling of approximately four days.

Actual historical cost of Albury-Wodonga stables constructed in 2000/2001 is reported at \$2000/loosebox unit. It is probably more realistic to base estimates on the indicative costing of John Walker (mentioned above) at approximately \$2,500 per unit on a prepared site plus site preparation and connections of water, electricity, sewerage and storm water. Cement floors would add approximately \$300/unit.

Site preparation and gravelling is estimated in the order of \$4,500. An additional \$2,000 should be allowed for concrete manure bins.

Stables development should be staged in one or more blocks at a time.

5.2.2. Additional Yards in the Cotter Plots

The Needs Study identifies a positive requirement of up to 200 horse yards for major endurance competitions. Given the yard stock available the deficit in horse accommodation is in the order of 130 places (depending on stable development). Full usage of this facility will be at best occasional making high cost units hard to justify – but ad hoc casual equine accommodation around the Cotter Plots will inevitably lead to significant degradation of the site, or substantial restoration costs. On this basis it is recommended that more yards should be constructed as shown in the Facilities Detail plan. It is strongly recommended that the construction be of a much lower cost nature than for the existing yards because the Cotter Plots can be regarded as a fully secured site and the suggested site is particularly well sheltered.

Hiring of reasonable overnight yards is also a consideration.

The recommendation is for single rail pipe construction of 3.6m x 3.6m with a 1200mm opening with a chain closure on a base of 200mm x 10mm minus crushed rock or similar.

Estimated Cost in single lines: \$350 per unit

In back to back: \$320 per unit

5.2.3. Truck Parking, Camping Areas & Powered Sites

For lower level events parking can be informal and utilise space around the lower arenas and within the main drive as needed. For multi day events on site camping is an identified requirement and some powered sites will be very desirable. At larger events a more structured truck parking arrangement will be essential.

Having regard to the Core Centre Plan it is recommended that there should be four access points to the Cotter Plots from the main driveway. The main entry point will be via a new gateway near the proposed stables site. Vehicles proceeding to unload at the stables or to the area indicated as parking and powered sites would turn right and eventually exit via a new gateway beside the organic garden. Circulation would be in a logical one-way clockwise direction. Vehicles proceeding to the Informal Camping area would follow the track to that point and eventually exit through the existing gates near the main entrance having travelled in an anti-clockwise direction.

5.2.3.1. Main Truck Park & Powered Camp Sites

It will be necessary to remove some large fire damaged eucalypt trees along the west side of the fence line but such removal should be kept to a minimum to retain shade and aesthetic effect. The area inside the Cotter Plots will need to be sheeted with gravel for stability at an estimated cost of \$3,400.

Powered campsites can be located along both sides of the existing fence line with close access to electricity source and the advantage of allowing access from both sides of the fence line. It is suggested that an implementation of powered site camping should again be staged. The cost using existing connections is estimated at approximately \$1000/site. Additional cabling to service the stable compound and the campsites is estimated from the work shed for a cost of approximately \$3000.

5.2.3.2. Informal Camp Site

Residual cricket pug must be removed from the site designated informal camping and the area re-pastured. There are some valuable tree specimens in this area that require ongoing protection from equine depredation. To remove the "cricket pug" construct a hard core based informal camping/parking area of 100 x 40m in this area is estimated at \$8,000

5.2.4. Access Roads

Yarralumla Equestrian Park is generally well supplied with formed internal access roads, however there is some requirement for upgrading especially within the Cotter Plots. The circuits mentioned above total approximately 800m in length and basic surface improvement based on a 75mm crushed rock sheeting with some enhancement of corners and new entry points including gates to the Cotter Plots is estimated in the order of \$6000.00

5.2.4.1. Other Access & Road Issues

The access to the main entrance from Cotter Road poses a real problem within the current use of Equestrian Park with horse floats and large trucks making a right hand turn into the venue from a busy two-lane road.

The turning circle in front of the Yarralumla woolshed is a shared use facility between the woolshed the CLPC and other users of Equestrian Park. At this time its general condition makes it difficult to turn horse floats and large vehicles.

Enhancement is recommended as a shared project between all users.

5.2.5. Front Gateway

The front gateway is the world's first impression of Yarralumla Equestrian Park. It is recommended that the entrance should make at least a neat, tidy workmanlike statement. The groves of trees around the entry way make any monumental structures wasteful and inappropriate. A 6m fence on each side in painted or stained 200 x 50mm rails would cost in the order of \$1000 exclusive if any signage.

5.2.6. Horse Washes

The existing horse washes are impossibly sited within the outline of this proposal. It is suggested that the excellent pipe work be re-sited adjacent to playing field 2. This is a manageable cost with a cement pad costing in the order of \$300. It is recommended that a second horse wash be established on the edge of playing field 3 close to the proposed stable area. In this less obvious place a much simpler and cheaper structure will prove quite adequate. Estimated cost is in the order of \$1,000. This site is convenient to truck parking and to the proposed conclusion points for horse trials and endurance competitions. An adjacent sand patch would be a welcome addition for tired horses.

5.2.7. Ablution and Lavatory

A competitor dedicated ablution/lavatory facility is high on the wish list of competitors generally. However high static costs mitigate against the construction of a complete new structure. After discussions it is recommended that significant efforts should be made to acquire a good-sized second hand transportable unit. This should be located close to the proposed stable compound but near a main sewerage line that runs just to the north of the stables. This recommendation is contingent on sourcing of a suitable structure. As such no attempt has been made to cost the exercise, however some contingency will be required for connection costs.

5.2.8. Turn-out Paddocks

Turnout paddocks or day paddocks have been identified as a valid use for some open areas within the Cotter Plot. The Manager at Werribee Park identifies the lack of this facility as a serious impediment to maximising accommodation revenue. Paddocks are recommended at 0.2ha in size. The cost of solid perimeter fencing and access gate can be estimated at \$2,250

per unit for all solid fencing or somewhat less if an electric fence component is included. This is based on no common fences.

5.2.9. Manager's/Stable Manager's Office

The existing building cannot be considered as a viable dwelling in the medium term. However with modest repairs and maintenance it would be a satisfactory site office for the manager and adequate, occasional sleeping quarters cum office for an event Stable Manager. It could also provide a private well-serviced scoring office for some events. The building has the advantage of power, telephone and water connection.

5.2.10. Competition Management Support & Club Facility

There are various event management needs in the needs and hopes of various organising bodies. Within the scope of this present study, it is noted that a Club House with catering, bar, toilet and social facilities would be widely appreciated in the context of a more generally developed venue. However in the immediate future it may well be more productive to maximise the use of the existing structures and use marquees and hire facilities for major events. The kiosk is limited but does supply a lavatory for both males and females along with a limited catering facility or 'front of house' office. The CLPC clubhouse is a sound structure that can fill many 'back of house' event management needs admirably. However any such use is contingent on amicable hiring arrangements between the particular organising bodies and the Canberra Lakes Pony Club.

In the longer term a more substantial 'club house' would be an extremely desirable addition. To keep such a project within achievable bounds the relocation of a suitable second hand structure should be strongly considered should the opportunity arise. The preferred site is in the vicinity of the existing kiosk.

5.2.11. Maintenance and Storage Yard

The work shed and general storage area are a good facility for the immediate future. However with greater and more constant use of the Cotter Plots area as an integral part of the Equestrian Park, some definition and security for the maintenance and storage area is recommended. Given that the total area is already security fenced ordinary paddock fencing with two access points is suggested. Estimated cost: \$3,100.

6. OUTLINE FOR STAGED DEVELOPMENT

6.1. STAGE ONE.

6.1.1. Primary Works.

Removal of fire damaged fencing and cross-country obstacles.
Removal of broken/burned sub-divisional fencing
Re-fencing of approximately 500m of western boundary.
Felling and removal of fire effected trees
Insert either a gateway or close bollards at either end of the laneway between the CLPC arena and the Organic Garden.

6.1.2. Framework Plantings

Replacement shade plantings in the main drive
Screen planting on the west side of Cotter Plot

6.1.3. Playing Fields

Continuing general maintenance

6.1.4. All Weather Arena

The primary need identified in the Needs Study was the All Weather Arena. Without this facility the facility is devoid of function, character and interest to potential users. Consequently its establishment should be given priority.

6.1.5. Cross-Country Course

Initial restoration of courses to at least Pre-Novice level

6.1.6. The Creek Crossings

Without access the eastern side of the creek attracts all maintenance and management issues with no offsetting utility. It is of high priority to re-establish safe access. Naturally it will be more cost effective to address all 3 proposed crossings in one project.

6.1.7. Other Development

Enhanced Truck Parking is an unavoidable adjunct to the playing fields and arenas and should be established at the same time. There is also the requirement for basic road and turn upgrading to begin to develop the Cotter Plot as a functional part of the park.

The Stable Compound site can be prepared in association with the site works for the All Weather Arena.

Horse washes should be moved from the arena site.

Preparation of the informal campsite should begin

The front entry should be upgraded.

Establishment of a Cotter Road equine entry lane and chicanes as indicated on the general arrangement plan and facility brief.

6.2. STAGE TWO.

The Truck Park and road enhancement should be completed including the first 20 powered sites.

The Stable Compound and short-term accommodation should be established with up to an additional 100 day yards and preferably under cover short stay accommodation for up to 50 horses.

The establishment of an ablution/toilet facility should be undertaken as and when the opportunity arises.

On-going restoration of the one-day event facility towards a complete multi level competition and training resource.

6.3. STAGE THREE

At the conclusion of Stage Two the centre will be able to stage significant multi day competitions and activities in various disciplines. The core centre will have taken on a definite form but the remainder of the site will still be awaiting development.

Further upgrade of internal roads and turning circle with appropriate landscaping

Further Cross-country development

The installation of more powered sites in the Riders Parking Area.

The Stable Compound further developed

Further development of day yards

6.4. STAGE FOUR

Install sand warm-up arena

The training installations should be continually upgraded.

Upgrade of stable facilities as needed

6.5. STAGE FIVE

Possible enlargement of competition office to become a functional Yarralumla Equestrian Club House

6.6. STAGE SIX

Establishment of an Indoor arena and associated facilities, or the construction of more extensive facilities both for riding participants and general public

Establishment of further arenas set in the landscape as may be required

7. MANAGEMENT OUTLINE

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park as proposed in this Draft Master Plan will be a comprehensive equestrian facility for general and competition specific use. The site evaluation and needs study aspect of this exercise indicate that the park must clearly aim to satisfy both of these needs. The public nature of this park is accepted as being integral to its nature and as presenting unusual management challenges for an equestrian venue.

Few centres can hope to develop the wonderful open-space equestrian exercising utility of this site.

Canberra being the national capital located amidst vibrant areas of top grade and general equestrian activity is a logical place for a prestigious equestrian competition venue and the Equestrian Park can be very suitable for a wider spectrum of high profile disciplines.

Two core qualities in the development and conduct of this particular horse sport complex must be unequivocally appreciated.

- The Centre must enjoy the enthusiastic support of local horse sports people within the identified disciplines.
- The Centre must have effective and committed management.

The research involved in the Needs Study Report established that unless the relevant "horsy people" can be made to feel involved in the scheme they will lose confidence in the project and will not support it.

Equestrian sports are what their supporters make them. To flourish the Equestrian Park will need lots of ongoing voluntary support. However a regime where one small family and a few individuals fill the entire management function of a large and quite complex multi use equestrian facility effectively 'out of their own pocket' is not sustainable in the longer term. The role and qualities of a working manager at the park will be crucial to its success. It is extremely difficult to define the individual, who could come from a wide variety of backgrounds and come to the position with a widely divergent array of skills and qualifications. It will be equally challenging to resolve an affordable and satisfactory package of remuneration.

7.1. SUMMARY

This report attempts to define what the centre as it is presently conceived, can reasonably do for its potential customers. These are the

functions to which management must give priorities and then make them work. The functions are considered in a much wider context than that of the local community in consideration of throughput, turnover, revenue, and a wider reputation.

The actual work needed to run the developed centre is examined along with the way that the proposed facilities are intended to work in real life.

The planning to date has been directed towards the achievable. The achievable has been based on what the site has to offer, what presently exists, and on utilities that can be shared or multi tasked. Resource hungry permanent structures for specific events or competitions have been avoided. Site allowances have been made so that temporary constructions can be erected for specific type events.

Recommendations also assume that while there are very many fine horse people and sports people enjoying the full gamut of horse sports, future riders will largely be trained in the *equestrian disciplines*. This situation is partly a consequence of the way in which our society is becoming progressively more urbanised and horse sport is continually developing. It is also because of the ongoing effects of the pony club movement.

The proposed management structure is very simple as are its lines of reporting, communication and responsibility. It closely mirrors the development management structure that is presently in place.

Any Management Plan based on the assumption that a major comprehensive equestrian facility in Australia will generate sufficient revenue to service its initial capital cost is a folly. Conversely there are substantial private centres around the world that do generate an adequate income for their proprietors and supply decent employment for reasonable numbers of employees.

The potential return of equestrian business varies greatly between different countries. The unit resources, which people in the USA expect to commit to equestrian training are more than double Australian expectations in real terms. However in most of Europe the horse business climate is much closer to our own.

Australia is one of few nations where many coaches actually own and manage their own 'centre'. In many nations a facility such as Equestrian Park supplies the venue and suitable work environment while the coach comes just to coach his or her pupils.

No operation can survive indefinitely without meeting its running costs. If the equestrian community of the Australian Capital Territory wants to

enjoy a comprehensive horse sport facility it must accept that reality as an absolute precondition of an ongoing equestrian park.

Too often the business philosophy of publicly owned equestrian undertakings have been almost solely based on selling the use of their facilities to other organising bodies for competition or for schooling. This strategy is inadequate for two main reasons.

1. The organising bodies are generally low profit, low resource, and voluntary organisations existing solely to benefit their members. They either do not have, or violently resent expending the sort of resources needed to cover the real cost of their venue usage.
2. The operation is selling an expensive and substitutable primary product with no added value into a tiny market.

The success of the Yarralumla Equestrian Park will be determined by its ability to:

- Maximise usage, thereby generating some economies of scale.
- Add value to the products that it has to offer.
- Broaden its base within the equestrian market.
- Market elements of the facility for non-equestrian use.

8. OBJECTIVES FOR MANAGEMENT

The objectives of the Equestrian Park Management must coincide with the aspirations of the individuals and organisations that make its existence possible.

The Centre must aim to:

- **Serve the best interests of the defined range of equestrian sports.**
- **Maximise the extent to which its supporters enjoy their sport.**
- **Be a viable operation.**
- **Generate the interest and activity to warrant its full development.**
- **Justify the great potential of the venue by achieving recognition as a world-class equestrian facility.**

9. FUNCTIONS OF THE EQUESTRIAN PARK

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park should develop as a vital and continually operating facility in order to satisfy the needs of the local equestrian community and to be viable. To do this the park must undertake, accept and promote a wide variety of activities.

The park will supply services for the involved organisations, private persons, other equestrian organisations and non-equestrian interests. All services have a value. There ought to be a high degree of flexibility in the range of services available to the potential users. The requirements for each group of customers must be considered with specific care and attention.

The Equestrian Park's services to each class of user can include:

9.1. THE ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

- Fully prepared and maintained competition arenas.
- Part prepared and maintained competition arenas. Some organisations may wish to minimise their costs by making a greater contribution to preparation and maintenance.
- Services as above for clinics, training or practice.
- The setting out of special equipment, e g show jumps, dressage menages.
- The storage of equipment.
- Arranging the supply and setting-up of other temporary facilities including lavatories, tents and marquees.
- Competitor and supporter parking with horses tied to trucks and floats.
- Competitor and supporter parking with horses in day yards.
- Competitor and supporter parking with on site camping.
- Short term horse accommodation under cover.
- Short term horse accommodation in open yards.
- Stable security.
- Preparation and clean-up of horse accommodation area.
- Ablution and change room facilities.
- Food preparation and distribution area.
- Competition secretary's offices.

- Supply of secretarial services for competition days.
- Collection of admission fees.
- Partial or complete site restoration after the competition or other function.
- Supply of secretarial or administrative services.
- Supply of suitable areas for meetings.
- Suitable areas for hacking out, easy horse exercising and recreational riding.

9.2. *INDIVIDUAL USERS*

- Suitable areas for hacking out, horse exercising, and recreational riding.
- Areas and equipment for private schooling and training.
- Access to specific rider education.
- Associated horse accommodation.
- Use of club facilities.
- Facilitation of various horse related services

9.3. *ADDITIONAL EQUESTRIAN FUNCTIONS*

- Supply facilities as required for the use of non-associated equestrian bodies.
- Conduct of equestrian events and clinics by the park.
- Co-ordination of equestrian services to be supplied by specialist providers at the centre.
- Stabling of horses for a range of clients.

9.4. *NON-EQUESTRIAN FUNCTIONS*

- Fairs, markets and exhibitions.
- Other sporting activities.
- Rallies and meet, e g car clubs.

- Other viable activities that will not detract from the core activity of the Centre or damage its environment.

10. THE MANAGEMENT TASKS

10.1. MAINTENANCE

10.1.1. Stable Area

- Ensure the cleanliness, safety and normal stable management works for any permanently/long term accommodated horses.
- Ensure the removal and disposal of all wastes, hay, straw, fodder, rubbish, and faeces on a daily basis during competitions, clinics and other events and at the conclusion of the specific activity.
- Ensure cleanliness of associated feed and tack storage, horse washes, sand rolls and holding areas.
- Appropriate husbandry of the planting's and the grassed areas.
- Ensure appropriate security and access for each specific activity.

10.1.2. Riders Park and Camping Area

- Appropriate husbandry of the planting's and grassed areas.
- Cleanup of wastes especially where horses have been tied.
- Restoration of horse induced degradation of the grassed areas.
- Care of the powered campsites.
- Rubbish collection.

10.1.3. The All Weather Arena

- As far as possible ensure the removal of faecal material from the arena surface.
- Harrow the arena smooth as specified for the surface.
- Water as/if specified to maintain the surface.

- Appropriate husbandry of the grassed areas and planting's, especially the viewing mounds.
- Set-up sub-arenas within the main arena as may be appropriate for various specific activities.
- Ensure proper functioning of fittings and accessories.

10.1.4. The Playing Fields

- Ensure that the arena is watered and mown appropriately.
- Ensure that the arena is restored after usage, the divots are filled where necessary, and harrowing, rolling, sanding, top dressing, aerating and re-seeding is undertaken as required.
- Appropriate husbandry of the viewing areas and planting's.
- Ensure that the turf remains free of weed infestation.

10.1.5. Public Parking

- Mow as required.
- Remove rubbish.
- Appropriate husbandry of the planting's.

10.1.6. Bridle Paths

- Harrow/roll according to usage.

10.1.7. Cross Country Training Areas

- Repair breakages.
- Maintain take-off and landing areas by the addition of sand, wood fibre or gravel as may be required.
- Ensure that the areas do not become poached and degraded.
- Preserve timber as may be appropriate.

10.1.8. Cross Country Competition Course

- Ensure that all take-off and landing areas at the obstacles will remain consistent and suitably yielding throughout the competition.
- Ensure that the footing of the whole track is of a suitable consistency by irrigating, sanding, top-dressing or rotovating as may be appropriate.
- Restoration of sites and track after the competition.

10.1.9. The Drive and Internal Roads

- Mow the road verges as required.
- Grade gravel sections as required.

10.1.10. The Amenities and other Structures

- Clean and maintain the buildings.
- Clean and maintain the amenities, lavatories, change rooms, showers.
- Clean and maintain kitchens
- Appropriate husbandry of the planting's, grassed areas and pathways.
- Care of storage and workshop areas.
- Care of the infrastructure fittings, irrigation and watering equipment.
- Maintenance of fire-fighting equipment.

10.1.11. Entire Equestrian Park Area

- Mowing or slashing of excess growth.
- Restoration of tracking and other damage due to continued usage.
- On-going development of ground surfaces and pasture cover.
- Weed control.
- Maintenance of perimeter and sub-divisional fencing.
- Husbandry of all the plantings.

- Ensure the proper operation of the drainage systems and irrigation systems.

10.2. ADMINISTRATION

- Take and coordinate bookings for competitions, events and other activities.
- Take and coordinate bookings for private schooling.
- Ensure that all organisations and coaches carry appropriate insurance before being allowed to use Equestrian Park.
- Authorise recreational riding and exercising.
- Receive inquiries for private coaching. Assess, coordinate and advise.
- Receive inquiries from and allocate appropriate areas and equipment to approved and acceptable private coaches and their pupils.
- Oversee all horse care and/or training within the centre.
- Take bookings for and coordinate all horse accommodation requirements.
- Take bookings for and coordinate all camping requirements.
- Receive inquiries in respect of non-equestrian functions. Allocate, arrange and Co-ordinate them.
- Ensure the proper and helpful reception of all visitors to the centre.
- Promote all the properly determined functions and image of the centre in the appropriate fora and media.
- Maintain all records and accounts.
- Prepare an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.
- Assess the operation of the Centre and advise on future development.
- Collect all fees and charges due to the centre.
- Discharge all proper debtors and conduct all other appropriate business functions.
- Negotiate or act on behalf of the Board of Trustees or the Management Group if directed to do so.
- Maintain an appropriate office structure.

10.3. OTHER TASKS

The fully operational Equestrian Park will eventually require a more extensive management and secretarial capacity than that of many of the associated organisations. The Park may be able to offer efficient secretarial services or other services to associated bodies that they may find attractive.

There will be some positive advantages derived from combining the identity of the Yarralumla Equestrian Park with that of an associated body organising a particular function.

In relation to the potential "Equestrian Park Club", the park management would be the pivotal identity and supply the administrative function.

The park management will essentially have to produce and disseminate calendars and details of the various activities at the centre along with their specific details and arrangements.

An advanced park management may be in a position to offer various services to its clients including score calculations, score and information print outs, competition draws and timetables.

The status of the Equestrian Park may be enhanced by the production of a regular newsletter or the development of an informative website.

10.4. STAGE ONE MANAGEMENT COST ESTIMATES

The outline costing below is based on historical figures and estimates supplied by Equestrian Park Management Group Treasurer, Joe Johnston.

10.4.1. Management Functions

- Park Maintenance
- Park Ranger operations
- Facilitation for hirers and participants on training and competition days
- Secretarial and financial administration

10.4.2. Summary of Historical Income and Figures

The actual cash payment running costs of Equestrian Park in the 2000 and 2001 financial years has been in the order of

\$9,000/annum⁶. This cost is exclusive of any labour, vehicle or machinery costs that have in effect been donated by the Johnston family.

The labour input for park maintenance is estimated at about 500 hours plus another 500 hours of general supervisory duties. Slashing and other tractor work was listed at 170 hour along with 6000km of vehicle use. In an ongoing budgetary sense these figures should be regarded as conservative.

Receipts derived from the normal functions of the park, hire of competition/training grounds/kiosk, hire of yards and overnight stays is approximately \$9,000/annum⁷.

