

Ms. Kristine Keneally

Premier of NSW

premier@nsw.gov.au

Dear Premier,

RE : Urgent-Centennial Parklands

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman of The Centennial Parklands Trust and wish to raise with you a matter of extreme and urgent concern.

It has been made clear to the Trust and myself from a number of very reliable sources that our Minister, Mr. Kevin Greene, is submitting to Cabinet this week a proposal that will remove Moore Park from our responsibility and hand it to the SCG Trust. As you know we have had no formal notification of this proposal.

It is our very strong view that this is very bad public policy. It is also our view that to contemplate such a move without any consultation with the Trustees of The Parklands is insulting and deceitful, particularly given the performance of successive Trusts and the calibre of Trustees that have given their time to the ongoing management of one of the world's great city parks over many years in the interests of public service and without payment.

On 21st May 2010 I wrote to the Minister (copy attached) when the proposal first came to my attention. The Minister has chosen not to reply to my letter. In view of this fact and the fact that he has not advised us of this proposal at any time and that, as I understand it, Cabinet will consider this matter this week, I felt compelled to write to you and ask that you defer any consideration of this matter until it has been discussed with me and through me to the Trustees.

It is unthinkable that a Government would consider handing over Public Parklands under the administration of a highly successful and voluntary public Trust which acts in the public interest, to a body that has its primary obligations to its private members and affiliated organizations and not to the public. It is our view that this will be viewed by the public as an outrage, even more so when the reasons would appear spurious, not in the public interest and, apparently, done without relevant consultation. The current Trustees would have no option if this transfer occurs than to protect and explain our positions as custodians for the public of this public park. The Trustees will have to consider their position and may have no alternative but to resign immediately

Currently Moore Park is the primary revenue engine that funds Centennial Park and Queens Park. In excess of 70% of all the Parklands revenue comes from the commercial operations we have successfully generated in this area. These revenues are applied in large measure to Centennial Parklands (in excess of \$7 mill per annum after maintaining Moore Park). As your Government continues each year to

reduce its contribution to the Parklands operating costs (93% of the Parklands operating revenue is now generated from its own activities) the removal of Moore Park will destroy the funding model that a succession of Trustees have worked hard to develop over many years. This model also includes the increasingly successful parklands Foundation . It is clear that Treasury may need in the future to pick up substantial shortfalls in the money needed to maintain and develop Centennial Parklands as one of the icons of Sydney. The alternative conclusion is that your Government has decided to abandon its obligations to maintain these historic Parklands

The Minister and his Department have substantial information provided by our Trust over the last 12 months that will clearly make the case not to proceed as proposed. It will show that in all cases at all times the Centennial Parklands Trust has sought to work with Government on solutions for many issues but that the SCG Trust has clearly not. Their intentions and the Ministers proposed solutions are, in our view, clearly not in the public interest.

As Premier I ask that you give this matter your serious attention and prevent it happening prior to full and meaningful consultation with us over the proposals being held.

I look forward to your urgent response

Yours Sincerely

John Walker