

**Submission
No 259**

INQUIRY INTO SYDNEY STADIUMS STRATEGY

Name: Mr Jonathan Pepper

Date Received: 25 May 2018

As a long term member of the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust, a local resident and a New South Wales tax payer, I would like to register my objection to the proposed demolition and redevelopment of the Sydney Football Stadium.

I have a number of concerns regarding the proposal as follows:

1. Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust, has had responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the award winning Sydney Football Stadium (SFS) for some 30 years. If, as claimed, the state of the facility is so poor, then the Trust has been derelict in its responsibility for maintenance to ensure that the facility continues to conform with appropriate safety, access and security standards. The Trust now seeks taxpayer subsidy to meet its obligations in this regard. An appropriate comparison may be the Sydney Opera House, which is older than the SFS and has been managed and maintained in order to meet contemporary safety, access and security standards, without the need for demolition and rebuilding.
2. The proposed additional encroachment of the Trust footprint onto Moore Park in addition to the closure of Driver Avenue as a consequence of the redevelopment. Moore Park has already been severely affected by the light rail development and its use as a carpark for the Trust venues. Given the rapid development in the surrounding area, every effort should be made to maintain green space which is accessible to the entire community.
3. There has been limited, if any, community consultation on the proposed development. This would appear to contradict the Government's own policy on development and expenditure initiatives. This Inquiry is a welcome opportunity to redress that shortcoming.
4. The apparent disregard of the Government for its own criteria for major projects in relation to the cost - benefit ratio, and the Government's failure to release the strategic business case and any other pertinent information that would substantiate the case for redevelopment.
5. Given the magnitude and scope of this proposal, there does not appear to have been an appropriate planning and approval process - the announcement and development of the proposal has occurred within an extraordinarily short time frame.
6. As a longstanding member of the SCG, I am also concerned with the manner in which the Trust has conducted itself. There has been no consultation with members, and very limited information as to how members' interests will be considered and how access to facilities will be maintained while any proposed development is undertaken. I am particularly concerned about the potential conflict of interest of Trustees who have personal, and perhaps commercial, relationships with the lessees of the Entertainment Quarter, which has been identified by the Trust as a potential site for location of Member services such as the gym during the proposed redevelopment. There is no clarity regarding the extent to which NSW taxpayers may be subsidising these interests. As an SCG Member and NSW tax payer, I would hope that this issue has been considered by the Government as part of the criteria for funding the development, should it proceed.
7. In view of the magnitude of the infrastructure development needs in NSW - specifically public transport in greater Sydney, and in the Health and Education systems across the state, I believe there are higher priorities for the quantum of funds proposed for this wasteful project. If any funds are to be allocated to the Sydney Football Stadium, they should be limited renovation to meet safety and disability access standards.