

Item 3.4

More Publicly Accessible Parkland at Moore Park

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

When parkland at Moore Park was allocated for a nine-hole golf course back in 1913 and later extended to 18 holes in 1922, the surrounding land uses were predominantly industrial.

It has been the policy of successive State Governments since 1995 to convert the former South Sydney industrial area into the Green Square Urban Renewal area, and by 2040, up to 80,000 more people will be living in the area within two kilometres of Moore Park.

The City is creating 40 parks and playgrounds as part of Green Square Urban Renewal, but small parks don't provide the same opportunity for people living in high-density apartments to stride out, de-stress, renew or commune with nature.

For generations, much of the land originally set aside for parkland at Moore Park has been alienated for other purposes. Large areas have been dedicated to professional sporting codes. This is in addition to sports and athletic fields, tennis courts, outdoor fitness areas, a cricket centre and pitches and the 18-hole golf course. Parkland was also lost to the Eastern Distributor and the Supacentre and there has been ongoing alienation from car parking on parkland.

The City of Sydney's strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision includes The Green City project idea of unlocking existing Crown Land at Moore Park for wider public use.

In built-up inner-city areas where land is expensive, is an 18-hole golf course the best use of precious public parkland? The question is fundamentally one of equity and putting public land to its best use in the community interest.

The City's proposal to convert the existing 18-hole Moore Park Golf Course to a nine-hole facility retains the popular driving range, club house, and maintenance depot and requires minimal reconfiguration of the fairway and greens.

When we asked the community what they thought of our proposal in 2020, unsurprisingly, people living immediately to the west of the course in areas like Redfern, Waterloo and Zetland were overwhelming supportive of reconfiguring the course to create public parkland.

Golfers, especially from the eastern suburbs, opposed the change despite that there are 12 other courses within 10km of Moore Park and that the proposal retains nine-holes and the popular driving range.

On 22 October 2023, following the City's advocacy supported by Business Sydney and former Premier of NSW, Bob Carr, the NSW Premier Chris Minns announced plans to convert up to 20 hectares of the Moore Park Golf Course into publicly accessible parkland when the current operating agreement expires in 2026.

I thank and congratulate the Premier for accepting the City's fair proposal. It is important for growing, densely populated communities to have access to parkland.

The NSW Government will conduct public consultation and release a discussion paper to guide that consultation, including with the current operator of Moore Park Golf Course on the future of the remaining holes and the operation of the clubhouse and driving range.

It is imperative that the City of Sydney encourages local residents to get involved in this consultation and have their say on the future of this public parkland.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council commend the NSW Government's announcement on 22 October 2023 that it will convert up to 20 hectares of the Moore Park Golf Course into publicly accessible parkland when the current operating agreement expires in 2026; and
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) communicate the successful outcome of the City's advocacy to convert up to 20 hectares of the Moore Park Golf Course to accessible public parkland and encourage the community to participate in the NSW Government's public consultation process on the future of this important parkland; and
 - (ii) make a submission to the NSW Government in response to the Discussion Paper and participate in any other consultative process in relation to the parkland conversion.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor