



Captains Flat Former Station Master's Cottage

Community information session - summary report

October 2023



Transport for NSW held a community information session on 19 September 2023 to update the community on the preferred remediation option for the Captains Flat former Station Master's Cottage.

At the event, Transport for NSW (**Transport**) presented the preferred Future Land Use option and remediation criteria for the cottage and announced the preferred option to demolish the structure, remediate the Site to residential criteria and resume the land into the rail corridor which would allow for the continuation of the use of land by the Captains Flat Heritage Trail. The proposed strategy was open to the public for feedback until 17 October 2023. The event agenda, questions asked at the event and next steps for the project are summarised on the pages that follow.



Key statistics and insights from the event

- A total of 14 community members attended the community information session, including 12 community and 2 Council staff. The event was held at the Captains Flat Community Hall.
- Overall, there was a neutral community sentiment at the event to the preferred option of demolishing the cottage.
- The main themes discussed included reasoning for the proposed options of demolishing the cottage, costs and plans for the whole corridor, and future plans for the turntable.

Event agenda – 19 September 2023

Item	Time
Project overview and related projects update	10 mins
Preferred future land use and remediation criteria	15 mins
How to provide feedback	5 mins
Next steps for the project	5 mins
Panel discussion	10 mins
Q & A with audience	15 mins

Questions raised at the community information session

1. Why can't we move the cottage to another location?

Due to the extent of the asbestos material in the cottage, and its structural stability, it is not considered viable to relocate the cottage. For a house to be relocated, the building must be structurally suitable for relocation and able to withstand the stresses involved in transportation. Moving buildings containing asbestos can cause the asbestos to become loose and fall off, causing a hazard in transit or when the building is reconstructed. This could result in potential health hazards and expensive clean-up costs. It is a requirement in NSW that asbestos material is removed prior to relocation of the building and a clearance certificate issued. Due to the extent of the asbestos material in the cottage, it is not considered viable to remove the asbestos required to allow the house to be relocated.

2. How can Transport demolish the house since it is heritage listed?

The former Station Master's Cottage is listed as a heritage item in the [Queanbeyan-Palerang Local Environmental Plan 2014](#) Heritage Schedule. While not preferable, due to the internal and underlying contamination and low structural integrity of the former Station Master's Cottage, demolition is required. Prior to demolition, Transport will obtain all relevant assessments and approvals, including undertaking required State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) consultation with Council giving written notice of the intention to carry out the development.



3. Why can't we remediate the Site like the SES Headquarters with top soiling or tarmacking under and around the house? It could be used for community purposes, like a museum.

The Declaration and Voluntary Management Proposal requires the Site to be remediated to low density residential criteria. The option of capping the site with a gravel or bitumen seal would not meet the requirements for low density residential criteria and would require a long-term management plan to be implemented to ensure the capping is maintained.

Under the *Contaminated Land Management Act (1997)*, a management plan is required for this to be enforceable. This is achieved by placing an annotation on the Title, which enables the Council to take action if the management plan is not maintained. Placing restrictions on the use of land on residential sites is not common practice, and the Auditor has advised that this approach would not be endorsed in the Site Audit Statement and Report.

The land is zoned RU1-Primary Production. Community or commercial use is not permissible under the RU1 zoning. If the Site is to be used for this purpose, Transport would need to apply for a land use zone change as well as make a request to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to amend the remediation criteria set out in the Declaration to commercial. Due to the time and costs associated with these options as well as the risk of Site not meeting rezoning or EPA approvals, these options were not considered viable. Transport has also not received any formal interest or request from any parties for this type of land use.

4. Can we get a better understanding of the cost estimates for the demolition of the cottage?

Estimated remediation costs are provided below. Detailed costing information will be available in the Remediation Action Plan, at a later stage.

Remediate to residential criteria – preferred option:

- This option will meet the expectations of the EPA.
- The Site Auditor has confirmed that this is an appropriate remediation strategy.
- Estimated completion mid-2025.
- Estimated cost: approximately \$350,000.

Remediate to public open space:

- Land use zone change required.
- Requires EPA agreeing to reduce the Health Investigation Level.
- Remediation Options Assessment cannot be completed until the land use zone change has been approved and the EPA approve a lesser remediation Health Investigation Level criterion.
- Residual risk requiring a long-term management plan.
- Estimated completion mid-2031. Estimated cost: approximately \$870,000.

