

**Submission
No 76**

**INQUIRY INTO GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST
BILL 2021**

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I would like senate committee members to consider in their deliberations that people who live in urban environments want access to places that connect them to the natural environment. This means trees, streams, rocks, meadows, native bush, a diversity of birds and other wildlife. People I talk to want places where they don't feel the pressure of noisy, frenetic cafe's, where a picnic is an event for family and friends and the environment is not over-engineered with a million paths that cyclists tend to dominate leaving pedestrians on edge.

I would like each of the five major parklands in Sydney to have its own Trust operating against a philosophy and set of principles with safeguards in place to prevent attempts to override those principles. The Callan Park (special provisions) Act 2002 has served Callan Park well in preventing commercialisation to date and I suggest similar legislation be put in place to protect the other major Sydney Parklands. The recent attempt by DPIE to allow commercialisation and sidelining of the council DA process within the Greater Sydney Parklands to me demonstrated either appalling naivety about how future governments could abuse the Parklands or a strategic move for their own future plans. We have witnessed the carve off of open space at Parramatta Park for the swimming pool demolished in 2017 to make way for a football stadium. Sydney Parklands should be just that, parklands, not 'available' space that can be taken for other purposes.

The recent attempt by DPIE to construct a giant mound and plaza type design on Callan Parks foreshore is a good example of what happens when there is not a Trust established to ensure principles are followed and community consultation is genuine rather than an engineered exercise designed specifically to achieve a predetermined outcome. I participated in the Callan Park Waterfront Green consultations conducted under DPIE. In this process, by way of example, there was no option for me to say 'no I don't want a toilet block on the foreshore I want it back near the carpark'. The option I was given was 'would you like a flat roof or a peaked roof on the toilet block'. I was not asked whether a large constructed mound was a good idea - in fact the mound was only marginally represented in the design consultants public drawings and a fair amount of research by dedicated community members was required to obtain its dimensions and impact on the natural topography of the foreshore.

I would like to see the result of this Senate Inquiry to be a rejection of the Greater Sydney Parklands Bill and instead a recommendation made that a process commence that establishes Local Trusts with clear reference to the individual qualities of each Parkland and a vision to keep our Parklands intact for the public's amenity.

With particular reference to the unique circumstances of Callan Park there is a need to balance its natural environment (open meadows, copses of trees, established gardens, bushland and wooded embankments) with its history as a psychiatric hospital. Sadly successive governments have allowed many of the heritage and serviceable hospital buildings to deteriorate. The buildings that have not deteriorated are those few that have been tenanted such as the NSW Writers Centre and the Kirkbride Block. I recommend that a plan for the majority of buildings to be tenanted by needed NFP community organisations under the requirements of the existing

Callan Park (special provisions) Act 2002 be immediately developed. The community has waited far too long for successive governments to address the potential of these vacated buildings.

Government cannot expect to make money out of our Parklands. Government should be concerned with protecting these precious spaces for the good of the community and enabling and supporting community based enterprises to value add to these public amenities.