

April 2025

# Taronga Zoo Sky Safari

Appendix KK  
Heritage Hoop Pines Letter  
RTS Revision 2

PREPARED BY



PREPARED FOR

**TARONGA**   
CONSERVATION SOCIETY AUSTRALIA

*For the Wild*



**SSD-46807958 Taronga Zoo Sky Safari – Impact on Hoop Pines**

The DPHI is considering the SSD Application to replace the cable car system at Taronga Zoo and provide an accessible facility with larger capacity. The proposal is at a higher level than the existing and includes larger cabins which require a wider path. At that elevation the proposal avoids significant impacts to the Hoop Pines and only requires minor pruning of small upper branches. The Urbis Statement of Heritage Impact dated July 2024 assessed the heritage impact of the pylons and cable route as minor.

The DPHI has requested that lower height pylons be investigated. Public submissions raised concerns about pylon height and therefore a lower option has been considered.

Investigation reveals that the lower option (12m) would result in a major detrimental heritage impact to the heritage significant group of Hoop Pines (53L) and to the cultural landscape of the Zoo as a whole. To provide the wider route at a lower level requires the removal of two trees (see landscape architects report). In addition, these trees large size, location on the ridge and prominence on the skyline means their removal would increase the visual prominence of the proposed cable car system.

This report further investigates the history and heritage value of the group of Hoop Pines 53L.

**Heritage Significance**

The 6 Hoop Pines are identified in Taronga Zoo Heritage and Conservation Register (s170) as Item 53L and as being of Exceptional significance and a State level. The listing states that they are early plantings reflecting Taronga's establishment as a Zoological Park and that they have landmark qualities, particularly from the harbour and from within the site itself. They aesthetically contribute to the cultural landscape of the Zoo. The group is recommended to be conserved and maintained in the Heritage Register and Heritage Management Strategy. The Landscape Management Plan recommends they be retained and conserved and that, in order to, conserve the broad planning intentions of the early layout, replacement plantings of Hoop Pines should be commenced. It also recommends continuing to monitor health and safety regularly (this is done). It recommends actions, now completed, removal of light and electrical wires from one tree and of general clutter in the area.

Research for this report (following) has found additional historical information which confirms the exceptional level of significance and that they are the most important cultural plantings at the Zoo. The group is important in its own right and as a crucial part of the cultural landscape of the whole Zoo.

Any actions damaging or removing these trees negatively impacts on the heritage value of the group - particularly any removal that impacts the perception of the group as an avenue.

Any actions damaging or removing Hoop Pine trees that are visible on the skyline of the ridge negatively impacts on the heritage value of the whole of the Zoo as a cultural landscape - particularly any action that impacts emergent Hoop Pine trees.

### Visual Analysis

The Hoop Pines are a landmark group of tall trees planted on the central north south ridge. As mature trees from the earliest (Le Souef) period they are now prominent in views from both east and west. The planting on the ridge was likely deliberate as a landmark for visitors particularly when arriving by boat and when within the Zoo. They act as locators within the Zoo emerging above the general canopy. There are views within the Zoo and from a distance (see following photos). Illustrations in the Visual Impact Assessment show the emergent pines in distant views – see figure pairs 25/26, 47/48, 49/50 and 57/58.

The Landscape Management Plan identifies three internal views of the Hoop Pines – V40, V41 and V42. V40 was an internal view down along the spinal path – the path is gone but the view remains. V41 is a similar view up along the spinal path from below towards the Hoop Pines. V42 is the view along the path looking west towards the Taronga Food Market framed by Hoop Pines. This is near the seats 55L looking west. V48 from the Taronga Centre looking west also features the emergent hoop pines. All these views would be negatively impacted by the removal of two of the Hoop Pines.

	
<p>View from the water with emergent hoop pines</p>	<p>V46 looking west with the pines visible.</p>
	
<p>V41 looking up the path between the Hoop Pines</p>	<p>The two pines affected viewed from the Sky Safari</p>

### Historical Analysis

It is highly likely the Hoop Pine group is part of the 1912 avenue planting by dignitaries at the inauguration ceremony as detailed in the following section 'Historical Evidence'. This strongly confirms the listing of the group as of exceptional significance at a State level. The site levelled for the tent was at the top of the hill.

The Hoop Pines are likely a remnant of a larger planting as the inaugural program and Trust report both indicate 19 trees were planted. Some of these were *Araucaria* and some *Lophostemon* (Brush Box). The 53L group of 6 are the only mature Hoop Pines surviving at the Zoo. It is possible more Hoop Pines were planted and did not survive or were in the way of later construction and removed. One Brush Box 186L survives near the Hoop Pines and was likely part of the 1912 planting and possibly others in the vicinity that are not in the heritage register. Two other mature Brush Box (235L & 236L) on a lower road nearby may be part of the planting. Three others (211L, 234L, 260L) are likely too far from the main group to have been planted on the day and four others are part of a later planting on the east boundary which was not part of the Zoo in 1912. The only other intact avenue planting at the Zoo is 5 *Waterhousia* (Weeping Lilly Pilly) trees on the road between the floral clock and the original Elephant House. They are believed to be a later planting but they could be early and the species is consistent with the idea "that each main avenue be bordered with striking species".