5. Is a management plan on a residential site allowed?

One of the ways to enforce a management plan implementation is to annotate it onto title. Placing restrictions on the use of residential sites is not common practice, and the Auditor has advised that this approach would not be endorsed in the Site Audit Statement and Report.

There is no mechanism for management plan implementation to be checked and reviewed by Council to confirm that the controls are effectively applied by the resident.

6. With all the constraints, it sounds like we can't do anything with the cottage. Does this mean that all that we will be left is landscaping and a memorial?

Due to the internal and underlying contamination and low structural integrity of the former Station Master's Cottage, it is not considered viable to retain the cottage. Plans for the site, including landscaping and potential interpretative heritage elements, will be confirmed during future design and planning stages.

7. What is meant by incorporating the cottage land in the Heritage Trail?

Prior to the contamination being identified, the rail corridor formed part of the Captains Flat Pathway to Gold Heritage Trail. Due to the potential risks to human health, Transport isolated the rail corridor and excluded it from the Heritage Trail. In 2022 Transport decided to remediate the rail corridor so that area can be returned to the Heritage Trail. This would also include remediating the former Station Master's Cottage site so that it is safe for the community to use and to enable it to be incorporated into the overall Heritage Trail. Transport may look at incorporating interpretative elements such as signage to acknowledge the history and significance of the site. If the community would like some type of interpretation at the site, they are able to provide that feedback during the public exhibition phase.

8. Where are the investigations up to with the Station?

The Station is part of Bungendore to Captains Flat rail corridor project, spanning 32 kilometres. We are currently in the investigation phase for that project. Transport is currently procuring consultants to undertake, water sampling, a Human Health Risk Assessment, and an Interim Environmental Management Plan. These works are expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

9. What about the ore loading structure – will that remain?

There are a number of rail items within the Captains Flat Rail Corridor that will remain including the goods shed, weighbridge, gantry and turntable. These items will be retained and will form part of the Heritage Trail. Final designs for the Captains Flat Rail Corridor, including heritage items will be confirmed during the Remediation Planning phase.

10. Why don't you remove the fence around the turntable and provide full access?

Access is restricted to the turntable as the area has been identified as containing a Critically Endangered Ecological Community (CEEC). Access to the turntable will continue to be restricted by a fence and a Biodiversity Management Plan will be developed and implemented to protect the area. The community can view the turntable area from the fenced perimeter.

11. Will the trees affect the turn table?

The turntable and CEEC will both be managed in order to ensure protection of both the heritage item and ecological community.

12. What opportunities have people had to put forward their ideas for the cottage in the past?

Transport have not received any formal expressions of interest or proposals from the community regarding the future of the cottage. The community can submit feedback during the public exhibition phase via the Transport website. Feedback will be considered as part of the future land use assessment process.

13. Will transport seek funding for this project?

The remediation project is fully funded – no additional funding is required.

14. Have community facilities like a men's shed been considered?

A community facility such as a Men's Shed is not viable due to the land-use change required and the cost involved. A change of land use for the Site would be required and will see additional fees and reports required before remediation could even commence. Opting to change the land use of the Site also presents risks that Transport's application to change the land use zone may be rejected.

15. What are the plans for Captains Flat to Bungendore Rail corridor?

This project is currently in the investigation phase. Transport is currently procuring specialists to undertake, water sampling, a Human Health Risk Assessment, and an Interim Environmental Management Plan. These works are expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

16. Has the Heritage Trail been delineated for this project?

The Heritage Trail will have a fence approximately 150m north-west of the Former Station Master's Cottage, at the boundary of Lot 4425 of DP 1217100. The completion of the whole Heritage Trail is dependent on other Government Agencies.

Community consultation

Transport invited feedback from the community on the preferred option for the former Station Master's Cottage. The findings from the consultation can be found at the bottom of this report in Appendix One: Public exhibition feedback summary October 2023.

The proposed strategy was open to the public for feedback for 28 days from **19 September 2023 to 17 October 2023**.

Feedback was submitted via landassessment@transport.nsw.gov.au or online form on the [project website](#).

