

Item 3.3

Moore Park Stadium

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Last Friday afternoon, the Department of Planning and Environment announced its approval of the demolition of the Sydney Football Stadium. The Government then immediately announced that it had signed a \$730 million contract with LendLease to demolish the existing Stadium and to build a new structure.

NSW Minister for Sport Stuart Ayres said work would commence in January 2019 and be completed in early 2022.

This project which remains deeply unpopular across NSW, is going ahead despite the fact that the existing Stadium is only 30 years old and is now even more on the edge of Sydney's centre of population. Of the submissions made to the State Government's stage one development application, 95 percent were opposed and more than 220,000 people signed an online petition to stop the demolition. Recent polling found that 58 per cent of people are either strongly opposed or opposed to the project.

Built in 1988 as a bicentenary project, Allianz Stadium was designed by eminent Sydney architect Philip Cox and received multiple awards. Such a large project on its inner city site was opposed by many at the time, but the elegant curved form ultimately sat lightly in the surrounding parkland and was sensitive to the heritage neighbourhood context. **It is the City's position that work at the current Allianz stadium, which is rarely full and often at about 40 per cent capacity, should be limited to refurbishment for modern safety requirements, rather than wasting hundreds of millions building a new stadium in the wrong place.**

The fact that the NSW Government has now included demolition in its current stage one planning application is a denial of proper process, and demolishing the stadium before the public has had the chance to have their say on detailed plans for the site shows contempt for community opinion and input.

As a planning authority responsible for the area, the City has questioned the Government's plan to prioritise funding for this major sporting and entertainment venue which is on the very edge of the Sydney's population centre. This determination runs contrary to the stated policies of both the State Government and the Greater Sydney Commission, to locate such facilities close to Sydney's population centres.

As a consent authority for the area, the City has expressed strong concern about the lack of proper process for this project - the detailed design is not known and not available for public or expert viewing and assessment.

This is a massive complex on the edge of a declared conservation area and surrounded by parklands, and yet there will be no environmental impact statement on the demolition, construction and operation in terms of noise, area disruption, parking proposals and inner Sydney traffic congestion. It's likely a new stadium will be much larger and bulkier, with an emphasis on corporate boxes, and would thus have a greater impact on parkland and heritage.

As the Local Government Authority of an area which has high and increasing residential densities and where people are predominantly living in apartments, the City is rightly concerned about protecting major city parklands – even working to expand them when possible.

Surrounding suburbs are growing rapidly. Green Square, to the south west, will be Australia's densest residential suburb by 2030 with 61,000 residents.

Twenty million people visit the Centennial and Moore Parklands annually, while just two million attend the current Allianz stadium and the SCG.

I am alarmed at the substantial and continuing loss of Moore Parklands and mature trees for the light rail project, and the alienation of public open space for venue parking, tunnel portals, pedestrian bridges and elite sport. The City has not been informed what affect the proposed rebuild will have on our diminishing recreational open space and object to the intended intrusion of professional sporting interests into adjacent public buildings on public land on the former Sydney Showground site.

As an elected body, Council is charged with providing for the critical needs of all our communities. We believe that prioritising professional sport facilities by the State, particularly in the Moore Park area, ignores the City's Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study 2016 which identifies that by 2031 our area will need up to 20 more sports fields, an additional 17-18 multi-purpose courts, 21 full size indoor courts for basketball, netball, volleyball and other sports, and 11 indoor multi-purpose courts.

Limited public funds for sports facilities should not be focused on show-case stadia that underwrite private business interests, but should support grass-roots sporting clubs that build the health and well-being of children, youth and local communities. Government money proposed in this project could achieve a generational shift in sporting access in all communities where population changes have made facilities access difficult, especially in Sydney's west.

Finally, since 2004, the City's economy has grown by more than two-thirds, over and above inflation. It now totals about \$125 billion, contributing more than ten per cent of Australia's current economic growth and overtaking the mining sector as the driver of the national economy.

Our work has supported that growth and made the City of Sydney the national epicentre of jobs with numbers growing by almost 30 per cent in the ten years to 2016. **Increasing traffic congestion is a major threat to that continued growth.**

Putting a large new sporting and entertainment venue with the prospect of more games and events, will force patrons to move substantial distances across the metropolitan area to a facility sited off the edge of Sydney's population centres. I fear that the proposed widened link between the WestConnex interchange at St. Peters and Anzac Parade through Moore Park, will substantially increase cross city traffic and will create even more pressure for event parking on our diminishing open space.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) convey its objection to the knock down and rebuild of Allianz Stadium to the NSW State Government; and
- (B) support the creation of one centralised sports administration entity which would properly plan for both professional and amateur sporting facility needs for the whole Sydney Metropolitan Area.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor