

**Submission
No 153**

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

Organisation: National Rugby League Ltd

Date Received: 17 January 2022



17 January 2022

The Director
Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021
parklands@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Inquiry into the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021*.

The NRL write this submission as our organisation and sport more broadly have been long-time users of facilities and spaces across the Centennial and Moore Park Trust lands, including the Sydney Football Stadium, Moore Park East, Kippax fields, and Moore Park West.

The NRL is a tenant of Venues NSW (previously the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust) with our head office located on the forecourt of the Sydney Football Stadium, on Driver Ave. The NRL has been in and around the Moore Park sporting precinct for many years, with our previous office located within the Entertainment Quarter.

At present, we are watching the construction works on the site of the new Sydney Football Stadium and we commend the NSW Government for the commitment to building world class infrastructure and the investment in the new Stadium. The rugby league community is excited for the elevated fan experience from 2022 and we expect attendees will want to enjoy the local bars, restaurants and amenities while in the area for an event. The Sydney Football Stadium was, and will soon be again, the home of the Sydney Roosters NRL team who will play home games each season at the venue. In addition, the NRL places major event content at the venue including Telstra Premiership Finals matches and International Test matches. We have plans to place other content in the coming years.

Given the \$839 million investment in a new Sydney Football Stadium and the anticipated increase in visitation that will follow, public policy efforts should be focussed on enhancing transport connectivity to the Moore Park precinct, not reducing access through the removal of car parking.

We have worked closely with the NSW Government agencies to ensure we can provide our fans and spectators with the best possible experience at our games. We know that our fans want a great experience from the minute they leave home, until they return home. We want them to be excited to get off the couch and attend live events regularly. This means that transport and connectivity are key, whether it be private vehicles, public transport, walking or cycling.

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We must ensure attendees have multiple transport options to access the precinct, including parking areas. We know some fans will drive regardless of public transport options. In 2017 Futures Sports and Entertainment undertook an extensive research program focussed on how to deliver the best possible match day experience for our fans and members. Allianz Stadium ranked 22 out of 25 venues for transport in our fan research. Whilst the delivery of the Sydney Light Rail project has enhanced transport connectivity to the precinct since then, the removal of parking will unwind any improvements that have been delivered.

The *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill 2021* if passed would result in the loss of more than 2,000 car spaces which are utilised by sporting fans accessing the Sydney Football Stadium and Sydney Cricket Ground on event days. Whilst approximately half of these spaces would be replaced if the proposed Venues NSW underground car park is approved there would still be more than 1,000 car spaces lost to the public. The Bill if passed in its current form would make accessing the new Sydney Football Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground more difficult for sports fans and members. For this reason the NRL does not support the Bill in its current form.

The NRL believes a far more measured and reasonable approach would be the phased removal of car parking from greenspace, as long as there is no net loss of parking capacity in the broader Moore Park precinct. We support the principle of the public having access to more green space in the Moore Park area, but this cannot be at the expense of parking options at this time. The removal of parking from Moore Park East and West must be in a phased process, and only when adequate alternative public parking arrangements are found and delivered.

Removing event day parking would have unintended consequences for fans. Many families, particularly those with young children, who attend events at the Sydney Football Stadium and Sydney Cricket Ground choose to drive to Moore Park, particularly for night-time events. Our elderly fans, and those with a disability also prefer travelling by car. Furthermore, the current COVID-19 pandemic means most fans prefer to travel by car rather than public transport to avoid prolonged close contact in confined spaces. To remove parking as proposed in the Bill would amplify fans displeasure with their experience and this would be reflected in game day attendance. To make it harder to access the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Football Stadium by removing parking options at a time when the sports, entertainment and hospitality industries are struggling because of the impacts of COVID-19 is ill-conceived. There would also be long-term impact to the local economy should event day parking be removed as fewer people would attend events and therefore there are fewer people spending money at local cafes, restaurants, bars and pubs.

The NRL is committed to actively working with the various NSW Government entities, our fans and members, and the local community to ensure that feasible equivalent car parking solutions are identified and delivered before the removal of parking as proposed in the Bill. It is essential the future

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vision for Greater Sydney Parklands is complimentary to the effective utilisation and accessibility of the Sydney Football Stadium and Sydney Cricket Ground.

Once again, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion.

Yours sincerely,

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