

Report on the online questionnaire:

Inquiry into the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021

The Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021 launched an online questionnaire to enable public participation in the inquiry in an efficient and accessible way.

The questionnaire was not intended as a statistically valid, random survey. Like the submission process, respondents self-selected in choosing to participate. This means that respondents were not a representative sample of the New South Wales population, but rather interested members of the public who volunteered their time to have a say. The questionnaire was complementary to and did not replace the usual submission process. The submission portal was also available to individuals and organisations who wished to provide a more detailed response to the inquiry's terms of reference. In this regard, it should be noted that some respondents may have completed the questionnaire and also made a submission.

Only responses from New South Wales participants are analysed in this report.

Questions asked

The questionnaire comprised of eight questions seeking participant's views on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021. Question 3 was a multiple choice question asking participants about their position in regards to the bill:

- support
- partially support
- support with amendments, or
- oppose.

Respondents were then provided with an open-ended question asking them to explain their answer. Respondents were also asked if they had any other comments on the bill.

The full list of questions is at Appendix 1.

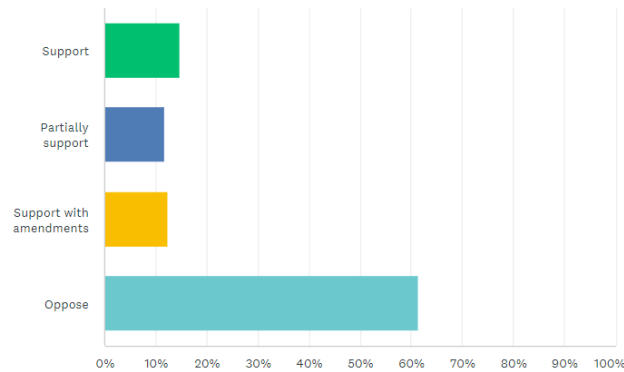
Responses to questions

The questionnaire was open online from 25 November 2021 to 19 December 2021 and received 191 responses.

A sample of answers and summaries of responses are provided for each question below. The samples have been selected to represent the various viewpoints expressed in the responses.

Q3. What is your position on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021?

Of the 171 respondents who answered this question, most (61.40 per cent, or 105 respondents) opposed the bill. 11.70 per cent, or 20 respondents partially supported the bill, while 12.28 per cent, or 21 respondents supported the bill with amendments. 14.62 per cent, or 25 respondents supported the bill. However, the free text responses of some of these respondents did not clearly demonstrate their support for the bill.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Support	14.62% 25
Partially support	11.70% 20
Support with amendments	12.28% 21
Oppose	61.40% 105
TOTAL	171

Q4. Please explain why you support the bill.

Of the 25 respondents who supported the bill, 15 provided free-text answers explaining their position. However, some of the answers to this question did not clearly demonstrate support for the bill. Of those that did, the most common reason given was that the bill would consolidate management of the parkland areas:

- 'Provides uniform management and retains terms of intent around land usage.'
- 'Makes sense to consolidate the management of them all.'

Q5. Please explain why you partially support the bill.

Of the 20 respondents who partially supported the bill, 14 provided free-text answers explaining their position. Most respondents indicated that they wanted parkland areas to be preserved and maintained for public use:

- 'I support the creation of the trust and agency. I want to ensure though that they uphold or expand mountain/cross-country biking trails like those in Western Sydney.'
- 'Callan Park and its grounds are a historic site that is worthy of preservation; a preservation that reflects its long history as a service for the people of NSW. The inner west has limited open space for passive and active recreation.'

- 'I don't care how the Parklands Trust is incorporated. I simply want them to do their job of providing a world class social infrastructure for the benefit of local communities.'
- 'I am an inner west resident who is very disappointed at how Callan Park has become a political football to the detriment of the community. The current approach to Callan Park has been unsuccessful. With some exceptions, historic buildings are deteriorating, and other obsolete and redundant buildings that ought to be demolished remain. There is no single walking track around the park, which based on the volume of people using the Bay Walk, would be very highly valued. Callan Park needs to be run more like Centennial Park where there are some commercial uses so that the rest of the park can be well maintained and there is life in the buildings. Centennial Park shows that some commercial uses are completely appropriate and add benefit to the community.'
- 'I would like to see Callan Park used for community benefit. It does not matter whether tenants are NFP or for-profit - this is not a helpful distinction. Rather, community benefit should be a key criteria that prospective tenants must be able to demonstrate. This would enable social enterprises or other interesting community initiatives in the arts, social welfare, environment and community space to become tenants. We need to ensure that tenants are viable and will help to create a thriving community asset.'

