



# NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard

## Western Sydney Parklands Bill

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Thursday 19 October 2006.

### Second Reading

**Mr FRANK SARTOR** (Rockdale—Minister for Planning, Minister for Redfern Waterloo, Minister for Science and Medical Research, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)) [4.28 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill formally establishes the Western Sydney Parklands, a 27-kilometre corridor of open space stretching from Doonside to Leppington. It also creates a trust to develop and manage these parklands for the people of Western Sydney. This is a major investment for the community in one of the fastest growing regions in metropolitan Sydney. The bill brings to fruition more than 30 years of careful planning and prudent land acquisition by successive New South Wales governments using the Sydney Region Development Fund.

**Mr Barry O'Farrell:** Started by the Askin Government.

**Mr FRANK SARTOR:** The parklands have been a long-term project for the New South Wales Government, which of course has been acknowledged by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The future corridor was first identified in 1968 under the Sydney Region Outline Plan. Piece by piece the land acquisition program has continued and Western Sydney now boasts one of the largest continuous urban greenspaces in the world. This investment has already provided land for Sydney's major electricity and gas supply lines, four of the Olympic 2000 venues, the protection of significant remnants of Sydney's original bushland, heavily used parks such as the Western Sydney Regional Park and the M7, which has delivered major benefits for Western Sydney. Under the Western Sydney Parklands Bill the Government is moving to further unlock the benefits of this long-term investment by establishing the Western Sydney Parklands Trust. The trust will consolidate and better co-ordinate the management of government land and facilities within the parklands and ensure the protection and development of the parklands for public enjoyment and relaxation.

The Government's long-term vision for the site will guide the Western Sydney Parklands Trust in its management and development of the parklands. It calls for the restoration of Western Sydney's indigenous and endangered Cumberland Plain Woodlands. It proposes major sporting hubs to meet existing regional needs, and the new demand generated by growth in the north and south-west land release areas. New picnic and play areas will be developed for families in Western Sydney and opportunities for the trust to form partnerships with the private sector or other government agencies to create venues for entertainment and commercial recreation. The parklands will also continue to provide land for sustainable agriculture. I now table seven maps prepared by the Department of Planning showing the proposed Western Sydney Parklands.

### Documents tabled.

These identify the land that will comprise the Western Sydney Parklands and are included in schedule 2 to the bill. The schedule may be amended in the future but only by regulation or by a further Act of Parliament. Clause 22 (5) of the bill makes it clear that privately owned land does not form part of the parklands until it is acquired and vested in the trust. A large amount of the land within the parklands will be owned by the new Western Sydney Parklands Trust. Some land will continue to be owned by existing agencies. For example, Prospect Reservoir will remain with the Sydney Catchment Authority, Blacktown Olympic Park will remain with Blacktown Council, and Kemps Creek Nature Reserve and the Western Sydney Regional Park will remain reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. However, the parklands trust will have the care, control and management of the existing Western Sydney Regional Park.

The total parkland comprises 5,218 hectares, which is marginally less than the 5,500 hectares originally announced by the former Premier for the following reasons. Firstly, 180 hectares of major roads were originally included in the area of the parkland, namely the M7, M4, Elizabeth Drive and The Horsley Drive. The area occupied by these main roads cannot be viewed as parklands. Secondly, following detailed investigation of each and every precinct since the original announcement, including consultation with community stakeholders, we determined that it is neither practical nor functional for 22 hectares of land in Prospect East—land which is severed from the parklands by the Prospect Highway—to be included in the parklands.

Thirdly, investigation of the alignment for the south-west rail corridor has identified that there are practical issues with inclusion of the Camden Valley site at the very southern end of the parklands, an area of approximately 80 hectares bisected by the proposed alignment of the new south-west rail route. In addition, Bringelly Road is proposed to be widened at this point. These two major infrastructure projects will have the effect of severing the

site from the parklands corridor and the remaining site will have little value for recreational parkland uses. Allowance for recreational links and, where possible, wildlife links will be included in the design of both the rail and road upgrade.

I turn now to the provisions of the bill. The Western Sydney Parklands Trust will be subject to ministerial direction and control. The trust will have a board comprising up to eight members. There will be three ex officio members, that is, the director of the trust and the directors general of the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment and Conservation or their nominees. The other members will be appointed by the Minister, including the chairperson. The director of the trust will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the trust subject to the policies and directions of the governing board.

The functions of the trust are set out in part 3 of the bill. The trust will be responsible for developing the parklands into a multi-use urban parkland. Its functions reflect the range of proposed uses for the parklands, including many types of sport, recreation and entertainment, conservation of natural and cultural heritage, major community events and revenue-raising activities to support its ongoing maintenance and improvement. The trust is to prepare and maintain a plan of management in consultation with the other government agencies that own or manage land within the parklands. The plan of management will identify key issues and priorities such as the establishment of an ecological network and the creation of an access and circulation network. The plan will address management matters and set out proposals to generate income for the parklands. The plan has no effect unless and until adopted by the Minister.

The bill also provides for precinct plans to be prepared for the parklands. Precincts or sub-precincts will be created to reflect different characteristics, land uses and ownership. The trust is to consult any other agencies, including local councils, responsible for land within the precinct and have regard to the statutory functions of those agencies when preparing the plan. The plan of management and any precinct plans will be reviewed at least once every seven years.

Clause 13 makes specific provision for the trust to enter into a management agreement with another government agency for the agency to manage, maintain or develop land of the trust or vice versa. For example, it is proposed that New South Wales Sport and Recreation will continue to manage the Sydney International Shooting Centre, the Eastern Creek Raceway, the Western Sydney International Dragway, and the Sydney International Equestrian Centre. There is also provision for the trust to draw upon skills and expertise elsewhere in the New South Wales public sector or the private sector. The bill includes safeguards against the disposal of lands vested in the trust so it can remain in public ownership for future generations. Clause 16 of the bill precludes the trust from selling off or otherwise disposing of its land within the parklands. The trust may grant a long-term lease or licence over land in the parklands only with the Minister's consent.

The land vested in the trust under the bill is described in schedule 3. Most of this land is currently owned by the corporation constituted by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, namely, the Minister administering that Act. The bill also preserves existing interests in the land vested in the trust such as easements and leases for infrastructure or heritage properties such as Fairfield City Farm. The bill also provides a mechanism for the transfer of additional land to the trust in the future. The bill establishes a Western Sydney Parklands Fund in the special deposits account. Finally, the bill contains broad regulation-making powers to deal with matters such as the regulation of conduct on land within the parklands. The trust will be able to appoint rangers to enforce any offences. This park is almost 25 times the size of Centennial Park. It will be seen by future generations as one of the most significant Government contributions to the people of Western Sydney. I commend the bill to the House.