

# Hyde Park Plan of Management: Round One Public Consultation

An Observational User Analysis Study of Hyde Park



Volume One

Executive Summary, Introduction and Study Methodology

Prepared for

The City of Sydney Council

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# Volume One: Executive Summary, Introduction and Study Methodology

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## **Volume One**

Executive Summary, Introduction  
and Study Methodology

## **Volume Two**

Entering the Park

## **Volume Three**

Moving through the Park

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Spending time in the Park

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## Executive Summary

This Observational User Analysis Study of Hyde Park consisted of observations of over 15,000 individual Park users whose activities were observed and recorded on three days:

- Wednesday 22nd March 2006, from 7.30am to 6.30pm
- Friday 24th March 2006, from 8.00pm to 11.00pm and
- Sunday 26th March, from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

The observations were 'non-participatory' in nature, which means that Park users were not approached to complete a questionnaire or to engage in any discussions about their activities – they were simply observed, and their activities noted, at the following points:

- Park entrances – people were counted when entering the Park from any one of the designated 24 Park entrances – separate male and female counts were undertaken.
- The pathways and desire lines used immediately after entering the Park were noted.
- Fixed seats – all people on fixed seats along pathways were counted.
- Open spaces – observations recorded activities undertaken by Park users in open spaces in designated sub-precincts of the Park,

A full discussion of the user analysis methodology appears on pages 2 to 4 of this volume (Volume One) of the report.

## Structure of the report

As the activities of over 15,000 individual Parks users were recorded during the three observation days, the systematic reporting of data is important.

The report is divided into five volumes:

Volume One: Executive Summary, Introduction and Methodology

Volume Two: Entering the Park

Volume Three: Moving through the Park

Volume Four: Spending Time in the Park

Volume Five: Appendix

The amount of data generated by the study means that it is difficult to 'summarise' the findings, in any real sense of the word, in the Executive Summary. The purpose of the Executive Summary therefore, is to point readers in the direction of particular sets of 'top line' data that may be worthy of note. In doing this, we note that as individual readers will have very different data requirements, all readers are encouraged to review the detailed data in Volumes Two, Three and Four.

We also mention that the complete data set has been provided to Council in the form of Microsoft Excel worksheets. The tables contained in the worksheets can be further analysed to produce additional cross-tabulations of data, should these be required.

## Some *top line* findings

### Volume Two – Entering the Park

On the Wednesday, four out of five *most used* entrances are in the northern end of the Park. On Sundays, the northern end has three out of five of the *most used* entrances, whereas on Friday night, the southern end has three out of five *most used* entrances. This appears to highlight that on the Friday night at least, the southern end appears to hold the main pedestrian pathways from the City. (See Vol: 2, page 1). It is also interesting to note that there was some suggestion in the Intercept Survey that the southern end of Hyde Park was the least safe at night (See Hyde Park Intercept Survey, pages 66-67).

Overall, the *most used* entrance on each of the three observation days was Entrance 21 – Market Street at St James. The second *most used* entrance on Wednesdays and Sundays was Entrance 2 – Prince Albert Road. The third *most used* was Entrance 4 – Cook and Philip Park. (See Vol: 2, pages 19-21).

During all three observation periods, males entering the Park significantly outnumbered females, although on Sunday the percentage difference was smaller (See Vol: 2, pages 23-24).

On all three observation days, only two wheelchairs were observed in the Park. This appears to indicate that access to the Park is difficult for those in wheelchairs (See Vol: 2, pages 25-26).

### Volume Three – Moving through the Park

The data in Volume Three provide very detailed visual profiles of people moving through the Park. As such, it is not helpful to summarise particular parts of Volume Three.

### Volume Four – Spending Time in the Park

On Wednesdays and Sundays, the data show only a low presence of babies and children in Hyde Park. The adolescent numbers on Wednesdays largely reflect schoolchildren. This appears to indicate that the Park does not appear to be a particularly attractive place to bring babies and children (See Vol: 4, page 4).

In relation to the total number of park users, the peak occurs on the Wednesday around 12.30pm, whereas on Sunday the data show the number of park users steadily increasing throughout the day until the 4.00pm end of the observation period (See Vol: 4, page 4).

For all people spending time in the park, the percentage of males is significantly greater than females on all of the observation days (see Vol: 4, page 4). Although this may broadly reflect gender imbalance in the workforce for Wednesday, there is no apparent reason for this occurring on a fine early Autumn Sunday – although there may be some relationship between this figure and the low numbers of babies and children in the park on both days.

### Volume Five – Appendix

The Appendix contains precise details and maps of *what we did* in the study. Details in the Appendix will be important for replicating the full study, or any particular parts, at any future date.

# Introduction

The City of Sydney Council commissioned The People for Places and Spaces in September 2005, to plan and implement a two-stage public and stakeholder engagement program, designed to inform the development of the new Hyde Park Plan of Management and Masterplan.

The consultation program included a number of distinct elements each of which is designed to provide Park user and other stakeholder inputs about Hyde Park to the design team – Clouston Associates, Landscape Architects working in conjunction with the City of Sydney team.

## The Observational User Analysis Study

This observational user analysis study was designed to provide the design team with detailed information about user activities across all designated precincts within Hyde Park. It complements the Hyde Park Intercept Survey of 1000 Park users, and is the second major study of Hyde Park users to be completed 'in situ' in the Park (see below for details of all other Round One studies).

Each of the two 'in-situ' user study is very different in its objectives and methodologies. This study is highly quantitative in nature and is designed to provide detailed profiles of user activities across the entire Park over three specific days:

- Wednesday 22nd March 2006, from 7.30am to 6.30pm
- Friday 24th March 2006, from 8.00pm to 11.00pm, and
- Sunday 26th March, from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

The Intercept Survey, by contrast, is essentially a qualitative study designed to identify a range of user opinions and values about Hyde Park, including events.

Together, these two 'in-situ' studies provide detailed information about Hyde Park users – their opinions, values and activities.

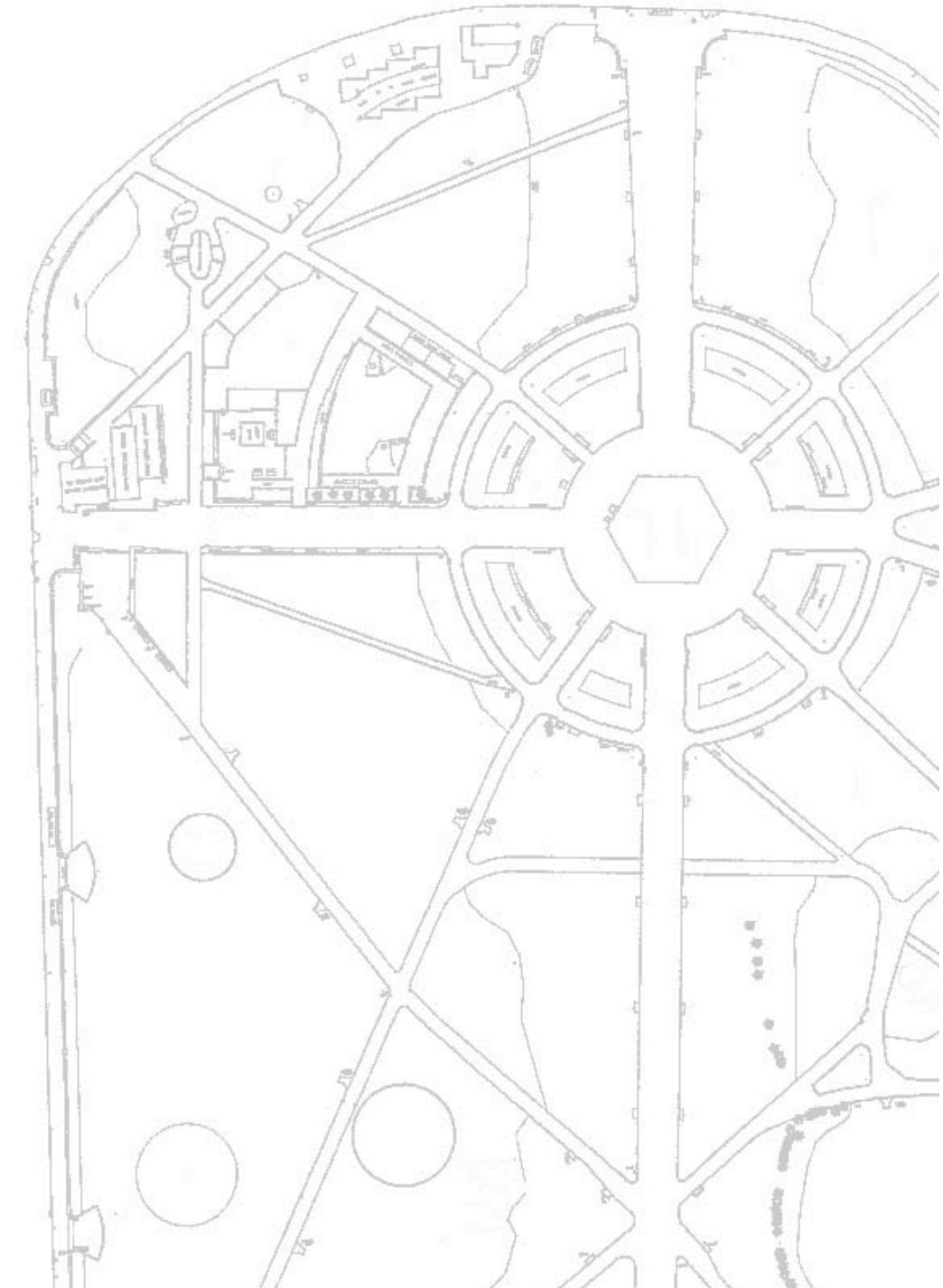
Detailed information about methodology of this study, is found on pages 2 to 4 of this volume of the report (Volume One).