Q6. What amendments would you like incorporated?

Of the 21 respondents who supported the bill with amendments, 15 provided free-text answers explaining their position. A range of amendments to the bill were suggested.

Several respondents raised concerns about commercialisation or privatisation of parklands. They argued the parkland areas should be preserved for public use, with limits on commercial development:

- 'The lands should not be able to sold or turned into roads, but should remain as reserve, without the possibility of rezoning. Covid lockdowns demonstrated that there were not enough parks in the Inner West.'
- 'Greater restrictions on commercialisation of parklands, especially long lease times for hotels, event management etc.'
- 'Stronger controls against privatisation and commercial leases. All initiatives should meet strong accountability controls and are consistent with the values and vision of a not for profit and public space. Stronger controls over heritage protection.'
- 'My concern is that the park should not become a money making business. We need to keep the area as parkland for public use. I am OK with short term leases and events but not if they become the main focus of Callan Park.'

Other respondents argued that the parkland areas should continue to be managed at the local level:

- 'Callan Park must be in its own trust.'
- 'Retain the Callan Park Act and management/operation of Callan Park by the Inner West council.'

Some respondents commented on the issue of car parking at Moore Park, with a range of views expressed:

- 'Parking to be allowed on grass for events at the Sydney Football Stadium, Sydney Cricket Ground and events at the Hordern Pavilion and entertainment quarter.'
- 'On-grass parking for events at EQ, Hordern Pavilion, SCG and SFS should remain until a viable like-for-like car parking solution is identified and delivered at Moore Park.'
- 'I wish to see all event car parking removed from Moore Park as Moore Park is an important green space for the community. Over the last couple of years the importance of such spaces on peoples mental and physical health has been highlighted. I personally use Moore park for relaxation and exercise several times a week.'
- 'With the advent of climate change and other environmental issues, I support as much green space as possible be preserved for public use in our Parklands. I am an accredited psychoanalyst and there has been peer reviewed articles stating the benefits of green space and nature to human beings. Therefore I support the removal of event car parking from Moore Park, and very limited, if any commercial development'

One respondent suggested that a review process should be included in the bill:

- 'After the bill is passed the community interests should be given up to two years to have the bill reviewed. If some aspect does not work in the interest of the community a second chance after two years would guarantee significant flow and change such a bill will generate. I think the second look after a two year trial period is quite adequate.'

Q7. Please explain why you oppose the bill.

Of the 105 respondents who opposed the bill, 86 provided free-text answers explaining their position. The most common reasons for opposing the bill were that the parklands should be managed individually; that the parklands should not be commercialised or privatised; and that the bill gives too much decision-making power to the Minister.

The parklands should be managed individually

- 'The Bill attempts to legislate uniform ideals for five different sites. It does not adequately recognise the uniqueness of each site, their flora and fauna, their different pasts, futures and potentials. It proposes governance by a Board lacking a Heritage expert and one focussed on corporate operations rather than community needs. The Draft Bill should be abandoned and separate legislation considered for each site.'
- 'I believe that each precious parkland is best managed by its own community, as far as that is feasible. Each parkland needs its own locally focused management group, well aware of the specific local needs and issues.'
- 'All the parks under the proposed bill were set up in different circumstances and have individual histories and needs. These cannot be accommodated or properly served by one overarching body. This is the wrong model for these parks.'

- 'Western Sydney deserves its own agency. It makes up one-tenth of Australia's population. Also, amalgamation of agencies end up costing more money and no benefits to the citizens. Just look at the Amalgamation of Councils back in 2016.'
- 'It is better that the Callan Park area remain as its own entity, as it is unlike any of the park areas in Sydney. It has special significance and needs to be controlled by those who understand the preservation of historic buildings and that waterfront be left as it is for all to view not be made into a playground, bike track or buildings/land leased or sold eventually. It has a great outlook on the shoreline and great history which could be lost in a big entity's control.'

