

**Submission
No 100**

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

Name: Ms Jo Hobson
Date Received: 12 January 2022

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

I am very critical of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust (GSPT) 2021.

I am concerned that the NSW government wants to commercialise our public parks and at the same time reduce community consultation and input.

IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL COUNCILS AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

I support the opposition to this bill put forward by the Inner West Council, the Friends of Callan Park, the Alliance for Public Parklands and other community and stakeholder groups.

I have been a member of the Friends of Callan Park for many years and it has been the support of local Councils and community groups that has proven crucial in protecting Callan Park and other green spaces from commercial development ventures.

The community needs to have a say in what they consider is best for their local area and Council plays an important role in listening and responding to community needs.

Councils provide the relevant controls to exclude activities that would, or could have, a negative impact on parklands, or are incompatible with Council Plans that have been developed in consultation with local residents.

Ensuring consent via a local council is crucial because it gives assurance to the community that the voice of the community is being heard.

CREATION OF TRUSTS FOR EACH OF THE PARKLANDS:

I am concerned that the community trustee boards in the Bill are essentially advisory bodies at the mercy of the GSPT board who can appoint the members and dismiss members or dissolve boards without any grounds.

This needs to be rectified. The community needs to have assurance that the government is listening to community members who have local knowledge about each park and that their position on the board is secure and not at the whim of the GSPT board.

The best solution is to restore or create Trusts for each of the parklands with many accountable local representatives on the Trust boards.

GOVERNMENT NEEDS FUND OUR PARKS NOT MAKING MONEY OUT OF THEM:

There is no mention in the Bill of supplying adequate funding for the parklands. Rather it is stated that the Trust will be tasked with 'facilitating business activities and facilities within the GSPT estate to maintain and improve the parklands'.

It is of great concern that the government is working towards reducing our green spaces for commercialisation and business hubs.

The government needs to be improving our parks NOT reducing green space for business ventures. The community and our native wildlife need larger and cooler parks not smaller. For example, on very hot days in my local Petersham Park there are no bird songs or movement in the trees anymore just silence. A few decades ago there used to be small birds and even sparrows darting about in summer but not any more. The government needs to be improving our parks and preparing them for the hot summers ahead. Parks need to have larger, denser areas to provide cool habitats for birds, reptiles and other wildlife.

PROVIDING PARKS FOR THE COMMUNITY IS A GOVERNMENT SERVICE:

Parks like hospitals, schools and roads are a public good and should be funded and serviced by general taxation revenue. The GSPT Bill appears to be suggesting that parks need to be self-funding.

Why is the government wanting to commercialise our parklands at the very time when our parklands need to be improved for the ongoing health of the community and wildlife. Why!

Yours sincerely

Jo Hobson