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2014

# Bulls Domain Reserve Management Plan: Part 2



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# Part Two:

## Legislative and Policy Framework specific to Bulls Domain, Bulls

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# **Introduction and background**

## **Introduction**

This is a management plan for Bulls Domain, a vibrant and popular park located on the outskirts of Bulls. Comprising both sports fields and children's play facilities, Bulls Domain provides for formal and casual recreational opportunities.

The two main issues for Bulls Domain are,

- to promote and encourage the use of Bulls Domain for a range of recreation activities and
- to develop a sustainable plan to progressively improve the condition of facilities at the Domain.

This Recreational Reserve Management Plan outlines a vision for the future of Bulls Domain.

## **Location of Bulls Domain**

Bulls Domain is located on Domain Road on the outskirts of Bulls. It is mostly surrounded by farmland with some mixed residential and commercial zones nearby.

## **Topography**

The playing fields are mostly flat and the surface of the fields is in excellent condition. The vehicle access to the playing fields can get very muddy. There is an area of planted forestry at the rear end of the Domain which has been used in the past to fund improvements to the facilities. The proceeds from previous harvests were used to develop the walkway on either side of the plantation, to improve the tennis courts and to refurbish the caretaker's house.

## **Purpose**

This plan provides a policy framework for the development of Bulls Domain, Bulls. It provides the necessary authority for the specific policies and action plan contained as part of this Management Plan.

## **Tangata Whenua**

The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are also relevant to reserve management and development. The Council will undertake consultation with local iwi and hapu in accordance with its Memorandum of Understanding Tutohinga with its iwi liaison komiti, Te Roopu Ahi Kaa.

## Recreational Amenities

Bulls Domain contains the following recreational amenities:

- Playing fields (2 rugby and 1 football)
- Rugby club rooms with toilets, kitchen, bar
- 2 sheds for rugby club use
- Hard surface with 2 netball courts and 3 tennis courts
- Pavilion: public toilets, changing rooms and Rugby Club showers (locked, not for public use)
- Skate park
- Children's play area
- Car parking area suitable for freedom camping (motorhome friendly dump station and potable water available at Taumaihi Street)
- Dog obedience area (fenced and gated)
- Small bore rifle range
- Walkways on either side of the plantation

## History of the Park

The formal development of the current 'Bulls Domain' occurred in 1893. The Bulls Town Board applied for the 45 acre section to become a recreation reserve. On 18 July 1893 this space was declared a space for public recreation which would be managed under the Public Domains Act 1881.

In its long history the Bulls Domain has been used for a wide variety of recreation purposes. In the very early stages of the space it was used for horse racing. Historically, the Domain also contained both a running and cycling track, as well as other athletics facilities which were used for a range of amateur athletics practices and competitions. An annual athletics day was held at the park, which attracted large crowds. On a weekly basis the athletics facilities were used on a Thursday afternoon after school. However, due to declining numbers of students using the facility, all athletics activities have since been relocated to Bulls School.

The Rugby Club has been located in the Domain for a significant period of time. Originally, the Rugby Club was located in the Bulls Township in an unused church. However, this building was burnt down and the Club rooms re-located to the Domain. The current Rugby Club building is approximately 20 years old. It was completed through a staged development with a significant amount of volunteer labour. All money was gained through fundraising events such as 'stock-drives'. The creation of the building as it is today is a product of community determination, effort and skill. The Bulls Rugby Club still has a strong membership. The Rugby Club is also a community resource which is hired for a number of meetings and events. Town meetings are even held occasionally in the building if the Town Hall is unavailable. In 2003 a scoreboard and verandah were constructed on the front of the clubrooms.

The tennis club is also a long standing feature of the Domain. It has been located in the area since at least the 1920s. The tennis courts were refurbished in 2011, with the re-sealing of the courts, as well as new fences and nets. The refurbishment was funded by the Rangitikei District Council with funds gained from harvesting trees on the Domain (a large hedge of Macrocarpa trees was removed). This upgrade has revitalised the club and ensured the satisfaction of local residents with the facility. The success of the upgrades resulted in the Bulls Tennis Club hosting the ‘Bulls Tennis Club Champs’ in February 2012. The refurbished courts are also used for netball during the winter.

The Pavilion, a key feature of the Domain, had shower facilities installed in 1977 and extension work of the building occurring in 1997. Other recreational facilities have also been upgraded in the recent past, with the swings and see-saw replaced in 2011.

The Domain also has one of the few grass hack cycle trails in the country. This track was well used in the past, however, in recent times use of the trail has been dwindling.