Finally, particular care has been taken to clearly document the study's methodology to allow for replication in the future. The Appendix contains concise precinct and sub-precinct maps and precise details of the observational activities undertaken in each precinct. This information is sufficient to allow future replication of the study.

## The Other Round One Consultation Studies

Each study listed below was prepared for the purpose of informing the preparation of the Hyde Park Plan of Management on behalf of City of Sydney Council by The People for Places and Spaces:

- Report of Interviews with Internal Stakeholders, January 2006
- Hyde Park Intercept Survey of 1,000 Park Users, March 2006
- An Observational User Analysis Study of Hyde Park, April 2006 (this study)
- Hyde Park Amenity Providers Study, in preparation
- Hyde Park Key Stakeholders Study, in preparation
- Hyde Park Key Institutions and Surrounding Property Owners Study, in preparation.



## Explanation of the user analysis methodology

The user analysis methodology for Hyde Park was designed to generate detailed profile of user activities across the entire Park, through a series of systematic, direct observations of user activities

This was a 'non-participatory' methodology that does not require Park users to complete any questionnaires or participate in any discussions. Rather, as it relies solely on the systematic observation and recording of Park user activities, many users would be unaware that their activities in the Park were being noted.

The non-participatory process systematically records user activities in the Park, together with any other relevant information that may occur during the observation processes.

To achieve this, a process of sample counting of activities is used (described in the following section on this page) to construct a profile of user activities in designated precincts of the Park.

The outputs of user analysis studies provide designers with a solid fact base – that is spatially based – about how particular spaces are used, to ensure the needs of the users are considered during design processes.

Readers are cautioned however, that user activities are extremely sensitive to climatic and other environmental conditions – including temperature, sun, rain, nearby events, holiday periods, among others. User profiles recorded during particular time periods cannot be assumed to be representative of other time periods, where environmental conditions may have changed.

## Details of the observational user analysis methodology

The observation processes used in Hyde Park were entirely anonymous and individual Park users cannot be identified. Although there are often ethical questions associated with non-participatory user analysis, – such as issues about invasion of privacy or observers impacting on user activity – we believe they do not apply in this case, as the methodology was conducted entirely in a public place and no individual Park users can be identified.

## The observation precincts and sub-precincts

Observational analysis requires a highly systematic study of user activity to build detailed and reliable activity profiles. To achieve this, Hyde Park was divided into ten user analysis precincts. To achieve a high level of integration between the activity profiles and the landscape studies undertaken by Clouston Associates, Landscape Architects – the ten precincts chosen were identical to those used by Clouston Associates.

A map of Hyde Park, indicating these ten precincts, appears on the following page. It should be noted that Precincts 5 and 6 were combined into a single precinct, for the purposes of the observational studies, as these two precincts were both small in area with an uncomplicated user pattern.

Further, each precinct was further subdivided into five sub-precincts. This was important as each sub-precinct contained different open-space areas, pathways and seats that required observation.

The Appendix contains full details of each of the five sub-precincts within each precinct, together with the designated observation points and the areas and activities to be observed and recorded in each sub-precinct.

The information in the Appendix is important, particularly if the study were to be replicated at any future time.

## The days and times of observations

The days and times on which the observations were undertaken and the areas and pathways to be observed (see Appendix) were agreed between Clouston Associates and The People for Places and Spaces, prior to sign off by the City.

