Opening Statement on behalf of Saving Moore Park Inc to the Public Works Committee Inquiry into the Sydney Stadiums Strategy, 29 June 2018

Good morning. We welcome this opportunity to respond to questions on our submission.

SMP is an independent community association, unaffiliated with any political or activist group. Through our website, Facebook page and Twitter, we have a supporter base of more than 3,200 people.

As you'd expect from our title, our main focus is on the preservation and enhancement of Moore Park for the benefit of present and future generations.

There are some in Government who see the park solely as an empty space that can be monetised for sports and entertainment. Even INSW talks of transforming Moore Park into a premier sporting and entertainment precinct. We see it as precious green space that exists for the community - for the mums and dads who want to kick a ball with their kids, have a picnic or read a book under a tree.

Much of the original 153 hectares set aside in 1866 for public recreation has been lost over the years to roadworks, bridges, retail activities and now light rail. The 115 hectares which now remains represents 28% of total parkland in the City of Sydney.

But it has been sadly neglected by successive Governments, trashed by the light rail and event day parking and appropriated by professional sporting codes.

While we do not see a need for a new stadium, its construction nevertheless provides an opportunity to bring the park up to the standards the community has a right to expect in the 21st century.

But a word of caution: while the Stadium needs to be integrated with Moore Park, it mustn't be allowed to determine the shape and use to which the park is put. Moore Park is for the community, and particularly the rapidly growing suburbs to the west of the park.

We therefore look to the Committee to do three things:

1. Explicitly acknowledge Moore Park's importance and the need to ensure that any stadium redevelopment doesn't adversely affect it;
2. Recommend that the integration of the stadium and the park be undertaken with the needs of the community foremost and consistent with the Moore Park Master Plan, and not just in a way which meets the needs of the SCG Trust and sporting codes and interests; and
3. Recommend that the Park be properly funded through an appropriate developer contribution to preserve and enhance it for the benefit of present and future generations.

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Document tendered by
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Received by
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Date: 29 / 6 / 2018
Resolved to publish (Yes) / No