There are some inconsistencies in the historical information that may be able to be clarified by further research. The Trust minutes plan the planting of *Araucaria* [sic] Cooki (Cook Island Pine) – not Hoop Pines. The plant list had *Araucaria Cunninghamii* [sic] (Hoop Pine) and *Araucaria australis* (which includes *Araucaria Cunninghamii* but not Cooki). It is possible the minutes were wrong or that the plants available on the day varied. All were species commonly planted at the time and promoted and supplied by Joseph Maiden, director of the Botanic Gardens.

The planting of emergent Pines (*Araucaria*) is typical of the late Victorian gardenesque style. *Araucarias* were also used at homesteads in avenues, or individually, as identifiers – they grew quickly, were tall and could be seen from a distance. Figs were also commonly planted adjacent for shade and to attract birds.

## Historical Evidence

In April 1912 an area of Ashton Park was rededicated as the site for the Zoological Gardens. Le Souef, the first superintendent, supervised the initial development. His hand map of 1912 had paths along the contours and a “Main Road”, or in 1913 a “Central Avenue”, through the centre of the Zoo and the entry centrally located along the north boundary. The Public Works Department (PWD) carried out a site survey in 1912. This survey was the base for a 1915 plan by the Government Architect which features the Central Avenue showing the idea persisted. See plans following. Though the formal avenue was not built many features of this plan were ultimately built, such as, the double stair and the entry with a garage and shelter.

Clearing the site and making paths commenced in August 1912 and a 1<sup>st</sup> September 1912 report to the Trust on planting suggested that each main avenue be bordered with striking species. An inauguration ceremony was held on 14th October 1912. Preparatory to this on 3<sup>rd</sup> October the Trust decided to

*“plant the Lophostemon and Araucaria [sic] cooki on 14<sup>th</sup> October and that the trees be planted by Members of the Ministry and Members of the Trust, Mayor of Sydney and Mayor of Mosman. An avenue 25’ wide cleared through the centre of grounds on which trees to be planted, and site for tent levelled off.”*

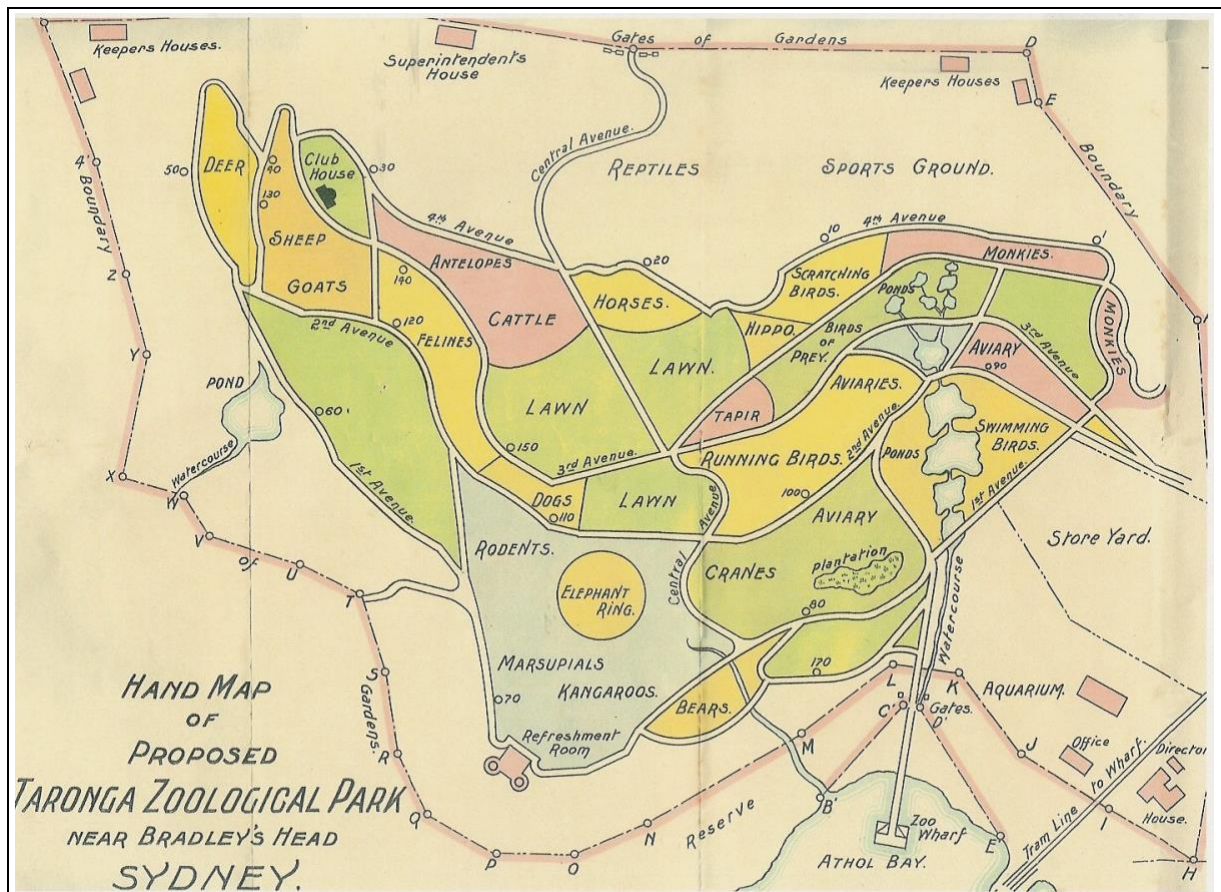
The program for the event and subsequent reports to the Trust note visitors arriving by ferry at 2.45pm. This would have been to the Quarantine Station wharf or to Athol Wharf and they would have walked up the hill (the lower entry and wharf was not built). One newspaper report complains of a long and dusty climb. Two participants, Mr McGowan (Premier of NSW) and Mr Watt (Premier of Victoria), were late as they walked in the wrong direction from Bradleys Head. The program lists those planting trees in the Main Avenue at 3.15pm, notes addresses by the Premier, Attorney General, Minister for Lands and others, followed by afternoon tea at 4pm and return by ferry at 5 or 5.30pm. The latecomers delayed the proceedings and the afternoon tea in the marquee at the top of the hill was not served until 5.15pm. A report to the Trust lists who planted trees on the north side, south side and centre implying the road, in part, ran east west.

