

**Submission  
No 286**

## **INQUIRY INTO SYDNEY STADIUMS STRATEGY**

**Name:** Mr Paul Murphy

**Date Received:** 28 May 2018

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Dear committee,

On Friday 25 May 2018 at approximately 9:00pm I attempted to lodge this submission for consideration by the committee via the online portal at [parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://parliament.nsw.gov.au) but unfortunately the site was not working at that time in spite of advice I had received that submissions would be accepted until midnight that night. Please see screenshot attached. I trust this submission will be accepted now.

My name is Paul Murphy. I am a 42 year old married but separated father of one 6 year old boy, Miles and until recently (March 2018), was a ratepayer in Parramatta City Council.

I strongly objected to the NSW Government's decision to rebuild western Sydney Stadium (a) without any meaningful community consultation or possibly at all and (b) in a way that caused the closure of the Parramatta War Memorial Pool, which I note has been demolished.

Miles became comfortable enough swimming by himself in a shallow swimming pool in 2015 but certainly by 2016. At the time, Miles' mother and I were in a continuing married relationship and I used to take Fridays off work to spend the day bonding with him. Sometimes we would go Parramatta pool on Fridays, weather permitting, so we could spend this time with him exercising in fresh air and learning some swimming skills. It was also a significant topic of conversation between Miles and me, even when he was that young, that the pool in which he was swimming was a war memorial, a gift to the people of Parramatta in remembrance of the sacrifice of the many young men and women who died for us fighting for Australia overseas.

I was very proud to have access to (and I felt as a Parramatta ratepayer, some ownership of) such a special place to spend time with my young son. The pool also sat on or adjacent to Parramatta Park land, a place we as a family used to spend time in recreation and where Miles enjoyed soccer clinics with the Western Sydney Wanderers. The precinct (as it was) was very important to us.

I was very annoyed at the NSW Government's decision – a decision that reeked to me as a cynical land-grab – to include the crown land on which Parramatta War Memorial pool stood in the land necessary for the Western Sydney Stadium re-development. Particularly because there was little or no meaningful community consultation and that the overlap between the proposed stadium and the pool was so small. I certainly never felt that my view was being seriously considered. I attended some community meetings in opposition to the closure of the pool and the local NSW Member of Parliament Dr Geoff Lee seemed only to be able to say he would take the community's concerns to the Government but I never heard about any outcome of these discussions and I do not believe that Dr Lee presented the community's concerns to Government or if he did, that they made a difference to a decision which had already been made by the Government and would not be reversed.

Miles is a better swimmer now but he still has swimming lessons and it is closer for us to travel outside our LGA - to Cumberland Council - than to travel to Epping pool which apparently remains in the Parramatta LGA. We cannot wait for a new Parramatta CBD pool to be built for Miles to have these lessons, he needs them now. I am very angry that his pool (and mine) has been taken away from us and we need to go elsewhere.

Which also raises the point that the NSW Government did not provide funding for a replacement pool in Parramatta when the War Memorial Pool's closure was announced. I note that sufficient funds have still not been announced but I fully expect that Geoff Lee will announce sufficient funding for the replacement pool in the lead up to the 2019 state election in the next 10 months, a cynical, grubby move prioritising his re-election over my son's quality of life and one well beneath the dignity of the office of the Member for Parramatta. I often hear politicians say the people of Parramatta deserve better. We certainly deserve better than this.

In the times that I attended rugby league or soccer matches at the old Parramatta stadium, there was always large swathes of empty seats so I also dispute the evidence of need to increase the size of the Stadium to one which would require demolition of the pool and I would encourage the committee to look closely at that evidence.

I believe this decision has significantly decreased the quality of life that I and my family used to enjoy in Parramatta prior to this decision, and I would encourage those investigating the stadium strategy to consider the effect of this very poor, cynical decision on the lives of real men, women and children.

I am available to talk about this matter further if you wish. Please call me on \_\_\_\_\_ or email \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for considering my submission.

Paul Murphy JP 217403(NSW), BA Comm (Soc. Inq.)/LLB (UTS), Grad. Cert. Migration Law (ANU)