

**Submission
No 86**

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

Organisation: NSW Rugby Union

Date Received: 14 January 2022



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Select Committee on the
Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Select Committee Members

Re: Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021

Established in 1874, NSW Rugby Union is Australia's oldest Provincial Union. It is only preceded only by the Rugby Unions of England (1871) and Scotland (1872) in the Northern Hemisphere. Rugby has always been connected with the Moore Park Precinct with rugby union being the first obtain permission to play on Moore Park at some point between 1870 and 1873. The NSW Waratahs, our professional rugby team has been a proud tenant of the Moore Park precinct having played games at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Sydney Football Stadium when it opened in 1998. Our players, members, fans and corporate partners are very excited to be returning to the new Sydney Football Stadium at the beginning of our Super Rugby Competition in February 2023 after being displaced for four (4) years.

Our Members and fans enjoy Moore Park because of its centrality, and quality event experience. As you are aware, the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021* in its current iteration makes parking on grass at Upper Kippax Lake (EP2) in Moore Park illegal, while also prohibiting parking on grass throughout Moore Park East from 31 December 2023.

In the case of the amalgamation of the parklands across Greater Sydney and subsequent *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021*, NSW Rugby request the Select Committee ensure that the *Bill* has no unintended consequences for the Members and fans of rugby union – many of which travel extensively from across not only Metropolitan Sydney, but also from regional NSW to attend matches at Moore Park.

NSW Rugby and The Waratahs are supportive of the phased removal of car parking from greenspace, as per the Moore Park Masterplan 2040, beginning with Upper Kippax but emphasise it is crucially important to our many thousands of fans who travel far and wide to attend games, that there is no net loss of parking capacity in the broader Moore Park precinct. The prohibition of on grass parking on the lower Kippax area (EP3) from 31 December 2023 results in a 43% reduction of available car parks immediately adjacent to the stadium. We recognise that there has been considerable infrastructure developed with the Light Rail – but this transport option is of little or no use to rectify the accessibility issue for many patrons caused by removing parking from the grass directly adjacent to the stadium.

NSW Rugby Union annually survey our Members and Fans. When asked what *their primary mode of transport to attend games* – 70% state they prefer to 'drive my own car'. In addition, our Members and Fans believe 'ease of parking' is the number one factor when driving to matches, 61% of respondents who drive typically park at EP2, 15% at EP3 and only 10% at EQ when playing at the old Sydney Football Stadium.

The high use of private vehicle transport correlates with the composition of our fans and public transport versus private vehicle travel time to the SFS from their homes. The weighty preference to private vehicle usage for our Members and fans is linked to it being quicker, easier and perceived to be safer for their family than catching multiple modes of public transport, particularly when our matches have late evening kick offs and even later finishing times. The current event day parking in the Moore Park precinct, EP2 and EP3 is within close proximity to both the Sydney Cricket Ground and the SFS creating convenient access options for families with small children including those with prams, as well as a large subset of our patrons with mobility and accessibility issues.

Through our tenancy at the Sydney Cricket Ground, as part of our displacement period stadia circuit, NSW Rugby have experienced firsthand the efficiencies created through previous amalgamations of government entities namely the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust and the former Venues NSW to the Venues NSW of today and understand the requirement for new governance legislation to be formulated in response to such changes.

Greater Sydney Parklands may point to the Venues NSW underground car park and shared community and outdoor recreation project as the solution for car parking in the Moore Park precinct however this infrastructure merely reinstates the off-grass car parking originally on Venues NSW land, commonly referred to MP1, which was disrupted by the SFS development, and provides a like for like capacity solution for the on grass car parking situated adjacent to the SFS site – upper Kippax or EP2 which NSW Rugby and The Waratahs through the vehicle of Alliance of Moore Park Sports (AMPS) have already agreed to no longer use as event day parking once this project is delivered. It does not account for the 43% loss of available car parks the Moore Park precinct would endure if car parking on EP3 was to be removed without a mutually beneficial and practical solution being formulated and delivered in totality beforehand.

NSW Rugby Union request the Select Committee move to remove from the *Bill* any reference to parking on Moore Park East greenspace being an offence or prohibited activity to ensure no unintended consequence/s and/or detrimental impact to the operation of the Moore Park stadia and event day experience occurs.

NSW Rugby Union is committed to actively working with Government, Transport for NSW, parkland authorities, the Entertainment Quarter and the local community to ensure that any future vision for Greater Sydney Parklands is complimentary to the effective utilisation and accessibility of the NSW Government's two world-class stadiums with mutually beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders.

NSW Rugby believe a mutually beneficial solution can be obtained through considered, consultative discussions between all entities and should not be constrained and/or spearheaded through parameters dictated by a *Bill* that is intended to provide governance direction for a newly formed entity.

I have discussed this issue with our National Body, Rugby Australia who also play Test Matches out of Moore Park and have their HQ based directly next to the Sydney Football Stadium. Rugby Australia is supportive of the NSW Rugby submission, with the CEO Andy Marinos, and Anthony French, Rugby World Cup Bid Executive Director cc-ed into this correspondence.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and look forward to working with the Greater Sydney Parklands to find a mutually beneficial solution to car parking in Moore Park independent of the *Bill*.

Yours sincerely

PAUL DOORN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NSW RUGBY & NSW WARATAHS

CC

Andy Marinos, CEO, Rugby Australia

Anthony French, Rugby World Cup Bid Executive Director, Rugby Australia