The observation days and times were:

Wednesday 22nd March 2006, from 7.30am to 6.30pm

Friday 24th March 2006, from 8.00pm to 11.00pm and

Sunday 26th March, from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

Weather conditions and other potential impacts on the observational study discussed on page 4 in Volume One.

## The 10-minute sample counts

Observational analysis in large spaces usually relies on systematic sample counts to build profiles of activity patterns, as it is generally not possible to count every user/activity in large spaces during extended periods of time.

For this reason, the Hyde Park user analysis methodology utilised a 10 minute sample count methodology. This sample count was carried out in each of the five sub precincts within each of the nine designated precincts (see map on page 3). The sample count was repeated in each of the five sub-precincts every hour, across all of the nine designated precincts within the Park. This resulted in a total of 20 hours of observations being undertaken within each sub-precinct across the entire Park during the three observation days – Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup>, Friday 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2006.

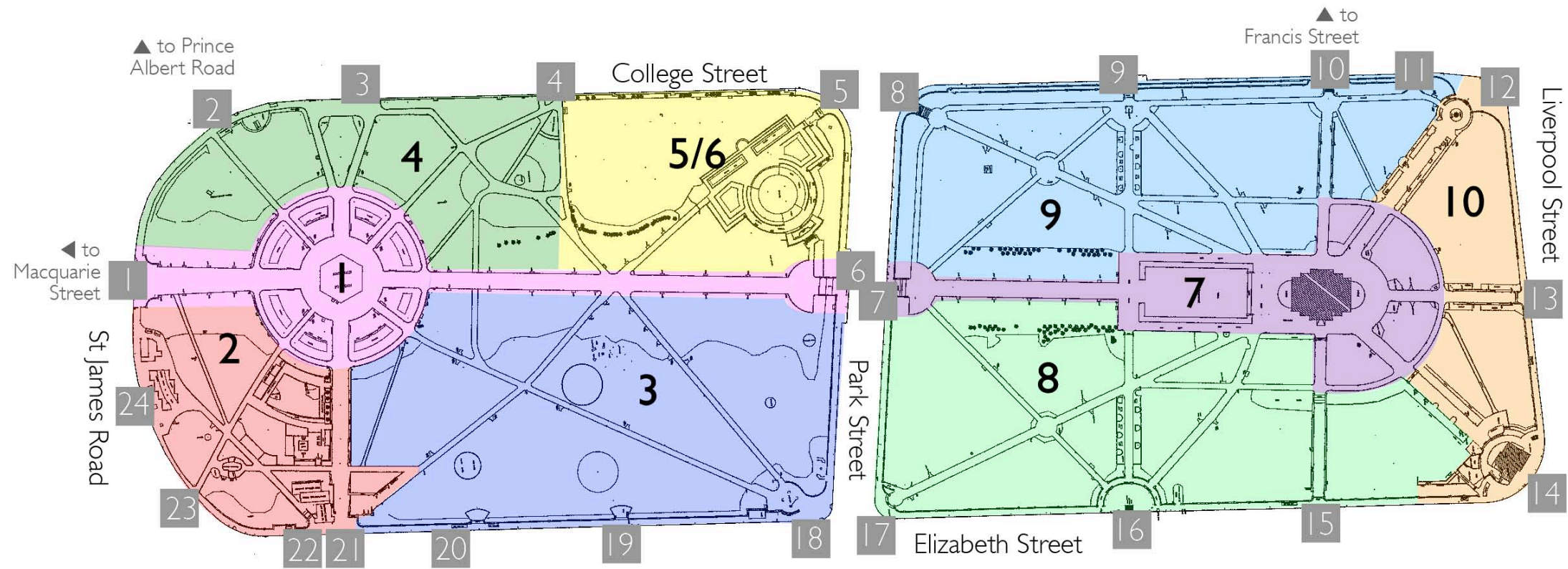
During each of the 10 minute sample counts, observation and recording of the range of activities listed in the Appendix was undertaken for each of the sub-precincts. It is noted that these activities were different for each sub-precinct.

Clearly, large quantities of data are generated for each precinct and sub-precinct, over each of the observation days. This data may be analysed and cross-tabulated in a great variety of ways to provide many different activity profiles.

During the data analysis process, the emerging activity profiles were discussed with Clouston Associates, to ensure that they were relevant to their task of developing the new Plan of Management and Masterplan for Hyde Park. Clouston Associates were satisfied with the emerging profiles and suggested some further activity profiles that would be useful for their task.

In addition to this report, raw data in the form of Microsoft Excel worksheets, has been provided to Council. This will enable the data to be further analysed and cross-tabulated in the future, if required.