Next steps for the project

2023	2024	2025
19 September - Public exhibition on the future land use	Finalise Remediation Options Assessment	Remediation completed
17 October - Public exhibition on the future land use ends	Prepare a Remediation Action Plan	Remediation validated
Inform EPA of outcome	Statutory Approvals	Site Auditor Report and Statement completed
	Planning completed	Inform EPA of remediation completion and achievement of objectives

Appendix One: Public exhibition feedback summary October 2023

Transport for NSW (Transport) hosted a Community Information Session on Tuesday, 19 September 2023 in Captains Flat.

At the event, Transport presented the preferred future land use option and remediation criteria for Captains Flat former Station Masters Cottage (Site).

Transport's proposed strategy is to:

- demolish the cottage
- remediate the land to residential criteria
- incorporate the vacant land into the rail corridor to form part of the Captains Flat Heritage Trail – Pathway to Gold.

The community were invited to provide written feedback on this preferred strategy during a public exhibition phase which ran from the 19 September until 17 October 2023.

Summary of community feedback

The community feedback received during the public exhibition period has been summarised below.

Transport received a total 22 submissions during the public exhibition phase:

- 21 submissions were received via online form on Transport's [website](#)
- One via email attachment via landassessment@transport.nsw.gov.au.

The majority of feedback received opposed Transport's preferred option to demolish the cottage, although some support for demolition has been received, as outlined below. An analysis of sentiment is detailed below:

Positive/neutral sentiment

A total of six submissions either supported of Transport's preferred option or were neutral.

Three of these submissions supported demolishing the cottage and resuming it into the rail corridor. The other three respondents did not specify their level of support for Transport's preferred option.

Key themes in the feedback included:

- Incorporate the land into the heritage trail and delineate the site (2)
- Requests to beautify the site (1)
- Support for the land being publicly accessible (1)
- Comments that the cottage has not been maintained and is not visually appealing (1)
- Offered ideas for potential future uses, should the condition of the cottage allow, including guest accommodation (1) a gallery (1), and a Council run customer service centre (1).

Negative sentiment

A total of 16 submissions opposed demolishing the cottage.

Key themes in the feedback were:

- **Ideas for potential future uses (22 comments)**
 - These included maintaining the site as a local museum (15), community hub (3) a visitor information centre and terminus of the Molonglo Trail (2).
- **Historical relevance of the site (13 comments)**
 - The building is of historical significance to the town and should be retained (7)
 - The importance of the cottage's link to the Heritage Trail (5)
 - Want high quality interpretative signage at the site (2)
 - The cottage is Heritage Listed (1).
- **Community consultation (10 comments)**
 - The community has not been invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) regarding other uses for the cottage (2)
 - Not enough evidence has been provided to suggest that the cottage cannot be retained (2)
 - The community has not been invited to submit an EOI regarding other uses for the site (2)
 - Request that Transport conducts a formal EOI process to assess community lease options (1)
 - Timelines presented for Option 2 are inflated (1)
 - Consult earlier for the Station and provide the relevant information for the community (1)
 - Community feedback should be incorporated before any future use assessment process occurs for the Station (1)
 - There is lack of information pertaining to process, costs and documentation regarding demolition and remediation of the cottage (1)
 - It is not clear why Transport has ruled out the option of divestment (1).
- **Preference for land use options (eight comments)**
 - Contamination issues at the site should be remediated whilst retaining the building (3)
 - The cottage is in good enough condition to retain (1)
 - Changing the land use zone is a viable option for the cottage (1)
 - Remediate the cottage to residential criteria due to lower cost (1)
 - Risk that Council will not support demolition and are more likely to support applications for rezoning (1).

Other feedback

A total of eight comments were received in relation to the Heritage Trail.

Feedback included:

- Overall support for implementation of the Heritage Trail (2)
- Specific requests including:
 - Extension of the Heritage Trail to the intersection with Beverly Hills Road to provide a safe trail for cyclists to enter Captains Flat (2)
 - Installation of a picnic area with seating and tables to encourage visitation (2)
 - Extension of the Heritage Trail so that is an attractive walking and cycling trail from the rail precinct into the centre of the village. (1)
 - Request for further information on future use options for the Station and remediation for the Station and rail corridor to Beverly Hills Road (1).

Facebook feedback

Some public discussion between three community members in opposition to the cottage being demolished on Transport's sponsored post promoting the public exhibition.

ABC Radio Interview

ABC Radio conducted an interview with a community member from Captains Flat on the 9 October 2023. They discussed the community's concerns regarding Transport's preferred option to demolish the cottage.