

SYDNEY COASTAL COUNCILS GROUP Inc.

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Attention: Group Deputy Secretary, Place, Design and Public Spaces
NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment
Parramatta, NSW 2124

Re: Greater Sydney Parklands White Paper

To whom it may concern,

We write to you regarding your department's recent consultation process on Greater Sydney Parklands White Paper. We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission regarding the future of green and blue spaces across the city.

About the SCCG

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) is a regional organisation of Councils that advances sustainable management of Sydney's urban coastal and estuarine environment. We currently comprise nine-member Councils who represent approximately 1.3 million Sydneysiders. These Councils are Bayside, Inner West, Northern Beaches, North Sydney, Randwick, Sutherland Shire, Waverley, Willoughby, and Woollahra.

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group and the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) are collaborating together to deliver a Greater Sydney Harbour Coastal Management Program (CMP) which is a requirement under the NSW *Coastal Management Act 2016*. This CMP aims to improve and sustain waterway health through greater collaboration, consistency and leadership at a catchment scale. It will build on the work already being done by a range of key stakeholders to improve waterway health including the Parramatta River Catchment Group's (PRCG) Masterplan for making Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025.

Further information on the CMP is available at:

<https://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/projects/greater-sydney-harbour-coastal-management-program/>.

Greater Sydney Parklands Trust is supported

We believe that our vision for the Greater Sydney Harbour CMP greatly aligns and supports the Greater Sydney Parklands 50 year vision. Our particular focus for this submission is on the need for greater consideration of our waterways in developing the framework and operating model of the Greater Sydney Parkland Trust given the importance of our waterways for recreation, not only Sydneysiders but also national and international visitors. We believe it is an opportune time to establish appropriate governance, partnerships and funding structures not only for Sydney's parklands but for also for its iconic harbour and its waterways.

We agree a city-wide approach is needed to create a 'city in a park'. However, the importance of waterways (both constructed and natural) underpinning the strategic level framework for a connected green urban form needs to be more greatly appreciated and water cycle management needs to be a core consideration for the sustainability of parkland's environmental assets and as a facilitator of activity and amenity.

Modelling undertaken by Sydney Water and through the Sydney Harbour Estuary Processes Study, shows that diffuse stormwater pollution remains a major contributing factor to poor water quality in the Parramatta River and Sydney Harbour. This is projected to further deteriorate as densifying growth continues in the urban catchment. However, urban development and Parklands that embrace blue-green infrastructure¹ and innovative management of stormwater has the ability to arrest this trajectory, improve water quality and protect the critical natural habitat for plants and animals within the parklands.

It is therefore recommended that there be a greater appreciation of the importance of waterways and water management is the success of a connected blue-green grid.

The White Paper outlines three main themes that shape the GSP proposal which we support. However, we believe policy reform is required if the promotion of blue green infrastructure is to maintain healthy soils, minimise the impact of stormwater runoff on the waterways, through reduction in runoff quantity and nutrients flows and increasing passive filtration on site to minimise erosion.

The SCCG strongly advocating for a future environmentally sensitive, greener urban form and water sensitive open space and parklands.

Community trustee boards supported but relationships with Councils need to be strengthened

The SCCG welcomes the proposed establishment of community trustee boards to represent local views and the development of a GSP Consultation, Engagement and Advocacy Framework to guide its approach to communications and engagement. However, more emphasis needs to be given on how the relationships between local councils and the Trust could best work together to connect local parks to create a *city in a park* and support the Trust vision, this is essential to ensure Council's local knowledge and community aspirations are appropriately considered.

The SCCG represent 9 local councils and would welcome collaboration through a working group to define opportunities that could be realised under a city-wide approach.

¹ Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces, natural systems and semi-natural systems including parks, rivers, bushland and private gardens that are strategically planned, designed and managed to support a good quality of life in an urban environment. GANSW, 'Draft Greener Places Policy', 2017

Funding and finance critical to achieving the vision

We agree with the need of new and innovative mechanisms that facilitate sustainable funding to support blue-green infrastructure and connectivity to realise the 50- years vision and concur funding models should not depend on over commercialisation of parklands and waterfronts. Therefore, support the idea to explore further the off-park business hubs financial model.

We support that the Trust maintain all the protections in the existing Acts that prohibit land sale and retain the conservation function of the existing park trust Acts. However, in carrying out its functions, the Trust should have regard to the principles of sustainable development, including the delivery of effective integrated water management; therefore, parklands water courses and groundwater are to be conserved or restored to their natural state.

We thank you once more for the opportunity to comment on this important piece of work. We would like to also re-emphasise the opportunity to work closely together moving forward to pursue a green, liveable and environmentally sustainable Greater Sydney Region.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joyce".

Sarah P Joyce

Executive Officer (SCCG)