The organisation also received \$1000 in grant monies in the 2001 financial year⁸. ACTEA Secretary Beth Stone advises that additional grants were made to that body for its functions including the park administration.

10.4.3. Stage 1 Management and Maintenance Estimates

At Stage 1 of the proposed park development the resources required to meet recurrent maintenance and administration needs will include:

Package for part time Working Manager working a flexible average 20 hours per week	\$20,000
Vehicle and Machinery Costs	\$ 8,000
Office, electricity & telephone	\$ 1,000
Turf and pasture maintenance	\$ 2,000
Repairs & Maintenance – fencing	\$ 500
Insurances	\$1,500
Irrigation	\$ 500
Fuel and Oil	\$ 1,600
Parts and repairs	\$ 3,500

⁶ Johnston J.H. Report on Costs of Running the Park, 27/4/01

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid

Miscellaneous

\$ 200

\$38,800**10.4.4. Stage One Revenue Streams**

List indicates some comparative charges by the National Equestrian Centre Werribee Park and the Albury-Wodonga Equestrian Centre

<i>Item</i>	<i>Werribee Park⁹</i>	<i>Albury-Wodonga¹⁰</i>
Competition hire of All Weather Arena	550	50
Training hire of All Weather Arena	550	50
Competition Hire of Turf Fields	550	60
Training hire of Turf Fields	550	60
Use of Kiosk		
Yard fees		3
Camping fees (powered)		10
Clean-up charges		100
Ground Service fee (per horse, competitor or entry)	4.50	1/h/day
Overnight horse accommodation charges	22	15
Temporary horse accommodation charges		
Club membership fees		
Private arena use charges	10/hour	member 5/hour Non member 10/hour

Utilisation of Werribee Park in the order of 12,000 horses per annum, a yield of \$50,000 in "Ground Service Fees" to its revenue stream.

11. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**11.1. CONSIDERATIONS OF REPRESENTATION AND EQUITY**

The organisations that enable and support the development of Yarralumla Equestrian Park must determine the manner of its future operation.

⁹ Data supplied by manager, Alan Bruno 7 May 2002

¹⁰ Data published at Albury web site, www.equestriancentre.org/rates, 9 March 2002

The Centre will not operate to any general satisfaction without the real support of the local horse sport and horse industry. The interviews undertaken in preparing the *Needs Study* indicated that a good proportion of those interests are represented within the involved organisations, but certainly not all of them. Some are just private individuals who own horses.

The enabling organisations must form a vital alliance with the users allowing the park to be a success and to justify its development. A perception of "*them and us*" must not be allowed to develop. Similarly the equestrian community must be particularly aware that *their Equestrian Park* is not just an available free service. It must be a viable undertaking as well.

Any worthwhile development of the Equestrian Park will involve substantial commitment; effort and investment of behalf of the members of the supporting equestrian organisations and their outlay should be responsibly protected.

Most equestrian assets are highly use-specific and as such their real value is hard to quantify. They are of real value only to those with the interest and skill to use them to advantage and are maintained for that purpose. To take the example of a big cross-country jump, the historical cost may be \$2500, but its net realisable value may be that of two tonnes of firewood, about \$200.

It is recommended that the management structure should be developed to ensure the integrity of the fixed assets and provide an open channel of communication between the equestrian users of the park and its executive management.

11.2. THE PROPERTY

The site is the property of the Australian Capital Territory Government. The Equestrian Park (exclusive of the specific leases of the woolshed and CLPC grounds) is operated by ACT Equestrian Association representing all equestrian activity in the ACT under license from the ACT government.

It is suggested that consideration be given to formalising this arrangement by some form of clear management agreement between the ACT Government and ACT Equestrian Association.

The ACT Equestrian Association has a wider interest base and wider responsibility than the horse related activities that do or may take place at Equestrian Park. The normal conduct and development of the Yarralumla Equestrian Park should continue to be overseen by an Equestrian Park Management Group. This group must include representatives of the organisations using and supporting the park. It

should also have some mechanism of representation for individual recreational riders.

11.3. THE MANAGEMENT

Refer to Figure 1.

The structure outlined in this section is based on an attempt to bring all of the parties, who have valid interests in the Yarralumla Equestrian Park together in a regime, which will give them all the best chance of achieving their various objectives, harmoniously. No party should ignore the vital importance of committed, independent and effective management to the success of this project. Representation is essential, but effective, beneficial management is vital.

The Equestrian Park Management Group should continue in its present structure with the following amendments.

1. It should directly represent all of the vitally involved user-organisations.
2. It should give some direct representation to the individual private users.
3. The Equestrian Park's Manager may be an additional full member of the Management Group or the Manager may attend and report but hold no voting right.

One clear fact is evident, all parties must agree on the appointment of a competent manager who will be responsible for the executive management on the Yarralumla Equestrian Park. They must then support that person to guide its conduct and ongoing development.