A 1913 list “List of Trees; Plants; Shrubs; etc. Recommended for Planting on the Taronga Zoological Park” included Araucaria Cunninghamii [sic] and Araucaria australis - a term which includes the three Australian species: bunya pine (A. bidwillii), hoop pine (A. cunninghamii), and Norfolk Island pine (A. heterophylla). Technical assistance in regard to the planting was provided by JH Maiden, director of the Botanic Gardens. Maiden arranged for the supply of all the plants needed. Also involved was James Dawes, superintendent of Centennial Park, in providing advice on horticultural matters.

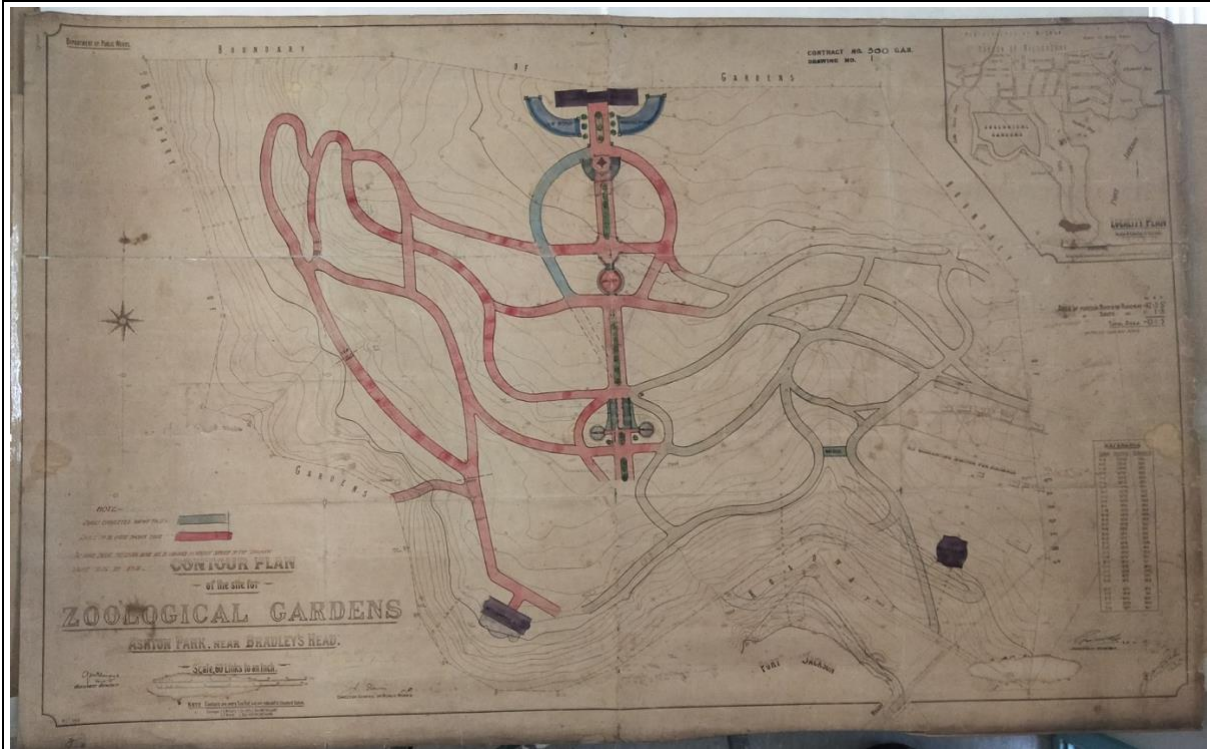
Initial works in the east of the site were supervised by Le Souef, Colonel Alfred Spain (trustee and architect), his business partner Thomas Cosh and Captain TS Phillips (clerk of works). In February 1915, after the outbreak of World War 1, the Government Architect's Branch (GAB) of the NSW PWD was engaged officially to design the first buildings and exhibits. Exhibits such as the monkey pits, now Wollemi Bushwalk and cultural circle, had already been commenced.

It is believed the Hoop Pine Group and at least one Lophostemon are likely to be from this planting. Another planting of pines is recorded in the Trust minutes on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1919: “Pine trees to be planted”. On 1<sup>st</sup> November “The trust instructed that the Pine Trees be called after the Minister for Lands, Mr W Ashford”. It is also possible that the pines could be from this planting.





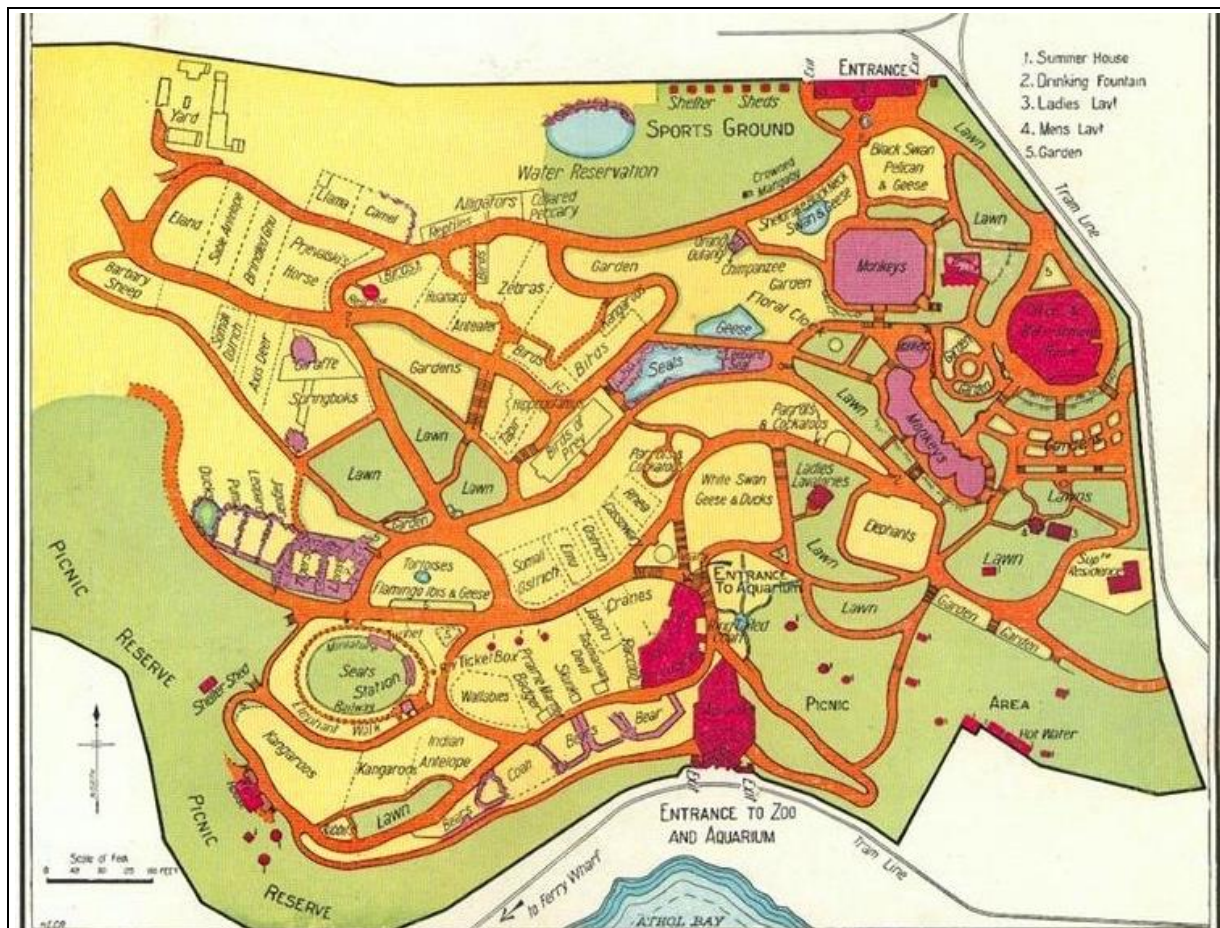
The 'hand map' of the proposed layout of Taronga Zoo dated 1913. Paths followed the natural contours and there is a north/south Central Avenue. Note the extensive lawn areas in the centre.



PL 001A in Taronga's archive was prepared by the Government Architects Office in 1915, with the 1912 survey as a base. It shows a formal Central Avenue with tree plantings, shelters and a double staircase. The key says that roads shown grey were those completed by 15 March 1915 and the roads shown red were yet to be made. The layout of the grey roads is not exact.

*Note that land was added later to the east of the boundary on the above maps.*

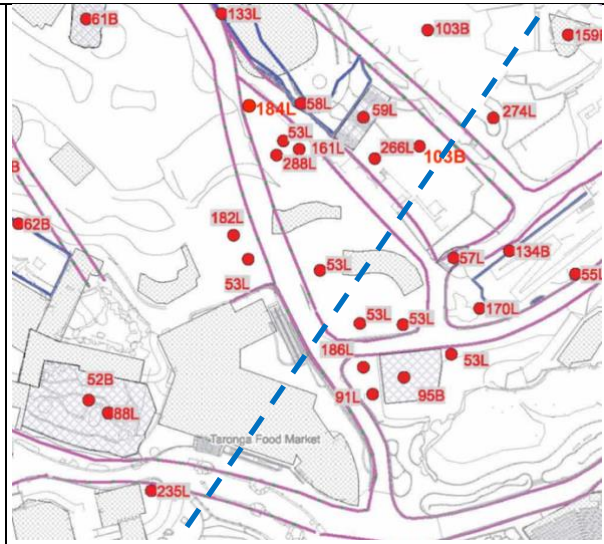




This Zoo plan is from a c1929 guide. An area of land had been added to the east. Note the three central lawn areas and gardens above the flamingo exhibit. The two righthand lawns near the double stair was later Hallstrom Square. They and the road adjacent giraffes were removed in 2017



This diagram shows the location of the 6 remaining Hoop Pine trees on each side of Giraffe Road (Central Avenue) and the main east west road. The purple indicates the Food Market built on the former flamingo exhibit



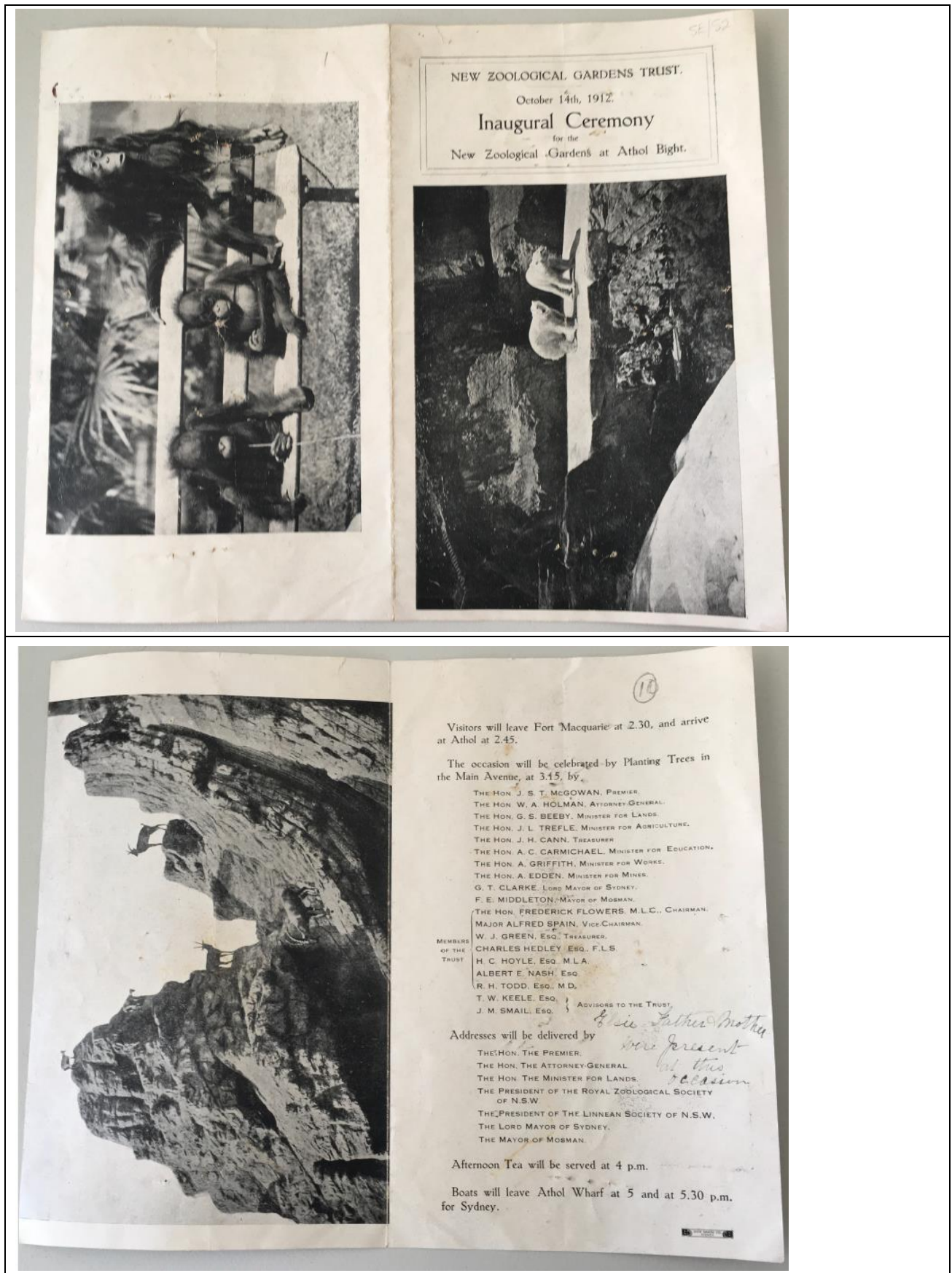
The s170 map is for the same area as at left. The Hoop Pines is 53L. The Sky Safari route is dotted blue. A tear shaped area at centre was 'Hallstrom Square' - removed in 2017. Item 186L is a Lophostemon, likely part of the 1912 planting

Jean Rice, B.Arch, MHerCon, LFRAIA and member ICOMOS, NT & DOCOMOMO  
Senior Project Manager, Heritage Specialist, TCSA



## Historical Documents

TZ Inaugural ceremony 1912 booklet





1912 araucaria planting from AF496 Chronological History Information Folder 1

SUMMARY OF REPORT OF PLANTING - 1 September 1912

Sandy loam, varying depth, in most parts of grounds, sufficient to support good growth of trees, specially those with branching roots.

Flora Present

Grounds covered with heavy growth of native trees and shrubs, the most useful being Angophoras which covered the lower slopes.

(Two species of eucalyptus in abundance considered to be of little use for ornamentation or shade).

A few established *Eugenia smithii* (lilli pilli) on lower slopes.

*Exocarpus* (Native cherry) fairly plentiful.

Good specimens of *Notelaea* (Axe breaker tree) in the valleys.

Blue Berry tree and 3 species of *Personia* (geebung) scattered about grounds.

Some good *Banksias* on upper slopes.

From young plants showing up, it appeared that *Waratahs* and *Christmas Bush* were once very plentiful.

