

**Submission
No 32**

REVIEW OF THE GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST ACT 2022

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The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022 review.

Our parklands are an essential green lung of our city. The review of the Act after two years reflects sensibly the importance that is placed on such an irreplaceable city asset.

The original Act 2022 has many good features and should be largely retained. There are however some points that need to be promoted and rectified. I shall outline those to you.

Background

I came to the Centennial Park precinct in 1951. I am a retired pharmacist who is passionate about our parks and our precinct. I have served in many organisations within our precinct including the Centennial Park Residents Association CPRA, the CCC of Centennial Park, two organisations of the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust and was Chairman of Greens at the nearby The Lakes Golf Club.

Importantly, I was involved, as a community representative, with Minister Rob Stokes' vision for our parklands when he formed the 50 year vision for our Greater Sydney Parklands.

Rob Stokes recognised that our iconic parklands could not defend themselves against the might of big business and big sport. He reasoned that by combining five iconic parks (Centennial Parklands, Callan Park, Parramatta Park, Western Sydney Parklands and Fernhill at Mulgoa), under the one umbrella they would have sufficient clout to compete for the necessary funding from Government when competing with the powerful business and sporting lobby.

As an example, Centennial Parklands attracts 31 million visits a year which is in the order of four times the total visits for all NRL grade matches plus the attendees to the races.

However it receives comparatively little financial support than do the NRL and Racing businesses.

We need more open, public green space as our city grows.

There is huge pressure on our existing parklands and public open green spaces. Yet today, governments and councils are increasing the development density of high rise apartments and expect the parklands to provide the green space instead of requiring the developers to do so. Eg Moore Park Golf Club.

Public parklands provide physical and mental health advantages

Numerous studies have shown the importance to the mental and physical well-being of people living in high-rise apartments of open green space. Free open accessible green space markedly reduces the health bill of the Government. It has also been shown that the policing bill is also reduced as mental tensions are relieved. Today, we are building more and more high-rise apartments with little green space associated with their development. Even now with the obvious errors in planning that trend is continuing.

Our parklands are being diminished as open space by long term leases to private businesses.

Much of Moore Park East is leased or controlled by the sporting bodies. This is driven by the need for income. The long-term needs of our growing population for open space is ignored.

Loss of long term income and its consequences

A decrease in income will certainly occur if Moore Park Golf Club is destroyed by decreasing it from an 18 hole championship Tier One public golf course to a 9 hole course. It allows those who cannot afford the high cost of private golf clubs to enjoy championship level golf at a most affordable rate. There are over 90,000 rounds of golf played at Moore Park GC. The income from this historic course helps fund both the Centennial Parklands and Callan Park.

Advantages of the Parklands to the environment.

Parklands act as a temperature moderator, water conserver and provide habitat to our wildlife. Without parklands our city would be hotter and drier making life more unpleasant.

The importance of SEPP47

SEPP47 was specifically included in the conditions of consent to ensure the old Show Ground site would support an emerging film industry in NSW. The old Fox Studios (now Disney) has grown into a major film producing centre in the world. Associated with the film producing at Disney is the Australian Film Television and Radio School which is training the future film, television and radio greats of tomorrow. Major films have been made in Australia. It is an industry that is growing. It is more than price competitive with the studios in the US. The SEPP47 ensures that the EQ site does not become another development site.

The future of our city

Imagine a city without parklands. Parklands provide passive recreation where one can relax in any way they prefer. Cities all over the world are assessed by their liveability and this in turn attracts tourism.

Structured entertainment is destroying our children's imagination and creativity. There would be more civil unrest and frustrations rise if there were no areas in which to escape, relax and recharge one's batteries.

Transparency

What needs to be improved is the flow of information from the 'Trust' to the public. Presently one cannot find a report outlining the work done with proper costings and Government financial input into our parks.

Summary

The cause of most of our problems can be traced to the lack of effective Government financial support for our parklands. Even the proposed destruction of the Moore Park Golf Course by halving it will markedly diminish the income stream from it which helps both Centennial Parklands and Callan Park. We would like to support the GSPT in seeking a substantial increase in Government financial support so that the GSPT can manage its Parklands for the long-term benefit of the citizens of our city and our state.

It would send a powerful message to all that our Government recognises the importance of our parklands and the need to responsibly maintain and grow our parklands as our city population grows.

Peter Tzannes



3rd February 2025.