11.4. THE PARK MANAGER

The Manager will undertake the complete executive management of the Yarralumla Equestrian Park on behalf of the Equestrian Park Management Group to which he will be responsible. He will report to and work with the Management Committee in all relevant areas. The demands of the position are very hard to define. There is a basic unavoidable level of site maintenance and beyond that they are determined by the development of the venue and the degree of activity.

Ultimately the Park Manager will:

- Appoint all employees, contractors and other workers at the park who will report to him.
- Ensure satisfactory operation of the park:
- Take responsibility for the organisation of activities and the operation of the Park.
- Take responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the Park and its facilities

The Park Manager may in addition be a competent and properly qualified equestrian coach of Australian NCAS or acceptable international equivalent. Such qualification in no way implies that the Manager should act as a coach within the Park. Whatever the precise qualification of the Manager happens to be, he or she must be competent to take *absolute responsibility for the technical excellence and activity of the Equestrian Park*.

To attract events, activities, and clients the Park must be viewed not merely as a good facility but as a technically excellent equestrian undertaking.

It is not contemplated that a coach as either manager or as a staff member of the Centre should in any way detract from its use by other coaches and trainers. Such utilisation is envisaged to be an important part of the park's activity.

11.5. THE YARRALUMLA EQUESTRIAN PARK CLUB

The formation of a club or similar body that would represent the individual users and give their association to the park some recognisable structure is strongly recommended. The involvement of a local equestrian community will be of great potential benefit to the success of the park development.

The concept of an "Equestrian Park Club" is not original; it works very well in other places. This is not an organisation to run events! It is a vehicle to involve people in the park community concept, to give them a stake, a sense of belonging. It also gives representation to persons who are otherwise outside of the structure.

I first saw this kind of club structure implemented on a smart level at the Gleneagles Equestrian Centre in Scotland, where it was particularly successful. A club structure is the backbone of the now successful equestrian centre operation in Albury-Wodonga.

Naturally membership must confer real benefits:

- Access to the restricted playing fields and arenas

- Access to coaching
- Preferential access to high profile events
- Eventually, access to “club facilities”
- Voice and identity
- The potential for rational regulation

11.6. RECREATIONAL RIDING AND EXERCISE

It is recommended that access to the park by recreational riders and persons using its facility to exercise horses should be restricted to five defined access points.

These are:

1. The main entry
2. The entry at the southern end of Yarralumla Creek
3. The exit point to the trail system on the west side of the park
4. The gateway accessing the trail system on the Lady Denman Drive frontage.
5. The access point to Forest Park Equestrian Centre.

This arrangement is an attempt to allow these users convenient and unimpeded access, while generating a predictable and manageable mode of access and egress.

Access point 1 will normally accommodate horses and riders arriving in vehicles. The entry point should remain subject to a protocol of “closed gate or manned control”.

Access point 2 is currently a significant safety issue in that it not only provides unimpeded access to the bridle path beneath the Cotter Road/Yarralumla Creek Bridge but also to the roadway itself. The potential for uncontrolled escape should be minimised by an access lane and two chicanes.

The remaining three access points should be equipped with properly hung and easily usable good quality field gates. Perhaps these gates could be locked and one of the Equestrian Club member’s privileges would be possession of a key. This system works well at Albury-Wodonga. It may also be practical to include a chicaned and/or cavaletti complicated access on the western boundary.

Under normal circumstances, there will be only one way in which a loose or uncontrolled horse can escape from the centre. That would be at the second entry point beneath Cotter Road.

A simple chicane should also be considered to slow the escape of a loose horse at the opening near the Yarralumla Woolshed. As noted above this access could be moved to the east side of the CLPC compound, obviating any need for casual equestrians to use the front drive, thus avoiding potential conflicts with other users.

12. THE STAFF

The Management Group will establish staffing levels. Initially the staff will be one part time working manager. However there may be a requirement for various levels of contract work that will normally be the responsibility of the Manager.

As the park develops, the Manager will be responsible for hiring all staff and all staff will report to him or to his appointee.

The proper maintenance of equestrian facilities is extraordinarily labour intensive, but the required skill and experience levels are not generally very high. Most equestrian centres around the world use working pupils/trainees to help with stable and general maintenance. It is considered to be a part of their necessary education rather than an as a paid occupation.

For people to work successfully in an environment of widely variant demands and odd hours, their conditions and the structure within which they work will need to be not just structurally efficient but remarkably flexible and considerate.

The absolute key post is that of the Manager. He or she will be the "*Product Champion*" who will eventually determine the relative success of the entire project. It is recommended that the package for this position should be heavily if realistically performance orientated.

13. THE PLANT AND MACHINERY

Joe Johnston has supplied much of the plant and machinery used in the Park. Grant Hughes of the adjacent Forest Park Riding & Equitation School has also loaned heavier machinery.

The Park will require certain minimum stock of plant and machinery to undertake its basic management and maintenance, to cart out, set up and take in competition and training equipment including:

- A medium sized tractor, equipped with front-end loader.
- Irrigation pump and associated lines, hoses and sprinklers.
- A general purpose low loading trailer with removable/drop down sides.
- A tractor mounted mulching mower or slasher.
- Heavy and light grass harrows
- An aerator
- A roller for turf and pasture playing areas.
- Smudging frame for the all weather arena.
- Rear mounted grader blade.
- Mowers and brush cutter for the landscaped areas.
- Chainsaw.
- Appropriate hand tools.
- Personal Computer, printer, scanner, etc.
- Sundry office equipment.

This equipment should have an adequate storage shed, which can be properly secured.

14. CONSIDERATIONS OF RISK

14.1. PRESENT ASSESSMENT

Having regard to my initial site inspection of 21 – 26 February 2002, there are several features of Yarralumla Equestrian Park, its general and equestrian use that pose a significant element of risk. This list is for consideration and early action but in no way represents a complete assessment of the envisaged park development.

In ranked order these are:

1. Lack of enclosure of riding and cross-country areas on western perimeter of park
2. Inadequate boundary fencing on eastern perimeter of park
3. Fire damaged cross-country infrastructure that can be readily accessed by equestrian or general public
4. Fire damaged standing timber in various areas of the park

5. Relatively unimpeded equine egress route out of northern paddock and under Cotter Road.
6. The unstructured and unsupervised recreational riding within the park. *"The Equestrian Park licence does not specifically remove fault from ACT Equestrian Association for any use and resulting accident due to public use of the Park"*.
7. Unstructured and unsupervised riding with access to a lot of cross-country fences
8. It is suggested that any cross-country coaching should be undertaken only by a National Coaching Accreditation Scheme qualified coach
9. Well-used narrow riding path between low-grade fenced perimeter of CLPC grounds and Cotter Plot security fence should be closed
10. General quality of perimeter fencing
11. Relative lack of delineation between public and equestrian activity
12. Uncertainty of security maintenance at the main entry point
13. Conflict between access to woolshed functions and general equestrian use of main driveway
14. Conflict between access to the Organic Garden and general equestrian use of the main driveway.
15. The relative difficulty of evacuation for equestrian participants and spectators in the event of a major incident during an event.
16. Access and egress from and to Cotter Road.

Yarralumla Equestrian Park in its close proximity to pine forest must be considered to have a relatively high fire risk. Suitable management strategy should be developed for:

- Workers
- Residents
- Recreational users
- Competitions
- Public

Yarralumla Creek is flood prone and in its present condition is subject to very rapid variation in volume and velocity of flow.

15. CONCLUSION

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park is one of the most congenial natural horse sport facilities to be found anywhere. However the venue indicates that its various stakeholders have been uncertain of what direction to take for some time.

The Yarralumla Equestrian Park has the necessary intrinsic qualities to host major international class competitions in at least four equestrian disciplines and the potential to do so with great success. This capacity is combined with its continuing usage as a wonderful parkland in which to go horse riding

The thrust of this Master Plan is to recommend horse friendly infrastructures and improvements to make the park work. These recommendations are framed on a background philosophy that the national capital should have the ability to stage top standard equestrian competitions.

The present stage of planning outlines a high standard equestrian facility that would be attractive to competitors and organisations. Within the outline of the brief and ongoing advice, the indicative costs outlined in this paper are based on full commercial quotations. It is my personal experience that for a project of this nature to succeed many of the stakeholders will need to combine in a good way to access various resources and to actually make things happen. There are many opportunities to achieve much greater utility and value through creative thinking and action.

To realize longer-term success the park must serve the needs of numerous organisations and equestrian disciplines. All parties must give consideration to various types of temporary facilities for the staging of big events to achieve a good long-term outcome. All stakeholders and potential stakeholders must accept the need to compromise and work together to achieve a best possible outcome for all concerned. There must be a necessary degree of give and take rather than unattainable exclusivity.

Equestrian Park's open public quality is almost unique and deserves to be jealously maintained. There are however many unavoidable challenges to be addressed if this lovely public asset is to be properly maintained.

The concept of an Equestrian Park user's Club is recommended as having real merit; not so much as a needed revenue stream but as a vehicle to generate a wider overall sense of community and product commitment.

Yarralumla Equestrian Park is a naturally wonderful venue in one of the country's best possible locations. It can become one of the nation's most prestigious equestrian venues while remaining a wonderful place to ride your horse and enjoy it.

16. TABLE 1 - MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