*Grevillea*, *Maple*, (*Pimelia*) and a yellow pea-shaped flower abundant all over the grounds.

*Epacris* (Heaths), *Flannel Flowers*, *Kennydia* (*Sarsparella*), *Native grape*, *Tecoma australia*, and *Clematus* also in evidence.

Suggested Treatment. Aim for planting was in ornamentation, shade and breakwinds. Extensive planting of quick growing trees and selection of permanent trees which would show up by the time others have outgrown themselves.

Suggested that different sections of the grounds be planted with one variety of flowering tree as its dominant feature, also each main avenue bordered with striking species. The decorative effect of two or three acres of acacias, waratahs, *Christmas Bush*, *Scarlet bottle brush*, *grevillea*, *hibiscus* etc. with palms and tree ferns, creepers etc furnishing the trees.

Sept. 6: Decision by Trust to pay the Chief Secretary the sum of One hundred pounds stg. £100 for expenses in connection with Survey.

6 men engaged in clearing the Grounds, one-third of which had been completed.

A shed was in course of erection.

Decision by Trust to have water laid on as required and to purchase a time registration clock when needed.

Oct. 3: Decision by Trust to plant the *Lophostemon* and *Auracaria cookii* on 14th October and that Trees be planted by Members of the Ministry and Members of the Trust, Mayor of Sydney and Mayor of Mosman. An avenue 25' wide cleared through centre of grounds on which trees to be planted, and site for tent levelled off.

Oct. 14: The Inaugural Ceremony for the new Zoo. Gardens took place on the land, when addresses were delivered by the Premier (Hon. J.S.T. McGowen), the Hon. Fred Flowers, MLC (Chairman of the Trust), Col. A. Spain (President RZS) Mr. W.W. Froggatt (Pres. of Linnaean Society), Mr. J.H. Maiden (Director of Botanic Gardens), the Hon. W.A. Watt (Premier of Victoria) and others. (230 acceptances received for function - a ferry engaged for the afternoon).

Trees were planted by members of the Ministry, Dr. Richard Arthur MLA (member for the district), members of the Trust, Ald. G.T. Clarke (Lord Mayor) and Ald. F.T. Middleton (Mayor of Mosman).



## NEW ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS TRUST.

October 14th, 1912.

Trees Planted by:-  
=====

## North Side; West to East:-

*Colonel* Major A. Spain President Royal Zoological Society N.S.W.  
 J. M. Small, Esq., Member New Zoological Gardens Trust  
 The Hon. Fred Flowers, Chairman " " "  
 T. W. Keele, Esq., Member " " "  
 Dr. R. H. Todd, " " " "  
 Dr. Richard Arthur M.L.A.,  
 Albert E. Nash, Esq., Member " " " "

South Side; West to East;  
=====

J. S. T. McGowan, Esq., M.L.A., Premier of New South Wales

*Peter* McBryde *Minister for Railways*

+ Mrs. McGowan

*William Alexander*  
R Watt Esq., Premier of Victoria

X Mrs. Spain

*Thomson* Dr. R. Hall, Esq. M.L.A., Minister for Justice & Solicitor GeneralCentre; West to East  
=====

X W. H. Willis, Esq., M.L.A., Speaker Legislative Assembly

X Alderman D.D. Middleton At Mayor of Mosman

The Hon Sir Francis Suttor, M.L.C.

Alderman J. T. Clarke, Lord Mayor of Sydney

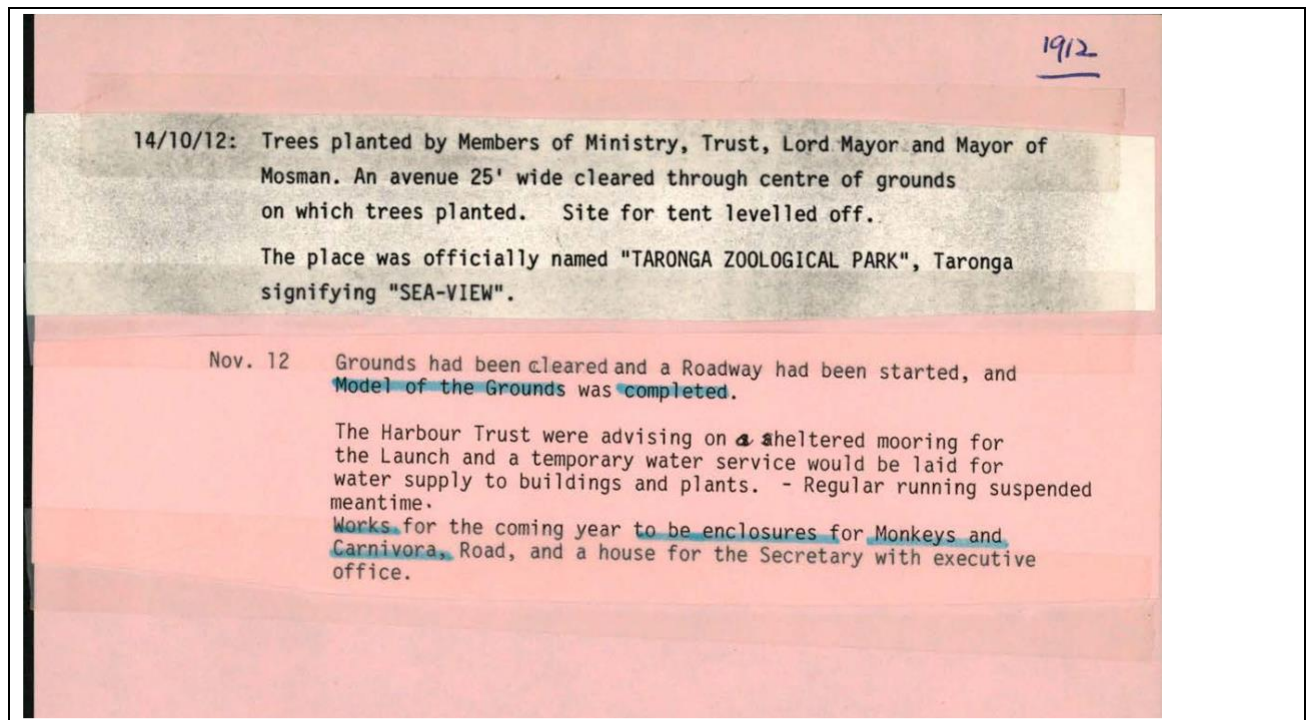
*Thomson* H. C. Hoyle, Esq., M.L.A. Member of New Zoological Gardens Trust

W. J. Green, Esq., Treasurer to New Zoological Gardens Trust.

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*John Williams*





## 1912 Newspaper article about the Speeches and Tree Planting

Sun (Sydney, NSW : 1910 - 1954), Tuesday 15 October 1912, page 2

## SPEECHES AND TREE-PLANTING.

### TARONGA ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

About 300 people went to Athol Bight yesterday to participate in the opening ceremony and tree-planting in connection with the new Zoo, which is to be available for the reception of animal, bird, and fish life in about three years time. They had a long and dusty climb before they reached the place where the tree-planting was to be done, and then they stood round for three-quarters of an hour waiting for something to happen. Nothing happened worth speaking of till the people who were to do the gardening arrived. Mr. McGowan and Mr. Watt (Victoria) got lost. They landed at Bradley's Head and made for the Clifton fortifications, instead of in the right direction. They reached the right spot after all the other speakers had had a nattering, and they delivered the eighth and ninth speeches respectively.

There was too much speech about the function, too much dust and hill about the walk for the ladies in summer dresses and high-heeled boots, too much tree-planting in a circumscribed area, too much time lost, too much south-westerly gale and dust; but there were compensations. The council of the Zoo had arranged matters through Mr. A. S. Le Sueur very well, and the drawbacks were forgotten when the party reached the top of the hill and found that the afternoon tea was still hot at 5.15 p.m., and the food supplies were ample.

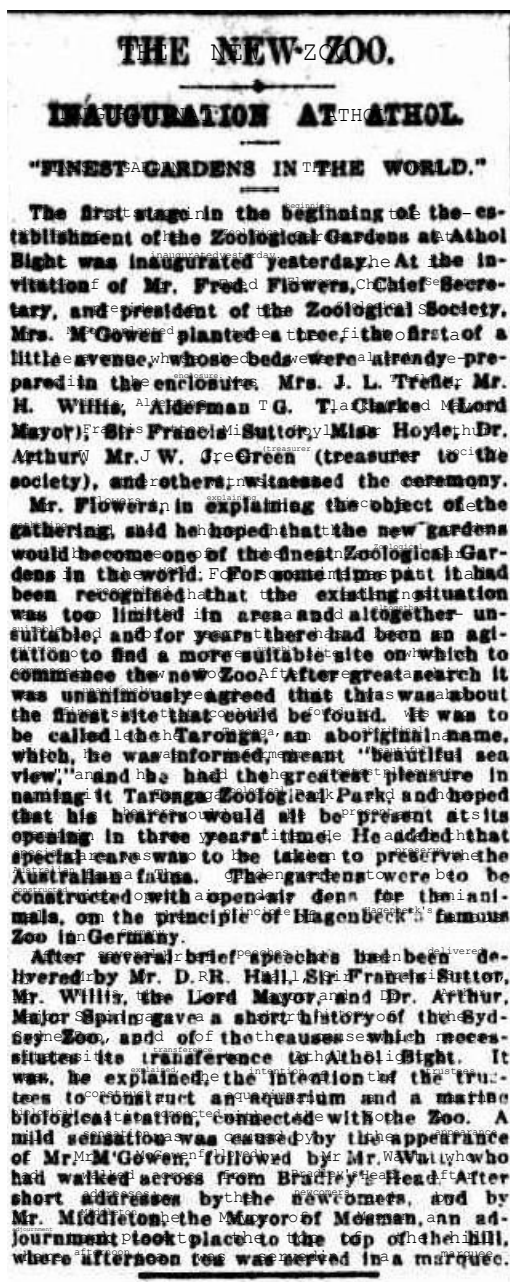
The site came in for much commendation, but as Mr. Flowers and Mr. Forster said, it will take much money, labor, and time to make Taronga Park the equal of the great Zoos of the world. However, the beginning is the main thing, and on the council of the

society are several men who are noted for doing things thoroughly and going wholeheartedly into any public project they take up. One thing worthy of note was that the first of the Australian wild animals to be on the site was a dainty little sugar squirrel, which was taken to the park in a Zoo attendant's pocket, in order to let it have a look at its new home of the future.



## 1912 Newspaper article about The New Zoo Inauguration at Athol

Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954), Tuesday 15 October 1912, page 10



Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW : 1883 - 1930), Wednesday 20 November 1912, page 7

have been provided for.

