

14 November 2021



NEW PLANNING LAWS PAVE WAY FOR PARKS PRIVATISATION ACROSS GREATER SYDNEY

A Sydney-wide Alliance for Public Parklands (APP) urge NSW Planning Minister Rob Stokes to withdraw legislation that would reduce community control and open the way for commercial interests to profit from some of Sydney's most iconic parks.

The APP has serious concerns that the proposed Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Bill introduced this week would centralize control of Centennial Park, Callan Park, Parramatta Park, Fernhill Estate and Western Sydney Parklands under a single authority with powers to override input from local communities.

There is no commitment for adequate government funding.

Parklands must be adequately funded by the government for the interests of public's mental and physical well-being.

The Minister's powers as proposed are overwhelming.

The Minister is ultimately responsible for major leases, appointments to the GSP Trust board, unilateral power to alter park plans of management, and mandatory directions to the Trust board.

Community rights to have a say are negligible to non-existent.

The existing park Trusts will be replaced by the GSP Trust; the proposed community trust boards are merely advisory; members of community trust boards are hand-picked by the GSP Trust board who can also summarily dismiss members.

APP calls on the government to withdraw the proposed legislation and work with communities to enshrine the following principles that would protect community interests:

- Each parkland should have its own Trust to best manage the individual characteristics and values of each parkland.
- The maximum lease period for all parklands should be limited to 25 years approved by parliament, not ministerial discretion.
- Unsolicited bids not permitted on parklands. Any SSD, SSDI or SEPP should be excluded from parklands.
- Bill should not allow discretionary powers vested in any Minister.
- There should be no new leases on open parklands. All green space should remain open, public green space.
- No bio-banking or stewardship of parklands – they are already conserved and not subject to double dipping.
- Councils to be consent authority for developments on parklands