

**Submission  
No 143**

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

**Name:** Ms June Lunsmann

**Date Received:** 14 January 2022

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**The Hon. Robert Borsak MLC**

**Dear Sir,**

**Re: Upper House inquiry into Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill**

As a resident having lived in Birchgrove since 1967 I have been involved in many local community consultations.

My husband and I actively participated in the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust many years ago. The communication with residents, local and further afield, was active and clear, heeding the needs and suggestions from the community.

I read the 50-year vision for Sydney's open space and parklands - Greater Sydney Parklands (GSP) and commented in September 2020.

I read and commented on the Greater Sydney Parklands White Paper in July 2021.

I responded to the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021 which claimed to reflect community responses.

All my comments fell on deaf ears.

The Bill has lots background information but overlooks any community involvement.

**Issues I object to:**

**1.** The TRUST states that it **may** establish community trustee boards with 7 members chosen by the TRUST and lists a number of requirements such as expertise in management, local knowledge of area and the community to name a few but also indicates that these boards will be directed and can be dissolved without specific grounds. Presumably if the community trust objects to a long lease to a for-profit venture such as restaurant or accommodation in their parkland the TRUST will remove them from negotiations.

**2.** The Bill also excludes involvement by Local Government whose officers have extensive knowledge of their local LGA.

All of this is totally unnecessary and a waste of taxpayers money. The State Government should immediately provide funding to the existing trustees for the updating and restoration of their parklands. They are the ones who understand their environment and its needs.

**My particular interest is Callan Park and the following which has been formulated after extensive community consultation still applies.**

**1.** Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 prohibits commercial and not-for-profit use of the site and must be upheld.

**2.** The Master Plan for Callan Park recommended that an Independent Trust for Callan Park and Broughton Hall be established. This should proceed and not be consumed by the current Trust proposed in the GSP.

**3.** The Callan Park Plan of Management (July 2011) needs special recognition in particular to its Aboriginal Heritage along Callan Point. There is no mention of an Aboriginal representative on the TRUST's board. The need for Aboriginal expertise would apply to the other parklands as well.

**4.** The future as expressed by residents in many community consultations is that Callan Park should recognise and pursue the ongoing need for mental health facilities on the site.

*As a local resident I often went there with a friend and our dogs in early 2000s. My friend at the age of 17 had been a patient there many years before when she suffered after her father had committed*

*suicide. She had found it a most peaceful rehabilitating environment. We would walk around and she would point out places that helped her recovery. We also chatted with the then current patients in various locations who used to enjoy talking to our dogs.*

*Health facilities such as these should be re-instated and a number of not-for-profit organisations are interested but how can they compete against the proposals being sought in this BILL which aims at turning every public facility into a money making machine for the state government's benefit.*

**We Who help Ourselves** (WHO) is a not-for-profit organisation operating since 2008 and provides mental health services including substance dependence, addiction and other mental health issues. The clients take responsibility for many aspects of their own care and they do things for themselves like cooking, cleaning and gardening and are given the tools to help themselves to stabilise their mental health.

WHO will remain on the site and be able to operate its not-for-profit food services.

5. There are two other important not-for-profit and community volunteer groups operating on the site.

**The longstanding Bushcare Group**, initially proposed in 1992 with Leichhardt Council officers the Callan Point Resource Management Group had representatives from local Aboriginal Land Council, National Parks and Rozelle Hospital and prepared a 'Conservation Management Plan for Callan Point, Rozelle'. The Bushcare Group have now been meeting since 2007/2008. Over the past 23 years many hundreds of people have been involved in the care and restoration of native bushland in Callan Park. These have included community members participating in National Tree Day and Mothers Day plantings, local school groups, Australian Conservation Volunteers as well as the volunteers who turn up every week, every month.

**The Community Refugee Welcome Centre** (CRWC) was opened in 2017. It is the only welcome centre of its kind in Sydney NSW. It provides a place for connection between the local community, refugees and people seeking asylum, through a range of programs in a safe and supportive space.

It is a creative and empowering space where some fantastic outcomes have been achieved for refugees and the wider community. It provides a welcoming, non-judgemental, positive environment, focusing on welcoming both refugees and Inner West locals— it's about equals coming together.

*"One of the main transformative things we do is the simple act of sharing a meal. It allows an opportunity for in depth conversation and connection. It's also a chance to learn the richness of each other's cultures through food and cultural ceremonies... like how to make Arabic coffee!"* volunteer Kathy Tribe said.

Not one of these ventures excludes the use of the area for approved musical/festival events which have been successfully held over the past years.

Unfortunately there is still no Callan Park Trust but Callan Park continues to be protected by the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 and should not be controlled by the one-size-fits-all Trust proposed by the GSP Bill.

The Bill is defective and needs to be withdrawn and re-written with genuine community involvement in the management and protection of our precious parklands.

We pay taxes so that the government can provide and maintain public infrastructure including the parks owned by the people of NSW.

If the BILL is accepted in its current form the management of these parklands will be at the whim of the Minister at the time and possibly influenced by his or her financial advisers.