

**Submission
No 111**

INQUIRY INTO SYDNEY STADIUMS STRATEGY

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The terms of reference of the Public Works Committee inquiring into the NSW Government's Sydney Stadiums strategy include options to protect, preserve and expand green space at Moore Park.

Currently, Moore Park and Centennial Park are managed by the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust and thus the fate these parklands is inextricably linked. This is particularly so because all the parklands are faced with the threat of expanding occupation by commercial and amateur sporting interests and because of the fact that the Trust is a self funded operation. As such, the Trust has to manage the parklands as a business proposition, to the detriment of the environmental management of the parklands. It is actually beyond comprehension that the NSW Government can readily give \$750 million to rebuild the 1988 Sydney Football Stadium and not fund the Trust, which has responsibility for such a leading Sydney landmark opened 100 years earlier!

To illucidate my point, I will focus on 3 areas of great concern regarding the present environmental management of Centennial Park.

These are:

(1) The need for rubbish catchment technologies on lakes with drain inlets from neighbouring streets

I have been appalled by the quantity of rubbish washed into a number of Centennial Park lakes via drains from neighbouring streets whenever it rains heavily, in particular, the drain running into the 'Model Yacht Club' Pond and the two drains to the 'Fly Casting' Pond. There may be other lakes which have similar inlet drains. The quantity of rubbish - plastic bottles, straws, foam, plastic bags etc - building up amongst the lakes' vegetation and by and large hidden from the gaze of the general public, is a serious environmental issue which has a simple solution. There should be rubbish traps where these drains spill into the lakes. These rubbish traps would need to be regularly cleaned and maintained.

I have read in a 1994 edition of *Park Views* that the Trust had installed a rubbish catchment device for the Model Yacht Club Pond. However, having recently filled 15 garbage bin-sized bags with rubbish from this lake, only to see the lake full of new rubbish after the first heavy rain - as the attached photos testify - I can guarantee that this rubbish catchment device is either not working correctly or is lacking any regular maintenance.

In fact, a regular rubbish removal program is needed for all of the parklands lakes, including Kippax Lake.

(2) Elimination of the invasive South American plant *Eryngium Pandanifolium* (see photos below)

The Parklands Trust could have a major environmental disaster on its hands in the form of what is sometimes referred to as the weed known as giant sea holly, now engulfing the park's lakes and potentially the rest of the park bushland. Currently, this plant has covered the banks of Kensington Pond and much of Randwick Pond. Park volunteers have temporarily halted a major spread to the Lachlan Swamp and the

Duck and Busby ponds. However, this clearance is only temporary as the spread from overrun areas will continue apace.

Besides herbariums, the only non-South American country where this plant is widely distributed is Portugal where this plant is now classified as an invasive species see <http://invasoras.pt/en/gallery/eryngium-pandanifolium-en/> and according to the Missouri Botanical Garden database, within Australia, this plant appears to be primarily in Centennial Park and Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens. See <http://www.discoverlife.org/mp/20m?kind=Eryngium+pandanifolium>

My fear is that this plant has unwittingly been introduced to Australia as a garden exotic but has the real potential to become a major environmental pest in our waterways in the way that another South American plant Erythrina Crista-galli or cockspur coral tree has become, starting with the Botany Wetlands. I have witnessed volunteer efforts to remove this pest which had overrun an area around a stream south of Carrington Drive - between the two reservoirs - and volunteers had to return repeatedly to this area to weed the next generation of plants as the seed bank was so entrenched. In fact, I think Eryngium Pandanifolium is a more serious pest than cockspur as it can exclude other plants in its territory, creating a plant monoculture, as is happening around Kensington Pond.

Eryngium Pandanifolium should be eradicated from Centennial Park altogether and cleared areas monitored regularly so that this plant does not return, not only to protect the natural environment of Centennial Park but also to prevent another invasive weed disaster further afield.

(3) Maintenance of the natural bush areas and lakes of Centennial Park and Moore Park

(a) My observation is that whilst the public path and other major public areas are kept free of litter, all sorts of rubbish left by sports kids and spectators, park party/concert goers, vagrants, homeless, workmen/contractors, drug users etc is not being cleared from the bush area surrounding sports fields and other bush areas and lakes.

(b) Whilst parkland entrance garden beds & rose gardens are being immaculately maintained, the natural bush areas, lake banks and islands that form the backbone of the parklands are not being continually weeded of such serious invasive weeds as lantana, hackberry, african olive, camphor laurel, privet, cassia, phoenix and cocos palms, moth vine and lantern vine etc. In the long term, this is short sighted. The parklands need full time gardeners for weed management of the bush areas and islands of the park.

These parklands are a gem and I feel action in the three areas cited would help preserve what is a natural treasure for Sydney for future generations and consolidate its already growing tourist attraction value.

Furthermore, the funding model for the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust should be reviewed to ensure the long term maintenance of the parklands ecosystem. Perhaps some of the governmental generosity given to Sydney Football Stadium might be extended to the maintenance of the parklands.

Yours sincerely
Anthony Estorffe