

**Submission
No 152**

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

Organisation: Darling Point Society

Date Received: 17 January 2022

THE GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST BILL.

The NSW Government Sydney Parklands.

Centennial Parklands (including Moore Park and Queens Park) Western Sydney Parklands, Callan Park and Fernhill Estate.

The Draft Exposure Bill has created concern in the Parkland Community of Sydney.

The approval of this bill could result in extensive and opportunistic development, and commercial use of public lands for business centres, hotels, spas & retreats, restaurants, and function centres and extensive commercial eventing.

The result would see irreparable damage to the footprint and heritage of the parkland, with little or no opportunity to reclaim and repair the open green space, critical for human well being.

As Sydney experiences extensive redevelopment, the sight of Parkland must create an insatiable desire to own and/or control it, outside of the communities' rights and desire to freely use it.

Few expansive acreages have been created in Sydney in decades, with an ever-increasing city population ratio and intensive development of units. South Dowling and Bourke Streets are overflowing with residents, and Centennial and Moore Parks are choking at times. The growing need for green spaces is vital to support health and well-being.

The Covid Pandemic of 2020/2021 brought extensive lockdowns to the daily lives of Sydney people. These were claustrophobic and endless. Only then was the true value of the Parkland Estates discovered for physical, social, and mental health. The simple enjoyment of a picnic, when restrictions eased, presented a newfound pleasure.

2022, has seen Covid throughout the city, but the communities have built a bonding relationship with their parklands. We, the community, want control over them for future generations. Each designated Parkland should have its own Trust Act to manage, and support, their individual priorities and protect their Heritage value. These should have local community delegates who can have voting powers well beyond advisory capacity.

The community trustee boards in the act are essentially advisory bodies at the mercy of the GSPT board who appoint the members and can dismiss members or dissolve boards without grounds.

Local control and local engagement have proven crucial for the protection of public open space for the last century. Breaking this link with local communities is part of a broader attack on the ability of local communities to have a say in their neighbourhood and local environment.

The proper alternative is to restore or create Trusts for each of the parklands with accountable local representatives on the Trust boards.

Funding for the parklands should come from the State Government of the day to encourage the use of green spaces in conjunction with primary health programs.

The Community says NO to the surrender of Public Lands and NO to the granting of a lease beyond 10 years.

A vigorous survival and extension plan for these Parkland Estates will enhance the international value of the City of Sydney.

Yours Sincerely,

Jasmine Steel

Darling Point Committee - Parks and Environment

For and behalf of Charlotte Feldman

President Darling Point Society