Submission No 102

INQUIRY INTO GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST BILL 2021

Name: Ms Dinah McClelland

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I would to see this Bill blocked by the committee, as it has no benefit for the people of Sydney. Having parks under one umbrella group makes them easy to administer from a bureaucratic point of view but this model ultimately benefits no-one else.

We pay taxes to our governments for basic services. The provision and maintenance of parks is one of those services.

The Greater Sydney Parklands, one-size-fits-all model will serve neither the parks or their communities. The current GSP board has no connection or knowledge of the history, biodiverstity and community engagement involved in most of the parks that will potentially fall under it's jurisdiction. Furthermore the proposed Bill allows for negligible community engagement. The GSP can sack a community panel if they so choose.

This bill proposes to put Centennial Parklands, Callan Park, Parramatta Park and Western Sydney Parklands (incorporating Fernhill Estate) under one management group with ultimate power at the hands of the Minister. Depending on the Minister's priorities and the politics of the day, this could potentially allow carving up of parklands for other purposes, should the Minister deem it necessary.

Parks must have permanent protection as green open spaces for recreation and mental health, as COVID has made only too plain.

Each of these parks has a unique history of which the current board of the GSP has no appreciation or knowledge.

I agree with the Alliance for Public Parklands model, that each park should have its own Trust Act, (as Callan Park already does). Each trust should be administered by a community representatives, Aboriginal custodians, those with expertise in biodiversity, heritage and park management and representatives of the local council. A group like this would have the park's best interests at heart,

due to their knowledge and long-term involvement.

Greater Sydney Parkland's role should be to ensure the above parks have the funds they need to be maintained for the community and that is all.

I believe that this Bill was been hastily written and is full of holes that disenfranchise the public and allow the GSP and the Minister to do whatever they want with the above group of parks. The entire model for the GSP to administer and have jurisdiction over these parks is flawed. The Bill proposing this model leaves the parks open to exploitation without any safeguards and leave the various communities powerless and voiceless.

I would ask that the committee dismiss this Bill.