## Map of Hyde Park showing entrances and study precincts



- |                       |                              |                           |                     |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Macquarie Street    | 7 Park Street South          | 13 Liverpool Street       | 19 Tattersalls      |
| 2 Prince Albert Road  | 8 Australian Museum          | 14 Museum Station         | 20 Sheraton         |
| 3 St Marys Cathedral  | 9 Sydney Boys Grammar School | 15 Elizabeth Street South | 21 Market Street    |
| 4 Phillip & Cook Park | 10 Francis Street            | 16 Obelisk                | 22 St James Station |
| 5 Sandringham Gardens | 11 College Street South      | 17 T & G                  | 23 St James Road    |
| 6 Park Street North   | 12 Oxford Street             | 18 Oddfellows Memorial    | 24 St James Church  |

## The user activities that were observed and recorded

The 'non-participatory' nature of the observations means that Park users were not approached to complete a questionnaire or to engage in any discussions about their activities – they were simply observed, and their activities noted, at the following points:

- Park entrances – people were counted when entering the Park from any one of the designated 24 Park entrances – separate male and female counts were undertaken
- The pathways and desire lines used immediately after entering the Park were noted
- Fixed seats – all people on fixed seats along pathways were counted
- Open spaces – observations recorded activities undertaken by Park users in open spaces in designated sub-precincts of the Park,

Full details of these observation activities and of each of the precincts appears in the Appendix.

## Environmental conditions that affected the observations

### Park entrances

Pavement works affected a number of entrances during the observations, on all three days.

**Entrance 1 and 2** were affected by pavement construction on each observation day, although each entrance remained open.

**Entrance 3** was closed for the entire observational study period due to pavement works. Aside from preventing observational counts at this entrance, this closure would have dispersed people to the nearest adjacent entrances – Entrance 2 and 4 – although it was not possible to determine the effects of this dispersal at Entrances 2 and 4.

**Entrances 5 and 6.** Although there were pavement and associated road works between Entrances 5 and 6, both remained open during the observation periods. The bus stop on Park Street was however closed. The combined effect of these road works and the closed bus stop may have impacted the number of people using both entrances at various times of the day.

**Entrance 6.** On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2006 only, the pedestrian pavement along Park Street north was closed. Pedestrians were walking east were instructed to detour through Hyde Park.

**Entrance 15** Although this entrance remained open throughout the periods of observations, pavement works extended from the southern side of Entrance 16 across entrance 15 and beyond along Elizabeth Street towards entrance 16. There were associated area closures for landscape work along the inside wall of Hyde Park, which virtually matched the external area of pavement works. The affect of these works, particularly the external works would have been to funnel people wishing to enter the Park to entrances 16 and 14, as it might have appeared that Entrance 15 was closed – although it remained open throughout the observational periods.

**Entrance 20** was effectively closed, due to internal Park landscape works (see Precinct 3: Sub-precinct 3a below)

### Park precincts

**Precinct 1** A number of seats positioned around the fountain in Precinct 1 were closed due to landscape works.

**Precinct 3: Sub-precinct 3a** A large area of this sub-precinct, immediately adjacent to Entrance 20, was closed due to landscape works. This meant that Entrance 20 was, in effect, closed for the entire duration of the observations.

**Precinct 4: Sub-precinct 4b.** A large area of sub-precinct 4B was closed between entrances 1 and 2 due to landscape works.

### Events

There were no events in the park on any of the observation days, although a Triathlon in the Domain area on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March increased cycle traffic through Hyde Park in the afternoon.

## Weather conditions

Weather conditions were variable throughout the observations days and are listed below

### Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2006

Wednesday recorded early morning rain that ceased by the commencement time of the observations at 7.30am. The weather remained overcast in the morning with a temperature of circa 21 degrees. This rose to a maximum of 28 degrees throughout the day. No further rain was recorded during and the clouds gradually cleared to a mostly fine afternoon. The ground was dry at lunch time and the early rain did not appear to deter people from sitting on the grass.

### Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2006

Friday recorded rain on several occasions throughout the day. Friday night was very overcast and rainy, which may have caused people not to use the Park. The temperature was 21 degrees and light rain was recorded for approximately 15 prior to the 8.00pm commencement time and for approximately 15 minutes after this time. It also lightly rained again at 9.00pm for approximately 10 minutes. After that time, although no further rain was recorded, it was noted that the seats remained wet throughout the night.

### Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> march, 2006

Sunday was a fine and sunny day with the temperature rising to 29 degrees, considered ideal for Park visitation.