

News

Heritage twist in skate park stoush

New hurdle for proposed \$1.1 million youth facility

✦ Anton Rose

AFTER years of controversy and debate, a divisive \$1.1 million proposal for a skate park in Rushcutters Bay has taken a new twist with the NSW Heritage Council stepping into the fray to announce the historical park is being considered for protected status.

Campaigners last week were celebrating what they claim is a decision that will ban any construction, however, Woollahra Council said the skate park can still be built at Rushcutters Bay Park but would now have to clear another hurdle in getting the Heritage Council to approve it.

Potts Point and Kings Cross Heritage Society president Andrew Woodhouse lauded the decision,



Jasper Oxley. Pic: John Appleyard

believing it to be the final nail in the project's coffin, just months after he and fellow campaigners presented a 2000-signature petition opposing the project to state parliament.

"We're very pleased with the result," Mr Woodhouse said. "It is important to remember this is a protective measure for this cherished

open space which will now be protected for users today and into the future."

The latest development is not a recommendation from the Heritage Council that Rushcutters Bay Park be listed, as those against it believe, but a notice to the public that it is being considered for heritage status.

The plans first flagged in 2017 have been subject to intense back and forths, with Woollahra councillor Anthony Marano recently stoking the fire with comments claiming activists fighting against the proposal were "old" and "would be dead soon anyway".

He later apologised for those remarks at a council meeting.

The Heritage Council's consideration for heritage listing will go on public exhi-



Updated concept plans for a skate park and youth recreation facility at Rushcutters Bay Park.

tion for 21 days before the Planning Minister Rob Stokes decides its fate.

Recently-elected Woollahra mayor Susan Wynne said council would still press ahead with its proposal to bring a skate park to Rushcutters Bay.

"While council has re-

ceived no notification from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and is seeking clarification, we fully support and respect the process and would welcome the opportunity to make a submission during any future public consultation, and will be taking no further

action until this has taken place," she said.

The suburban stoush has also seen political heavyweights weigh in on the debate, with former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull and Labor MP Tanya Plibersek facing off in federal parliament over the issue.

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