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Dear Kim

Moore Park Master Plan 2040

Establishing a master plan for Moore Park is vital to achieving the community's long term vision and protecting the park in the future; I commend the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust for taking on this important task.

While there are some important proposals to green parts of Moore Park, I share strong community concern that the draft master plan represents a dangerous move towards commercialisation and alienation of public land that is vital to the region and fails to expand much-needed space for passive recreation.

Moore Park is part of the Sydney Common that was set aside by Governor Macquarie in 1811 for the long term recreation needs of present and future Sydney generations. Less than a third of the original bequest is open public land, yet the demand for green open space is growing at unprecedented rates due to urban consolidation policies and continuing major inner city redevelopments, including at Green Square adjacent to the park.

The focus of Moore Park future planning must be to provide for the long term recreational needs of the surrounding communities.

Tree Planting and Canopy Extension

There is strong community support for proposals that increase trees and vegetation across the park. Moore Park has pockets of wild nature and these areas must be enhanced and expanded to improve the passive recreation experience and ensure the park remains a peaceful haven from the city for expanding populations.

Loss of trees for the light rail project has led to significant community discontent and the draft master plan includes proposals for their replacement. These proposals need to be strengthened to compensate for the loss of tree canopy not just the number of trees, with mature trees part of the plan so that there is no net loss of canopy while new trees grow and that wildlife has access to new habitat as early as possible.

Avenue tree planting, especially along South Dowling Street to buffer noise and pollution will improve the park's environment and make it more pleasant. New plantings that include lost specimens and habitat will help restore the park's ecology and provide new habitat.

Proposals to conserve and enhance the wildlife around Kippax Lake with new plantings have strong community support. Kippax Lake is a much loved part of the park and the recent birth of



cygnets demonstrates the significant natural potential of the area and I support the draft master plan's proposals. The area can be used more for passive recreation and picnics.

Recovering Green Space

Event-related car parking has alienated much of Moore Park east from public use, degraded grasslands and compacted soil, prevented planting of much-needed soft landscaping and undermined the heritage value of the area for too long. I welcome proposals to disperse event car parking away from grasslands when light rail commences operations. This is consistent with the government's intention that light rail provide transport for major events at the sporting stadia and Entertainment Quarter.

The master plan, however, should go further and eliminate or at least reduce event-related car spaces. Car removal would provide opportunities to create new green open space.

I share widespread community objection to the proposal to build a large car park north of the golf clubhouse. This area could be used as green public open space or at the very least not detract from the recreation purposes of the land and create traffic congestion.

The light rail project is removing significant parts of the Centennial Parklands to provide a fast alternative to private motor vehicle transport to the precinct and the parklands must benefit from this through the phase-out of car parking. The parkland does not have responsibility to supply car parking spaces during major events at the sporting stadiums and the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust and other event promoters should use integrated ticketing, which is referred to in the draft master plan, to make public transport more attractive, removing traffic congestion and the huge demand for private vehicles parking during major events.

The master plan must permanently phase out parking on Moore Park altogether once light rail services commence, as promised in the 1992 Moore Park Plan of Management.

The draft master plan provides few other options for creating new public open space for passive recreation. Indeed the draft master plan indicates that parts of Moore Park east currently used for car parking could potentially be marked out for new sporting fields, not open space dedicated to passive recreation.

The master plan will guide planning of Moore Park for the next 25 years and it must identify ways to expand open space for passive recreation use, including from land recovered from destructive private car parking.

The Entertainment Quarter provides potential to create new public open space but the draft master does not propose to reclaim any land for recreation. Instead, the plan proposes to intensify and activate the area in ways that are in stark contrast with the longstanding recreation purposes required in the precinct or the film-related purposes promised when the showgrounds were moved to Homebush. This is a significant failure of the draft master plan that must be addressed.

The golf course also provides an opportunity to increase open space for passive recreation. The trust could consider whether a nine-hole course would be more appropriate in the inner city given this move would provide much-needed space for passive recreation. I note that the draft master plan identifies that the golf course needs to meet shorter forms of golf to accommodate people's time-poor lifestyles.

Relocation of the bus loop when the light rail commences operations could provide opportunity to recover, and green, more land; however it is unclear what is proposed for this space. Grassing the area and introducing trees should return this area to open green space. This area should be not used for public events and activities, which should be restricted to those areas already dedicated to this purpose.

Access

There is strong support for improving access across the site and into Fox Studios and the Entertainment Quarter, particularly from Paddington residents who have restricted direct pedestrian access. The precinct is not permeable with fencing and new buildings on adjacent land managed by the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust blocking access. This will be a challenge and the trust's commitment to addressing accessibility while preserving heritage is welcome.

Large numbers of residents live within walking and cycling distance from the park and many don't have cars and should not have to use them when visiting the parklands. The draft master plan's focus on pedestrian and cycling access is strongly supported, including the proposed new shared boulevard on Dacey Avenue with entry to Centennial Park, extension of Federation Way along Cleveland Street and bicycle parking stations.

Proposals to reconfigure the golf course to enable better pedestrian and bicycle access into the park will provide much needed walking and cycling opportunities within the greens and is in line with the core recreational purpose of the parklands.

Entertainment Quarter and Fox Studios

I share widespread community alarm about proposals to activate the entertainment quarter.

The draft master plan advocates for changes in the use of the Entertainment Quarter in ways that are inconsistent with its recreation and film-related purposes. The aim appears to be about making the precinct more commercial and 'financially viable'.

The Entertainment Quarter is not an attractive destination and the draft master plan acknowledges this; many people report that they find the area soulless, generic and synthetic. But proposals in the draft master plan to 'activate' the area are in keeping with past trends that have led to the area's failure.

Successful entertainment areas are organic and evolve slowly through synergies of creative ideas responding to demands within communities. Attempts to artificially generate demand for entertainment through tourist accommodation and office space are unlikely to create anything more than a characterless, generic entertainment experience. Good restaurants and bars cannot be planned, they respond to community demand.

I share widespread opposition to proposals to change planning guidelines to allow for short term accommodation, offices and other uses that are inconsistent with the precinct's recreation or the promised film related purposes. The land is part of the Centennial Parklands and has been subject to successive incremental erosions and alienation. The master plan should not continue this destruction but protect the area's core and original purpose, which remain more relevant and needed than ever.

The question must be asked why there is such a push to make this another entertainment area that attracts new people from far and wide when adjacent communities need more public open space at escalating levels due to urban consolidation and that providing this open space is the core business of the parklands. Beautiful green spaces with trees that attract locals to linger are more likely to attract visitors than synthetic built spaces designed for tourists. Massive government and private investment has made other parts of the city tourist centres and there is no rationale for this occurring at Moore Park.

I strongly oppose any changes to planning guidelines that would allow further commercialisation and alienation of public land.

The master plan will govern the direction of Moore Park until 2040 during which the 40 year lease for Fox Studios and the Entertainment Quarter

ES Marks Athletic Field

There is strong community support for upgrading the ES Marks Athletic Field for sports training with short term use as basketball courts or other outdoor sport facilities however there is widespread objection to development proposals on adjacent land along Anzac Parade.

The land next to the ES Marks Athletic Field provides much needed greenery in this densely populated region and Anzac Parade has significant social heritage value as a memorial boulevard with the trees planted to remember armed forces leaving for war. Anzac Parade is very heavily trafficked, with a bus lane and soon a light rail service. The vegetation is visually attractive and provides environmental benefits like soaking up pollution and heat from the adjacent arterial road. The draft master plan overlooks these benefits and treats the area as a development site.

Particularly objectionable are development proposals for a university campus, short term accommodation, or allied health and sports medicine facilities. These have no place on parkland.

The draft master plan must exclude any development adjacent to the ES Marks Athletic Field.

Active versus Passive Recreation

Demand for passive and active recreation is growing and Moore Park must provide for both. While an objective of the draft master plan is to “create a place for all to play and balance the needs of the community and high performance sport”, it fails to achieve the right balance.

The draft master plan has a strong focus on active recreation while being light on proposals for green open public grassland for walking, jogging, picnics, informal sport playing, sunbathing, reading under trees and quiet contemplation.

