

**Submission  
No 84**

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

**Organisation:** Callan Park Bushcare Inc.

**Date Received:** 15 January 2022

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Callan Park Bushcare CPB) is an incorporated body comprised of volunteers who have been undertaking native bush regeneration for upwards of 15 years on a two hectare area above the King George Oval on the north-eastern edge of Callan Park. The site which was once full of rubbish is now thriving bush land with diverse flora of local provenance providing habitat for birds, lizards, possums, spiders and insects.

CPB is opposed to the Greater Sydney Parklands (GSP) Trust Bill as it allows the potential for our parklands to be over developed and over engineered. In urban settings parklands should be places for recreation where people can enjoy the natural environment. Like other public amenities parklands should be properly funded and protected. They afford stress reduction, providing mental, physical and spiritual health benefits.

Parklands should never be treated as empty spaces for governments to take when it suits them. The allocation of a section of Parramatta park for the relocation of the Parramatta swimming pool (displaced for the building of a football stadium) is a good example of current government attitudes towards parklands as 'empty space' for the taking and the GSP Trust Bill does nothing to disallow this kind of development. An example of over-engineering is the recent attempt by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to foist a completely inappropriate foreshore design on Callan Park comprised of dissecting paths and a large capped dirt mound, in stark contradiction to its heritage topography of gently sloping meadow to the water. If the GSP Trust Bill was currently in place the Minister could have implemented this foreshore design without the Council DA process which affords community and heritage views to be considered. The highly cynical consultation process that was undertaken by DPIE downplayed the dimensions of the mound and failed to include it in any meaningful way in publicly accessible diagrams. Under the proposed legislation community views would have had no impact on the design as the Minister of the day could have fast tracked it to implementation.

Parklands are a very precious resource for local populations. They should be managed by their own individual Trusts guided by agreed principles. It is unsatisfactory to establish one Trust over the five parks currently being targeted under the GSP Trust Bill. Each park is unique with specific historical and environmental profiles and potentials. The public has very little faith in the proffered local community consultation committees which can be disregarded and dispensed with under the proposed legislation.

CPB can see no benefits to the GSP Trust Bill. It appears to allow for increased commercialisation and development to raise funds for the parklands but in doing so is likely to greatly reduce the role of parklands as places where people can escape the white noise and concrete of the urban environment. It is irresponsible to allow the passage of a Bill that provides so few safeguards against over development of our parklands into the future. As climate change increases parklands will become more and more important. CPB believes governments should be finding more areas that can be regenerated to green spaces within our urban landscapes to mitigate the worst of global warming given current government commitment to renewable energy sources is progressing at a snail's pace. Finally it is important to note that the current Covid pandemic has seen people flock to our parklands as never before. Whatever the future brings we need to protect and increase our green spaces in the Greater Sydney area. CPB would like to see legislation that achieves that outcome. The GSP Trust Bill in its current form threatens rather than protects our Parklands.