

**Submission  
No 83**

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

**Organisation:** Venues NSW  
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The Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC  
Chair, Legislative Council Select Committee  
Greater Sydney Parklands Bill 2021

**Submission to the Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Bill 2021**

Dear Mr Borsak,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Select Committee about the Draft Greater Sydney Parklands Bill 2021 and the implications for the Sydney Cricket Ground and new Sydney Football Stadium (opening in late 2022).

Today, our venues at Moore Park continue a legacy that began in 1851 when soldiers from nearby Victoria Barracks established a cricket ground and gardens, known around the world today as the SCG. When the new SFS opens this year, it will be the third sister venue to the SCG, following the Sydney Sports Ground (established 1903) and the former SFS (1988).

The SCG precinct is surrounded by some of Sydney's oldest and most sought-after neighbourhoods, which will benefit from the significant increase to public open space and vastly improved community facilities that will come with the opening of the SFS.

Venues NSW is a strong and consistent advocate for improved accessibility to the precincts it manages, including Moore Park where there is a particular focus on public, green and active transport to support the vibrant business communities nearby the SCG and SFS. Venues NSW takes a multi-modal, whole of precinct approach to transport planning for major events with the aim of making our venues easier to get to and easier to get home.

Venues NSW has increased its debt facility to fund a 1500-space multi-level carpark and village precinct that will alleviate some of the carparking shortfall proposed in the Draft Bill. The development will turn the former bitumen MP1 carpark into a revitalised public and recreational space.

This is a game-changing investment in the precinct, moving cars from on-grass carparks and into structured sites, with a coordinated and multi-agency planning overlay to increase traffic flows on ingress and egress, thereby limiting the traffic impacts associated with drawing tens of thousands of Sydneysiders to the public entertainment venues at Moore Park.

The Draft Bill has significant implications for Venues NSW's sport and entertainment partners at Moore Park given the immediate and proposed future reduction of accessibility to the precinct for visitors from Greater Sydney and beyond.

## 1. Summary

Schedule 5 of the Greater Sydney Parklands Bill 2021 amends the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act, proposing that all current on-grass parking areas at Moore Park East are reclassified as non-parking areas. Removal of all on-grass parking from 31 December 2023, without the provision of a like-for-like carparking alternative, will leave the Moore Park precinct with 1,100 fewer carparking spaces and create a significant barrier to access for many NSW residents, particularly those from south and western Sydney, and regional areas.

Private vehicle usage represents a reliable, efficient and consistent mode of transport to the SCG precinct for events and remains the most-used mode of travel (34.9 per cent-65.9 per cent depending on event). Vehicles carry an average of nearly three people to events, making up an average of 43.7 per cent of total attendees.

Parking is available in structured dispersed carparks throughout the precinct, providing reliable and resilient revenue streams for precinct partners, including Greater Sydney Parklands and Sydney Boys and Girls high schools. While the geographic origin of attendees varies drastically between differing sports and events, the attendees using these carparks come from all over Greater Sydney.

Event start times have a significant influence on fan travel behaviour, with private vehicle usage increasing for night-time matches and fixtures preferred by sports broadcasters. Particularly at night, private vehicle usage remains the most popular mode of transport for those attending the Moore Park precinct – especially for young families, the elderly and those with accessibility needs. Similarly, family-friendly fixtures have strong private vehicle usage percentages, recognising that young families are reticent to take multi-stop journeys on public transport.

A reduction of carparking spaces below what is currently available across the precinct will be a significant barrier to many residents which will, in turn, impact venue patronage and the NSW Government's investment and operation of the Sydney Football Stadium, Sydney Cricket Ground, the Entertainment Quarter, and the Hordern Pavilion – as well as affecting the many small businesses that provide goods and services to these facilities.

Combined, these sporting and entertainment facilities are major contributors to the NSW visitor economy and, as such, any barriers to their operation and accessibility will be felt far beyond the Moore Park precinct. When major events are held at the SCG and SFS, up to 35 per cent of event attendees visit from interstate and overseas and choose to stay in the CBD's hotel network, and shop and dine in the nearby business communities.

Venues NSW has been a long-term supporter of the return of green space to the community but does not support doing so without provision of viable transport and accessibility alternatives and collaboration to provide the best outcomes for NSW.

Precinct public transport infrastructure has benefited from significant Government investment and the cost of travel is included in ticket pricing by home teams and codes with varying results. The NSW Waratahs (rugby union) and Sydney FC (soccer/football) offer integrated ticketing to their customers yet have the lowest public transport usage pattern of all fan groups.

