

**Submission  
No 146**

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

**Name:** Ms Hilary Bell  
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I am very concerned by the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill, and the danger it poses to our parklands.

If there was ever any doubt about the importance of public green spaces, COVID-19 has made it abundantly clear. Parks are crucial for mental health, physical exercise, as places to safely socialise, to sustain wildlife, to let children and dogs experience freedom. Rather than limiting their use by the public, this government should be creating more of them.

It is especially galling that the government expects parks to generate revenue. Like the arts, like health and education, our green spaces are a public good and it is the duty of government to support them rather than commercialise them.

Instead, what we need is a guarantee of adequate funding from the NSW Government to maintain and protect our parks.

There is a danger that this bill will allow for the surrender of public lands, and leases of up to 50 years.

There is no guarantee of engaging in meaningful community consultation. And by removing the authority of local councils, how will local concerns be reflected?

There is a danger that an inordinate amount of power will rest with the current Minister, leaving our parks at the mercy of politics, developers and lobby groups.

Finally, the bill lacks any reference to the primacy of the Heritage Act. There needs to be an express support of this, not the ambiguity of silence.

Yours sincerely,

Hilary Bell