

HISTORY OF THE GINNINDERRA FALLS ASSOCIATION

The Ginninderra Falls Association has had a long gestation. By 1837, the falls area had been declared a public reserve but, sometime after 1875, the area was broken up and sold. In 1931, the Canberra Advisory Committee discussed the desirability of opening up the falls but the cost involved was a deterrent. In 1978, a couple wanting to open the falls to the public purchased the property and made the falls accessible. When the land came on the market in 1984, Chris Watson, of the Ginninderra Community Council, along with a member of the Conservation Council, proposed a trust company to purchase the property to preserve the area and ensure continuing accessibility to the falls. This effort failed and, eventually, the falls were closed to the public because of public liability insurance issues.

In 2011, after contact from an officer of Regional Development Australia suggesting a cross-border committee be established, the Belconnen Community Council held a well-attended public meeting where many cross-border issues were raised. This meeting agreed that Chris Watson should set up a working party to explore this idea. On 24 October 2011, a meeting was held to establish the group which was named the Ginninderra Falls Association at the following meeting on 15 December 2011.

This association was incorporated on 7 March 2012 and has been active in making representations to various bodies to advance the idea of the Ginninderra gorge and falls forming part of a National Park incorporating the gorges of the adjacent Murrumbidgee River corridor. The association has been involved in consultations on the proposed West Belconnen (ACT) and Riverview (NSW) residential developments since 2013, having monthly meetings with the Riverview Group and prompting the formation of a working group to assess the biodiversity and other characteristics of the Ginninderra Falls and gorge. The aim of this latter group is to assess the vulnerability of the gorge to urban development with a view to preventive measures being taken, as appropriate.