

Submission
No 115

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 16 January 2022

Partially
Confidential

I am opposed to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill for the following reasons:

Communities in Greater Sydney need a parklands planning process and support system that will help us to meet the many challenges we face from rising temperatures, increasing numbers of extreme weather events, loss of trees to massive tollways and rapid population growth in poorly designed housing estates. It is clear to me that this Bill fails to address any of these serious challenges.

Western Sydney residents have been worst hit by the challenges, which are making the maintenance of open spaces and the provision of diverse natural environments in Western Sydney Parklands critical. I oppose the commercialization of the Parklands and support their enhancement as community resources and sites for restoring tree cover and biodiversity.

I particularly object to yet another undermining by the NSW government of the authority and responsibility of local councils contained in this Bill. Decision-making about parklands needs to rest with local communities, and councils are best placed to facilitate consultations and participation. Open processes involving communities with independent expert advisors produce good outcomes.

The Bill proposes centralizing control of parklands with government Ministers, their departments and committees made up of people they appoint. I believe that the public interest would be served by local control of our major parklands through the establishment of separate trusts which would have to include representation of traditional custodians of the parkland, local residents and park users. Input from the Heritage Council would also be important.

Many communities desperately need the government to invest in more parklands, and I note there is provision in the Bill for the Trust to establish more parklands. Urgent action is needed on this to reserve areas for future parklands because of the enormous competition for land throughout Greater Sydney.

While I support the Trust acquiring appropriate land for parklands I object to there being any takeovers of parks currently controlled by Councils.

Existing parklands should not be sold or transferred for use for road developments or public or private institutions.

Large commercial developments on our parklands should be ruled out. Small developments like kiosks and cafes should be permitted, but no long term leases are necessary