At its peak, public transport services 20.9 per cent of event attendees. Ride share and taxis service up to 25 per cent of attendees, with a peak of 22 per cent travelling to the precinct on foot or by other active methods.

While the CBD and South East Light Rail is a material improvement to public transport, there will always be a need to accommodate private vehicles in the SCG precinct. Removing convenience in the form of structured parking facilities, and thereby asking people to travel for longer and/or include another leg in their travel journey, will see people attend less frequently or not at all. The Draft Bill's proposed closure of on-grass event day parking in December 2023 without providing viable alternatives has significant negative implications for the NSW Government's \$828m public infrastructure investment in the new SFS, as well as the SCG.

## **2. Economic Context and Opportunity**

The live entertainment industry, which includes major sport, contributes \$36.5bn in direct economic benefit to the Australian economy, as well as \$16.7bn in indirect contribution. It also supports an estimated 122,647 jobs around Australia.

Major sporting, entertainment and cultural events held at the Moore Park Precinct such as the Mardi Gras, mega concerts or international sporting fixtures drive significant direct and indirect contribution to Sydney and the wider-NSW. Direct contribution can be best defined as the expenditure of a live entertainment attendee on tickets, transport, food and beverages, merchandise and accommodation. Indirect contribution can be best defined as the wages earned by venue/sport/media/ticketing and other staff, taxi and rideshare drivers, bar and hotel staff in surrounding areas. Further, profits from events are then spent in the economy - second and third-round spending, creating indirect economic contribution.

Major events (such as the SCG's 2019 U2 concert) and major professional sport in Australia contribute \$16.5bn in direct and indirect contribution, \$7.6bn in value add, and support more than 56,000 Australian jobs.

Venues NSW has adopted a coordinated approach to event procurement with current and potential partners to develop and grow attendance at existing events and partner on attracting more major events to help drive economic growth. We continue to work closely with our NSW Government partner agency, Destination NSW, to secure long-term marquee content.

## **3. Background of On-Grass Parking**

On-grass carparking at Moore Park has been taking place since Sir Donald Bradman was playing at the Sydney Cricket Ground – with the parklands providing equitable access to residents from Greater Sydney and beyond to attend sporting and entertainment events.

On-grass parking has reduced over time, with two areas now used on approximately 65 event days per year. These are EP2, close to Moore Park Road and EP3, close to Lang Road in the south – forming only a fraction of the parklands space managed by Greater Sydney Parklands. The on-grass areas are supplemented by other options, which are outlined below. The two on-grass areas serve distinctly different metropolitan residential areas. EP2 is easily accessible from the CBD and via the Eastern Distributor for residents from Sydney's north and north-west, while EP3 is preferred by attendees from Sydney's south and west.

Venues NSW has long recognised the value of green space and public domain surrounding the SCG precinct and has taken active steps over the years to ensure green space in the wider Moore Park precinct is available for public use.

The 1988 opening of the Sydney Football Stadium allowed the former SCG Trust to return half a hectare of parkland to Moore Park East. This remains the first and only time that the land of the

Sydney Common has increased since it was set aside in 1811 as part of Governor Macquarie's bequest.

The current SFS redevelopment will make more public open space available to nearby residents by removing the 'black gates' that formerly surrounded the SCG precinct. When the new stadium opens this year, the public plazas will provide relaxation areas, public sporting and exercise equipment and facilities and a public art project.

The former SCG Trust is responsible for the sole major removals of carparking from Moore Park East via the construction of the Sydney Swans and Sydney Roosters training fields. The former SCGT funded the construction of the fields, thereby removing thousands of parking spots used by visitors to the precinct and providing vastly improved public green space.

Prior to being developed as a shared community and elite training field, the Roosters field was a gravel pit. The Sydney Swans training field was constructed in the early 2000s and following SCGT- and NSW Government-funded upgrade works in 2018, is a full-size AFL field, capable of hosting elite level matches including AFLW fixtures.

#### **4. Integrated ground transport planning**

Recent improvements in transport planning have made the Moore Park precinct more accessible for all visitors, whether for major events or for the many other forms of recreation. Maintaining accessibility and capacity for all forms of transport is important to support the continued equitable use of the Moore Park precinct for Greater Sydney and beyond.

The proposed masterplan for EQ, as well as the recently announced increased film-related activity at Disney's Fox Studios, will draw more activity and people to the Moore Park precinct, driving up demand for improved transport, connectivity, and accessibility solutions.

To fully unlock the economic potential of the precinct and maximise community benefits and usage, precinct-wide thinking and integrated solutions are required. This must include consideration for users from all over Greater Sydney. Wayfinding, lighting, signage and accessibility must be considered by all landowners and stakeholders to provide the best outcomes for the parklands, for visitors and the local business and residential communities.