The parklands should not be commercialised or privatised

- 'I disagree with the privation or commercialisation of Sydney Parklands which are public open space which should not have to pay their own way but should be paid for by taxes.'
- 'I believe that parklands and open spaces in NSW should not be commercialised at the expense of access to residents of the state. This leads to a diminishment of open spaces for families and inequity of access.'
- 'Corporatisation by this government or future governments is a way of preparing to privatise publicly owned property. The trust will farm out management of public space to private interests. There will need to be a financial balance sheet & that means selling some off or charging for access.'
- 'As a resident of the Inner West, I fear the tendency of corporations to commercialise aspects of the Callan Park environment, which needs to be preserved for its heritage values, harbourside open space and natural habitat potential.'
- 'Against commercialisation, privatisation, weak ecological objectives and I don't trust the government and their willingness to respect the history of the park or what locals want for Callan Park.'

The bill gives too much decision-making power to the Minister

- 'The bill removes the power from the locals and transfers that power to people appointed by the minister i.e. directly politicises the process. Local input is sought but they have no real power. This process allows the minister of the day to direct outcomes that are not consistent with the local interests.'
- '...the Bill will allow for a large diminishing of democracy and a massive concentration of power to one person (the minister) and his/her hand-picked trust.'
- 'Puts a corporation in charge of our iconic parks, it endows the Minister with excessive powers, it aims to reduce community input to a formality and authorises commercialisation ...'

Q8. Do you have any other comments?

Many respondents used this question as an opportunity to reiterate their comments to the preceding questions.

Some respondents provided further comments about their concerns, and/or opposition, to the bill:

- 'I am concerned about proposals that may lead to commercialisation of our parklands. The importance of our limited green space has been well demonstrated during the pandemic. Commercial ventures risk alienating areas of our parks from the general public and altering existing priorities, e.g. mental health in the case of Callan Park.'
- 'The Bill is focussed on enabling the parks to make money. This is completely inappropriate. Parks like health and education should be the responsibility of the NSW and Commonwealth governments to fund. There are some parks, like Callan Park that should be left alone. I am against privatising Callan Park as it will change the ethos of the site. Government should be using it for services for those suffering from mental health issues. The Lower House Amendments are crucial. The Upper House should not change these. The ones regarding Callan Park are essential to keep the protections for the site that are currently in the Callan Park Act.'
- 'It leaves the parklands open to destruction by lobbyists and developers by handing control of the parklands from the local council to state government. Local councils better understand the needs of the communities who utilise these parklands. I oppose the bill because it enables destruction of the green spaces that make our suburbs liveable.'

Other comments included suggestions for how the bill could be amended, or how the trust should operate:

- 'Strongly consider creating community consultative Committees for each park, so the users have more input to what is available to them. Does anyone consider asking the children what equipment they might like to play on or ask older persons what creates for them a safe, secure, accessible and inclusive Park? Ask the customers, not just consultants, designers etc. who have little or no direct ownership of the Park other than their stipend.'
- 'I would like to see the bill ensure ongoing maintenance and upkeep of parks and significant buildings within them. The aim would be to enhance community use and provide venues for creative and sporting activities.'
- 'Any proposal for cafes and food outlets should not be supported unless they provide employment and training for current occupiers. There are local cafes and coffee shops nearby.'

Appendix 1: List of questions

1. Please enter your contact details.

Name:

Email address:

Postcode:

2. Are you a resident of NSW? Select one of these options:
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. The main object of the Bill is to constitute the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust as a corporation and NSW Government agency and provide for its powers and obligations, including in relation to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust estate. Further information about the inquiry, including the terms of reference, can be found on the committee's website.

Based on your own understanding and the descriptions above, what is your position on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021? Select one of these options:

- a. Support
 - b. Partially support
 - c. Support with amendments
 - d. Oppose
4. Please explain why you support the bill.
300 words – free text box
 5. Please explain why you partially support the bill.
300 words – free text box
 6. What amendments would you like incorporated?
300 words – free text box
 7. Please explain why you oppose the bill.
300 words – free text box
 8. Do you have any other comments?
300 words – free text box