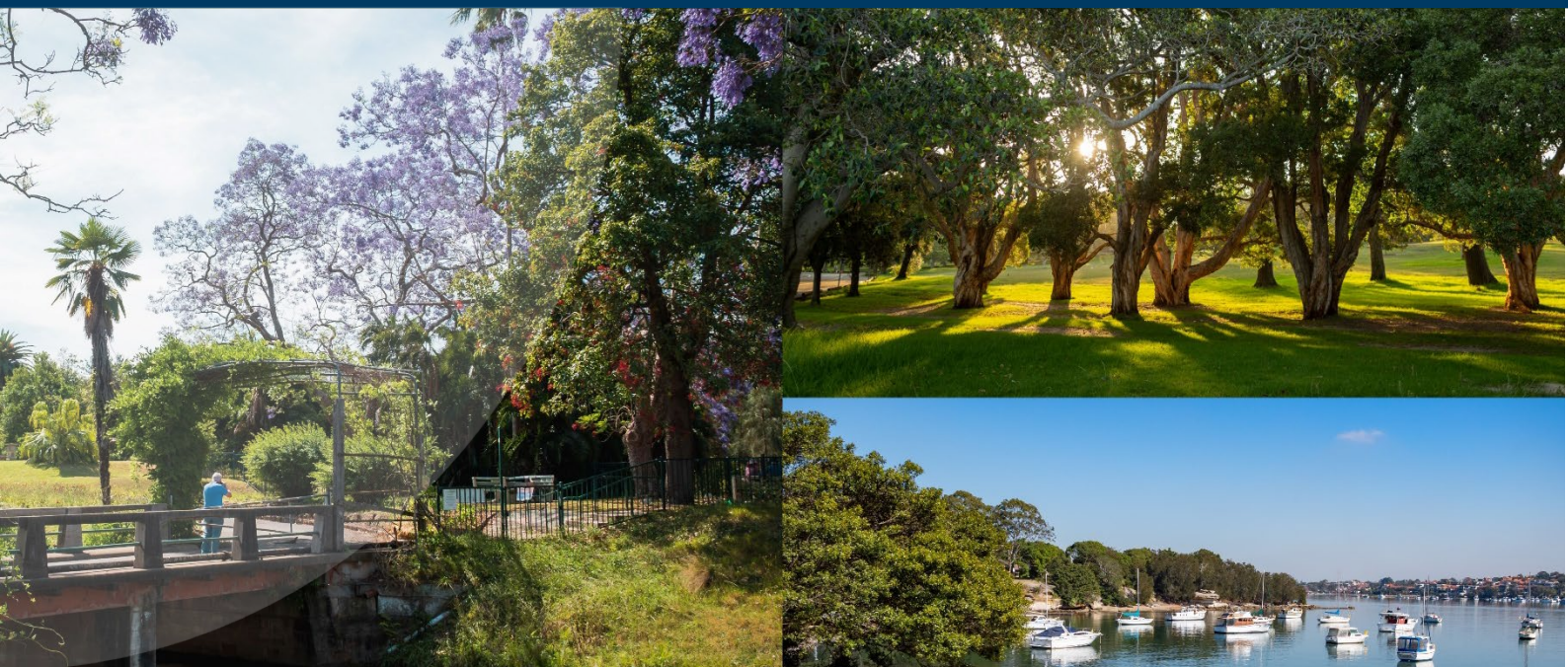


Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney  
Parklands Trust



PARLIAMENT OF  
NEW SOUTH WALES

# Review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*



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The motto of the coat of arms for the state of New South Wales is "Orta recens quam pura nites". It is written in Latin and means "newly risen, how brightly you shine".

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# Membership

<b>Chair</b>	The Hon Peter Primrose MLC
<b>Deputy Chair</b>	Mr Alex Greenwich MP
<b>Members</b>	The Hon Robert Borsak MLC Ms Donna Davis MP Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC Mr Nathan Hagarty MP (from 28 March 2025) Mr Mark Hodges MP The Hon Jacqui Munro MLC The Hon Cameron Murphy MLC Mrs Sally Quinnell MP (from 26 September 2024 to 28 March 2025) Dr David Saliba MP
<b>Contact details</b>	Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Parliament House Macquarie Street SYDNEY NSW 2000
<b>Telephone</b>	(02) 9230 3054
<b>E-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:greatersydneyparklandstrust@parliament.nsw.gov.au">greatersydneyparklandstrust@parliament.nsw.gov.au</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/greatersydneyparklandstrust">https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/greatersydneyparklandstrust</a>

## Chair's foreword

Vibrant, flourishing and well-maintained parklands are vital for Sydney and the diverse communities that enjoy its green spaces. As Sydney's population grows, we will increasingly need places to experience nature. This means that parklands are more important than ever.

These natural spaces provide a range of benefits to people as places of recreation and socialising, exercise, arts and culture, and connection to nature. They have significant cultural and historical heritage and provide environmental benefits by supporting biodiversity and wildlife refuges. The parklands also have a rich First Nations cultural heritage and can provide a connection to Country for First Nations people.

The Greater Sydney Parklands estate includes Centennial Park and Moore Park, Callan Park, Parramatta Park, Western Sydney Parklands and the Fernhill Estate. The *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* sets out how the parklands estate is to be managed and maintained by the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust (GSP Trust). The Act establishes clear policy objectives for the management of the parks, to preserve them and enhance their values to communities across Sydney.

The Committee's inquiry considered whether the Act's policy objectives remain valid, and whether the terms of the Act are appropriate for achieving those objectives. It was clear from what we heard that inquiry participants broadly supported the Act's objectives. However, we heard that implementation of the Act is not happening effectively because of funding constraints. We found that the Act needs to be amended to better enable the GSP Trust to implement its objectives.

Limited funding means that the GSP Trust is not always able to develop new infrastructure or undertake necessary repairs and maintenance in some of the parks. It also limits the types of activities that can happen in the parklands.

Recognising the public value of the parklands, the Committee has recommended ongoing and committed government funding to support maintenance and operations. Like schools and hospitals, parklands are important infrastructure that benefits the public and funding from government should reflect that public value.

The Committee has also recommended changes to the Act to enable the GSP Trust to improve the parklands' financial sustainability, by facilitating commercial uses that would raise revenue for the parklands. We heard that business hubs in the Western Sydney Parklands generate income for the park's maintenance and that this model could be expanded to other parks in the parklands estate.

However, we recognise stakeholder concerns about commercialisation of the parklands and agree that commercial development should be approached with caution. We support a balanced approach that would enable appropriate commercial activities in each park to supplement income while preserving the parklands' environmental and cultural values.

We heard that a key matter that has not been progressed by the GSP Trust is the creation of a Blue-Green Grid committee. The GSP Trust's role includes expanding green corridors across Sydney to work towards a long-term vision of quality parklands across Greater Sydney. While a

Blue-Green Grid committee could guide work towards this vision, we heard that the GSP Trust has not created this committee. Inquiry participants supported the broad objective of the Act to enhance green connections across Greater Sydney. We have recommended that the NSW Government takes immediate steps to establish the Blue-Green Grid committee to progress this objective.

The Committee has also recommended changes to the advisory committees for the specific parklands. Each park has a community trustee board that advises the GSP Trust on matters relevant to the park. These bodies are an important avenue for local input on the GSP Trust's management of each park, but we heard that they aren't working as effectively as they could be. We have recommended changes to improve how the community trustee boards operate, and to strengthen representation of First Nations peoples on the boards.

The Act outlines an ambitious framework that will serve the Greater Sydney Parklands estate into the future. The Committee's recommendations aim to ensure that the GSP Trust is able to maintain and expand the parklands and fully implement the Act's objectives.

I am grateful to the organisations and people who made submissions to the inquiry and spoke to us in public hearings. Your feedback has been invaluable in learning about the importance of the parklands and understanding how the Act should be amended to ensure its objectives can be achieved.

I'd also like to thank my fellow Committee members for their contributions, and committee staff for their support during the inquiry.

**The Hon Peter Primrose MLC**  
Chair

## Summary

The Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust was appointed to review the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* (the Act) to determine whether its policy objectives remain valid and whether the terms of the Act are appropriate for securing those objectives.

### Implementing the objectives of the Act

The Act sets out a framework for preserving and enhancing the values and uses of the parks in the parklands estate. The five parks in the estate – Parramatta Park, Centennial Park and Moore Park, Callan Park, the Fernhill Estate and the Western Sydney Parklands – provide a range of benefits to communities across Sydney. They support ecological diversity, sports and recreation, community engagement, cultural and historical heritage, and entertainment that is important to the character of Greater Sydney. The Committee heard that the parklands are increasingly important as Sydney's population increases and demand for access to natural spaces grows.

The Act was introduced to streamline governance of the parks, which have their own separate legislation. This allows the parks to be more effectively managed, while preserving their inherent values. The Committee heard that each park has its own unique character and history that should be maintained for the benefit of future generations.

The Act sets out an ambitious framework to provide world class parklands. It establishes the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust (GSP Trust) as the agency that manages the parks in accordance with the objects of the Act. Inquiry participants broadly supported the Act's vision and objectives. There was support for the work of the GSP Trust to maintain the parks for the benefit of communities across Greater Sydney.

While the Act's objectives are supported, we found that it is not being fully implemented. Funding constraints are limiting how effectively the GSP Trust performs its role, and some stakeholders are concerned that the parks aren't being properly protected and maintained.

A key issue raised by stakeholders was the lack of action on establishing the Blue-Green grid committee, which is envisaged in the Act. Blue-Green grids are interconnected networks of natural spaces that provide a range of environmental, economic and social benefits. The Committee heard that the GSP Trust has not established a Blue-Green grid committee to progress this work despite clear stakeholder support. We have recommended that the NSW Government takes immediate steps to establish this committee so that work on blue-green grids can progress.

We heard that there are opportunities to enhance the values of the parklands and further the objectives of the Act, but it is difficult to achieve this without additional sustainable sources of funding. Aligning the objects of all relevant legislation would also assist the GSP Trust in its work of managing the parklands estate.

### Ensuring the parklands' financial sustainability

We found that funding constraints are limiting how well the GSP Trust is able to implement the

objectives of the Act. We heard that limited funding impacts maintenance and repairs, as well as the delivery of new infrastructure and projects in the parklands. The Committee has recommended that the Act be amended to improve the financial position of the parklands by enabling new revenue streams.

The Committee has also called for committed and ongoing funding from government, recognising that the parklands provide key public benefits, like other public infrastructure. We have recommended that the NSW Government provides long term and sustained funding to the GSP Trust. Ongoing government funding would allow the GSP Trust to progress infrastructure programs and ensure ongoing maintenance of the parks. This would reduce pressure on the parks to self-fund their operations by expanding commercial activities.

Stakeholders raised concerns about commercial development risking the environmental and heritage values of the parks. We agree that leasing areas of the parklands for commercial activity should not come at the expense of natural green spaces. The Committee has recommended against permitting development that would reduce the total existing area of natural environment in the parks. We support a balanced approach, with appropriate commercial opportunities providing revenue for the parklands while not being relied on as the only way to achieve financial sustainability.

The Committee considers that improving financial sustainability requires amendments to the Act that will enable the GSP Trust to generate income for the parklands' maintenance. We have recommended amending the Act to add financial sustainability as a function of the GSP Trust; modify leasing provisions for some parks in the estate; enable the acquisition and development of surplus government land; and enable funds to be loaned between the parks' associated Trusts. We heard that supplementary and surplus government land could be used to expand the business hub model that is operating successfully in the Western Sydney Parklands. Surplus and supplementary land could also be acquired to expand the parklands estate.

These measures will help to strengthen the financial sustainability of the parklands and allow the GSP Trust to dedicate much needed funds to ongoing maintenance and improvements.

### **Improving the functioning of the community trustee boards**

The Act creates community trustee boards for each associated trust. The trustee boards are advisory bodies that provide input from local communities, work with the GSP Trust to develop plans of management for the parks, and advise on matters relevant to each park.

While the trustee boards perform an important role, we heard that they aren't working as effectively as intended. The Committee has recommended that the GSP Trust provides more detailed financial information to the trustee boards so that they can make informed decisions about matters relevant to their parks.

We heard that there are barriers to First Nations participation on the community trustee boards and some boards did not have First Nations members during their first terms. We have recommended that the GSP Trust explores ways to support First Nations membership of the community trustee boards.

The Committee also found that the recruitment process for community trustee board members could be improved to reduce the gap between meetings when trustee board memberships expire. The trustee boards have an important role in advising the GSP Trust and



representing the views of local communities, and it is important that there are no long periods where they are not operating.

The GSP Trust is working with the community trustee boards to improve how they operate. We heard that the GSP Trust surveyed the trustee boards to evaluate their performance and effectiveness. The evaluation identified ways to improve the functioning of the trustee boards and the GSP Trust is working to implement an improvement plan in collaboration with the trustee boards. The Committee supports this work and recommends that the actions identified in the plan continue to be progressed.

# Findings and recommendations

Finding 1	1
The objects and provisions of the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i> are broadly supported by inquiry participants.	
Recommendation 1	3
That the objects of the associated Trusts' legislation be amended to be consistent with the objects of the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i> to remove constraints on how the parkland estate may be used for public benefit.	
Recommendation 2	4
That the objects of the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i> be amended to include 'such other objects, consistent with the functions of the Trust in relation to the GSPT estate, as the Trust considers appropriate'.	
Finding 2	5
The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust is generally performing its functions as required under the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i> . However, funding constraints are impacting the Trust's ability to meet some of the Act's objectives.	
Recommendation 3	8
That the NSW Government takes immediate steps to establish the Blue-Green grid committee.	
Recommendation 4	10
That the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i> be amended to omit references to the Greater Sydney Commission and the <i>Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015</i> .	
Finding 3	12
There is a tension between the need to conserve and enhance the environmental values of the parklands estate, and the need to create opportunities for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust to earn revenue and fund the maintenance and improvement of the estate.	
Recommendation 5	15
That the NSW Government provides additional and sustained funding to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.	
Recommendation 6	16
That the NSW Government amends the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i> to include financial sustainability as a function of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.	
Recommendation 7	17
That the NSW Government develops a framework under the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i> to allow for the loan of funds between associated Trusts for a time limited period for essential maintenance, repairs and operations.	

Recommendation 8 \_\_\_\_\_ 17

That the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to provide that community trustee boards can advise the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust on proposed loans of funds between associated Trusts, but cannot prevent a loan.

Recommendation 9 \_\_\_\_\_ 17

That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust be required to report, in an easily accessible and understandable manner, all loans and financial transfers between the associated Trusts under its management as part of its annual reporting obligations.

Recommendation 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 19

That section 18 of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to enable the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust to acquire and develop supplementary land to fund the maintenance and improvement of the parklands estate, consistent with object 3(a) of the Act.

Recommendation 11 \_\_\_\_\_ 19

That the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to allow the transfer of surplus government land to:

- Deliver off-park business hubs to generate income for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust if the Minister of a public authority administering that land agrees the land is not being used for the core activities of the public authority.
- Expand the parklands estate if the Minister of a public authority administering that land agrees the land is not being used for the core activities of the public authority.

Recommendation 12 \_\_\_\_\_ 22

That section 21(1)(b) of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, which provides that leases, licenses or easements must not reduce the extent of the net existing natural environment of the GSPT estate, not be amended.

Recommendation 13 \_\_\_\_\_ 23

That the *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001* and the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* be amended to extend the maximum term of leases and licences to 50 years.

Recommendation 14 \_\_\_\_\_ 25

That the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* be amended to remove provisions that limit development in Callan Park to not-for-profit purposes.

Recommendation 15 \_\_\_\_\_ 26

That the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* be amended to remove the requirement for a notice of a proposed lease or licence totalling more than 10 years to be tabled in both Houses of Parliament.

Recommendation 16 \_\_\_\_\_ 27

That section 22 of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, which requires an open tender process for leases and certain licences with a term of 10 years or more, not be amended.

Recommendation 17	29
That section 6(6) of the <i>Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002</i> be amended to provide that the public notice requirements for proposed leases and licences only apply to leases or licences totalling more than five years.	
Recommendation 18	29
That section 13 of the <i>Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001</i> be amended to remove the requirement for the Trust to publish a notice of a proposed lease in a newspaper.	
Recommendation 19	31
That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust works with each community trustee board to ensure that processes for meetings, including accessibility, frequency and duration of meetings and the provision of meeting papers, meet the needs of each community trustee board.	
Recommendation 20	31
That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust continues to implement initiatives resulting from the improvement plan for community trustee boards, and reports to the trustee boards on implementation progress.	
Recommendation 21	36
That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust regularly briefs community trustee boards on revenue and expenditure on the parklands estate, where appropriate.	
Recommendation 22	38
That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust works with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to identify ways to reduce the length of the recruitment process for community trustee boards when the terms of the trustee boards expire.	
Recommendation 23	39
That sections 17 and 39 of the <i>Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022</i> be amended to provide that the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust must have regard to the views of a community trustee board before providing a plan of management to the Minister for approval, but is not required to obtain the trustee board's agreement to the plan.	
Recommendation 24	41
That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust consults First Nations stakeholders and the community trustee board for each park to identify barriers to First Nations trustee board membership and to improve measures to support First Nations membership.	
Finding 4	41
That the requirements under the Act for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust to conserve, restore and enhance connection to Country for First Nations people aren't being met.	
Recommendation 25	41
That priority be given to ensuring genuine engagement and involvement with First Nations people in the decision making for, and management of, the parklands estate.	
Recommendation 26	42

That at least one member of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Board must live in western Sydney.

# Chapter One – Implementing the objectives of the Act

## The Act's policy objectives are broadly supported

### Summary

Inquiry participants broadly supported the objects and provisions of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act.

### Finding 1

**The objects and provisions of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* are broadly supported by inquiry participants.**

- 1.1 The purpose of this review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* (the Act) is to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, and the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing these objectives.
- 1.2 The Committee considers that the Act sets out clear and ambitious objectives that remain valid and are generally supported. These objectives provide a holistic framework for the maintenance and improvement of the parklands, to ensure the parks continue to provide a variety of uses and benefits to Sydney's diverse communities.
- 1.3 The Act's policy objectives can be found in the objects of the Act and the functions of the agency established to manage the parklands estate, the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust (the GSP Trust).
- 1.4 In his second reading speech, the Hon Rob Stokes MP, then Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, said that the vision at the heart of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill was the need 'to provide equitable access to green public spaces for all'. He said that the Bill's objects were progressive and inclusive, and focus on the need for ecological preservation and restoration. Mr Stokes stated that the Bill:

... aims to encourage the use and enjoyment of parklands by the community by promoting recreational, historical, scientific, educational, cultural and environmental values within the parklands estate. Importantly, the objects include explicit requirements to ensure the conservation of natural and cultural heritage values of the parklands estate and the protection of the environment within the parklands estate.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.5 Mr Stokes observed that the objects of the Act were intended to 'act as guiding principles that the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust will follow when managing

<sup>1</sup> New South Wales, Legislative Assembly, [Parliamentary Debates](#), 10 November 2021 (Minister for Planning and Public Spaces).

new parklands and operating the parklands of the associated trusts'.<sup>2</sup>

- 1.6 We heard overwhelmingly from a range of stakeholders that they support the objects of the Act and consider that they remain valid.<sup>3</sup> The Committee for Sydney said that the objects 'remain valid, and will stand the test of time'.<sup>4</sup> Penrith City Council said that the objectives 'are fundamental to the strategic management of public green spaces, at the same time as encouraging greater public use and benefit'.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.7 Parks provide a range of benefits to communities and the Act is designed to ensure those benefits are maximised and continue into the future. Inquiry participants told us that parks are particularly important as public spaces for recreation, exercise, socialising and connecting with nature. We heard that this is becoming increasingly important as more people are living in higher density housing.<sup>6</sup>
- 1.8 Some stakeholders argued that the Act's objects could be modified and expanded. We heard suggestions to add issues such as:
- active transport modes and amenities both in and around the parklands<sup>7</sup>
  - engagement and collaboration with local councils on proposals in the parklands<sup>8</sup>
  - built heritage<sup>9</sup>
  - prioritising public access to open space and use and enjoyment of the parklands estate<sup>10</sup>
  - sustainable development by requiring all development to have a minimal adverse environmental impact on the parklands<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> New South Wales, Legislative Assembly, [Parliamentary Debates](#), 10 November 2021 (Minister for Planning and Public Spaces).

<sup>3</sup> [Submission 20](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc, p 1; [Submission 21](#), Bicycle NSW, p 1; [Submission 30](#), The Committee for Sydney, p 2; [Submission 42](#), Randwick City Council, p 2; [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 7; [Submission 3](#), Penrith City Council, p 1; [Submission 10](#), The Walking Volunteers Inc, p 2; [Submission 17](#), City of Sydney, p 1; [Submission 22](#), Australian Racing Drivers' Club (ARDC), p 1; [Submission 23](#), Western Sydney leadership Dialogue, p 1; [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 7.

<sup>4</sup> [Submission 30](#), The Committee for Sydney, p 2.

<sup>5</sup> [Submission 3](#), Penrith City Council, p 1.

<sup>6</sup> Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive, Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 26; Mr Laurie Johnson, Program Manager, Public Domain Strategy, City of Sydney, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 22; [Submission 20](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, p 5; [Submission 30](#), The Committee for Sydney, p 3; [Submission 32](#), Mr Peter Tzannes, p 1; [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 2; [Submission 42](#), Randwick City Council, p 1.

<sup>7</sup> [Submission 21](#), Bicycle NSW, p 1.

<sup>8</sup> [Submission 42](#), Randwick City Council, p 2.

<sup>9</sup> [Submission 4](#), Mr Alan Bottle, p 2.

<sup>10</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), City of Sydney, 24 March 2025, p 1.

<sup>11</sup> [Submission 38](#), Centennial Park Residents Association (CPRA), p 1.

- improving participatory and community led governance.<sup>12</sup>

- 1.9 There was some support for amending the Act's environmental objectives to strengthen work to preserve and enhance the ecological values of the parklands estate. The Cumberland Bird Observers Club said that the objects to protect the estate's natural environment and the environmental values are too broad and open to interpretation, and would not prevent the removal of native vegetation.<sup>13</sup> Mr Douglas Belton II, a member of the Western Sydney Parklands community trustee board, said that world class parklands should not only preserve landscapes, they should also regenerate ecosystems as places for social and environmental participation.<sup>14</sup>
- 1.10 Some inquiry participants argued that the GSP Trust is failing to meet the objects of the Act.<sup>15</sup> Mr Belton suggested that the functions of the Act be amended to 'better secure the objects of (f) and (g)', which relate to community engagement and meeting diverse community needs.<sup>16</sup> Dr Peter Watts AM stated that he had no difficulties with the Act's objects but considered that some of the objects are not being implemented.<sup>17</sup> Penrith City Council said that objectives must be matched with funding and resource allocation strategies to ensure they are actioned.<sup>18</sup>

## Amending the Act's objects to remove constraints on the GSP Trust

### Summary

- The objects of the legislation for the associated Trusts should be consistent with the objects of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act.
- The objects of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act should be changed to align with the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust's functions under the Act.

### Making the associated Trusts' legislation consistent with the Act

#### Recommendation 1

**That the objects of the associated Trusts' legislation be amended to be consistent with the objects of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* to remove constraints on how the parkland estate may be used for public benefit.**

- 1.11 The Committee recognises that the objects in the legislation for the associated Trusts of the parklands estate do not always align with the Act. We consider that there is value in making those objects consistent with the Act so there are uniform objectives for the parklands.
- 1.12 The NSW Government noted that legislation for the associated Trusts was made

<sup>12</sup> Mr Douglas Belton II, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 18.

<sup>13</sup> [Submission 26](#), Cumberland Bird Observers Club, p 1.

<sup>14</sup> Mr Douglas Belton II, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 18.

<sup>15</sup> [Submission 33](#), National Turf Alliance, p 5; [Submission 1](#), Mr Douglas Belton II, p 1.

<sup>16</sup> [Submission 1](#), Mr Douglas Belton II, pp 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Dr Peter Watts, AM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 17.

<sup>18</sup> [Submission 3](#), Penrith City Council, p 1.



at a different time to the Act and has different objects that can be misaligned. For example, the Government noted that the use of the parklands is not always enabled in a way that is consistent with object (f),<sup>19</sup> which provides that the parks are to be 'used by the community in a way that is adaptive and recognises and responds to the diverse needs of the community'.<sup>20</sup>

1.13 To address this inconsistency the NSW Government recommended aligning the objects of the associated Trusts legislation with those of the Act.<sup>21</sup> This would mean amending the objects of the following legislation to be consistent with the Act:

- *Western Sydney Parklands Act 2006*
- *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*
- *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001*
- *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983*.

1.14 We consider that aligning the legislation for the associated Trusts with the Act would modernise the operation of the legislation for all the parklands and support more streamlined governance by the GSP Trust.

#### **Better aligning the objects of the Act with the GSP Trust's functions**

##### **Recommendation 2**

**That the objects of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to include 'such other objects, consistent with the functions of the Trust in relation to the GSPT estate, as the Trust considers appropriate'.**

1.15 The GSP Trust is performing functions that are largely supported by the objects of the Act. However, there are some activities that the GSP Trust undertakes that are not clearly covered by the Act's objects. The Committee considers that, to enable to GSP Trust to better perform its role, the objects should be amended to align with the Act's functions and activities undertaken in accordance with the Act. This should be done by amending the Act's objects to include 'such other objects, consistent with the functions of the Trust in relation to the GSPT estate, as the Trust considers appropriate.'

1.16 The NSW Government noted that the objects of the Act do not 'cover all the activities and functions undertaken in accordance with' the Act. The Government suggested aligning the objects of the Act with the functions of the GSP Trust 'to ensure objects relate to all functions undertaken by GSP and all land owned by GSP'.<sup>22</sup> This amendment would make the Act consistent with the objects in the legislation for the associated Trusts, by including an object that is consistent with section 6(d) of the Parramatta Park Trust Act or section 8(d) of the Centennial

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<sup>19</sup> *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, [s 3\(f\)](#).

<sup>20</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 14-15.

<sup>21</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 14-15.

<sup>22</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 14.

Park and Moore Park Trust Act.<sup>23</sup>

- 1.17 Ensuring the objects of the Act cover the various functions of the GSP Trust will support the Trust's work to further the underlying objectives of the Act.

## Funding limits are affecting the implementation of the Act

### Summary

Funding limits are impacting the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust's ability to meet some of the Act objectives.

### Finding 2

**The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust is generally performing its functions as required under the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*. However, funding constraints are impacting the Trust's ability to meet some of the Act's objectives.**

### Funding is critical to realising the objectives of the Act

- 1.18 The Committee believes that the Act provides a clear legal framework to support the work of the GSP Trust in delivering the vision of quality parklands across Greater Sydney. However, we find that parts of the Act and key activities are not being adequately implemented, largely because of funding constraints. Without adequate funding the GSP Trust can't perform its functions under the Act and the Act is at risk of being aspirational.
- 1.19 We heard that funding is critical to enable the GSP Trust to further the outcomes anticipated by the Act. The National Trust of Australia (NSW) said that 'appropriately directed and sufficient funding is of course key to facilitating any of these outcomes.'<sup>24</sup> Several stakeholders told us that limited funding is constraining implementation of the Act, and more funding is needed to achieve its objectives.<sup>25</sup>
- 1.20 Economic constraints are impacting the parks in different ways. Stakeholders pointed to different activities or functions under the Act that they perceive aren't being adequately addressed because of limited funds. For example:
- Limited funding impacts public access to and use of Fernhill Estate.<sup>26</sup>
  - Delayed implementation of plans to protect and celebrate First Nations heritage sites at Callan Park.<sup>27</sup>
  - Lack of priority given to restoration and conservation of heritage buildings at

<sup>23</sup> *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001*, [s 6\(d\)](#); *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983*, [s 8\(e\)](#).

<sup>24</sup> [Submission 29](#), National Trust of Australia (NSW), p 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ms Cheryl Bates OAM, Chair, National Trust of Australia (NSW), [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 10; Mr Laurie Johnson, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 21-22; Mr Laurence Bennett, Secretary, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 9.

<sup>26</sup> [Submission 3](#), Penrith City Council, p 1; [Submission 20](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, p 10.

<sup>27</sup> Mr Hall Greenland, President, Friends of Callan Park, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, pp 12-13.

Callan Park.<sup>28</sup>

- The GSP Trust not establishing a Blue-Green grid committee.<sup>29</sup>

- 1.21 The NSW Government said that constraints on funding are the 'single biggest impediment to delivering on the objects of the GSPT Act and growing the parklands estate.'<sup>30</sup> Penrith City Council said that without 'funding commitments, the objectives of the Act will remain aspirational rather than achievable.'<sup>31</sup> The Council also said that funding is needed for maintenance of the parklands estate and to develop facilities needed to enhance public enjoyment.<sup>32</sup>
- 1.22 Other stakeholders also expressed concern about funding. Mr Ross Nicholas, Member, Centennial Park Residents Association, referring to Centennial Park and Moore Park said that funding 'is fundamentally problematic because government has not funded.'<sup>33</sup> Mr Laurence Bennett, Secretary North Parramatta Residents Action Group (NPRAG) said that the most significant issue for the management of Parramatta Park is funding.<sup>34</sup> Mr Phillip Russo, President, NPRAG, called for an increase in funding for that park 'to make it a more sustainable and beautiful area'.<sup>35</sup>
- 1.23 The Committee agrees that funding is a major issue and additional funding solutions should be pursued to support the GSP Trust to fully implement the objectives of the Act by investing in the parklands. Funding options are discussed in more detail in chapter 2.
- 1.24 We also recognise that implementing the Act will take time. We note that the Act is three years old and the GSP Trust is a young agency. Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive, GSP Trust told us that implementation is occurring in a staged process over time. Mr French stated that the GSP Trust has focused on actions that have timeframes specified in the Act, including preparing the Callan Park Plan of Management and assessing the suitability of four parks to become part of the estate.<sup>36</sup>
- 1.25 Under current arrangements the GSP Trust does not receive any direct funding. Funding is directed to the associated Trust for each park from a combination of government grants and commercial activities. This means that each park has different funding sources, which vary depending on the types of activities occurring in the park. The GSP Trust told us that revenue raised from commercial events in a park is only used to fund that park. Commercial activities can't fund maintenance at Callan Park, as for-profit activities are not currently permitted at

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<sup>28</sup> [Submission 15](#), Dr Peter Watts AM, p 2 and Dr Peter Watts, AM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, pp 17-18.

<sup>29</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, Director, Total Environment Centre, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 30.

<sup>30</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 3.

<sup>31</sup> [Submission 3](#), Penrith City Council, p 2.

<sup>32</sup> [Submission 3](#), Penrith City Council, p 1.

<sup>33</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, Member, Centennial Park Residents Association, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 11.

<sup>34</sup> Mr Laurence Bennett, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 9.

<sup>35</sup> Mr Phillip Russo OAM, President, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 10.

<sup>36</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 27.

that park.<sup>37</sup>

- 1.26 The GSP Trust seeks to fund maintenance and operational costs through commercial activities in the parks.<sup>38</sup> The four separate associated Trusts receive some government funding from various departments for capital projects and operational and maintenance costs for Parramatta Park and Callan Park.<sup>39</sup> The GSP Trust said that sustainable funding streams will fund the ongoing management and improvement of all parks and allow the parklands estate to expand. The Government suggested this could be achieved by creating off-park business hubs on surplus government land.<sup>40</sup> This is discussed in more detail in chapter 2.
- 1.27 The NSW Government said that sustainable funding would enable expansion of the parklands estate.<sup>41</sup> The Act provides that the GSP Trust must consider expanding the parklands estate by acquiring new parks. Under the Act, the GSP Trust is required to assess and report to Parliament on the suitability of four parks becoming part of the parklands estate.<sup>42</sup> In its report, the GSP Trust found that three of these parks (Chipping Norton Lake, Mirambeena Regional Reserve and Millennium Parklands) are broadly suitable to become part of the parklands. However, the report noted that the GSP Trust can't consider ownership of the parks until a sustainable funding stream is made available to fund ongoing capital and operational costs.<sup>43</sup> Limited funding is preventing expansion of the parklands.
- 1.28 Funding is also limiting general capital investment and development of the parks. For example, we heard that funding has delayed development at Fernhill Estate, where \$65 million was initially promised but not delivered.<sup>44</sup> A sustainable funding stream is needed for this park to realise potential benefits to communities in Western Sydney.<sup>45</sup> To differing degrees, this is also the case for the other parks in the estate.

## The Blue-Green grid committee envisaged in the Act should be established

### Summary

The NSW Government should establish the Blue-Green grid committee that is envisaged in the Act.

<sup>37</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, 10 April 2025, p 4.

<sup>38</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, p 4.

<sup>39</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, p 4.

<sup>40</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, p 8.

<sup>41</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 15-16.

<sup>42</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [Sch 3 cl 5\(2\)](#).

<sup>43</sup> GSP Trust, [Assessment of suitability of certain parks becoming part of the Greater Sydney Parklands Estate](#), A report under Schedule 3 Clause 5 (2) of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, 19 November 2024, p 11.

<sup>44</sup> Ms Patrician Barkley, PSM, AM, Secretary, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ms Patrician Barkley, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, pp 8-9.

### Recommendation 3

**That the NSW Government takes immediate steps to establish the Blue-Green grid committee.**

- 1.29 The Committee considers that the NSW Government should take immediate steps to establish the Blue-Green grid committee and progress work on expanding blue-green connections. These connections are core to realising the broader vision of the Act to establish quality green spaces and parklands across greater Sydney.
- 1.30 The Act states that the GSP Trust may establish a Blue-Green grid committee to 'advocate for a long-term vision for and outcome of quality parklands across Greater Sydney, particularly connectivity of green corridors and public access to open space.'<sup>46</sup> Advocacy for this long-term vision is also an object in the Act and a function of the GSP Trust.<sup>47</sup>
- 1.31 We heard that Blue-Green grids are about delivering increased connections between natural spaces and waterways. This could provide a range of community and environmental benefits and support the broader vision of the Act. Mr Laurie Johnson, Program Manager, Public Domain Strategy, City of Sydney, explained that the Blue-Green grid would be a web of green corridors across metropolitan Sydney that can improve urban tree canopy, build biodiversity, improve water quality and cool the environment within those corridors.<sup>48</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, Director of the Total Environment Centre, also talked about the biodiversity, climate change and urban heat benefits of the Blue-Green grid.<sup>49</sup>
- 1.32 The GSP Trust confirmed that it has not established the Blue-Green grid committee.<sup>50</sup> This is despite broad stakeholder support for stronger advocacy to expand green connections between the parks and across Sydney.<sup>51</sup> Mr Jeff Angel called for the GSP Trust to advocate for the Blue-Green grid's implementation and the expansion of blue and green corridors, and to progress work on the plan that has been prepared by the NSW Government's chief architect.<sup>52</sup>
- 1.33 The GSP Trust has an important role to expand parklands through blue-green connections. Ms Estelle Grech, Policy manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney explained that the provision to establish the committee aims to give the GSP Trust agency to bring relevant organisations together to connect the parklands as part of a broader vision of expanding parklands in Sydney.<sup>53</sup> Mr Jeff Angel argued that establishing the committee to oversee this work is important

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<sup>46</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 12\(1\)\(a\)](#).

<sup>47</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [ss 3\(d\)](#) and [15\(j\)](#).

<sup>48</sup> Mr Laurie Johnson, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 22.

<sup>49</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 29.

<sup>50</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, 14 April 2025, p 5.

<sup>51</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 30-31; Mr Ian Napier, President, The Walking Volunteers Inc, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 2; [Submission 10](#), The Walking Volunteers Inc, pp 2-3; [Submission 30](#), Committee for Sydney, pp 2-3.

<sup>52</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 30-31.

<sup>53</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, Policy manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 18.

to create momentum and push the GSP Trust and the Government to implement it.<sup>54</sup>

- 1.34 We heard that the GSP Trust has not reported on progress towards establishing the Blue-Green grid committee.<sup>55</sup> Mr Joshua French confirmed that the GSP Trust does not report on its work to advocate for the long-term vision and connectivity of parklands.<sup>56</sup> Stakeholders suggested that this lack of progress may be because the GSP Trust has a significant workload in managing the parklands estate, and this limits its ability to focus on broader metropolitan issues.<sup>57</sup>
- 1.35 Many stakeholders told the Committee that they support the concept of Blue-Green grids but noted that no progress has been made on establishing a committee to progress the grid.<sup>58</sup> Mr Jeff Angel stated that the GSP Trust should be pushed to pursue the grid and be given the political influence to advance it.<sup>59</sup> He also noted the lack of resources allocated by the Government or the GSP Trust to pursue the Blue-Green grid.<sup>60</sup> Mr Ian Napier, President, The Walking Volunteers Inc, said that his organisation had made several inquiries about the status of the committee and were told that the GSP Trust is focusing on the parklands estate.<sup>61</sup>
- 1.36 The GSP Trust said that it has begun planning for the Blue-Green grid committee by undertaking research on forming the committee. The Trust also noted that it has established Blue-Green grids through the estate's parks, including shared user paths and bushwalks in Western Sydney Parklands and enhancing the walking and cycling tracks in Centennial Park.<sup>62</sup> Mr Joshua French said the GSP Trust is investigating governance arrangements for a potential Blue-Green grid committee but hasn't moved to an establishment phase yet.<sup>63</sup> Mr French noted that submissions to the Committee's review had highlighted the need for the Trust to 'focus our improvements and our efforts in environmental stewardship and advocacy for Sydney's blue-green grid'.<sup>64</sup>
- 1.37 While the Act does not require the GSP Trust to create the Blue-Green grid committee, several stakeholders told us that the GSP Trust should be doing more to progress green connections.<sup>65</sup> The Walking Volunteers were concerned about how well the GSP Trust is able to deliver connections between the parklands,

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<sup>54</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 30.

<sup>55</sup> [Submission 13](#), Total Environment Centre, pp 3-4.

<sup>56</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 33.

<sup>57</sup> Mr Ian Napier, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 3; Mr Laurie Johnson, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 25.

<sup>58</sup> [Submission 38](#), Centennial Park Residents Association (CPRA), pp 1-2; [Submission 10](#), The Walking Volunteers Inc, pp 2-3; [Submission 13](#), Total Environment Centre, pp 1-2.

<sup>59</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 30.

<sup>60</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 29.

<sup>61</sup> Mr Ian Napier, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 5.

<sup>62</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, 14 April 2025, pp 5-6; Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, pp 34-35.

<sup>63</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 35.

<sup>64</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 26.

<sup>65</sup> [Submission 10](#), The Walking Volunteers Inc, p 2; Mr Jeff Angel, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 29; [Submission 30](#), Committee for Sydney, pp 1-2, 3.

stating that the Trust 'appears not to be in a position to drive the agenda of such connections outside its estate boundaries.'<sup>66</sup>

- 1.38 Stakeholders suggested ways that the GSP Trust could progress the Blue-Green grid committee. While the Total Environment Centre questioned whether the GSP Trust is the most appropriate body to progress the work, they made several suggestions on ways to encourage progress including providing more funding, authority and collaborating with relevant government agencies.<sup>67</sup> Mr Ian Napier, President, The Walking Volunteers Inc, said the Blue-Green grid committee should have a high level steering committee and a working group including community and government stakeholders.<sup>68</sup>
- 1.39 Some stakeholders suggested that the Act should be amended to require the GSP Trust to establish the Blue-Green grid committee.<sup>69</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing at the Committee for Sydney, said the Act should be changed to require the Blue-Green grid committee to be set up.<sup>70</sup>
- 1.40 However, the Committee does not consider that amendments to the Act are needed to progress this work. The NSW Government should move to establish the Blue-Green grid committee as a matter of priority, to progress work on building green connections across Sydney. The NSW Government has an important role to play in supporting the establishment of Blue-Green grids as it will require coordination across government agencies, to acquire land and achieve the broader vision of the Act. Mr Joshua French said that the GSP Trust will look into establishing the Blue-Green grid committee under the direction of government.<sup>71</sup>

## The Act should be amended to remove references to the Greater Sydney Commission

### Summary

References to the former Greater Sydney Commission should be removed from the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act.

### Recommendation 4

**That the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to omit references to the Greater Sydney Commission and the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*.**

- 1.41 The Committee considers that references to the Greater Sydney Commission should be removed from the Act, as the Commission no longer exists.

<sup>66</sup> [Submission 10](#), The Walking Volunteers Inc, p 4.

<sup>67</sup> [Submission 13](#), Total Environment Centre, pp 4-5.

<sup>68</sup> Mr Ian Napier, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 2.

<sup>69</sup> Mr Ian Napier, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 3.

<sup>70</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 15.

<sup>71</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 34.

- 1.42 The Act includes a definition from the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*, which has been repealed. The Act also has a provision requiring consultation between the Greater Sydney Commission and the GSP Trust.<sup>72</sup>
- 1.43 The NSW Government recommended that references to the Greater Sydney Commission be removed from the Act as the Greater Sydney Commission no longer exists.<sup>73</sup> Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc supported this recommendation.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 25\(1\)](#) and [Sch 4](#).

<sup>73</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 15.

<sup>74</sup> [Submission 20](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc., p 12



## Chapter Two – Ensuring the parklands' financial sustainability

### Tension between raising revenue to maintain the parklands and protecting the environment

#### Summary

There is tension between the need to secure funding for the maintenance of the parklands and protecting the environmental values of the parks that are part of the parklands estate.

#### Finding 3

**There is a tension between the need to conserve and enhance the environmental values of the parklands estate, and the need to create opportunities for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust to earn revenue and fund the maintenance and improvement of the estate.**

- 2.1 A key challenge for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust (GSP Trust) is securing funding to maintain the parklands while meeting the expectations of diverse communities that use the parks. Striking the right balance is challenging given the diverse views of stakeholders that have an interest in the management and operations of the GSP Trust.
- 2.2 The Committee heard that while stakeholders recognise financial pressures, some are concerned about commercialisation and see it as a threat to the underlying public value of the parklands. Stakeholders told us that securing revenue should not compromise the environmental values that are so important to the communities that enjoy the parks.
- 2.3 Stakeholders talked about how each park in the parklands estate has its own unique cultural, environmental, historical and recreational features and values that should be preserved.<sup>75</sup> Ms Cheryl Bates OAM Chair, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Parramatta Regional Branch, noted that each park has varying needs and there are challenges in preserving heritage areas.<sup>76</sup> Ms Linda Bergin OAM said that the parks are 'not homogeneous'.<sup>77</sup>
- 2.4 Each park is managed according to relevant priorities and management plans. Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive of the GSP Trust, said that strategic planning and plans of management support activities within the parks. These inform the way decisions are made about projects and development in the parks, while integrating community feedback and expectations of how the parks are managed for public benefit. Mr French said there is an individual model for each park

<sup>75</sup> [Submission 29](#), National Trust of Australia (NSW), p 1.

<sup>76</sup> Ms Cheryl Bates OAM, Chair, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Parramatta Regional Branch, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 10-11.

<sup>77</sup> Ms Linda Bergin OAM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 24.

setting out management priorities.<sup>78</sup>

- 2.5 We heard that balancing financial sustainability with preservation of the parks is critical to the parklands' future. Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney, stated that as Sydney continues to grow, ensuring long-term protection and sustainable funding for the parklands is 'more important than ever.'<sup>79</sup>
- 2.6 Stakeholders talked about a tension between development pressures and the ongoing use and preservation of the parks. Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley observed that 'striking the right balance between open access to parks, and revenue-raising activities such as events or granting exclusive use to particular groups is challenging.'<sup>80</sup> Mr Eamon Waterford, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Sydney, said that achieving the right balance between preservation and commercialisation is important for long-term intergenerational preservation.<sup>81</sup>
- 2.7 The balance between commercial activity and inherent values, such as conservation and heritage, varies between the parks. Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney, told the Committee that Centennial Park has achieved the right balance between ensuring recreation and public use, while Callan Park has more restrictions on commercial activity that limit park revenue. She supported a more consistent approach to encourage sustainable funding across the parklands.<sup>82</sup>
- 2.8 We heard that the green spaces of the parklands have significant environmental and biodiversity value for Sydney. Mr Martin Mansfield, Conservation Officer, Cumberland Bird Observers Club, told us that the parklands are 'some of the most significant and substantial areas of open green space and bushland in the Greater Sydney region'.<sup>83</sup>
- 2.9 Stakeholders also spoke about the importance of protecting green spaces to maintain benefits for local populations. Mr Leigh Shearer-Heriot, Vice-President, The Walking Volunteers Inc, said that 'large areas of the Trust land bring people back into contact with the natural world'.<sup>84</sup> The Cumberland Bird Observers Club wanted to see the Act strengthened to ensure that existing native vegetation in the parklands is retained.<sup>85</sup>
- 2.10 Ms Patricia Barkley, PSM, AM, Secretary, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc, said that the Fernhill Estate needs to be protected from development to

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<sup>78</sup> Ms Joshua French, Chief Executive, Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 32.

<sup>79</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 15.

<sup>80</sup> [Submission 20a](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc, p 6.

<sup>81</sup> Mr Eamon Waterford, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Sydney, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 17.

<sup>82</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 17.

<sup>83</sup> Mr Martin Mansfield, Conservation Officer, Cumberland Bird Observers Club, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 30.

<sup>84</sup> Mr Leigh Shearer-Heriot, Vice-President, The Walking Volunteers Inc, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 7.

<sup>85</sup> [Submission 26](#), Cumberland Bird Observers Club, p 1.

maintain green corridors and public access to open space. She noted that quality open space is important for Western Sydney given its increasing population and hotter temperatures.<sup>86</sup>

- 2.11 A key element of the NSW Government's funding model is that the parklands are self-funding, with each park raising revenue through commercial projects. The government noted that revenue from business hubs and leasing has secured the long-term future of Western Sydney Parklands, and sporting facilities, property and events provide significant funding to Centennial Parklands.<sup>87</sup>
- 2.12 However, some stakeholders expressed concern about self-funding and its impact on the parklands.<sup>88</sup> These concerns included:
- Overcommercialisation 'denigrates the benefits of public open space'.<sup>89</sup>
  - Commercial leases of Moore Park diminish available green spaces.<sup>90</sup>
  - Overdevelopment in Parramatta Park may be detrimental to the riverine environment.<sup>91</sup>
  - Lack of government funding leads to overcommercialisation of the parks.<sup>92</sup>
- 2.13 Ms Linda Bergin OAM questioned the appropriateness of the self-funding model, and said that it will lead to more incursions on Sydney's green space.<sup>93</sup> The North Parramatta Residents Action Group said that the reliance on self-funding has led to failures in the management of Parramatta Park.<sup>94</sup>

## Ensuring the parklands' financial sustainability

### Summary

- The NSW Government should provide additional funding to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.
- Financial sustainability should be a function of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.
- A framework should be created to enable loans of funds between the associated Trusts for the parks that are part of the parklands estate.
- The community trustee boards for the parks should advise the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust on proposed loans between associated Trusts, but should not be able to prevent proposed loans.

<sup>86</sup> Ms Patricia Barkley, PSM, AM, Secretary, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, pp 8-9.

<sup>87</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 15.

<sup>88</sup> Ms Cheryl Bates, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 10; [Submission 40](#), Ms Linda Bergin OAM, p 3; [Submission 35](#), Ms Kobi Shetty MP, p 2.

<sup>89</sup> Ms Cheryl Bates, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 10.

<sup>90</sup> [Submission 32](#), Mr Peter Tzannes, p 2.

<sup>91</sup> Mr Ian Napier, President, The Walking Volunteers Inc., [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 6.

<sup>92</sup> [Submission 20](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc, p 8.

<sup>93</sup> [Submission 40](#), Ms Linda Bergin OAM, p 3.

<sup>94</sup> [Submission 27](#), North Parramatta Resident Action Group (NPRAG), p 5.

**The NSW Government should provide committed and ongoing funding to the GSP Trust**

**Recommendation 5**

**That the NSW Government provides additional and sustained funding to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.**

- 2.14 The Committee recognises that the parklands have immense value to the residents of Sydney as well as providing significant intrinsic environmental value. We acknowledge inquiry participants' concerns regarding overreliance on self-funding and commercialisation to fund the parklands. We support a balanced approach to funding and recommend ongoing public investment from the NSW Government to ensure the parklands can continue to expand and the GSP Trust can further the objects of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act.
- 2.15 The Committee supports efforts by the GSP Trust to pursue diverse funding streams. However, we consider that the parklands are important public infrastructure that should attract public funding, in addition to sourcing revenue from commercial operations.
- 2.16 We heard that government funding for the parklands estate is limited. The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust received \$2.77 million in the 2023-24 financial year to fund maintenance and operations at Callan Park, while the Parramatta Park Trust received \$1.85 million in the 2023-24 financial year for maintenance and operations at Parramatta Park.<sup>95</sup> The Committee has noted that funding limits are impacting the GSP Trust's ability to perform its role and meet the Act's objectives. Ongoing government funding can help to address these funding issues.
- 2.17 Many stakeholders talked about the importance of secure funding for the parklands to support the long-term management of the parklands, and ensure the objects of the Act can be met.<sup>96</sup>
- 2.18 We heard that when the Act was introduced significant government funding was allocated for parklands, but more recent funding constraints have meant that sustainable revenue sources have become a growing area of concern.<sup>97</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney, cited cuts to government funding that was promised to Fernhill Estate and Parramatta Park, as examples of funding volatility in a changing economic climate.<sup>98</sup>
- 2.19 There was significant support for direct government funding of the GSP Trust.<sup>99</sup> Mr Laurie Johnson, Program Manager, Public Domain Strategy, City of Sydney, referred to the pressure on parks to self-fund through commercial activity where

<sup>95</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, 10 April 2025, p 4.

<sup>96</sup> [Submission 24](#), Carsingha Investments Pty Ltd, p 1; [Submission 29](#), National Trust of Australia (NSW), p 1; [Submission 30](#), The Committee for Sydney, p 4; [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 1; [Submission 3](#), Penrith City Council, pp 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 18-19.

<sup>98</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 19.

<sup>99</sup> [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 1; [Submission 17](#), City of Sydney, p 2; [Submission 18](#), Mrs Gretchen Gamble, p 1; Ms Linda Bergin OAM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 17.

they might instead be supported by appropriate government funding. Mr Johnson said that government funding is necessary and warranted as the parklands are critical infrastructure for Sydney.<sup>100</sup>

- 2.20 Mr Eamon Waterford, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Sydney, stated that recurrent government funding is used to fund 'a lot of things in this state'. He said that funding certainty is important for the parks to ensure it doesn't fluctuate between different governments.<sup>101</sup>
- 2.21 Inquiry participants supported ongoing government funding for parks as important public infrastructure. Mr David Burdon, Director, Conservation, National Trust of Australia (NSW), said that parks should be considered in the same way as other public institutions that justify direct government investment, like art galleries.<sup>102</sup> Friends of Callan Park also said that, like other public infrastructure such as schools and transport, the parks need to be appropriately funded by government.<sup>103</sup>

### Adding financial sustainability to the functions of the GSP Trust

#### Recommendation 6

**That the NSW Government amends the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* to include financial sustainability as a function of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.**

- 2.22 The Committee has noted that funding constraints are limiting investment in the parklands estate and the capacity of the GSP Trust to deliver necessary improvements. Securing funding must continue to be a focus area for the GSP Trust to ensure the parklands are properly maintained. The Committee recommends amending the Act to include financial sustainability as a function of the GSP Trust. This would enable the GSP Trust to pursue opportunities to increase revenue for the parks and supplement the amount received from government funding.
- 2.23 The NSW Government proposed different solutions to improve the financial sustainability of the GSP Trust's operations. One of these was to add 'financial sustainability' to the functions of the Trust to support the parklands and enable funding of critical repairs and maintenance.<sup>104</sup> Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive of the GSP Trust, said that the change to the Act is needed to support the parks' ability to generate income, which can be used to support their operations.<sup>105</sup>
- 2.24 We heard that making financial sustainability a function of the GSP Trust would allow the Trust to further the parklands' financial sustainability. The NSW Government submitted that including financial sustainability as a function of the

<sup>100</sup> Mr Laurie Johnson, Program Manager, Public Domain Strategy, City of Sydney, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 21-22.

<sup>101</sup> Mr Eamon Waterford, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 19.

<sup>102</sup> Mr David Burdon, Director, Conservation, National Trust of Australia (NSW), [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 14.

<sup>103</sup> [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 7.

<sup>104</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 3.

<sup>105</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 31.

GSP Trust would support opportunities to earn revenue from property, sporting facilities and events to finance improvements to the parklands and satisfy the objects of the Act.<sup>106</sup> This is because the GSP Trust is required to perform its functions in accordance with the objects of the Act.<sup>107</sup>

- 2.25 Activities undertaken to address financial sustainability should not come at the expense of the other objects of the Act and functions of the GSP Trust. The Committee acknowledges that there could be tension between financial sustainability and other functions and objects of the Act.
- 2.26 However, the Committee believes the governance mechanisms under the Act, such as community trustee boards and plans of management, will ensure there is adequate guidance on the kind of commercial activities that are considered appropriate for each park.

### Enabling loans between associated Trusts

#### Recommendation 7

**That the NSW Government develops a framework under the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* to allow for the loan of funds between associated Trusts for a time limited period for essential maintenance, repairs and operations.**

#### Recommendation 8

**That the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to provide that community trustee boards can advise the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust on proposed loans of funds between associated Trusts, but cannot prevent a loan.**

#### Recommendation 9

**That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust be required to report, in an easily accessible and understandable manner, all loans and financial transfers between the associated Trusts under its management as part of its annual reporting obligations.**

- 2.27 The Committee considers that the Act should provide for loans between trusts for the different parks in the estate. These loans could provide funds for essential maintenance and operations. The Act currently enables funds to be moved between the accounts for the associated Trusts for each park, but this can only occur with the approval of the relevant community trustee boards.
- 2.28 While the GSP Trust should consider the advice of the relevant community trustee boards on proposed loans of funds, we consider that the trustee boards should not be able to block proposed loans.
- 2.29 The Act currently allows the movement of funds between parks. The Act provides for a Special Deposit Fund called the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Fund.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>106</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 15-16.

<sup>107</sup> *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, s [16\(2\)](#).

<sup>108</sup> *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act*, s [43\(1\)](#).

Within this fund there is a separate account for the associated Trust of each park.<sup>109</sup> All money received by the GSP Trust is paid into this fund and can be reallocated among the separate accounts for each associated Trust.<sup>110</sup>

- 2.30 However, the allocation of funds between associated Trusts is restricted by the Act. Funds can only be allocated from one associated Trust to another if the relevant community trustee board has been given written notice and has not objected to the allocation within 14 days.<sup>111</sup> This means that the reallocation of funds can be blocked by the relevant community trustee board.
- 2.31 Stakeholders suggested enabling loans between the different associated Trusts. The proposal would allow one park to loan funds to a separate park for works such as repairs and maintenance. Not all parks have equal ability to raise revenue, and this could address the issue of equity between the parks.
- 2.32 The NSW Government recommended that the Act be amended to enable loans between parks by removing the ability of community trustee boards to object to the loan. The government recommended establishing a process for the loan of funds from one associated Trust to another. This could include criteria for how the transferred funds must be used, such as for asset repair, maintenance and operations.<sup>112</sup>
- 2.33 The NSW Government submitted that loans would support 'critical asset repair and maintenance'. Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive, GSP Trust, said that loans could fund repairs of cracked footpaths and assets that pose safety risks. He noted that off-park business hubs could provide an opportunity for parks to pay back loans.<sup>113</sup>
- 2.34 Several stakeholders supported a change to allow funds to be more easily transferred between the parks.<sup>114</sup> Mr Eamon Waterford, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Sydney, noted that some parks have greater opportunity to raise revenue and there is value in allowing that to be distributed to parks with less revenue, particularly as Sydney has 'deep spatial inequality'.<sup>115</sup>
- 2.35 Ms Cheryl Bates OAM, Chair, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Parramatta Regional Branch, said that as the needs of each park are different, it's critical that funding is available to support priority issues in parks where there is an opportunity to do so.<sup>116</sup> Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc recommended that revenue raised from business hubs be shared equitably among the parks.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 43\(2\)](#).

<sup>110</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 44\(1\) and 44\(3\)](#).

<sup>111</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 46\(4\)\(b\)](#).

<sup>112</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 16.

<sup>113</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 32.

<sup>114</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 18; [Submission 20](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc, p 9; Mr Glenn Matthews, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Racing Drivers' Club, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 6; [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 7.

<sup>115</sup> Mr Eamon Waterford, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 19.

<sup>116</sup> Ms Cheryl Bates, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 14.

<sup>117</sup> [Submission 20](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc, p 8.



- 2.36 The Committee supports an amendment to remove the ability of community trustee boards to object to the reallocation of funds between parks. However, it is important that there is adequate oversight and transparency around transfers of funds. Some stakeholders noted there could be concerns in the community about taking money from one park to support another.<sup>118</sup>
- 2.37 Mr Eamon Waterford, Chief Executive, Committee for Sydney, said it's important that transfers of funds are transparent to ensure there aren't any concerns about the way they are managed.<sup>119</sup> The Centennial Park Residents Association said that there has been no transparency about the transfer of funds between parks and it is not clear if any money has been transferred from the account for Centennial Park and Moore Park to another park within the parklands estate.<sup>120</sup>
- 2.38 Noting these concerns, adequate consultation and transparency about proposed loans between associated Trusts would be critical. The community trustee boards will continue to be consulted about proposed loans and should also be given the opportunity to advise on the essential maintenance and improvements they would support.

## Enabling the Trust to acquire supplementary and surplus land

### Summary

- The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust should be able to acquire and develop supplementary land to fund the maintenance of the parklands estate.
- The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust should be able to acquire surplus government land to enable off park business hubs to generate income for the Trust and to expand the parklands estate.

### Recommendation 10

**That section 18 of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to enable the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust to acquire and develop supplementary land to fund the maintenance and improvement of the parklands estate, consistent with object 3(a) of the Act.**

### Recommendation 11

**That the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to allow the transfer of surplus government land to:**

- **Deliver off-park business hubs to generate income for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust if the Minister of a public authority administering that land agrees the land is not being used for the core activities of the public authority.**
- **Expand the parklands estate if the Minister of a public authority administering that land agrees the land is not being used for the core**

<sup>118</sup> [Submission 31](#), Name suppressed, p 5; Mr David Burdon, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 14.

<sup>119</sup> Mr Eamon Waterford, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 19.

<sup>120</sup> [Submission 38](#), Centennial Park Residents Association (CPRA), p 3.



**activities of the public authority.**

- 2.39 The Committee supports amendments to the Act to enable the GSP Trust to acquire supplementary and surplus land. The Act should be amended to facilitate the transfer of surplus government land for the purpose of off-park business hubs and to expand the parklands estate.
- 2.40 We heard that the GSP Trust could acquire surplus government land and supplementary land for commercial development, to provide funding for the maintenance and improvement of the parklands estate. We note that the GSP Trust is already working with the Government on a model to develop supplementary land.
- 2.41 Surplus government land could also provide an opportunity to expand the area of the parklands estate, so that surplus land is not acquired for commercial purposes alone. Transfers could occur if the Minister responsible for a public authority that administers the surplus land agrees that it is not being used for any core activities.
- 2.42 The GSP Trust proposed expanding the use of off-park business hubs on surplus government land to increase funding for the parklands.<sup>121</sup> The NSW Government and the GSP Trust submitted that business hubs provide financial security and long-term funding for the Western Sydney Parklands.<sup>122</sup>
- 2.43 The GSP Trust could acquire both 'supplementary' (private) land and 'surplus' government land for commercial development. The Act provides that the GSP Trust can acquire land for new parks or supplementary land. Supplementary land is defined as land outside the parklands estate that is owned or managed by the GSP Trust.<sup>123</sup>
- 2.44 While the GSP Trust doesn't own any supplementary land yet, Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive of the GSP Trust, said that in acquiring supplementary land, the Trust would be looking at land with the highest and best use for income, such as industrial land, to raise revenue to support the parklands estate.<sup>124</sup> The GSP Trust said this land wouldn't be part of an existing or future park and would be acquired for the development off-park business hubs. The Trust stated that off-park business hubs would likely be located on land with low environmental value and would typically be developed for retail, commercial and/or industrial uses.<sup>125</sup>
- 2.45 Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive of the GSP Trust, explained that the Trust could lease supplementary land to private industry to provide returns for the parklands estate. This revenue could also support other parks that aren't able to generate their own revenue.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>121</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, 10 April 2025, p 8.

<sup>122</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 15; [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, 10 April 2025, p 8.

<sup>123</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [Sch 4](#).

<sup>124</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 29.

<sup>125</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, 28 March 2025, p 3.

<sup>126</sup> Ms Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, pp 28 - 29.

- 2.46 Stakeholders supported the GSP Trust acquiring surplus government land. The NSW Government recommended that the Act be amended to streamline the process for transferring surplus government land to the GSP Trust for off-park business hubs or for parkland purposes.<sup>127</sup> The government recommended amendments to align the Act with the Western Sydney Parklands Act,<sup>128</sup> which provides for the transfer of government land to the Western Sydney Parklands Trust.<sup>129</sup> This would be land outside of the parklands estate.
- 2.47 Mr Joshua French told the Committee that the Trust is already working with the NSW Government to identify surplus government land that might be available to transfer to the GSP Trust.<sup>130</sup>
- 2.48 The Committee for Sydney pointed to the revenue earned from business hubs in the Western Sydney Parklands as a reason for the GSP Trust to pursue further commercial opportunities on surplus land or supplementary land. The Committee for Sydney referred to business hubs as a successful example of how commercial leasing can generate significant revenue.<sup>131</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney said that this should be rolled out for the other parklands, as leases on surplus government land could create long term revenue.<sup>132</sup>
- 2.49 Inquiry participants also suggested that surplus land could be used to increase the parklands estate. For example, Mr Phillip Russo stated that surplus land adjoining the Great Western Highway, which is to be developed, could be traded off to increase Parramatta Park further north.<sup>133</sup> The GSP Trust noted that amending the Act to allow transfers of surplus government land for off-park business hubs or for parkland purposes would enable additional parklands to be added to the parklands estate.<sup>134</sup> This could include acquiring the parks that the Trust has considered for inclusion in the estate under section 5 of the Act.<sup>135</sup>

## Lease, licences and easements should not reduce the GSPT estate's natural environment

### Summary

Leases, licenses or easements should not reduce the net existing natural environment in the GSPT estate.

<sup>127</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 21.

<sup>128</sup> *Western Sydney Parklands Act 2006*, ss [33](#) to 38.

<sup>129</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 8, 21-22.

<sup>130</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 29.

<sup>131</sup> [Submission 30](#), The Committee for Sydney, p 4.

<sup>132</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 16.

<sup>133</sup> Mr Phillip Russo, OAM, President, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 10; [Submission 27](#), North Parramatta Residents Action Group, p 4.

<sup>134</sup> Ms Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 31; [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, p 15.

<sup>135</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, [Assessment of suitability of certain parks becoming part of the Greater Sydney Parklands Estate](#), November 2024.

## Recommendation 12

**That section 21(1)(b) of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, which provides that leases, licenses or easements must not reduce the extent of the net existing natural environment of the GSPT estate, not be amended.**

- 2.50 The preservation of natural environments for public enjoyment is core to the purpose of the GSP Trust and the parklands estate. The Committee does not support the GSP Trust using supplementary land in a way that reduces the net extent of the natural environment in the GSPT estate.
- 2.51 The leasing or licencing of land held by the GSP Trust for commercial development could provide secure and ongoing funding. However, the Committee considers that such development should not come at the expense of existing areas of natural environment. The leasing and licencing provisions of the Act provide protection for the natural environment. The GSP Trust can only grant a lease, licence or easement over land in the parklands estate if it is consistent with the objects of the Act and will not reduce the extent of the net existing natural environment of the parklands estate.<sup>136</sup>
- 2.52 The NSW Government and the GSP Trust recommended that the Act be amended to remove the requirement for a lease, licence or easement to not be granted if it reduces the extent of the net existing natural environment. The government stated this would allow the development of supplementary land that may include areas of natural environment.<sup>137</sup> This would permit leases, licences or easements that could reduce the net extent of areas of natural environment on land owned or managed by the GSP Trust.
- 2.53 Inquiry participants did not support amending this provision. Mr Martin Mansfield, Conservation Officer, Cumberland Bird Observers Club, said that the GSP Trust 'should have an objective of increasing the amount of natural environment, not trading it off for any number of other things'. He also observed that the concept of 'net' is problematic and could justify planting smaller trees to replace large, older trees.<sup>138</sup>
- 2.54 Some stakeholders questioned the concept of no net reduction, preferring the GSP Trust to be focusing on increasing areas of natural vegetation, rather than simply retaining existing areas. Mr Jeff Angel, Director, Total Environment Centre, questioned why the GSP Trust wanted to amend section 21, arguing that the Trust should be increasing the amount of natural environment rather than trading it off.<sup>139</sup> Mr Martin Mansfield supported a focus on growth, rather than no net reduction.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 21\(1\)](#).

<sup>137</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 17.

<sup>138</sup> Mr Martin Mansfield, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 32-33.

<sup>139</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, Director, Total Environment Centre, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 32.

<sup>140</sup> Mr Martin Mansfield, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 32-33.

## Consistent provisions for leases, licences and tenders on the parklands estate

### Summary

- The maximum term for leases and licences in Callan Park and Parramatta Park should be changed to 50 years.
- Commercial for-profit development should be permitted in Callan Park.
- Notices of proposed leases or licences in Callan Park totalling more than 10 years should not have to be tabled in both Houses of Parliament.
- Open tender process should continue to be required for leases and certain licences with a term of 10 years or more, under the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act.
- Notification requirements for leases and licences in Parramatta Park and Callan Park should be consistent with the requirements for the other parks in the estate.

### Permitting longer leases and licences for Callan Park and Parramatta Park

#### Recommendation 13

**That the *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001* and the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* be amended to extend the maximum term of leases and licences to 50 years.**

- 2.55 The Committee supports modifying the leasing and licencing provisions for Parramatta Park and Callan Park to make them consistent with the legislation for the other parks in the estate. Granting leases, licences and tenders is key to the economic activity occurring on the parklands estate. Extending the maximum term of leases and licences will allow increased opportunity for leases and activities in Parramatta Park and Callan Park, and provide revenue for the parks' maintenance.
- 2.56 The legislation for each associated Trust regulates how leases and licences are granted. There are inconsistent provisions for the length of leases or licences that can be granted in each park in the parklands estate. The maximum terms for leases and licences across the parks are:
- Unlimited for Western Sydney Parklands.<sup>141</sup>
  - 99 years for Centennial Parklands.<sup>142</sup>
  - 10 years for most parts of Parramatta Park.<sup>143</sup>
  - 50 years for Kirkbride, Broughton Hall and the Convalescent Cottages in Callan Park, otherwise 10 years.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>141</sup> *Western Sydney Parklands Act 2006*, [s 16\(7\)](#).

<sup>142</sup> *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983*, [s 20\(3\)](#).

<sup>143</sup> *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001*, [s 12\(3\)](#) and [s 13](#).

<sup>144</sup> *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*, [s 6\(2\)](#). Leases or licences over 10 years can only be granted if a notice with details of the lease or licence has been tabled in each house of Parliament, and the proposal has been confirmed or not disallowed.

- 2.57 Some stakeholders supported consistent provisions for the length of leases and licences in the parklands estate. The Committee for Sydney argued that 'standardised rules for leasing and development activities across all five parklands would ensure fairer and more consistent governance and operations, balancing protection with sustainable use.'<sup>145</sup>
- 2.58 Some inquiry participants supported extending the maximum length of leases and licences. The NSW Government recommended lengthening the maximum lease terms as a way to encourage 'activation' of those parks, and noted that longer maximum lease terms would be consistent with recent amendments to the *Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust Act 1980*. The government stated that limited terms make it difficult to attract investment from tenants, especially given the investment needed on heritage buildings.<sup>146</sup>
- 2.59 The Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue said that the current leasing restrictions may inhibit investment and noted that leases have been used across a variety of sectors by the GSP Trust to help fulfill the remit of the Act.<sup>147</sup>
- 2.60 We heard that longer leases could provide an opportunity to meet the funding needs of both Parramatta Park and Callan Park. For example, the government noted that heritage buildings in Callan Park require significant investment, which could be met through longer leases.<sup>148</sup> Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive, GSP Trust, said that consistent provisions in relation to leases is about sourcing investment for the restoration work required on certain buildings in the parks. He said longer leases may provide a broader scope for people to invest in those buildings.<sup>149</sup>
- 2.61 However, some stakeholders opposed extending lease terms beyond 10 years for those parks.<sup>150</sup> Ms Christine Hay, Member, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, supported the current 10-year limit on leases, noting that 10 years is a suitable time to review the impact leases may have on heritage values.<sup>151</sup> Mr Hall Greenland supported maintaining the 10-year maximum lease period at Callan Park. He argued that the lease period does not deter investment, noting that a current lessee has 'spent millions of dollars in lease fees, renovations, maintenance and upgrades, and it's done so under the 10-year-maximum lease rule.'<sup>152</sup>
- 2.62 While supporting consistency between legislation, the Committee also recognises that a completely unified approach regarding lease terms is not suitable as the parks have unique values and heritage.

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<sup>145</sup> [Submission 30](#), The Committee for Sydney, p 4.

<sup>146</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 18-19.

<sup>147</sup> [Submission 23](#), Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue, p 2.

<sup>148</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 18.

<sup>149</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 30.

<sup>150</sup> [Submission 39](#), Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA), p 3; Ms Linda Bergin, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 23; [Submission 34](#), National Trust (NSW) Parramatta Regional Branch, p 2.

<sup>151</sup> Ms Christine Hay, Member, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 27.

<sup>152</sup> Mr Hall Greenland, President, Friends of Callan Park, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 7.

- 2.63 It is important that the GSP Trust considers the appropriateness of each lease type and the benefit they can provide to the parklands estate when evaluating proposals. Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive of the GSP Trust, said that the Trust would further investigate the different types of activities that would be appropriate for longer term leases that could be granted, to ensure the values of the parklands estate are met.<sup>153</sup> Mr Douglas Belton II wanted to see a case-by-case approach to lease terms and ensure that public benefit is the first priority in assessing lease proposals.<sup>154</sup>
- 2.64 We note that plans of management and related conservation management plans are an important instrument to guide the types of activities and uses undertaken in each park. They also provide guidance on how to balance economic activity with the other values and uses of each park. Ms Christine Hay, Member of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, said plans of management help to identify areas of a particular park with different levels of value to determine where development may not be appropriate, such as in areas of exceptional value.<sup>155</sup>

### Commercial for-profit activity should be permitted in Callan Park

#### Recommendation 14

**That the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* be amended to remove provisions that limit development in Callan Park to not-for-profit purposes.**

- 2.65 The Committee supports allowing for-profit development in Callan Park. This would enable the GSP Trust to grant commercial leases for activities in this park. While the Committee notes that some stakeholders were concerned about commercialisation of Callan Park and the impact on its unique values, we consider that removing the restriction on for-profit development provides opportunities to raise much needed revenue. New revenue streams could fund maintenance and improvements while also supporting heritage conservation. Appropriate guidance through the Park's plan of management, and community input on the types of leases that are appropriate, can achieve overall positive outcomes for Callan Park.
- 2.66 Aside from the duration of leases, the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act (Callan Park Act) also limits the type of development that can occur in the Park to development that is on a not-for-profit basis.<sup>156</sup> The Act limits leases and licences to not-for-profit uses that are permitted under section 7(3). Funding from commercial operations is not possible for Callan Park, as it is the only park with restrictions on for-profit development. Callan Park received a government grant of \$2.77 million in the 2023-24 financial year to fund maintenance and operations.<sup>157</sup> We heard that Callan Park is one of the parks in the estate that operates at a deficit, with 'very constrained own source revenue generating

<sup>153</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 37.

<sup>154</sup> Mr Douglas Belton II, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 23.

<sup>155</sup> Ms Christine Hay, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March, p 28.

<sup>156</sup> *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*, [s 7\(3\)](#). The following not-for-profit development is permitted: arts and culture facilities, community facilities, educational facilities, food and drink premises, and health facilities.

<sup>157</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, 10 April 2025, p 4.

opportunities'.<sup>158</sup>

- 2.67 The NSW Government said that the lease requirements make it difficult to activate Callan Park and find suitable tenants that could provide funding for essential maintenance.<sup>159</sup> The government recommended that section 6(5) of the Callan Park Act be amended to remove reference to section 7(3), to require consistency with the objects of the Act. This would remove the requirement for leases and licences to only allow not-for-profit uses.<sup>160</sup>
- 2.68 The Committee for Sydney noted the inconsistency between the Callan Park Act and other legislation, and argued that Callan Park should not be treated differently to other parks, such as Parramatta Park. The Committee for Sydney noted that small businesses like cafes and kiosks would increase visitation in the Park, creating more opportunities for people to engage with the Park's heritage and reducing the cost burden to government.<sup>161</sup>
- 2.69 However, several groups opposed changes to the Callan Park Act to enable commercial activity.<sup>162</sup> Friends of Callan Park said that widening the scope for commercialisation of Callan Park could undermine the special qualities of the Park and that its limited green space should be preserved.<sup>163</sup> Mr Hall Greenland, President of Friends of Callan Park, said that inactivation, or lack of commercial activity, is a value of parks as they provide places for peace and tranquillity.<sup>164</sup>

#### **Not requiring notices of proposed leases or licences in Callan Park to be tabled in Parliament**

##### **Recommendation 15**

**That the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* be amended to remove the requirement for a notice of a proposed lease or licence totalling more than 10 years to be tabled in both Houses of Parliament.**

- 2.70 The Callan Park Act provides that leases or licences longer than 10 years can only be granted if notice of the proposed lease or licence is provided to both Houses of Parliament and the proposal is not disallowed.<sup>165</sup> This requirement only applies to Callan Park and is not a provision in the GSP Trust Act or associated Trusts legislation. In the interests of consistency, the Committee believes this provision should be removed from the Act.
- 2.71 Providing public information about the granting of leases or licences supports community awareness and public trust. However, the notification process should not discourage potential tenants. The Committee supports an amendment that would permit the GSP Trust to publish information about proposed leases in

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<sup>158</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 15.

<sup>159</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 18-19.

<sup>160</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 19.

<sup>161</sup> [Submission 30](#), The Committee for Sydney, p 4.

<sup>162</sup> [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, pp 5 - 6; [Submission 18](#), Mrs Gretchen Gamble, p 1; [Submission 28](#), Ms Dinah McClelland, p 1.

<sup>163</sup> [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 6.

<sup>164</sup> Mr Hall Greenland, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 8.

<sup>165</sup> *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*, [s 6\(3\)](#).



Callan Park on its website.

- 2.72 The NSW Government said that while the Callan Park Act permits leases or licences to be granted for longer than 10 years, the requirement to provide notice to both Houses of Parliament is likely to 'discourage potential tenants'.<sup>166</sup>
- 2.73 Some groups opposed changing these notification requirements. Mr Hall Greenland, President, Friends of Callan Park, said that the ability of Parliament to refuse a proposed lease or licence provides important Parliamentary oversight and a safeguard to protect Callan Park.<sup>167</sup> Ms Linda Bergin OAM argued in favour of the provisions in the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust Act, which permit leases up to 35 years, with Parliamentary scrutiny of leases over 25 years.<sup>168</sup>

#### **Lease and licences should only be granted after an open tender process**

##### **Recommendation 16**

**That section 22 of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, which requires an open tender process for leases and certain licences with a term of 10 years or more, not be amended.**

- 2.74 The Committee considers that the open tender requirements in the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act should be retained to provide adequate probity and meet public expectations of transparency around the granting of leases and licences in the parklands estate. While there was some stakeholder support for allowing direct dealing in certain circumstances, the Committee is not persuaded that it would further the objects of the Act and may undermine public confidence in how the GSP Trust performs its functions.
- 2.75 The Act provides that the GSP Trust must not grant a lease or licence over the parklands estate with a term of 10 years or more unless the lease or licence has been put out to open tender.<sup>169</sup> This means that all leases longer than 10 years are required to go to an open tender.
- 2.76 The NSW Government recommended that relevant Acts be amended so that an open tender is at the discretion of the Minister. The government proposed amending the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act and the associated Trusts Acts to give the Minister the discretion to undertake a direct dealing for leases longer than 10 years rather than an open tender. Direct dealing could occur with a proponent in certain unique circumstances where it's justified.<sup>170</sup> Ms Joshua French, Chief Executive, GSP Trust, said that the open tender requirement is a restriction and the GSP Trust wants to see opportunities for concessions where currently there is a requirement to go to open tender.<sup>171</sup>
- 2.77 Some stakeholders argued for a change to the requirement to hold an open

<sup>166</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government p 18.

<sup>167</sup> Mr Hall Greenland, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 7.

<sup>168</sup> Ms Linda Bergin OAM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 23; [Answer to question on notice](#), Ms Linda Bergin OAM, p 3.

<sup>169</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 22](#).

<sup>170</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 19-20.

<sup>171</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 36.



tender process.<sup>172</sup> The Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue said that leaseholders would be able to make more confident investment decisions if they were able to negotiate extending the terms of existing leases.<sup>173</sup>

- 2.78 We heard that open tender processes can hinder existing long-term projects, as lessees may not be successful in applying for extensions of their leases or licences. The Australian Racing Drivers' Club (ARDC), which holds a long-term lease in the Western Sydney Parklands raised this issue in relation to its lease. Mr Glen Matthews, CEO of the ARDC, said that previous tenure extensions leading to significant investment are not possible under the Act, as they require an open public tender.<sup>174</sup> Open tendering was not required before the introduction of the GSP Act.
- 2.79 The ARDC argued that the open tender process should not apply to 'transformative tenure extensions', for projects that could provide benefits that would not be possible without a lease extension.<sup>175</sup> The ARDC supported allowing direct dealing for tenure extensions exceeding 10 years where 'a clear and practical case exists to pursue a guaranteed major capital investment'.<sup>176</sup>
- 2.80 However, several organisations supported open tenders. The Sydney and Northern NSW Branch of the Australian Garden History Society stated that open tenders for leases with a term of 10 years or more should be retained.<sup>177</sup> The Centennial Park Residents Association pointed to the open tender process for the Entertainment Quarter as an example of where the probity and transparency of open tender processes are important.<sup>178</sup> Carsingha Investments Pty Ltd, the current leaseholder of the Entertainment Quarter, welcomed the NSW Government's decision to hold an open tender process for the long-term lease of the Entertainment Quarter.<sup>179</sup>
- 2.81 We heard that open tenders provide for improved transparency in land and business dealings. Mr Ross Nicholas, Member, Centennial Park Residents Association, referring to the open tender process for the Entertainment Quarter, said that the 'necessity for transparency in such an open tender process cannot be overstated to ensure appropriate probity and equity when dealing with an important asset such as parklands'.<sup>180</sup>
- 2.82 Mr Jeff Angel, Director, Total Environment Centre, said that increasing ministerial discretion in the Act would reduce accountability. He said the reason for open tendering being included in the legislation was to improve accountability and

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<sup>172</sup> [Submission 22](#), Australian Racing Drivers' Club, p 14.

<sup>173</sup> [Submission 23](#), Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue, p 4.

<sup>174</sup> Mr Glenn Matthews, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 3.

<sup>175</sup> [Submission 22](#), Australian Racing Drivers' Club (ARDC), p 3.

<sup>176</sup> [Submission 22](#), Australian Racing Drivers' Club (ARDC), p 3.

<sup>177</sup> [Submission 16](#), Australian Garden History Society Sydney and Northern NSW Branch, p 1.

<sup>178</sup> [Submission 38](#), Centennial Park Resident Association (CPRA), pp 2-3.

<sup>179</sup> [Submission 24](#), Carsingha Investments Pty Ltd, p 2.

<sup>180</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 10.

transparency and prevent corruption risks.<sup>181</sup>

## **Consistent notification provisions for leases and licences in Parramatta Park and Callan Park**

### *Public notice requirements for leases or licences in Callan Park*

#### **Recommendation 17**

**That section 6(6) of the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* be amended to provide that the public notice requirements for proposed leases and licences only apply to leases or licences totalling more than five years.**

- 2.83 The Callan Park Act should be amended so that the notification requirements for proposed leases or licences only apply to leases or licences totalling more than five years. The Committee recognises the importance of public notification and transparency for proposals to grant leases or licences. However, we consider that the notification requirements should only apply to longer leases or licences.
- 2.84 The Callan Park Act regulates the way that leases and licences are granted, including notification requirements for the proposed granting of leases or licences. The Act provides that before the Minister can grant consent to a lease or licence regardless of its length, they must:
- Give notice of the proposed grant in a way that the Minister thinks is likely to inform local members of the public.
  - Consider comments received in response to the notice.
  - Publish reasons for the decision to grant consent in a way that informs local members of the public.<sup>182</sup>
- 2.85 The NSW Government proposed changing these notification requirements to provide that they only apply to leases or licences longer than five years, to minimise and streamline administrative processes for leases.<sup>183</sup>

### *Public notice requirements for leases in Parramatta Park*

#### **Recommendation 18**

**That section 13 of the *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001* be amended to remove the requirement for the Trust to publish a notice of a proposed lease in a newspaper.**

- 2.86 The Committee considers that the *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001* should be amended to remove the requirement for the Trust to publish a notice of a proposed lease in a newspaper. This change will modernise the provisions to make the notification process consistent with current government communication methods, and enable notices of proposed leases to be published on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust's website.

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<sup>181</sup> Mr Jeff Angel, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 29.

<sup>182</sup> *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*, [s 6\(6\)](#).

<sup>183</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, pp 21-22.

- 2.87 The Parramatta Park Trust Act provides that the Trust cannot grant a lease in Parramatta Park unless it has given public notice of the lease through a notice published in a newspaper (in print or on a website).<sup>184</sup>
- 2.88 The NSW Government recommended amending this section to make it consistent with contemporary government notification processes. The Government noted that requiring public notification and advertising in newspapers has been removed from most NSW legislation, and departments generally notify the public about specific events using government websites.<sup>185</sup> The Committee considers this to be a pragmatic change and supports the amendment.

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<sup>184</sup> *Parramatta Park Act 2001*, [s 13\(5\)](#).

<sup>185</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 20.

## Chapter Three – Improving the functioning of community trustee boards

### Changes to improve community trustee boards' performance

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#### Summary

- The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust should work with community trustee boards to implement changes to meeting processes to meet the needs of each trustee board.
- The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust should continue to implement changes requested by community trustee boards as part of a survey of their performance.

#### Recommendation 19

**That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust works with each community trustee board to ensure that processes for meetings, including accessibility, frequency and duration of meetings and the provision of meeting papers, meet the needs of each community trustee board.**

#### Recommendation 20

**That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust continues to implement initiatives resulting from the improvement plan for community trustee boards, and reports to the trustee boards on implementation progress.**

- 3.1 The Committee recommends that the GSP Trust works with the community trustee board for each park to ensure that the way the trustee boards operate meets the needs of members and enables them to perform their role effectively.
- 3.2 The Committee notes that the GSP Trust has surveyed members of the community trustee boards on their performance and has developed an improvement plan to address issues that were identified in the survey responses. We consider that the GSP Trust's survey and improvement plan are an important step in ensuring that the community trustee boards can perform their role under the Act. We recommend that the GSP Trust continues to implement changes that trustee board members have called for and updates the trustee boards on progress with the changes. This includes changes to the way meetings are conducted, the frequency and length of meetings, and making meetings more accessible to members. These changes could improve the way the trustee boards function and make it easier to attract and retain diverse membership.

#### Membership and role of community trustee boards

- 3.3 Community trustee boards are advisory bodies of community members that advise the GSP Trust. Under the Act, the Minister must establish community trustee boards for Callan Park, Centennial Park and Moore Park, Parramatta Park

and the Western Sydney Parklands.<sup>186</sup>

- 3.4 Five community trustee boards were created in 2022 for the four parklands prescribed under the Act, as well as for the Fernhill Estate.<sup>187</sup>

*Trustee boards' membership*

- 3.5 Community trustee boards have up to six members, including a member nominated by each relevant local council (or chosen by the Minister as a community representative) and up to six other members appointed by the Minister on the GSP Trust's advice.<sup>188</sup>
- 3.6 In recommending people for appointment to trustee boards, the GSP Trust must be satisfied that they have good knowledge of the relevant parkland and can communicate effectively with local residents, community groups and other people who use the parkland.<sup>189</sup>
- 3.7 The GSP Trust has to consider the need for trustee boards to represent diversity, including in relation to gender, age and cultural background, and to include representation for local First Nations peoples, as well as a representative with experience or skills in heritage or heritage management.<sup>190</sup>
- 3.8 The appointment of community trustee board members is discussed in detail at paragraphs 1.35 and 1.47.

*Trustee boards' role*

- 3.9 Community trustee boards act as consultative and advisory bodies for the GSP Trust. This includes consulting on the development of plans of management for the relevant parkland and approving the plans; the protection and use of the parkland; and business, leasing and other activities carried out in the park.<sup>191</sup>
- 3.10 Community trustee boards also advise the GSP Trust about services and facilities for the relevant parkland, including priorities for investment, and visitor and local community issues.<sup>192</sup>
- 3.11 Inquiry participants supported the role of community trustee boards in providing an avenue for local communities to play a part in the management of the parklands.<sup>193</sup> The NSW Government's submission to the inquiry stated that the

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<sup>186</sup> *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, [s 37](#). The Trust can recommend that the Minister establishes trustee boards for other parts of the parklands estate.

<sup>187</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, [Consultation and Engagement Framework 2023](#), February 2019, p 19; GSP Trust, [Community trustee boards](#), viewed 2 May 2025.

<sup>188</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 38\(1\)](#).

<sup>189</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 38\(4\)\(a\)](#). The Trust also has to be satisfied that the overall membership of the board will reflect the views and interests of the community and people who use the relevant parkland.

<sup>190</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 38\(4\)\(b\)](#).

<sup>191</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 39](#). The boards may also have other roles allocated under the Act or other Acts.

<sup>192</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 39](#).

<sup>193</sup> [Submission 17](#), City of Sydney, p 2; Mr Laurie Johnson, Program Manager, Public Domain Strategy, City of Sydney, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, pp 21-22.

trustee boards 'directly influence decision-making for the GSP'.<sup>194</sup>

- 3.12 Mr Ross Nicholas, a member of the Centennial Park community trustee board, told us that the consultative role played by the trustee boards is 'very important given the ownership of parklands by the people of New South Wales, and the need to ensure diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making in relation to such assets'.<sup>195</sup> Mr Nicholas also noted that local communities are impacted if decision-making does not adequately consider potential impacts on the community.<sup>196</sup>
- 3.13 A survey of trustee board members indicated that members had 'a strong sense of representation and advocacy on behalf of the community, park users and interest groups they represent and acknowledgement of the diversity of CTB [community trustee board] member knowledge and experience, which positively aligns with the role and responsibilities of the CTBs'.<sup>197</sup> The survey results also detailed members' feedback on areas where they felt they had made the most significant contributions.<sup>198</sup>

#### **The operation of the community trustee boards**

- 3.14 While there is support for the community trustee boards' role in community consultation, the Committee heard that the way they operate could be improved.
- 3.15 The GSP Trust's consultation and engagement framework guides the establishment of the trustee boards.<sup>199</sup> The framework and the terms of reference for each trustee board set out the arrangements for their meetings. The GSP Trust provides secretariat support for meetings and works with the chair of each board to develop an agenda. Summary reports of meetings are sent to board members and published on the Greater Sydney Parklands website.<sup>200</sup>
- 3.16 Inquiry participants raised the following issues with how the community trustee boards operate:
- Meeting processes including the frequency and length of meetings, the development of the agenda, the circulation of papers before meetings, and meetings not being open to the public.<sup>201</sup>
  - Trustee boards not being made aware of and not having the opportunity to

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<sup>194</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 13.

<sup>195</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, Member of Centennial Park Residents Association, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 11.

<sup>196</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 11.

<sup>197</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, 10 April 2025, Attachment 1: Combined annual performance report 2023, Community trustee boards, p 4.

<sup>198</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, p 8.

<sup>199</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 13.

<sup>200</sup> GSP Trust, [Consultation and Engagement Framework 2023](#), February 2023, p 18.

<sup>201</sup> [Submission 20a](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, p 6; [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Friends of Callan Park, 10 April 2025, p 1; [Answers to questions on notice](#), Centennial Park Residents Association, 3 April 2025, p 2; Ms Linda Bergin OAM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 16.

comment on issues that impact the local community.<sup>202</sup>

- The need for a framework or mechanism for direct communication between trustee boards and the general public.<sup>203</sup>
- The need for First Nations members, and members with heritage and environmental knowledge.<sup>204</sup>
- The inability of trustee boards to elect their chair.<sup>205</sup>
- More transparency around the process for nominating and selecting trustee board members.<sup>206</sup>

- 3.17 Inquiry participants who have served on the trustee boards raised issues with trustee board meetings. Mr Ross Nicholas, a member of the Centennial Park community trustee board, told us that the boards have four meetings a year, totalling six hours. Mr Nicholas said that boards are briefed on specific issues, but 'there's very little opportunity for members of the committee or the community trustee board to discuss within themselves, to get to know each other and to actually ask questions of the GSP'.<sup>207</sup>
- 3.18 Mr Nicholas stated that the agenda for meetings was set, and meetings were 'quite a controlled environment'. Members were given limited time to discuss issues that were raised previously, and did not have each other's contact details.<sup>208</sup>
- 3.19 Mr Hall Greenland, a member of the Callan Park community trustee board, raised concerns about the trustee boards' autonomy and independence. He stated that the boards should be able to elect their chair and provide input on meeting agendas.<sup>209</sup>
- 3.20 Some inquiry participants considered that the framework under the Act should be changed to give trustee boards more power.<sup>210</sup> Dr Peter Watts AM argued that the trustee boards should have more authority and power, noting their ability to provide local knowledge and expertise.<sup>211</sup> Mr Douglas Belton II, a

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<sup>202</sup> [Submission 38](#), Centennial Park Residents' Association, p 3; Mr Ross Nicholas, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 11.

<sup>203</sup> [Submission 4](#), Mr Alan Bottle, p 2; [Submission 20](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, p 7; [Submission 20a](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, pp 5-6; [Submission 31](#), Name suppressed, pp 3, 6; [Submission 40](#), Ms Linda Bergin OAM, p 9; [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Randwick City Council, 10 April 2025, p 1; Ms Pat Barkley, PSM AM, Secretary, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 15; Ms Linda Bergin OAM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 16.

<sup>204</sup> [Submission 20a](#), Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, p6; [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 5; [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 1; Ms Pat Barkley, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 15.

<sup>205</sup> [Submission 35](#), Ms Kobi Shetty MP, p 2; [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 5; [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 1; [Answers to questions on notice](#), Centennial Park Residents Association, p 2.

<sup>206</sup> [Submission 41](#), Friends of Callan Park, p5; [Submission 40](#), Ms Linda Bergin OAM, p 9.

<sup>207</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 11.

<sup>208</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 14.

<sup>209</sup> Mr Hall Greenland, President, Friends of Callan Park, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 14.

<sup>210</sup> Ms Linda Bergin OAM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 16.

<sup>211</sup> Dr Peter Watts AM, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, pp 18, 19-20.

member of the Western Sydney Parklands community trustee board, stated that the boards lack decision-making authority and have limited opportunities to propose projects.<sup>212</sup>

- 3.21 We note that some of these observations echoed performance feedback from members of the community trustee boards, which is discussed below.

### **Evaluation of trustee boards' performance**

- 3.22 The terms of reference for the trustee boards require each board to evaluate its performance and effectiveness annually. Self-evaluation surveys were completed by trustee board members between February and April 2024 and the GSP Trust prepared individual performance reports. The Committee received the collated findings of the individual performance reports.<sup>213</sup>
- 3.23 The survey results indicated that most trustee board members were satisfied with meeting administration and operations in the first year of their operation. However, some chairs and members raised issues with meetings not being long enough or frequent enough. There were four 90-minute trustee board meetings in 2023.<sup>214</sup>
- 3.24 There was also feedback that agendas were not received before the meetings, and there was no time for members to raise issues and provide community feedback. Some members felt that meetings were primarily to inform rather than consult, and there was a lack of clarity about outcomes and the trustee boards' role in decision making.<sup>215</sup>
- 3.25 The survey results also showed the importance of flexibility in how and when meetings are conducted to ensure meetings are accessible to trustee board members. Some members indicated that they preferred face-to-face meetings with an option for virtual/remote meetings, while others preferred online and weekend meetings, or alternate online and face-to-face meetings.<sup>216</sup>
- 3.26 The performance report identified opportunities to improve participation in community trustee boards, based on the survey feedback. It also identified opportunities for improvement for each park's trustee board, and across themes including effective participation, agenda formulation, dialogue outside meetings, and First Nations history and recognition.<sup>217</sup> The opportunities for improvement were collated into an Improvement Plan, which lists recommendations for improvement against each theme and actions to achieve the recommendations. It also includes information about the timing of actions and their progress status.<sup>218</sup>
- 3.27 The GSP Trust told us that the improvement plan will be reported to the GSP

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<sup>212</sup> Mr Douglas Belton II, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 19.

<sup>213</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, p 1.

<sup>214</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, pp 1-3.

<sup>215</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, pp 3-4, 8.

<sup>216</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, p 5.

<sup>217</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, pp 9-10.

<sup>218</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, pp 11-13.



Trust Board and will inform the next review of the GSP Trust's Consultation and Engagement Framework. Mr Jacob Messer, Director Operations, Visitors and Sport, GSP Trust, said that the plan will improve the functions of the trustee boards and their relationship with the GSP Trust.<sup>219</sup>

## Briefing community trustee boards on revenue and expenditure on parklands estate

### Summary

Community trustee board members should be briefed on revenue and expenditure relevant to their park.

### Recommendation 21

**That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust regularly briefs community trustee boards on revenue and expenditure on the parklands estate, where appropriate.**

- 3.28 The Committee heard that members of the community trustee boards are seeking greater access to information about revenue and expenditure on their parks. We consider that the GSP Trust should brief the trustee boards on financial information to support their engagement with the GSP Trust and their internal decision making. This would improve community trustee board confidence in the financial management of the relevant parks and enhance their effectiveness in performing their advisory role under the Act.
- 3.29 Improving access to financial information would support the trustee boards ability to provide informed advice to the GSP Trust, including priorities for investment, proposed services and facilities, and leasing and other activities in the relevant park.<sup>220</sup> Trustee board members would have a clearer understanding of the financial position of the parks and which projects would be achievable with available funds.
- 3.30 Some stakeholders expressed concern about the lack of transparency on funding and revenue for the parklands estate. Mr Ross Nicholas, Member, Centennial Park Residents Association, said he was concerned about the lack of information the trustee board receives about funding for Centennial Park and Moore Park. He said some of the income is commercial in confidence and 'there's no transparency to the funding and where it is spent.'<sup>221</sup> Mr Nicholas noted that commercial in confidence provisions make it difficult to understand the costs or benefits of proposals.<sup>222</sup>
- 3.31 Other inquiry participants raised similar concerns. Mr Laurence Bennett, Secretary, North Parramatta Residents Action Group (NPRAG), said that there is

<sup>219</sup> Mr Jacob Messer, Director Operations, Visitors and Sport, Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 34; [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, pp 5-6.

<sup>220</sup> *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, [s 39](#).

<sup>221</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 11.

<sup>222</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 14.

limited information about lease income for Parramatta Park and the trustee board should have insight into leases being negotiated on public land.<sup>223</sup> While community trustee boards don't have the power to make decisions on leases, their role includes being a consultative body for the relevant park on leases or other activities carried out or proposed to be carried out in the park.

- 3.32 Ms Cheryl Bates, OAM, Chair, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Parramatta Regional Branch expressed concern about Parramatta Park's finances, particularly whether there is enough money for the trustee board to progress desired projects.<sup>224</sup> Mr Phillip Russo, OAM, President of NPRAG, shared this concern and said there is not full disclosure about the Park's finances.<sup>225</sup> Likewise, Mr Hall Greenland, President, Friends of Callan Park, was concerned about lease income at Callan Park and the need to ensure it is spent at Callan Park.<sup>226</sup>
- 3.33 We consider that community trustee boards would be better supported to perform their role under the Act if they had information about revenue the parks earn and the funds available to them. The Centennial Park Residents Association said that trustee boards should be provided full financial information that includes the costs of maintenance and new development, and receipts of income received. This would enable the trustee boards to perform their functions under the Act, such as assisting the GSP Trust to develop plans of management and advise on services and facilities for the relevant park.<sup>227</sup>
- 3.34 Ensuring trustee boards are given detailed financial information about their respective parks will be particularly important if amendments are made to the Act, including changes to allow the loan of funds between associated Trusts. Stakeholders said they would expect transfers of funds between parks to be transparent to ensure there aren't concerns about how the transfers are managed.<sup>228</sup> Accurate and detailed financial information for the trustee boards will enable that transparency and improve confidence in the financial management of the parks.

## Reducing the length of time to recruit community trustee boards

### Summary

The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust should identify ways to reduce the time taken to recruit new members to community trustee boards when the terms of previous trustee boards expire.

<sup>223</sup> Mr Laurence Bennett, Secretary, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 14.

<sup>224</sup> Ms Cheryl Bates OAM, Chair, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Parramatta Regional Branch, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 13.

<sup>225</sup> Mr Phillip Russo, OAM, President, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 14.

<sup>226</sup> Mr Hall Greenland, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 14.

<sup>227</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), Centennial Park Residents Association, p 2.

<sup>228</sup> Mr Eamon Waterford, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Sydney, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 19.

## Recommendation 22

**That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust works with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to identify ways to reduce the length of the recruitment process for community trustee boards when the terms of the trustee boards expire.**

- 3.35 Community trustee boards play a significant role in the administration of the parklands estate. They have members with diverse expertise and skills to advise on the management of each park and are intended as a conduit between local communities and the GSP Trust. However, recruitment of members can be a lengthy process, and the Committee considers that the recruitment process should be shortened. Reducing the time gap between the appointment of consecutive trustee boards will ensure that the community consultation and engagement framework envisaged in the Act is operating effectively.
- 3.36 We heard that there will be a significant gap between the last meeting of the initial community trustee boards and the first meeting of the newly appointed boards. The GSP Trust told us that the first term of the trustee boards ended on 31 December 2024 and recruitment of members for the second term is underway. The GSP Trust expects first term reappointments and new council representatives to be appointed by May 2025 and remaining vacant positions filled by July 2025.<sup>229</sup> We note that the GSP website indicates that community trustee boards were scheduled to start meeting in May 2025 and further meetings are scheduled through the year.<sup>230</sup>
- 3.37 There was a four-week campaign to advertise trustee board vacancies from 10 February to 7 March 2025; interested persons were required to submit an expression of interest. Prospective members are selected by a panel and appointed by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, on the recommendation of the GSP Trust,<sup>231</sup> and in accordance with the Trust's consultation and engagement framework.<sup>232</sup>
- 3.38 The GSP Trust advised that the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Ethics and Compliance team did not consider the gap in the trustee boards' operation to be a 'significant issue', as the trustee boards are advisory bodies.<sup>233</sup> However, we consider that the GSP Trust should identify ways to speed up the recruitment of new trustee board members so that there are no lengthy gaps between trustee board meetings when trustee board terms expire.

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<sup>229</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, pp 11-12.

<sup>230</sup> GSP Trust, [Community trustee boards](#), viewed 22 May 2025.

<sup>231</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, pp 11-12.

<sup>232</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 38\(3\)](#).

<sup>233</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, pp 11-12.

## Plans of management should not require community trustee board approval

### Summary

When developing a plan of management for a park, the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust should consult the relevant community trustee board, but the trustee board should not be required to agree to the plans.

### Recommendation 23

**That sections 17 and 39 of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* be amended to provide that the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust must have regard to the views of a community trustee board before providing a plan of management to the Minister for approval, but is not required to obtain the trustee board's agreement to the plan.**

- 3.39 The Committee considers that community trustee boards should continue to play a role in advising the GSP Trust on the development of plans of management for each park. However, trustee boards should not be required to approve the plans before they can be given to the Minister for final approval. While trustee boards are an important avenue for community input on plans of management, they should not be able to block the adoption of a plan of management. Preventing the adoption of a plan of management for a park would have a significant impact on the GSP Trust's ability to effectively manage the park. It is also inconsistent with the associated Trusts' legislation, which requires the Trust to have regard to the views of trustee boards when developing a plan of management but not obtain the trustee board's approval.
- 3.40 Under the Act the GSP Trust must ensure that each associated Trust has an approved plan of management in place and that it gives effect to these plans.<sup>234</sup> A plan of management sets out the strategic direction for the management of the park; the permitted activities and uses of the park; the amount of land that can be used for specific activities in the park; and the principles that apply when deciding whether to grant proposed leases or licences in the park.<sup>235</sup>
- 3.41 Plans of management underpin the work of the GSP Trust and 'support everything that occurs in the park.'<sup>236</sup> We heard that the plans are integral to the management of the parklands estate as they provide a strategic framework and guardrails on how the parklands are managed.<sup>237</sup>
- 3.42 The plans provide an avenue for community feedback through consultation with the community trustee boards and are intended to reflect broader community values about how the parks should be used. Under the Act, the relevant community trustee board advises the GSP Trust when it develops a plan of management and must also agree to the plan before it can be submitted to the

<sup>234</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 24\(1\)](#).

<sup>235</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [s 24\(3\)\(a\)](#).

<sup>236</sup> Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive, GSP Trust, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 32.

<sup>237</sup> Mr Laurie Johnson, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 24.

Minister.<sup>238</sup>

- 3.43 Community feedback on parklands management through the community trustee boards is critical to aligning management of the parks with community expectations. Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney, noted the consultation requirement for plans of management and said that 'one way to avoid 'commercialisation ... cannibalising the parks is through transparency and having that really strong community connection'.<sup>239</sup>
- 3.44 The NSW Government noted that the requirement for community trustee board approval of a plan of management under the Act is inconsistent with other legislation such as the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*.<sup>240</sup> For Callan Park, the GSP Trust is required to consult with and have regard to the advice of the community trustee board when developing or reviewing a plan of management, but there is no requirement for the trustee board to approve the plan.<sup>241</sup> We note that the Parramatta Park Trust Act and Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act also do not require the Trust to obtain the trustee board's approval to a plan of management.<sup>242</sup>
- 3.45 The NSW Government recommended amending the Act to make the role of the community trustee board in developing a plan of management consistent with other legislation.<sup>243</sup> The proposed amendment would remove the requirement for community trustee board approval of a plan of management. The GSP Trust said that the requirement for community trustee board approval could leave a park with no plan of management in place, if a trustee board did not approve the plan. The GSP Trust said that there should be a pathway for Ministerial approval of a plan of management that includes the views of community trustee boards, but not their agreement. The Trust noted that this is consistent with the advisory role of the trustee boards under the Act.<sup>244</sup>
- 3.46 We agree that the GSP Trust should consider the advice of community trustee boards when developing a plan of management, but the boards should not be required to approve the plan.

## Supporting First Nations membership of community trustee boards

### Summary

The Greater Sydney Parklands trust should consult community trustee boards and First Nations stakeholders on ways to reduce barriers to First Nations membership of community trustee boards.

<sup>238</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [ss 17\(2\), 39\(a\)](#).

<sup>239</sup> Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney, [Transcript of evidence](#), 13 March 2025, p 18.

<sup>240</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 22.

<sup>241</sup> *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*, [s 8\(3\)\(a\)](#).

<sup>242</sup> *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001*, [s 16](#); *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983*, [s 14](#).

<sup>243</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 22.

<sup>244</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, question 16, p 10.

## Recommendation 24

**That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust consults First Nations stakeholders and the community trustee board for each park to identify barriers to First Nations trustee board membership and to improve measures to support First Nations membership.**

## Finding 4

**That the requirements under the Act for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust to conserve, restore and enhance connection to Country for First Nations people aren't being met.**

## Recommendation 25

**That priority be given to ensuring genuine engagement and involvement with First Nations people in the decision making for, and management of, the parklands estate.**

- 3.47 The Committee recommends that the GSP Trust works with the community trustee boards and First Nations stakeholders to address barriers to First Nations membership of community trustee boards. We consider that First Nations peoples could be better supported to participate in the management of the parklands by improving appointment and membership processes for community trustee boards.
- 3.48 First Nations' connection to Country and cultural heritage is enshrined in the objects of the Act and in the functions of the GSP Trust.<sup>245</sup> The Act requires First Nations representation on community trustee boards. These provisions enable the recognition and conservation of First Nations cultural heritage and values in the parklands estate. Community trustee board membership helps to enhance First Nations perspectives on park management.
- 3.49 The NSW Government noted the need to encourage representation of First Nations people on community trustee boards.<sup>246</sup> However, we heard that some community trustee boards did not have a First Nations member during their first term. Mr Ross Nicholas, Member of the Centennial Park Residents Association said the Centennial Park and Moore Park community trustee board did not have a First Nations representative during its first term. Mr Nicholas observed that this is problematic given the need to ensure diverse board membership. He noted that recruitment was underway for a First Nations member, but the confirmation process is 'incredibly complex'.<sup>247</sup>
- 3.50 Mr Joshua French, Chief Executive of the GSP Trust, said that there are significant consultation demands on some First Nations representatives, as they are often taking part in a range of programs. He said the GSP Trust is aware of these difficulties and is working to improve connections with First Nations people and

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<sup>245</sup> Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act, [ss 3\(b\), 15\(b\)\(i\)](#).

<sup>246</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 22.

<sup>247</sup> Mr Ross Nicholas, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 12.

broaden the range of people who are involved in work for the GSP.<sup>248</sup>

*Strategies to improve First Nations representation*

- 3.51 The NSW Government recommended encouraging First Nations membership by enhancing existing support mechanisms and incentives.<sup>249</sup> The GSP Trust noted that the community trustee boards Improvement Plan 'includes actions to improve acknowledgement and understanding of the Aboriginal history and custodianship of each park for all community trustee board members'.<sup>250</sup>
- 3.52 The GSP Trust outlined a series of initiatives to include and support First Nations representatives on the trustee boards:
- Updating the code of conduct and terms of reference for the community trustee boards to include cultural safety.
  - Ongoing action to improve acknowledgement and understanding of First Nations history and custodianship for all board members.
  - Promoting vacancies of First Nations membership through relevant organisations and networks during recruitment for membership of the boards.<sup>251</sup>
- 3.53 The GSP Trust also suggested other ways to support representation, including reimbursing members for travel and other expenses and developing further engagement programs such as a regular First Nations forum or a First Nations advisory group.<sup>252</sup> Other stakeholders suggested engaging directly with First Nations organisations in selecting First Nations representatives<sup>253</sup> and providing support with transport costs and other assistance.<sup>254</sup>
- 3.54 Community trustee board members' suggestions in response to the GSP Trust's performance survey also supported the need to appoint First Nations representatives. The survey results indicated that members felt there needed to be acknowledgement and understanding of the Aboriginal history and custodianship of the parks.<sup>255</sup>

## **Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Board to have member who lives in western Sydney**

### **Recommendation 26**

**That at least one member of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Board must live in western Sydney.**

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<sup>248</sup> Mr Joshua French, [Transcript of evidence](#), 14 March 2025, p 38.

<sup>249</sup> [Submission 37](#), NSW Government, p 22.

<sup>250</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, p 12.

<sup>251</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, p 12.

<sup>252</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), GSP Trust, p 12.

<sup>253</sup> [Answers to supplementary questions](#), Friends of Callan Park, p 1.

<sup>254</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), Centennial Park Residents Association, p 2.

<sup>255</sup> [Answers to questions on notice](#), GSP Trust, Attachment 1, pp 9-10.

## Appendix One – Terms of reference

1. The Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust is to review the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* to determine whether—
  - a) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, and
  - b) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
2. A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament by 1 July 2025.



## Appendix Two – Conduct of inquiry

The Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council appointed the Committee to conduct a review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* in resolutions passed on 14 August and 19 September 2024. The terms of reference for the inquiry is at Appendix One.

The Committee adopted the terms of reference for the inquiry on 29 October 2024 and issued a media release calling for submissions.

Submissions closed on 31 January 2025. Forty-three submissions were received from community groups, business groups, local councils, members of the public and the NSW Government.

A list of submissions is at Appendix Three. Submissions are available on the [inquiry webpage](#).

The Committee held two public hearings at Parliament House on 13 March and 14 March 2025. Representatives of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, community groups, business groups, local councils, and members of the public appeared at the hearings.

A list of witnesses is at Appendix Four. Transcripts of evidence taken at the hearings are available on the [inquiry webpage](#).

Members of the Committee visited Centennial Park and Parramatta Park in December 2024 and met with members of the community trustee boards for those parks, and Greater Sydney Parklands Trust staff. The Committee also met with First Nations members of the Callan Park and Parramatta Park community trustee boards in May 2025. Notes from these meetings are at Appendices Five and Six.

## Appendix Three – Submissions

No	Author
1	Mr Douglas Belton II
2	Confidential
3	Penrith City Council
4	Mr Alan Bottle
5	Ms Lynda Newnam
6	Mr Wayne Olling
7	Confidential
8	Mr Gareth Collins
9	Mr Graeme Robinson
10	The Walking Volunteers Inc.
11	Mrs Rosalia Robinson
12	Mr Stephen Durbidge
13	Total Environment Centre
14	Mrs Kathryn Clark
15	Dr Peter Watts AM
16	Australian Garden History Society Sydney & Northern NSW Branch
17	City of Sydney
18	Mrs Gretchen Gamble
19	Ms Amanda Jane Reynolds
20	Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc
20a	Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc
21	Bicycle NSW
22	Australian Racing Drivers' Club (ARDC)
23	Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue
24	Carsingha investments Pty Ltd
25	Mr Roger Fenton
26	Cumberland Bird Observers Club
27	North Parramatta Resident Action Group (NPRAG)
28	Ms Dinah McClelland
29	National Trust of Australia (NSW)
30	The Committee for Sydney
31	Name suppressed

No	Author
32	Mr Peter Tzannes
33	National Turf Alliance
34	National Trust (NSW) Parramatta Regional Branch
35	Ms Kobi Shetty, MP
36	Name suppressed
37	NSW Government
38	Centennial Park Residents Association (CPRA)
39	Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA)
40	Ms Linda Bergin OAM
41	Friends of Callan Park
42	Randwick City Council
43	Name suppressed

## Appendix Four – Witnesses

**13 March 2025**

**Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney**

<b>Witness</b>	<b>Position and Organisation</b>
Mr Ian Napier	President, The Walking Volunteers Inc.
Mr Leigh Shearer-Heriot	Vice President, The Walking Volunteers Inc.
Mr Peter McLean	Chief Executive Officer, Bicycle NSW
Mr David Burdon	Director, Conservation, National Trust of Australia (NSW)
Ms Cheryl Bates OAM	Chair, National Trust (NSW) Parramatta Regional Branch
Mr Eamon Waterford	Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Sydney
Ms Estelle Grech	Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney
Mr Laurie Johnson	Program Manager, Public Domain Strategy, City of Sydney
Ms Christine Hay	Member, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA)
Mr Jeff Angel	Director, Total Environment Centre
Mr Stuart Read	Chair, Sydney Branch, Australian Garden History Society
Mr Martin Mansfield	Conservation Officer, Cumberland Bird Observers Club

**14 March 2025**

**Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney**

<b>Witness</b>	<b>Position and Organisation</b>
Mr Glenn Matthews	Chief Executive Officer, Australian Racing Drivers' Club (ARDC)
Mrs Patricia Barkley PSM, AM	Secretary, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc
Mr Phillip Russo OAM	President, North Parramatta Residents Action Group (NPRAG)
Mr Laurence Bennett	Secretary, North Parramatta Residents Action Group (NPRAG)
Mr Hall Greenland	President, Friends of Callan Park
Mr Ross Nicholas	Member, Centennial Park Residents Association (CPRA)

<b>Witness</b>	<b>Position and Organisation</b>
Dr Peter Watts AM	
Mr Douglas Belton II	
Ms Linda Bergin OAM	
Mr Joshua French	Chief Executive Officer, Greater Sydney Parklands Trust
Mr Jacob Messer	Director Operations, Visitors and Sport, Greater Sydney Parkland Trust

## Appendix Five – Site visit to Centennial Park and Parramatta Park

**Monday 9 December 2024**

### **Meeting with Greater Sydney Parklands Trust staff**

Members present: Mr Peter Primrose (Chair), Ms Cate Faehrmann

Attendees:

- Jacob Messer, Acting Chief Executive
- Kerry Jahangir, Director, Finance and Business Services
- Paula Tomkins, Senior Manager, Open Space Planning

### **Key issues discussed**

#### Regulatory framework

- The Parklands estate includes Parramatta Park; Centennial Park and Moore Park; Western Sydney Parklands; Callan Park; and Fernhill Estate (vested into Western Sydney Parklands).
- There is separate legislation for Parramatta Park, Centennial Park and Moore Park, Western Sydney Parklands, Callan Park, as well as Greater Sydney Parklands (GSP).
  - Each associated trust is a separate entity.
  - Each trust provides annual reports to the Minister.
  - No funding is allocated to the GSP, but associated trusts support GSP.
  - The overall objective of the GSP can't be fulfilled until a long-term funding mechanism is in place.
- The Greater Sydney Parklands Act (GSP Act) requires open tender processes and public consultation:
  - Legislation for each of the associated trusts has differing requirements and maximum periods for leases and licences.
  - There are different notification requirements for leases and ministerial sign off criteria.
- The GSP Act facilitates the GSP owning land outside the parklands. Supplementary land could provide funds to support existing parks, through the off-park business hub model.

#### Funding

- Larger parks in the estate have more opportunities to raise revenue (Centennial Parklands and Western Sydney Parklands), while smaller parks with fewer opportunities have difficulty meeting operational needs (Callan Park) or are in deficit (Parramatta Park).
- Western Sydney Parklands' plan of management enables 2% of the parkland to be used for business hubs to fund the rest of the parkland. Four hubs have been established – the model is operating well.
- The GSPT Act limits the transfer of funds between the associated trusts for the parks. There is limited ability to move funds between parks and increase connectivity between them.

#### Community trustee boards' role

- The parks managed by the GSP Trust have five community trustee boards (CTBs) with 41

members. The GSP Trust manages CTB meetings and works with CTB chairs.

- The CTBs were established two years ago. The GSP Trust has conducted a survey of CTB members on their performance and work, to reflect on how their terms have gone.
- Perception that CTBs are just getting started and need more time to fulfil their role under the GSP Act.

#### Consideration of other parks' suitability to be part of estate

- Framework for adding to the parklands network – a key consideration is financial sustainability.
- Four parks are being assessed for suitability for acquisition as part of the GSP estate, however the GSP Trust lacks funds to acquire additional parks.

#### **Meeting with Centennial Park and Moore Park community trustee board members**

Members present: Mr Peter Primrose (Chair), Ms Cate Faehrmann

Attendees:

- Alia Karaman, Chair
- Alex Kibble
- Alim Fazley
- Ross Nicholas, Heritage representative
- Isabelle Shapiro, Woollahra Council representative
- Joseph Herschel
- Ross Feller, Randwick City Council representative

#### Operation of CTB

- Current CTB members were appointed for two years, those who are continuing will be appointed for three more years. Maximum term of five years for members.
- The CTB meets four times a year. Meetings take 1.5 hours and are held in person. Ad hoc meetings have also been held. Some members feel the number of meetings is sufficient while others support more frequent meetings. The Chair and CEO of the GSP Trust have met with the CTB twice.
- GSP Trust staff brief the CTB during their meetings but there's a perception that the CTB may benefit from more meetings or longer meetings.
- Committee composition: there is a good mix of people, but the lack of Indigenous representation is a key gap that needs to be addressed. Inability to attend meetings was a barrier for a potential First Nations representative.
- The CTBs are points of interaction and connection with park users and add significant value, for example by feedback on project design. Aiming to strike a balance between being strategic and being more engaged in operational issues. Members are working out their role and place in the broader engagement framework.

#### **Meeting with Parramatta Park community trustee board members**

Members present: Mr Peter Primrose (Chair), Mr Mark Hodges

Attendees:

- Stewart Thompson, Chair
- Cheryl Bates OAM, Heritage representative
- Mustafa Agha
- Thelmerie Rudd, First Nations representative

### Operation of CTB

- Question of what influence CTB members have in the decision-making processes of the GSP Trust. The CTB want to be consulted on strategies and management plans. Members want a feedback mechanism to identify which of their suggestions have been actioned. Members' feedback has been taken on board, for example on ways to address park safety issues through better lighting. Members want meeting agendas to be more collaborative.
- The CTB is a consultative body but lacks clear engagement with the general public.
- Issue of providing training and capacity building for CTB members. It's valuable for all CTBs to meet together – this has happened on a couple of occasions.
- The CTB has asked for budget statements from the GSP Trust and have presented ideas for plans and projects, but funds aren't available. Tension between preserving heritage values and commercialising the park to improve financial sustainability.
- CTB members are interested in building connections to Parramatta Park, noting location of future metro stations, and the history and heritage values of Park.



## Appendix Six – Meeting with First Nations community trustee board members

### Monday 12 May 2025

Members present: Mr Peter Primrose (Chair), Mr Mark Hodges, Ms Cate Faehrmann, Ms Jacqui Munro, Mr Cameron Murphy, Mr Nathan Hagarty, Mr Alex Greenwich (Deputy Chair) and Ms Donna Davis.

#### Attendees:

- Deborah Lennis, Callan Park community trustee board member
- Thelmerie Rudd, Parramatta Park community trustee board member

### Key issues discussed

#### CTB capacity building and awareness of First Nations issues

- The GSP Trust and members of the community trustee boards (CTBs) should have cultural awareness and competence training. This should include building knowledge about the significance of Aboriginal places in the separate parks and their broader value for Aboriginal people and culture in the Sydney Basin.
- Need for practical, hands-on, in person training to improve understanding of Aboriginal history of the parks, from point of contact to contemporary Australia – what life was like at the time of contact.
- All parklands CTBs meet twice a year online. Suggestion to build connections between the parks to break down silos and overcome the lack of connection between the parks.

#### Experience of First Nations CTB members

- CTB roles are demanding with a minimum of four meetings a year, and some CTBs choosing to have additional meetings.
- First Nations people could be supported to participate in CTBs by improving the recruitment and onboarding process. It is a demanding role that is not clearly explained to potential members. The roles are an opportunity to talk about Aboriginal specific issues in the different parklands.
- Expectation of the role of First Nations member wasn't clear. The induction wasn't adequate – onboarding needs to improve. Current members are experienced but newer members may not know what to expect.
- Collaboration between First Nations members across the parks and mentorship is important to support members, encourage participation, and share knowledge and ideas. Opportunity for younger people to be mentored by older members.
- The appointment process for CTBs requires a resume and an interview, which can be a barrier for some First Nations people. The requirement to have ID can also be a barrier.
- Advertising could be done in a different way, noting that First Nations people don't read newspapers or use LinkedIn or Seek. CTB roles could be promoted on Darug social media pages or through word of mouth.
- There should be an opportunity for all First Nations CTB members to meet and have a yarn. There is a connection between the parks and ideas could be shared between CTBs. Representatives could get together to have cultural conversations and build capacity across the parklands.

- Representatives need time to talk to their communities – more time to consult mob on significant proposals in the parks and talk to their communities. New First Nations members need to know they can consult with mob.

Investment in First Nations priorities

- More funding should be made available to support initiatives like protecting and recognising significant Aboriginal sites, telling Aboriginal stories and teaching connection to Country.
- Education around connection to culture and environment – teach young people about Aboriginal culture.
- Importance of cultural mapping of parklands – telling the story of Aboriginal connection, middens, songlines, sites, and meeting places.

## Appendix Seven – Extracts from minutes

### Minutes of meeting no 1

9.03am, 18 October 2024

Room 1136/Webex

### Members present

Mr Greenwich, Dr Saliba (via Webex), Ms Hodges, Ms Davis (via teleconference), Mrs Quinnell, Mr Primrose, Mr Borsak (via Webex), Ms Faehrmann (via teleconference), Mr Murphy, Ms Munro (via Webex)

### Officers present

Helen Minnican, Sam Griffith, Caroline Hopley, Dora Oravec, Rhea Maggs and Isabella Ciampa

### 1. Appointment of Committee

The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly opened the meeting and read the following extracts from the Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings and the Legislative Council Minutes:

#### **Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings no 67, Wednesday 14 August 2024**

#### **8 JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST**

Mr Ron Hoenig moved, pursuant to notice, That this House:

- (1) In accordance with section 60 of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, a joint select committee, to be known as the Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, be established.
- (2) The Joint Select Committee is to review the Act to determine whether-
  - (a) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, and
  - (b) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (3) The review is to be undertaken as soon as practicable after the period of 2 years from the commencement of this Act.
- (4) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of 2 years.
- (5) The Committee is to consist of eight members, as follows:
  - (a) five Legislative Assembly members, and
  - (b) three Legislative Council members.
- (6) That the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee be elected at the first meeting.
- (7) Mr Alex Greenwich, Dr David Saliba, Mrs Sally Quinnell, Ms Donna Davis and Mr Mark Hodges be appointed to serve on such Committee as members of the Legislative Assembly.
- (8) The Committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales, and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (9) The Committee will have leave to sit during the sitting or any adjournment of the House.
- (10) That at any meeting of the Committee four members shall constitute a quorum, but the Committee must meet as a joint committee at all times.

- (11) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting that it appoint three of its Members to serve on the Committee.

Question put and passed.

**Legislative Council Minutes no 70, Thursday 19 September 2024**

**16 JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE GREATER SYDNE PARKLANDS TRUST – MEMBERSHIP**

On the order of the day being read for consideration of the Legislative Assembly's message of Wednesday 14 August 2024 relating to the Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust -

Ms Sharpe moved, without notice:

- (1) That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Wednesday 14 August 2024 relating to the appointment of a Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, with the following amendment, in which the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly is requested:  
In the paragraph (5)(b) omit "three Legislative Council members" and insert instead "five Legislative Council members".
- (2) That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust be Mr Borsak, Ms Faehrmann, Ms Munro, Mr Murphy and Mr Primrose.
- (3) That this House requests that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly set the time and place of the first meeting.

Debate ensued.

Question put and passed.

Ms Sharpe then moved, according to standing order: That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly conveying the terms of the resolution agreed to by the House.

Question put and passed.

**Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings no 75, Thursday 26 September 2024**

**20 JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON GREATER SYDNE PARKLANDS TRUST – CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MESSAGE**

The order of the day was read.

Mr Ron Hoenig moved, That:

- (1) This House agrees with the Legislative Council's amendment to the resolution appointing a Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council of this resolution.

Debate ensued.

Question put and passed.

**2. Election of Chair**

Resolved on the motion of Mr Murphy, seconded by Mr Greenwich: That Mr Primrose be elected Chair of the Committee.

**3. Election of Deputy Chair**

Resolved on the motion of Mr Murphy, seconded by Mr Primrose: That Mr Greenwich be elected Deputy Chair of the Committee.

**4. Staffing arrangements**

The Clerk-Assistant, Scrutiny and Engagement introduced the Committee Director, Committee Manager, and Committee Officer.

**5. Standard motions**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That the standard motions be amended to state that the Committee will not meet while the Legislative Council is sitting.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the Committee adopts the standard motions as amended:

**Conduct of proceedings**

1. The Committee will not meet while the Legislative Council is sitting.
2. During any committee meeting, if a division or quorum is called in the Legislative Assembly, or either House in the case of Joint committees, the meeting will be suspended until the committee regains quorum.
3. Conditions for the broadcasting, filming or photography of the committee's public proceedings will be determined by the committee on a case-by-case basis. Those conditions shall be consistent with the Legislative Assembly's resolution of 9 May 2023; and the Assembly's guidelines for coverage of proceedings for parliamentary committees administered by the Legislative Assembly.
4. Witnesses appearing before the committee will not be represented by a member of the legal profession or other advocate.
5. Committee members can only use electronic devices unobtrusively during committee proceedings, so that they do not interfere with, or disrupt, the conduct of those proceedings.
6. Supplementary questions for witnesses, following a public hearing, shall be determined by the committee.
7. Media releases on behalf of the committee can only be made by the Chair; and where practicable, following consultation with the committee.

**Administrative arrangements**

8. Arrangements that facilitate or support committee proceedings and activities be delegated to the Chair and the committee staff, to undertake in accordance with the committee's decisions.
9. Members nominated by the committee to undertake site visits are expected, where practicable, to participate in the full itinerary.
10. The Chair and the Committee Director, through the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, be authorised to liaise with the Speaker on approvals for committee expenditure.

**Communications and engagement**

11. The Legislative Assembly's Engagement Team will support and promote the work of the committee. The Team will implement any agreed media and engagement strategy and coordinate the production of media and other promotional activity with the Chair.

**6. General business**

The Committee discussed matters to be covered during its next meeting, including consideration of site visits.

**7. Next meeting**

The meeting adjourned at 9.14am until a date to be determined.

**Minutes of meeting no 2**

**9.31am, 29 October 2024**

**Room 1254/Webex**

**Members present**

Mr Primrose (**Chair**), Dr Saliba (via Webex), Ms Hodges (via Webex), Ms Davis (via Webex), Mrs Quinnell (via Webex), Mr Murphy (via Webex), Ms Munro (via Webex)

**Apologies**

Mr Borsak, Ms Faehrmann, Mr Greenwich

**Officers present**

Caroline Hopley, Dora Oravec and Rhea Maggs

**1. Confirmation of minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That the minutes of the meeting of 18 October 2024 be confirmed.

**2. Review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022***

**2.1 Terms of reference**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Davis, seconded Mr Murphy: That the Committee adopts the terms of reference as circulated to conduct a review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*.

**2.2 Call for submissions**

The Committee discussed the circulated list of stakeholders, and agreed to add the following stakeholders to the list:

- Transport of NSW
- National Rugby League
- Cricket NSW
- Australian Festivals Association
- Parramatta Leagues Club
- Club Parramatta
- University of Tasmania, Rozelle campus
- Parramatta High School
- Western Sydney Local Health District
- MISC Parramatta
- Parramatta Female Factory Fields
- A Dharug community group and any relevant First Nations groups

- NSW Health
- NSW Police
- Other relevant stakeholders located in or bordering the parklands estate.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Murphy, seconded Ms Munro: That the Committee:

- Calls for submissions with a closing date of 31 January 2025
- Writes to the stakeholders on the list circulated, and other stakeholders nominated by members, inviting them to make a submission to the inquiry.

### **2.3 Inquiry timeline**

The Committee noted the indicative inquiry timeline.

### **2.4 Briefing note on *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022***

The Committee noted the briefing note on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act.

## **3. \*\*\***

## **4. General business**

The Committee discussed the timing of site visits and public hearings. It was agreed that Committee staff would check members' availability on dates in December 2024 and February 2025.

## **5. Next meeting**

The meeting adjourned at 9.41am until a date to be determined.

### **Minutes of meeting no 3**

**12.31pm, 17 February 2025**

**Room 1136/Webex**

### **Members present**

Mr Primrose (**Chair**), Mr Borsak, Ms Davis (via Webex), Ms Faehrmann (via Webex), Mr Greenwich (via Webex), Mr Hodges (via Webex), Dr Saliba (via Webex), Ms Munro (via Webex) and Mr Murphy

### **Apologies**

Mrs Quinnell

### **Officers present**

Rohan Tyler, Dora Oravec, Alex Read and Mohini Mehta

## **1. Confirmation of minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Davis: That the minutes of the meeting of 29 October 2024 be confirmed.

## **2. Review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022***

### **2.1 \*\*\***

### **2.2 Publishing submissions**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy That:

- the Committee accepts and publishes submissions 1, 3 to 6, 8 to 30, 32 to 35, 37 to 42 in full.
- the Committee accepts and publishes submissions 31 and 36 with the author's name suppressed.
- submissions 2 and 7 be accepted and remain confidential to the Committee and not be published.

### **2.3 Public hearing dates and witness list**

The Committee discussed witnesses to appear at public hearings for the inquiry.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Hodges: That the Committee holds public hearings on 13 March and 14 March and invites the listed witnesses to give evidence at the hearings.

### **3. Next meeting**

The meeting adjourned at 12.43pm until 13 March in the Macquarie Room.

#### **Minutes of meeting no 4**

**9:23am, 13 March 2025**

**Room Macquarie room/Webex**

#### **Members present**

Mr Primrose (**Chair**), Mr Greenwich (**Deputy Chair**), Ms Davis (via Webex), Ms Faehrmann, Mr Hodges, Dr Saliba (via Webex), Ms Munro, Mr Murphy and Mrs Quinnell

#### **Apologies**

Mr Borsak

#### **Officers present**

Caroline Hopley, Dora Oravec, Alex Read and Mohini Mehta

### **1. Deliberative meeting**

#### **1.1 Confirmation of minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That the minutes of the meeting of 17 February 2025 be confirmed.

#### **1.2 Publishing submission**

Resolved on the motion of Mrs Quinnell: That the Committee accepts and publishes submission 43 in full.

#### **1.3 Media orders**

Resolved on the motion of Ms Faehrmann: That the Committee authorises the audio-visual recording, photography and broadcasting of the public hearing on 13 March 2025, in accordance with the Legislative Assembly's resolution of 9 May 2023; and the Assembly's guidelines for coverage of proceedings for parliamentary committees administered by the Legislative Assembly.

#### **1.4 Supplementary questions on notice**

Resolved on the motion of Mr Hodges: That the Committee adopts the following process in relation to supplementary questions for the 13 March and 14 March hearings:



- Members to email proposed supplementary questions for witnesses to committee staff within 2 business days of the uncorrected transcript being circulated to members.
- Committee staff to circulate all proposed supplementary questions to the Committee, with members to lodge any objections to the questions within 1 business day of the questions being sent to members.

#### **1.5 Answers to questions taken on notice and supplementary questions**

Resolved on the motion of Mrs Quinnell: That witnesses be requested to return answers to questions taken on notice and supplementary questions within 1 week of the date on which the questions are forwarded.

The meeting concluded at 9.26am.

### **2. Public hearing – Review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022***

The Chair opened the public hearing at 9.30am and made a short opening statement.

Mr Ian Napier, President, The Walking Volunteers Inc, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Leigh Shearer-Heriot, Vice President, The Walking Volunteers Inc, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Peter McLean, Chief Executive Officer, Bicycle NSW, was sworn and examined.

Mr David Burdon, Director, Conservation, National Trust of Australia (NSW), was affirmed and examined.

Ms Cheryl Bates OAM, Chair, National Trust (NSW) Parramatta Regional Branch, was sworn and examined.

Mr Eamon Waterford, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Sydney, was affirmed and examined.

Ms Estelle Grech, Policy Manager, Planning and Housing, Committee for Sydney, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Laurie Johnson, Program Manager, Public Domain Strategy, City of Sydney, was sworn and examined.

Ms Christine Hay, Landscape Architect Heritage Consultant, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA), was affirmed and examined.

Mr Jeff Angel, Director, Total Environment Centre, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Martin Mansfield, Conservation Officer, Cumberland Bird Observers Club, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Stuart Read, Chair, Sydney Branch, Australian Garden History Society, was affirmed and examined via videoconference.

The Committee questioned the witnesses. Evidence concluded; the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 4.18pm.

### **3. Post hearing deliberative meeting**

The Committee commenced a deliberative meeting at 4.21pm.

#### **3.1 Publishing transcript of evidence**

Resolved on the motion of Mr Greenwich: That the corrected transcript of public evidence given today be authorised for publication and uploaded on the Committee's webpage.

#### **3.2 General business**

The Committee discussed ways to consult with First National stakeholders for the inquiry.

#### **4. Next meeting**

The Committee adjourned at 4.27pm until 14 March in the Macquarie room.

#### **Minutes of meeting no 5**

**10:12am, 14 March 2025**

**Room Macquarie room/Webex**

#### **Members present**

Mr Primrose (**Chair**), Mr Greenwich (**Deputy Chair**), Ms Davis, Ms Faehrmann, Mr Hodges, Dr Saliba (via Webex), Mr Murphy (via Webex) and Mrs Quinnell (via Webex)

#### **Apologies**

Mr Borsak, Ms Munro

#### **Officers present**

Caroline Hopley, Dora Oravec, Alex Read and Mohini Mehta

#### **1. Deliberative meeting**

##### **Media orders**

Resolved on the motion of Ms Faehrmann: That the Committee authorises the audio-visual recording, photography and broadcasting of the public hearing on 13 March 2025, in accordance with the Legislative Assembly's resolution of 9 May 2023; and the Assembly's guidelines for coverage of proceedings for parliamentary committees administered by the Legislative Assembly.

The meeting concluded at 10.13am.

#### **2. Public hearing – Review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022***

The Chair opened the public hearing at 10.15am and made a short opening statement.

Mr Glenn Matthews, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Racing Drivers' Club, was sworn and examined.

The public hearing adjourned at 10.53am.

#### **3. Deliberative meeting**

The Committee commenced a deliberative meeting at 10.54am.

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#### **4. In-camera evidence**

The in-camera hearing commenced at 10.54am.

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The in-camera hearing concluded at 11.08am.

## **5. Public hearing – Review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022***

The public hearing resumed at 11.19am.

Mrs Patricia Barkley PSM, AM, Secretary, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley Inc, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Phillip Russo OAM, President, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Laurance Bennett, President, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Hall Greenland, President, Friends of Callan Park, was affirmed and examined via videoconference.

Mr Ross Nicholas, Member, Centennial Park Residents Association, was affirmed and examined.

Dr Peter Watts AM, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Douglas Belton II, was affirmed and examined.

Ms Linda Bergin OAM, was affirmed and examined.

Ms Bergin tendered the following documents:

- An email to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust dated 20 January 2025
- An email to the Department of Planning, Housing and Industry dated 5 February 2025
- An extract from the Western Sydney Parklands Trust's financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2024

Mr Joshua French Chief Executive Officer, Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, was affirmed and examined.

Mr Jacob Messer Director Operations, Visitors and Sport, Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, was affirmed and examined.

The Committee questioned the witnesses. Evidence concluded; the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 3.59pm.

## **6. Post hearing deliberative meeting**

The Committee commenced a deliberative meeting at 4.02pm.

### **6.1 Confirmation of minutes**

Resolved on the motion of Ms Faehrmann: That the minutes of the meeting of 13 March 2024 be confirmed.

### **6.2 Publishing transcript of evidence**

Resolved on the motion of Mr Hodges: That the corrected transcript of public evidence given today be authorised for publication and uploaded on the Committee's webpage.

### **6.3 Accepting tendered documents**

Resolved on the motion of Ms Faehrmann: That the Committee accepts the following documents tendered by Ms Linda Bergin during the public hearing:

- An email to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust dated 20 January 2025
- An email to the Department of Planning, Housing and Industry dated 5 February 2025
- An extract from the Western Sydney Parklands Trust's financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2024

#### **6.4 General business**

The Committee discussed issues arising from the hearing.

#### **7. Next meeting**

The Committee adjourned at 4.06pm until a date and time to be determined.

#### **Minutes of meeting no 6**

**10.02am, 12 May 2025**

**Room 814, Parliament House**

#### **Members present**

Mr Primrose (**Chair**), Mr Greenwich (**Deputy Chair**), Ms Davis, Ms Faehrmann, Mr Hodges, Mr Hagarty, Ms Munro and Mr Murphy

#### **Apologies**

Mr Borsak, Dr Saliba

#### **Officers present**

Leon Last, Joe Stewart, Dora Oravec, Alex Read and Mohini Mehta

#### **1. Deliberative meeting**

##### **1.1 Committee membership**

The Committee noted that, as recorded in the Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings no 103, entry no 16, 28 March 2025, Mr Nathan Hagarty has been appointed to the Committee in place of Mrs Sally Quinnell.

##### **1.2 Confirmation of minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That the minutes of the meeting of 14 March 2025 be confirmed.

##### **1.3 Publishing submissions**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy:

- That submission 20a be published in full.
- That the Committee amends its publication order for submission 43 to publish the submission with the author's name suppressed.

##### **1.4 Publishing answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions**

The Committee noted receipt of the following documents:

- Answers to questions on notice from Bicycle NSW, the City of Sydney, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects; Linda Bergin OAM; the Committee for Sydney, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, Centennial Park Residents Association.
- Answers to supplementary questions from Dr Peter Watts AM, Penrith City Council, the Committee for Sydney, Randwick City Council, Friends of Callan Park, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, Linda Bergin OAM, the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Greenwich: That the Committee publishes the following documents:

- Answers to questions on notice from Bicycle NSW, the City of Sydney, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects; Linda Bergin OAM; the Committee for Sydney; Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, Centennial Park Residents Association.
- Answers to supplementary questions from Dr Peter Watts AM, Penrith City Council, the Committee for Sydney, Randwick City Council, Friends of Callan Park, Friends of Fernhill and Mulgoa Valley, Linda Bergin OAM, the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.

### **1.5 Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following correspondence received:

- Ian Napier, Walking Volunteers, providing further information following appearance at 13 March public hearing, 18 March and 21 March 2025.
- Linda Bergin OAM, providing clarifications to evidence given at 14 March public hearing, 20 March 2025.
- Laurence Bennett, North Parramatta Residents Action Group (NPRAG), advising that questions taken on notice at 13 March public hearing were addressed NPRAG's submission and evidence, 26 March 2025.
- Joshua French, Chief Executive of Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, providing clarifications to evidence given at 14 March public hearing, 28 March 2025.
- Jacob Messer, Director Operations, Visitors & Sport, Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, providing clarifications to evidence given at 14 March public hearing, 28 March 2025.
- Lynda Newman, commenting on evidence given at 14 March hearing, 29 March 2025.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Faehrmann: That the Committee publishes correspondence received from Linda Bergin OAM, Joshua French and Jacob Messer clarifying evidence given on 13 and 14 March 2025, and that footnotes and links to the published correspondence be inserted at the relevant sections of the transcripts.

## **2. Informal meeting with First Nations stakeholders**

The Committee met with the following stakeholders:

- Deborah Lennis, First Nations member, Callan Park community trustee board
- Thelmerie Rudd, First Nations member, Parramatta Park community trustee board.

### **Next meeting**

- 3.** The meeting adjourned at 11:39am until a date and time to be determined.

### **UNCONFIRMED minutes of meeting no 7**

2.03pm, 20 June 2025

Room 1254 and Webex

### **Members present**

Mr Primrose (**Chair**), Mr Greenwich (Deputy Chair) (via Webex), Ms Davis, Ms Faehrmann, Mr Hodges, Mr Hagarty (via Webex), Ms Munro, Mr Murphy (via Webex) and Dr Saliba (via Webex)

### **Apologies**

Mr Borsak

**Officers present**

Caroline Hopley, Dora Oravec, Alex Read and Mohini Mehta

**1. Recording meeting**

Resolved on the motion of Ms Munro: That the Committee agrees to record the meeting for the purposes of committee staff preparing the minutes and report amendments, and that the recording be deleted when the report is tabled.

**2. Confirmation of minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That the minutes of the meeting of 12 May 2025 be confirmed.

**3. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following correspondence received:

- Lynda Newman, regarding animal welfare in the Greater Sydney Parklands, 24 May 2025.
- Joshua French, Chief Executive of Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, regarding difficulties with leasing a property at Callan Park, 27 May 2025.

**4. Consideration of Chair's draft report**

The Committee agreed to consider the report chapter by chapter.

The Chair proposed that Chapter 1 stand as part of the report.

Ms Faehrmann moved:

- That the word 'overwhelmingly' be omitted from the first sentence in paragraph 1.6 on page 2.
- That recommendation 1 on page 3 be omitted.
- That recommendation 2 on page 4 be omitted.
- That a new recommendation be inserted after recommendation 3 on page 8 to read:

That the Act be amended to prohibit the use of artificial turf within the Greater Sydney Parklands Estate.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 1 [Ms Faehrmann]

Noes 8 [Ms Davis, Ms Munro, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose, Mr Hodges]

Question negatived.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 3 on page 8 be amended by inserting the words 'and to progress the Green Grid plan developed by the NSW Government Chief Architect.' at the end of the recommendation.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 3 [Ms Faehrmann, Ms Munro, Mr Hodges]

Noes 6 [Mr Greenwich, Ms Davis, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose]

Question negatived.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Hodges: That Chapter 1 stand as part of the report.

The Chair proposed that Chapter 2 stand as part of the report.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Hagarty: That a new recommendation be inserted after recommendation 8 on page 17 to read:

That the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust be required to report, in an easily accessible and understandable manner, all loans and financial transfers between the associated Trusts under its management as part of its annual reporting obligations.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 6 on page 16 be omitted.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 1 [Ms Faehrmann]

Noes 8 [Ms Davis, Ms Munro, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose, Mr Hodges]

Question negatived.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 8 on page 17 be omitted.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 1 [Ms Faehrmann]

Noes 8 [Ms Davis, Ms Munro, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose, Mr Hodges]

Question negatived.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 12 on page 23 be omitted and the following recommendation be inserted instead:

That the *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001* and the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* not be amended to extend terms of leases and licences.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 1 [Ms Faehrmann]

Noes 8 [Ms Davis, Ms Munro, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose, Mr Hodges]

Question negatived.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 13 on page 25 be omitted.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 1 [Ms Faehrmann]

Noes 8 [Ms Davis, Ms Munro, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose, Mr Hodges]

Question negatived.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 13 on page 25 be amended by inserting the words 'ensuring that any proposals for for-profit developments must have the support of the Callan Park Community Trustee Board' after the words 'not-for-profit purposes'.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 1 [Ms Faehrmann]

Noes 8 [Ms Davis, Ms Munro, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose, Mr Hodges]

Question negatived.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 14 on page 26 be omitted.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 3 [Ms Faehrmann, Ms Munro, Mr Hodges]

Noes 6 [Ms Davis, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose]

Question negatived.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 16 on page 28 be omitted.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 3 [Ms Faehrmann, Ms Munro, Mr Hodges]

Noes 6 [Ms Davis, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose]

Question negatived.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Davis: That Chapter 2 stand as part of the report.

The Chair proposed that Chapter 3 stand as part of the report.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That two new recommendations be inserted on page 31 to read:

- That the Act be amended to remove the ability for the Minister to remove a Community Trustee Board member at their discretion.
- That the Act be amended to remove the ability for the Minister to appoint the Chair of a Trustee Advisory Board and to provide for the Board to elect their own Chair.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 2 [Ms Faehrmann, Mr Greenwich]

Noes 7 [Ms Davis, Ms Munro, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose, Mr Hodges]

Question negatived.

Ms Faehrmann moved: That recommendation 22 on page 39 be omitted.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 1 [Ms Faehrmann]

Noes 8 [Ms Davis, Ms Munro, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose, Mr Hodges]

Question negatived.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Faehrmann: That a new finding be inserted on page 41 to read:

That the requirements under the Act for the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust to conserve, restore and enhance connection to Country for First Nations people aren't being met.



Resolved on the motion of Ms Faehrmann: That a new recommendation be inserted on page 41 to read:

That priority be given to ensuring genuine engagement and involvement with First Nations people in the decision making for, and management of, the parklands estate.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Davis: That a new recommendation be inserted on page 42 to read:

That at least one member of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Board must live in western Sydney.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Murphy: That Chapter 3 as amended stand as part of the report.

Mr Murphy moved:

1. That the draft report, as amended, be the report of the Committee and that it be signed by the Chair and presented to the House.
2. That the Chair and committee staff be permitted to correct stylistic, typographical and grammatical errors.
3. That, once tabled, the report be posted on the Committee's webpage.

Question put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes 8 [Mr Hodges, Ms Munro, Ms Davis, Mr Greenwich, Mr Murphy, Mr Hagarty, Dr Saliba, Mr Primrose]

Noes 1 [Ms Faehrmann]

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **5. Report cover image**

Resolved on the motion of Mr Greenwich: That the circulated report cover image be used on the cover of the Committee's tabled report.

## **6. General business**

The Chair thanked members and committee staff for their work on the inquiry.

The meeting adjourned at 2.42pm.