

ITEM 3.2. MOORE PARK UNDER THREAT**FILE NO: S051491****MINUTE BY THE LORD MAYOR**To Council:

In a visionary decision in 1811, Governor Lachlan Macquarie made a bequest of 405 hectares (1000 acres) of land, known as the Sydney Common, for “the benefit of the present and all succeeding inhabitants of Sydney”.

Moore Park was established in 1866 when 153 hectares of the north-west section of the Sydney Common were dedicated as recreational ground.

Now, two hundred years later, just a third of Governor Macquarie’s original 405 hectare bequest remains to provide Australia’s fastest growing urban communities with a vital green lung and indispensable public space for active and passive recreation.

By 2030, Green Square, which borders the park to the south-west, will be Australia’s most densely populated suburb, providing 30,500 new homes for up to 61,000 residents.

Persistent leaks to the media show that the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust (SCSGT) has a grand plan to seize control of precious passive and recreational open space at Moore Park for a massive spectator stadium and elite sporting complex.

The most serious threat is the aggressive campaign by the Sports Trust to build a new stadium on the Kippax Lake area of Moore Park as a replacement for Allianz Stadium. Once a new stadium is built, it is clear the Trust believes the existing site will be available for car parking and for elite sports training venues.

An SCSGT promotional video prepared as part of a pitch to the State Government, exposed by Radio National yesterday, outlined the spectacular land grab to build a massive “sport and entertainment hub” on Moore Park.

The leaked plans show a scheme to seize Moore Park West for sports fields and a 2,500 space underground car park, linked by a bridge across Anzac Parade to the sporting stadia, exactly where the Tibby Cotter Bridge has been built.

It appears that the bridge is part of the grand plan the SCSGT has sought to keep hidden from the public, with the public now fearing that the structure has been massively over-engineered to function as an access road for a future car park.

Construction on Tibby Cotter “bridge to nowhere” began in 2014 without a tender or clear rationale. The cost escalated from \$25 million to \$38 million and the process has been condemned by the Auditor General. Work began before public consultation occurred and strong public opposition was ignored.

The Tibby Cotter Bridge is rarely used as it does not link to cycle networks, and stadia patrons prefer to use the direct route via Drivers Triangle. The bridge significantly erodes public open space and required removal of Fig trees on either side of Anzac Parade. The damage from its construction has still not been repaired.

Anzac Parade was renamed in 1917 and planted as a grand boulevard of Fig trees in honour of the Anzac soldiers. Almost immediately after the survivors returned, they began to gather each year just north of the Kippax Lake area in the earliest commemorations of Anzac Day.

The memorial that marked the significance of this area was removed - during the anniversary of World War I - because it was in the way of the Tibby Cotter Bridge's construction. It remains in State Government storage, waiting for reinstatement or relocation.

Shockingly, the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust's grand takeover plan continues even though the Allianz Stadium rarely approaches its existing capacity. The efficient option is to upgrade the current stadium, rather than waste millions building a new larger stadium that will also struggle to attract crowds.

The government's limited funds for sports facilities can and should be spent where they are needed – in Sydney's west. Key rugby league clubs have made it clear they would prefer an upgrade to the ANZ Stadium at Homebush, given its proximity to their fans.

Despite the NSW Government's stated policy for a replacement stadium on the existing site, the NSW Sports Minister, Stuart Ayres, continues to promote the Kippax Lake scheme. He was recently reported as saying that a "historical governance model" of two Trusts should not constrain planning for the new stadium.

The NSW Government has a clear choice: act in the interests of powerful vested interests or act in the interests of the people of Sydney – both east and west – by protecting Moore Park and directing sports investment to western Sydney.

There is growing concern that the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust is failing in its responsibility to protect the parklands and must take a stronger, public role defending our parklands.

Around 30 to 40 Fig trees in Centennial Park have been lost this year due to a major, late design change to the light rail that moved the route from the Royal Randwick Racecourse side to the Centennial Parklands side of Alison Road.

While I strongly support the need for new light rail, which has the potential to remove on-grass car parking from Moore Park, I continue to raise with Transport Minister Constance concerns about tree loss and impacts on Centennial and Moore Park.

The Altrac-led consortium, contracted to design and construct the CBD and South East Light Rail project, needs to amend the current plans to minimise impacts on the parklands. Altrac's proposals include inappropriate structures on Moore Park, which should be located elsewhere or underground.

In 2013, when the Centennial and Moore Park Trust was developing its *Centennial Park Master Plan 2040*, I raised concern that a plan for the future of Moore Park was not being developed at the same time to ensure planning was coordinated and Moore Park is treated with equal importance to the rest of the Centennial Parklands.

Last year, early drafts of a Moore Park Master Plan included massive new underground car parks in Moore Park West and a function centre on Mount Steele. These shocking proposals were abandoned following strong public opposition.

The subsequent draft Moore Park Master Plan publicly exhibited late last year remains inadequate, lacking essential data and research for a rigorous planning process.

It does not provide an integrated plan for the entire parklands and reinforces the long-standing public perception that Moore Park is considered less important with a primary role as 'cash cow' to fund the entire Centennial Parklands.

Most importantly, it will not provide the necessary protection from the predatory expansion plans of the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust.

I have fought to protect Centennial and Moore Park from overdevelopment and degradation for over 20 years in my capacity as State Member for Bligh and Sydney, and Lord Mayor. Unfortunately, we need to continue battling destructive proposals.

In 2010, the City hosted a successful public meeting to oppose Labor State Government plans to transfer control of Moore Park to the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust. That meeting effectively mobilised significant public support, including Former NSW Premier Neville Wran and Federal Member for Wentworth Malcolm Turnbull.

Given the ongoing threats to Moore Park, I propose the City hold a public meeting and help mobilise parklands supporters to send a clear message to the State Government that the community highly values the parklands and will resist proposals that threaten them.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council approve:

- (A) a public meeting to be held as soon as possible on the threats to Moore Park;
- (B) the preparation and distribution of public materials informing the community of the proposals and what they can do, and promoting the public meeting;
- (C) a letter from the Lord Mayor to the Premier asking him to unequivocally rule out a new stadium at Moore Park and to direct sports stadium funding to western Sydney where it is needed; and
- (D) the Lord Mayor continuing to engage with the Minister for Transport to minimise impacts on Moore Park from the CBD and South East Light Rail project.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor