

**Submission
No 113**

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

Name: Brad Norington

Date Received: 16 January 2022

Sunday 16 January 2022

Dear Select Committee Members,

Re: Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill.

I am writing to express firm opposition to any commercialisation of our public parks as envisaged in the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill which could change their character and purpose. I ask that you recommend this legislation not proceed, or be redrafted in such a way that the status quo future of our parklands is guaranteed.

The park at most risk of downgrading in status through commercialisation at this point in time is Callan Park, which is landmark, unique heritage parkland and public space in Sydney's inner west and close to where I live.

My family members are long-time local residents and regularly use this park for exercise and recreation - to the benefit of our health and as a practical counter to the problems of high-density living, as currently permitted under Covid regulations. Many, many thousands of people from our electorate, and others, do so as well.

It would be a travesty to turn this and other parkland – currently prime community space – into some sort of profit making machine, or somehow tie its maintenance to funds that might be raised from treating this space as a for-profit enterprise.

In fact, this bill would seem to jeopardise the protection of this parkland and it would seem totally at odds with the purpose of all parkland if legislation were to permit potential development such as high-rise living apartments, business space and other such ventures.

If this government values parkland and wants to be consistent with that policy, then it cannot allow the potential for backdoor development through the granting of long-term leases. Nor should the minister responsible for such parks have the power to make decisions that override their purpose as community space and ignore heritage regulations on a whim.

Instead of downgrading the status of Callan Park, and potentially others as the Sydney Parklands Trust Bill would seem to do, I urge you to support a strengthening of the status quo, not downgrade it.

Please guarantee the future for our parks. Their importance cannot be stressed highly enough when the community is struggling to remain safe and maintain good mental health in these times of Covid.

The value of Callan Park and others in our city is invaluable. They should not be a plaything for self-centred developers or governments looking to squeeze parks in a quest for a buck.

Yours sincerely,

Brad Norington