More recent events occurring in the Domain include; 2011 Running of the Bulls Festival (which included air force aerobatics), the 2013 dog agility competition, annual Christmas family fun days, the ‘Wear-a-Bull’ arts day (an annual free family event) and the 2013 ‘Rhythm in Bulls’ event (a free concert featuring Wellington’s top 5 piece band). Within the past 10 – 15 years the Domain has also been used for a number of weddings and funerals. It is also used on an informal recreational basis for recreational walking and exercising dogs.

Overall, the Bulls Domain has always been an important part of the community, a place where a wide variety of sporting and recreation activities have occurred. This high quality space will continue to provide opportunities for a wide range of recreational and leisure interests into the future and to host a variety of community events.

## Legal Framework

The Bulls Domain is located within Rangitikei District and overall management and administration of the reserve is the responsibility of the Council. The overall park is classified as Recreation Reserve and its management is prescribed by the Reserves Act 1977.

Table 1 provides the legal description of the parcels of land that comprise Bulls Domain and their reserve classification.

Table 1 Legal Status of Bulls Domain			
Land title reference	Area	Description	Comment
CFR WN 22C/614 – valuation number 1365066600	19.4458Ha	SECS 474 476 PT SECS 484 485	Bulls Domain
No title – valuation number 1365066800	2.41Ha	PT SECS 484 485 BLK XI RANGITOTO SD -REC RES	Recreational reserve including caretaker's house

## **The District Plan**

For development purposes, Bulls Domain is zoned rural. It is touched by some commercial and residential zones. It is within the Hazard Zone Flood 1 and Liquefaction 2. There are no current or proposed listings of notable trees or significant buildings at Bulls Domain.

## **Bylaws**

Control of Dogs Bylaw: Under the bylaw, dogs must be on a lead in the Domain, except in the designated dog exercise area in the northern section of the Domain. Dogs must stay off the playing fields and children's play area at all times.

Liquor Control Bylaw: Bulls Domain is a liquor controlled area in the Council's Liquor Control Bylaw. In a liquor controlled areas nobody is allowed to consume, bring or possess liquor unless in a licensed premise.

## **Existing Leases/ Licences**

There are no current leases over any of the land or property on Bulls Domain.

The Rugby Club operates a licensed bar at its Club rooms.

## **Specific Policies for Bulls Domain**

Particularly in relation to Part One: Policies 1 and 2, the Council will work closely with the Bulls community to implement progressive developments at the Domain to meet the needs of today, bearing in mind the needs of future generations.

### *Explanation*

Since 2009, the Council has been explicit that it expects to reduce the number of community and leisure assets that it manages and maintains over the next ten years or so. It will do this in consultation with local communities. In the 2012 Long Term Plan, it was suggested that Council should take a presumption against renewing any community and leisure facilities until a full review of use and the potential to relocate or combine activities was undertaken.

During the consultation over the 2013/14 draft Annual Plan, a submission was received which requested that Council consider tar-sealing the remainder of the access road for Bulls Domain and the parking area. This was estimated to cost \$30,000 and \$20,000 respectively. This was in order to make the Domain hard surface suitable for freedom campers in motor-homes.

Discussions with the Bulls Community Committee indicated that to make the Domain fully "motor-home friendly" may require additional improvements to Bulls Domain such as outside lighting, toilet block and signs advising of the facility. The cost of these improvements is currently unknown.

In addition, use of the Domain at night would require that the gates be left open. Presently these are shut in the evening due to issues with vandalism to the grounds and facilities. Vandalism will continue to be a risk (and cost) in this situation.

These elements potentially add up to a significant cost. Council decided that these costs are not immediately justifiable, particularly in the absence of a Park Management Plan for Bulls Domain. Council needs to find an affordable solution for the Bulls town and district ratepayers that will maximise the recreational amenity of the Domain. Council further decided that staff should prepare a Management Plan for Bulls Domain as soon as practicable but during 2013/14.

Council notified its intention to create a Reserve Management Plan for the Domain at the end of July 2013 and invited comments and ideas for inclusion during August. It convened a public meeting on 14 August from the key users and stakeholders. This group included input from:

- Bulls & District Community Trust
- Rugby Club
- Dog Obedience
- NZ Police
- Tennis Club
- Football Club

Various issues were raised through these avenues, some of which related to the day-to-day management of the Domain and others highlighted areas for improvement into the future.

A draft Bulls Domain Management Plan (Part 2) was adopted for two months consultation from 3 February to 4 April 2014. Two submissions were received. These submissions contained further suggestions for operational improvements but also requested that Council:

- encourage the development of a combined sports club in Bulls, and
- create a pest free native bush walk around the perimeter of the pine trees to the north side of the Domain

A summary of improvements to the Levels of Service are included in the Bulls Domain Action Plan to be further considered as part of the Council's Community and Leisure Assets Activity and Asset Management Planning.

## Action Table for Bulls Domain Reserve Management Plan