

**Submission
No 35**

REVIEW OF THE GREATER SYDNEY PARKLANDS TRUST ACT 2022

Name: Ms Kobi Shetty, MP

Date Received: 6 February 2025



KOBI SHETTY MP

MEMBER FOR BALMAIN

201-205 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe NSW 2037
02 9660 7586
balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au



Submission to Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust

Thursday, 6 February 2025

The Hon Peter Primrose, Chair
Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust
Parliament of NSW
C/- GreaterSydneyParklandsTrust@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Primrose,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Joint Select Committee on the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust's statutory review of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*. I make this brief contribution in my capacity as the Member for Balmain.

Callan Park sits entirely within my electorate. It is an incredible asset with its 61 hectares of open green space, public buildings and facilities nestled amongst some of Sydney's oldest and most built-up suburbs. It is managed by Greater Sydney Parklands and several other government agencies on behalf of our community, and the provisions of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* have both financial and operational implications for this important public land.

For more than two decades my community has sought to protect Callan Park from privatisation. The introduction of the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) 2002* by the Carr Labor Government was an important achievement, and since that time we have advocated for significant investment for the upkeep and improvement of the grounds and its magnificent buildings. We have also called for greater inclusion in the governance of the park and for an independent trust to oversee its transformation.

As you know some changes were made to the *Callan Park (Special Conditions) Act 2002* through the introduction of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*, which raised significant interest and concern in my community. My predecessor, the former Member for Balmain, Mr Jamie Parker, negotiated an acceptable outcome when the previous government made their initial proposal to amend the Callan Park Act in late in 2021. Those

negotiations achieved cross-party support and Mr Parker was able to pass several amendments to ensure the protections afforded by the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* were not entirely eroded with the introduction of the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*.

It will be incredibly disappointing for my community if this cross-party agreement cannot withstand this statutory review, and the NSW Government reverts to a position that supports the privatisation of Callan Park.

As such, I encourage the committee to consider all submissions and recommendations made to this inquiry very carefully. I urge you to be particularly alert to any proposals that could affect community confidence in the financial management and operations of Callan Park.

Proposals that will enhance Callan Park's financial capabilities without reliance on commercialisation and monetisation of public assets should be supported. Consideration of how government can ensure reliable revenue streams are in place for the management and operation of Callan Park should be pursued. Parks should be treated as essential community infrastructure, whose upkeep and operations should not rely on the ability to self-fund.


Proposals that would guarantee public access to parklands within Callan Park should also be supported. There is a strong desire in my community to continue the restoration of the Kirkbride precinct's buildings, at pace, so they can be put to an appropriate long-term use that enhances community accessibility.

Finally, any proposals that will strengthen community participation in the governance of Callan Park must be supported. Community Trustee Boards are unable to elect their own Chair. The current legislation allows a Community Trustee Board member to be appointed or removed at the Minister's discretion, with no opportunity for review. These are matters that must be addressed.

The establishment of a Callan Park Trust also remains a high priority for my community.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's review of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act. Should you wish to discuss the matters raised here in any further detail please do not hesitate to contact my office on (02) 9660 7586 or Balmain@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



Kobi Shetty MP
Member for Balmain