This is likely to be two or three solid work  
before any part of the site is ready for occupa-  
tion. A plastic model of the complete work  
is now being prepared. It is a difficult job  
and as soon as it is done the construction  
of the details will begin. The same com-  
pletion date for the open up operation has  
been made available from time to time.



## 1913 auracaria in planting list from AF496 Chronological History Information Folder 1

| LIST OF TREES; PLANTS; SHRUBS; etc.,<br>=====                     |                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Recommended for Planting on the Taronga Zoological Park.<br>===== |                               |
| Acacia decurrens, (Var. normalis)                                 | Callitris cupressiformis      |
| " " " mellis                                                      | robusta                       |
| discolor                                                          | verrucosa                     |
| elata                                                             | macleayana                    |
| accula                                                            | australis                     |
| glaucescens                                                       | Cryptocarpa obvata            |
| lanigera                                                          | Casuarina sumatrana           |
| macredenia                                                        | terulea                       |
| myrtifolia                                                        | Cherezema grandiflora         |
| pendula                                                           | Chamaelaucium uncinatum       |
| pruinosa                                                          | Cupania australis             |
| pubescens                                                         | Callistemon phoeniceus        |
| pycanthia                                                         | speciosa                      |
| retinodes                                                         | liniaria                      |
| saligna                                                           | lanceolatus                   |
| baileyana                                                         | violaceum                     |
| cyanophylla                                                       | sempiflora                    |
| drummondii                                                        | Cerata petalum, (gummigerum)  |
| pedalyriaefolia                                                   | Castanopsis australis         |
| premineus                                                         | Capparis mitchellii           |
| pulchella                                                         | Corynocarpus laevigatum       |
| spectabilis                                                       | Clerodendron tomentosum       |
| <del>Cultroformis</del>                                           | Cupania anacardioides         |
| Araucaria australis                                               | pseudorhus                    |
| cunninghamii                                                      | Cordyline striata             |
| Alsophylla australis                                              | arinalis                      |
| cooperii                                                          | Doryanthes excelsa            |
| Assorted Ferns                                                    | Dicksonia antarctica          |
| Backhausia myrtifolia                                             | Dacrydium franklinii          |
| Barklya pyramidalis                                               | Eucalyptus ficifolia purpurea |
| Bauhinia heckeri, (Q. Land Ebeni.?)                               | "                             |
| Baekea flicata                                                    | calophylla                    |
| Baleghia lucida                                                   | sitriodora                    |
| Banksia serrata                                                   | betriodes                     |
| ericifolia                                                        | sideroxylon                   |

| Continuation Sheet.                       |                                   |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Eucalyptus corymbosus</i>              | <i>Lomatia longifolia</i>         |
| blue gum                                  | <i>Macadamia ternifolia</i>       |
| <i>Elaeagnus cyaneus</i>                  | <i>Myoporum platycarpus</i>       |
| abundans                                  | acuminatum                        |
| grandis                                   | <i>Melia composita</i>            |
| <i>Erythrina</i> , (Illawarra flame tree) | <i>Melaleuca hypericifolia</i>    |
| <i>Eugenia leucomannii</i>                | leucodendron                      |
| ventenatii                                | cunifolia                         |
| smithii                                   | squamea                           |
| ugni                                      | parviflora                        |
| <i>Ficus aspera</i>                       | stypheleides                      |
| benjaminea                                | genistifolia                      |
| australis (variegata)                     | wilsenii                          |
| eugenioides                               | <i>Nephelium becklerii</i>        |
| hillii                                    | biocarpum                         |
| nitida                                    | tomentosum                        |
| rubiginosa                                | <i>Olea paniculata</i>            |
| cunninghamii                              | <i>Pimelia decussata</i>          |
| <i>Gmelina Feichhardtii</i>               | <i>Personia brunneiana</i>        |
| <i>Grevillea hilliana</i>                 | <i>Pedocarpus elata</i>           |
| buxifolia                                 | <i>Ptychosperma alexandriae</i>   |
| robusta                                   | <i>Scolecopia brownii</i>         |
| banksii                                   | <i>Sterculia diversifolia</i>     |
| <i>Graptophyllum carlii</i>               | acerifolia                        |
| <del>Styphalea</del>                      | <i>Stenocarpus sinuatus</i>       |
| <i>Geodia leucomannii</i>                 | <i>Swainsonia</i> , (Asserted)    |
| <i>Glyceriaramigera</i>                   | <i>Sellia heterophylla</i>        |
| <i>Hymenocarpus flavum</i>                | <i>Sideroxylon argenteum</i>      |
| <i>Hakea laurina</i>                      | australis                         |
| cristata                                  | <i>Tabernaemontana laurifolia</i> |
| victoria regina                           | <i>Tristania laurina</i>          |
| <i>Hamelia patens</i>                     | neriifolia                        |
| <i>Helicia ferruginea</i>                 | <i>Tecoma australis</i>           |
| <i>Hibiscus tiliaceus</i>                 | jazzminoides                      |
| <i>Harpulia pendula</i>                   | <i>Tabernaemontana</i>            |
| <i>Lagunaria patersonii</i>               | <i>Verticordia brownii</i>        |
| <i>Litsia dealbata</i>                    | <i>Vitis glauca</i>               |
|                                           | antarctica                        |



## 1919 pine planting