New sporting facilities are proposed including a new sporting hub, upgrade to the ES Marks Athletic Field for high performance sports training, short term use of the ES Marks Athletic Field as basketball courts, a new rugby field in Moore Park east, new sporting fields on Moore Park east where cars park during events, an active multipurpose sports and events field on the show ring, and indoor and new extreme sports facilities in the Entertainment Quarter. Meanwhile there is little proposed that would expand green open space.

The master plan must aim to achieve more open space for passive recreation and propose ways to address this challenge. Recovery of Moore Park east from event-based car parking should lead to more green open space for passive recreation, not a new sporting field, and opportunities for public open space in the Entertainment Quarter should be explored.

The master plan should also specify that sporting fields and facilities should not be fenced, making them available for informal community use when they are not being hired. The City of Sydney's approach to Redfern Park has balanced these different uses.

There is community concern about fencing of the recently installed multi-purpose synthetic field which alienates a large portion of land from community access and there should be no further fencing of fields. Residents have raised concerns about being asked to move off courts when they are not being hired for games. Informal use of courts to shoot hoops or practice can help improve the balance between passive and active recreation by allowing unplanned use by small groups.

I share widespread concern about the introduction of extreme sports to the area, particularly go-kart racing and similar sports that have no health or environmental benefit and may have amenity impacts such as noise affecting nearby residential communities. Such extreme sports do not fit in with Moore Park's role as a place for recreation and community congregation.

Moore Park Toll House and Driver Avenue Tram Shed

There is community support for the adaptive re-use of the toll house and tram shed and I welcome reference in the draft master plan that their future use must provide appropriate community benefit.

These facilities should not be redeveloped for commercial purposes that are inconsistent with the parklands' purpose.

Obelisk

There is strong community support for the relocation of the Moore Park Obelisk to Moore Park, after it was removed from Anzac Parade. Moore Park is close to the obelisk's original home from where it was taken and connects this memorial with its Anzac heritage.

Moore Park Common

The draft master plan includes a specific move to create a Moore Park Common adjacent to Kippax Lake as a community hub for passive and active recreation. On the surface this seems supportable; however it is unclear what exactly this proposal entails and the community should be provided with more information and the opportunity to comment on specific plans before the master plan is finalised.

There will be strong community opposition to development of facilities that become another base for commercial events that alienate the parkland from public access or undermine open green space.

Story and Interpretation

Educating people and providing them with information about the history of Moore Park is important and will encourage people to use and cherish the parklands and defend them from inappropriate proposals. However, there is concern that this could mean large plaques and placards throughout the park, detracting from its peaceful green atmosphere. If this is the case, a different approach must be adopted that does not result in intrusive structures.

Sustainability

The master plan must ensure the park's sustainability into the future and I welcome the proposal to include sustainability as a principle.

While environmental sustainability can easily be interpreted as green open space, trees and vegetation, there is wide community concern that financial sustainability means that the parklands will have to generate greater amounts of income over the next thirty years.

The existing model of funding is unsustainable with the trust reliant on income from event car parking, the Entertainment Quarter and commercial events to cover recurrent operations. These alienate space from public use and the draft master plan's focus on new uses like tourist accommodation for the Entertainment Quarter appears part of an approach aiming to generate more funds.

It would be an error to plan to make space that is dedicated for the regional recreation needs of Sydney's residents self-funding at a time when demand for recreation space is escalating at unprecedented levels. Major redevelopment projects in areas adjacent to the parklands including in Green Square, will generate massive state government income through stamp duty that should be invested in providing services and facilities for new residents, including providing for their open space needs.

The NSW Government should be funding recreation space because it has a positive effect on the health budget by encouraging exercise, social interaction, respite, and exposure to fresh air and sunlight, which is increasingly difficult for residents in high rise apartment buildings with very limited open space and is essential for people's productivity and contribution to community and economy. The master plan should make a case on these grounds for state government funding, for which there is strong community support.

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The primary role of the Moore Park Master Plan 2040 must be to ensure the park can provide for the long term recreational needs of the surrounding residential communities and I ask the trust to work further on this vital plan in response to community concerns to achieve this. This is now more important than ever.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AG', written in a cursive style.

Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney