Thanks for the chance to provide feedback on this important draft Plan of Management (PoM) for the Mt Keira Summit Park (MKSP). I strongly support Council’s proposal to sensitively & sustainably develop the Summit Park.

I believe the Summit Park is currently under-utilised and an appropriate development is required to revitalise Mt Keira, making it a world class destination, encouraging greater visitation and use by the local community.

I acknowledge that Aboriginal people are the original custodians of the Illawarra area, including Mt Keira and the surrounding escarpment. Any developments need to respect their wishes and cultural connection to the country where the Summit park is located.

Overall, the proposed plan for the park is positive but I am concerned that a clear plan for mountain biking (MTB) has not been incorporated into the Summit Park. Given the scale & significance of the overall MTB project for the Illawarra, there should be a firm commitment by Council to connect the MKSP into the wider MTB trail network, proposed in the Draft NPWS Illawarra MTB strategy, which includes a Green loop beginner MTB trail at the summit. There appears to be a lack of strong vision and commitment to this activity by Council. The PoM sets no obvious direction for MTB in the Summit Park, as it has not been defined as either a ‘permissible use’ nor a ‘prohibited activity’. Also, one of only a couple of references to MTB in the PoM (Pg. 31 of the PoM) is ambiguous, as it states, ‘new trails/trail sections may be developed to provide beginner mountain bike opportunities as part of a broader Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy’.

The Summit Park is the ideal location for a MTB trail hub, as it already provides much-needed facilities for the success of the wider MTB trail network, including toilets, running water, power, parking, BBQ and picnic tables. For the park to be utilised as a MTB hub, there needs to be a dedicated MTB trail, linking it with the surrounding trail network. A ‘green’ beginner trail, as proposed in Dirt Art’s plan, would be ideal and could be constructed in such a way as to ensure that MTB is kept as a low impact activity in the park. This ties in well with one of the PoM’s key aims to ‘protect the natural & cultural values of the Summit Park & provide for a range of sustainable visitor uses’.

The magnificent view at the summit park is one of our region’s best assets as a tourism drawcard. The lookout will provide a unique world-class MTB experience by rewarding riders for reaching the top of the mountain. This experience is likely to be shared all over the world on social media, making Mt Keira a must-ride MTB destination. Increased visitation to the MKSP by mountain bike riders and their family members will help to support existing and proposed business opportunities...
located in the park area, including a café, restaurant, cultural/heritage tours, not to mention other potential businesses such as MTB coaching and bike hire.

I commend Council for re-affirming their commitment to MTB on Mt Keira and the wider escarpment in a recent social media post and recommend that the PoM is revised to reflect this commitment. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback.