

Item 3.1

Wentworth Park

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

The City of Sydney has long opposed greyhound racing, and advocated for the return of Wentworth Park to the community as public open space.

Last month in Parliament, both the Minister for Lands and Property, Steve Kamper, and the Minister for Gaming and Racing, David Harris, acknowledged they are considering supporting the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association's proposal to extend its lease at Wentworth Park after it expires in 2027.

I am extremely concerned that the NSW Government is considering reversing a commitment made to the community and to the City that Wentworth Park would be returned to the public once the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association's lease expired to meet the open space requirements of the adopted Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy.

Open Space for Density

Wentworth Park sits in the middle of one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in Australia. Ultimo/Pymont has one of our highest residential densities at 14,000 people per square kilometre.

The City's Local Housing Strategy aims to provide an additional 56,000 dwellings between 2016 and 2036, with over 30,000 dwellings built or in the pipeline, including in areas around Wentworth Park such as Blackwattle Bay.

We welcomed the former Government's commitment to return Wentworth Park under the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy. It is critical that this parkland is returned to support the additional residential and commercial uses planned in the area.

The City has already conducted early consultation and begun a new masterplan for parkland use of this prime inner-city land, and we have included an allowance for embellishment works for the parkland in the Draft Ultimo Pymont Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2023.

Overwhelmingly, the community supported removing the greyhound racing track to create more public parkland as part of the consultation. The early engagement also told us the community want to connect to nature, as well as a place for exercise and play, a place that supports social activity and a place that is easy to move through.

It would be bitterly disappointing if the NSW Government reneged now, which would indicate the greyhound industry is more important than the communities of Pymont, Ultimo and Glebe and this would potentially jeopardise the development in Pymont, as the returned parkland was part of the negotiations to increase housing and other development as part of the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy.

Greyhound Racing

Wentworth Park is currently dominated by a greyhound racing track. This parkland should be for the benefit of the community, not an industry that has admitted to killing up to 17,000 healthy dogs each year, has been shown to live-bait, and causes people with a gambling problem real suffering. Reforms introduced by previous NSW Governments have not improved animal welfare.

Since 2020, 17 dogs have been killed and 1,262 injured at Wentworth Park. The number of dogs killed does not include the many who are put down as a result of their injuries. This year alone, two dogs have been killed and 83 dogs injured at Wentworth Park. This is truly heartbreaking and needless. The greyhound racing track at Wentworth Park currently records the fourth highest number of injuries in Australia in 2024.

Council has passed several resolutions condemning greyhound racing and I have written to successive NSW Governments opposing the cruel practice.

On 5 March 2024, I wrote to the Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Gaming and Racing expressing serious concern and disappointment that the NSW Government may overturn a previous commitment to the community to remove greyhound racing from Wentworth Park.

Given the NSW Government has already met with Greyhound Racing NSW about this matter, I have sought an urgent meeting with the Ministers to discuss the future of Wentworth Park.

With plans to increase housing, particularly around Blackwattle Bay, Pyrmont and Ultimo, we cannot expect people to thrive in higher densities without improved public amenity, including access to adequate parkland and recreational space.

A community-led petition started by a Glebe resident urges the NSW Government to end the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association's lease and return the land to the local community. The petition notes redevelopment in the area and that where the racetrack is should be green space and used for outdoor recreation.

The Animal Justice Party NSW has also started a petition to End the Tragedy at Wentworth Park Greyhound Track, which I support.

The NSW Government must commit to removing greyhound racing from Wentworth Park when the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association's lease expires in 2027, so it can be returned to the existing and future residents, workers and visitors in this area. This commitment must be made in line with NSW Government directions to increase density.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council reaffirm its opposition to the cruel practice of greyhound racing;
- (B) Council express disappointment in Minister Kamper and Minister Harris' comments in Parliament suggesting they are considering reversing the previous commitment to the community to return Wentworth Park to public open space by extending the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association's lease beyond 2027;
- (C) Council note the Lord Mayor recently wrote to the Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and Minister for Gaming and Racing, urging the NSW Government to formally commit to removing greyhound racing from Wentworth Park;
- (D) Council note the [community-led petition](#) calling for a stop to the NSW Government's plan to keep greyhound racing in Wentworth Park, endorse its promotion through the City's various communication channels and encourage the community to write to the NSW Government urging Wentworth Park to be returned to the community as public open space when the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association's lease ends in 2027;
- (E) Council endorse the requests in the [petition by the Animal Justice Party NSW](#) to End the Tragedy at Wentworth Park Greyhound Track; and
- (F) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to report back to Council via the CEO Update with the outcomes of the City's early consultation and progress on the City's masterplan for a consolidated Wentworth Park when the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association's lease ends in 2027.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor