

**Submission  
No 34**

## **REVIEW OF THE GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST ACT 2022**

**Organisation:** National Trust (NSW) Parramatta Regional Branch

**Date Received:** 5 February 2025

7 February 2025

**Submission to the Joint Select Committee**  
Review the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022

I lodge this submission on behalf of the National Trust (NSW) Parramatta Regional Branch (the Branch). I am the Chair of the Branch, and I represent the views of 1,000 National Trust members located in and around Parramatta.

The purpose of this review as stated is to determine whether:

- a) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, and
- b) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing these objectives.

Whilst the Branch supports the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022 No 9 (Current version for 31 May 2024) we would like to make specific comments about several points in the Act that relate to Parramatta Park.

The points are:

**3 Objects**

COMMENT: The Branch believes that the points (a) – (g) stated as the Objects of this Act remain valid.

**12 Committees**

COMMENT: The Branch believes that this remains appropriate for securing the objectives of the Trust.

**18 Acquisition of land**

COMMENT: In particular the Branch believes that Parramatta Park could be further extended to take in lands located east of the Parramatta River and adjacent to the Parramatta Female Factory and Cumberland Hospital precinct.

In 1848, the Parramatta community clamoured for access to what was the Governor's Domain for exercise, recreation open grounds and pure air. In 1858 the boundaries for a park of 246 acres (or 99.5 hectares) was established. Since that time Parramatta Park has continued to shrink, first with the western railway line dividing the Park in two, then subsequent land allocations for: a road; a returned serviceman's club; a high school; an enlarged football stadium that resulted in the relocation of the aquatic centre to take up land on the Park's southern boundary at Mays Hill; as well as land leased to sporting clubs.

Now is the time to acquire, for the Parramatta community, the quantum of land that has been lost over the last 160 years. The original parkland size should be reinstated by the handover of the

Female Factory/Cumberland Hospital precinct currently under threat of rezoning for residential housing. The Parramatta community vehemently opposes this rezoning.

At the time when the Park was established, Parramatta's population was around 6,000 people. Today by comparison, Parramatta Park has dwindled from 246 acres to 210 acres to serve an exponentially growing population forecasted to grow to 487,731 by 2041, 81 times greater than when the Park was allocated. This figure was stated even before the Transport Orientated Development program.

In addition, the burgeoning community of residents will be housed in high-rise dwellings devoid of outdoor space and with little access to active open space.

Parramatta is becoming a "concrete jungle" and there is a great need to increase tree coverage to allow trees to remove carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon in the trees and soil. This action will in turn release oxygen back into the atmosphere. We need more green space parkland to sustain a health living environment for future generations.

This is a critical and once in a lifetime opportunity to expand Parramatta Park as a botanic garden again as it was in the early years of the colony of New South Wales.

### **21 Leases, licences and easements**

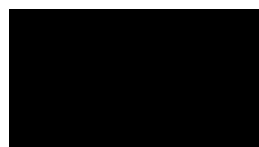
COMMENT: The Branch's biggest concern is about current long term leases that exist with organisations on Parramatta Park land. These leases far exceed the 10 years that is acceptable today. Further they continue to encroach on Parramatta Park and their continuing development of the leagues club in particular overshadowing the parkland. We are not aware of the rent charged to the club but believe that they should pay market rate rental to increase the income for the Park's ongoing care. We believe a review of the current leases should be undertaken.

### **23 Prohibition on disposal of GSPT estate**

COMMENT: The Branch is also concerned about the incremental loss of parkland that has occurred more recently in the southernmost part of the Park at May's Hill with the construction of the Parramatta Aquatic Centre. In previous years there was discussion about creating a land bridge to link both the northern and southern parts of the Park but this has not occurred. One major concern is that the May's Hill area will be seen as underutilised and surplus land for government use. Should this occur Parramatta Park will be further diminished and parkland lost.

### **46 Other matters relating to Trust's financial powers**

COMMENT: The Branch believes that the allocation of money from one part of the parkland estate to another with the written approval of the Community Trustee Board from where the money came is appropriate for securing the objectives of the Trust. We have seen this occur when funds were transferred to Parramatta Park from another parklands account.



Cheryl Bates OAM  
Chair, National Trust (NSW) Parramatta Regional Branch