

Saving Moore Park Inc.

174 Windsor Street
Paddington NSW 2021

10 April 2024

Future of Moore Park South

Centennial Parkland is seeking the community's views on how it would like to see 20 hectares of Moore Park Golf Course used for the benefit of the community surrounding Moore Park.

Our Association is currently in a state of flux while undergoing a process of renewal. This means we are not in the best position to develop options, test these with the community and then make a detailed submission on this issue. However, we would like to make a few comments.

We do not think asking how this space should be used is the right question when so many other questions remain unresolved. While in principle we support the addition of green space for the community, we are concerned about a number of aspects of this proposal.

What is the community's need?

The focus of the decision is the local community's need. In our view, this need has been created in large part by planning failures by the City of Sydney - its decision to approve large scale developments without adequate provision for green space. The City has done a reasonable job around Green Square but has evidently taken the view that it didn't need to worry about those areas closest to Moore Park.

Which "community"?

We do not question that additional high quality recreational space is needed. However, satisfying it by carving out 20 hectares from the golf course can only come at the expense of another large section of the community - those whose only opportunity to play golf - and so enjoy green space - is on a public golf course.

There is no shortage of private golf courses in Sydney, but membership fees are typically beyond the means of most golfers. With 18 holes Moore Park Golf Course thus meets a very real community need. It is our understanding that people come from all over Sydney to play golf here, demonstrating a very real community need - just a different "community".

What are the financial implications?

Of particular concern is the failure of the Government to spell out the financial implications of the proposal. There are several aspects affecting both recurring revenue and capital expenditure:

- There is a complete lack of transparency as to the level of funding Moore Park Golf Course contributes towards the maintenance of Moore Park. However, we understand from previous Centennial Parklands management that the golf course is overwhelmingly the largest source of revenue required to maintain and enhance the Park. So with the loss of significant revenue from the golf course, where is the revenue going to come from in future? The Government has given no explanation or commitment on this.
- For the past two years Saving Moore Park has been strongly advocating that the Government allocate \$12 million toward the revitalisation of Moore Park East for the community's benefit. To date it has declined to do so. A token amount has been provided, much of it swallowed up in consultancy fees.
- So if the Government is unwilling to commit to sensible funding of the Park's revitalisation, what can the community reasonably expect the Government to contribute towards the capital cost of the proposed 20 hectare redevelopment?
- This is particularly relevant given the capital costs likely to be required to create safe pedestrian access across South Dowling Street by those living west of the park.
- We are also concerned that, having used regulation to override legislation to permit the continuation of car parking on Moore Park for events at the SCG and SFS, albeit for a limited time, with the reduction of revenue from Moore Park Golf Course, the Government will have a financial incentive to continue this car parking well beyond the new dates to which it has committed.
- In short, enhanced access to the golf course area will be at the expense of enhanced access to the other side of the Park. So, it has the potential to become a question of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

What alternatives have been considered?

There are several lower cost and less disruptive alternatives which will provide meaningful access to additional green space for the local community. These include:

- completion of the cycle path on the northern side of Dacey Avenue, an improvement we have long advocated.
- Providing access to the course on one or two golf-free days each quarter.

- Constructing a cycle path across the course, something which exists at other golf courses in Australia and overseas.
- Provision of dedicated space on a little used section of the course for the provision of an outdoor mini or put-put golf layout.

Conclusion

Having regard for all these considerations, there must be doubt about whether the community really will benefit from the conversion of 20 acres of Moore Park Golf Course into green space. We are therefore unable to provide any sensible assessment of how this space can best serve the community.



Vivienne Skinner
President
Saving Moore Park