Moore Park will benefit from a coordinated, whole of Government approach to precinct and ground transport planning. This differs from the approach used in preparation of the Draft Bill. The intention to remove all on-grass parking without providing viable alternatives was only made public when the Bill was read in Parliament.

The proposed reduction of parking and accessibility in the precinct locks out huge swathes of Sydneysiders from using the precinct, just as the NSW Government opens the new SFS. The closure of the southern on-grass carpark, closest to the Hordern Pavilion and known as EP3, has a particular impact on patrons from the south and west of Sydney.

Venues NSW's Moore Park sports partners have expressed concern about the proposed changes to parking, including the immediate decision to remove some 750 parking spaces (in the upper Kippax part of EP2 opposite the SFS) for the 2021-22 summer of cricket and the busy football seasons that follow. The Draft Bill's proposal to further remove 1100 spaces from the precinct in December 2023 goes against previous undertakings to the sports by various Ministers. Like our

sports partners, Venues NSW also supports the gradual phasing out of on-grass parking once space-for-space alternatives are provided.

## 5. Village Precinct and Multilevel Carpark

The development of a village precinct and multilevel carpark as part of the wider SFS redevelopment is both a response to the progressive removal of on-grass parking as identified in the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust's Moore Park Master Plan 2040 and an opportunity to create a vibrant public precinct linking users through culture, entertainment, fitness and lifestyle offerings, further enhancing the community's well-being.

The village precinct will be funded by Venues NSW. It will concentrate parking into structure, removing it from the on-grass event day carpark at the northern end of the precinct. This follows significant prior Venues NSW and former SCGT investment in facilities in Moore Park that have resulted in reduction of on-grass event day parking capacity, as outlined elsewhere in this submission.

The village precinct project has been designed to accommodate the transfer of 1000 on-grass parking spaces from Kippax Lake, known as Event Parking 2 (EP2). The project, however, **does not** offset the proposed removal of a further 1,100 spots on the grass opposite the Hordern Pavilion, known as Event Parking 3 (EP3).

The village precinct development allows the transition of the on-grass carparking at EP2 upon completion of the development. The removal of EP3 parking was not contemplated or proposed as part of the precinct village proposal.

The following table outlines the current and future parking capacities in the precinct, taking into account the Draft Bill's proposed closure of EP3.

		CAPACITY		
CARPARK	TYPE	As per current SFS approval SSD 9835	On SFS opening	With Village Precinct and Carpark
<b>MP1</b>	Permanent	540	0	1500
<b>EP2</b>	Event parking (on-grass)	1000	350	0
<b>EP3</b>	Event parking (on-grass)	1100	1100	0 (Closure proposed in Draft Bill)
<b>High schools</b>	Event parking	750	750	750
<b>Golf club</b>	Permanent	100	100	100
<b>EQ</b>	Permanent	2000	2000	2000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5490</b>	<b>4300</b>	<b>4350</b>

As previously outlined, the closure of EP3 without viable alternatives results in a significant reduction in accessibility to the precinct that will particularly affect visitors from Sydney's south and west. EP3 is situated in the south-west corner of Moore Park East, connected to and easily accessed from M1 northbound and M5 east, as well as WestConnex M8, the \$16.8bn NSW Government infrastructure program that is transforming the way our city travels.

## **6. Where the Fans Come From**

The ability to drive and park at the Moore Park precinct, combined with improvements to public transport, particularly the light rail, have made the precinct accessible to all NSW residents.

## 5.1. Western Sydney

In 2016, the former SCG Trust commissioned Repucom to undertake a survey of where Sydney sports fans reside and their access to Sydney's major stadiums. The study was based on 10,000 Australians and tracked their interest in rugby league, rugby union, Australian Rules football and football.

The study split Sydney into four regions and the below table shows where sporting fans live:

Region	Fans	% of all fans
South & South West	1,133,000	23%
West	1,359,300	27%
North	770,500	15%
Central	1,736,000	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,998,800</b>	

The study went into more detail about where fans came from that attended Sydney's two major stadia, the SFS at Moore Park and Stadium Australia at Sydney Olympic Park. This question was asked during the winter football season.

Region	SFS	SA
South & South West	179,910	198,633
West	293,816	272,549
North	102,673	102,900
Central	424,429	408,265
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000,828</b>	<b>982,347</b>

This research showed that more sporting fans, and particularly fans from the west, attended the former SFS at Moore Park than Stadium Australia at Sydney Olympic Park. It is also worth noting this survey did not consider attendance at the SCG nor Sydney Swans home matches, which would further boost the numbers in the SCG precinct.

Further surveys were undertaken during 2018 by Infrastructure NSW into the travel habits of fans attending the Moore Park precinct.

The research found that private vehicle usage was a reliable and consistent mode of transport with usage rates between 35 per cent and 65 per cent per event. Similarly, the percentage of fans travelling to the Moore Park precinct from western Sydney and regional NSW ranged from 30 per cent to over 60 per cent.



## 7. Public Transport Access

While public transport access to the Moore Park precinct has improved with the introduction of light rail and dedicated bus lanes, there are still limitations that these options have not yet resolved. For young families, western Sydney and regional NSW residents, elderly and those with accessibility needs, public transport is not always convenient – particularly for night-time sporting and entertainment events. With the NSW Government’s investment in WestConnex and extensive upgrades to the state’s highways, private vehicle usage is often faster and more convenient.

### 6.1 Travel Times

A family from Bringelly in western Sydney can spend 55 mins driving to Moore Park or take 3hr 1min on two buses to Glenfield Station, catching a train to Central and taking the light rail to Moore Park.

A wheelchair-bound resident of Doonside can drive to the Sydney Cricket Ground in 41mins via the M2 (with tolls), 52mins via the M4 (toll-free) or 1hrs 36mins on public transport via Blacktown station because Doonside station is only accessible by stairs. Train station access also poses a barrier to young families and the elderly.

For regional residents, driving is an invariably faster way to access the Moore Park precinct. Public transport options can add more than an hour each-way to a trip. For regional residents of limited mobility, not all TrainLink Regional and Intercity trains are accessible.

### 7.2 Modal split for capacity events

The CBD and South East Light Rail has introduced new public transport network capacity to the SCG precinct. It also provides the leverage and opportunity to advocate for changed customer behaviours and increased public transport usage. It is important to note that the light rail provides a significant impact to people movements, but it does not act as a complete public transport solution for the precinct. To clear a capacity crowd at either the SCG or SFS (attendance 46,000+) in one hour, the modal split is:

- |                                      |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| • Buses (60 pax per bus)             | 6,120  |
| • Light rail at ‘high’ capacity      | 10,800 |
| • Private vehicles (2.5 pax per car) | 11,550 |
| • Ride share/taxi                    | 6,750  |
| • Walking                            | 9,000  |
| • Other                              | 1,780  |

Further, the suggestion that a ‘hubbed’ or dispersed parking model would solve the capacity issues in the SCG precinct have been proven incorrect in past events. Previous trials of park and ride solutions at Royal Randwick have been unsuccessful. At a 2018 event day double header, which drew nearly 80,000 people to the SCG and former SFS at the same time, only four vehicles parked at Royal Randwick. Venues NSW trialled ‘hubbed’ parking for the 2022 New Year’s Test in partnership with the Australian Turf Club. No vehicles parked at the site.

## **7. Precinct Patronage/ Underutilisation**

Sufficient precinct carparking is critical to the needs of the Moore Park sporting codes and clubs. Availability of sufficient carparking space is a major driver for ensuring strong game-day attendance, and therefore a significant factor in the successful operation of the Sydney Football Stadium.

Venues NSW funds the ongoing maintenance and capital works programs at the SFS and SCG on revenue derived from food and beverage sales. Apart from recent government investment in major capital works projects, the SCG and SFS have been self-sustaining public facilities.

Clubs and codes have been a strong advocate for Government to deliver suitable carparking facilities within the precinct as the existing shortfall is placing downward pressure on visitation. To meet an attendance threshold, it is critical that carparking capacity of 1,100 on EP3 is maintained or a like-for-like carparking alternative is developed within the precinct.

## **8. Recommendation**

The Committee should:

- Ensure that public facilities in NSW remain as accessible as possible to all residents, rather than allowing legislation to create barriers to usage and attendance;
- Consider strong direction for Venues NSW, Greater Sydney Parklands, Transport for NSW and other key stakeholders to work on a coordinated and whole-of-government approach to ground transport planning for the Moore Park precinct, as well as Sydney's other major sport and entertainment precincts at Parramatta and Sydney Olympic Park;
- Propose that the EP3 carpark should continue to be available until a like-for-like carparking solution is in place within reasonable proximity to the Hordern Pavilion, EQ, SCG and SFS.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's investigations. Venues NSW CEO, Kerrie Mather, is available to appear at the Public Inquiry should you and your colleagues wish.

Yours sincerely,

**PHILLIP HEADS**  
**Group General Manager**  
**Communications, Heritage and Community**