

## Greater Sydney Parklands Year in review 2021–22





## Acknowledgement of Country

Greater Sydney Parklands acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waters and sky upon which the parklands are located and pays respect to the Elders of these lands – past, present and emerging.

We recognise First Nations Peoples’ unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society. We acknowledge the rights and interests of First Nations Peoples to be involved in the ongoing management of these traditional lands.

We will work in a respectful manner with Traditional Custodians, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and the First Nations communities of Greater Sydney to support their custodianship of the natural and cultural heritage of parklands so that these are places where First Nations Peoples feel socially, culturally and economically included.

**Disclaimer** Greater Sydney Parklands has compiled this report in good faith, exercising all due care and attention. No representation is made about the accuracy, completeness or suitability of the information in this publication for any particular purpose. It shall not be liable for any damage which may occur to any person or organisation taking action or not on the basis of this publication.

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## Chair's message

The parks that make up the Greater Sydney Parklands Estate are a vital and much loved part of Sydney's physical and cultural landscape. They are as distinctive as Sydney's harbour and beaches and they make a significant contribution to the liveability of our city.

We welcomed 40 million visitors to our parks throughout the year, including many new visitors who enjoyed our beautiful open spaces for the first time. Despite the demands and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and an unusually wet La Niña year, our team continued to welcome visitors and maintain and improve the places and facilities that make our parks so special.

In July 2022 the NSW Parliament enacted the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*. The Act provides the framework for our ongoing stewardship of the Parklands Estate and outlines our approach to community consultation and engagement, and is the realisation of the NSW Government's *50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands*.

With the new legislation in place, we have commenced work on a new model of community engagement and consultation, including the establishment of community trustee boards in December 2022. The Greater Sydney Parklands team is looking forward to working with these boards to ensure that our parks meet the needs and aspirations of Sydney's diverse communities and continue to be used, loved and cared for into the future.

During the year we said farewell to Suellen Fitzgerald. As our inaugural Chief Executive, Suellen played a pivotal role in the creation of Greater Sydney Parklands and our planning for the future. On behalf of the Board, and of the communities we serve, I congratulate Suellen on an outstanding career and a wonderful legacy for Sydney's great parks.

Our new Chief Executive is Joshua French, our former Director of Strategy, Design, and Delivery. Joshua is a landscape architect by background and he brings to the role years of experience with our parks.

I would like to thank Joshua and the Greater Sydney Parklands team for their dedication, energy and efforts over the last year. Thanks also to my Board colleagues for their great contributions to the work of Greater Sydney Parklands.

**Michael Rose AM**  
Chair  
Greater Sydney Parklands



**We welcomed 40 million visits across the Parklands Estate throughout the year, including many new visitors who enjoyed our beautiful open spaces for the first time.**





Those who help to make the Parklands Estate so great to visit should be congratulated for all their efforts in adapting to support the community over the last 12 months.



## Chief Executive's message

The Greater Sydney Parklands Estate offers the people of Sydney more than just green spaces – these are places that help to make people feel better, fitter, healthier and close to nature, especially during a time when many of us were asked to stay close to home.

As an organisation, we needed to adapt the way we worked in 2021–22 so that we could still support the communities and environments that make up the networks of the Parklands Estate.

The Greater Sydney Parklands team was ready to adapt to online education programs when that was called for; they have completed a seamless transition to the new city-wide parks agency; and they have continued to deliver the new facilities, infrastructure and maintenance activities we need, despite the impacts of yet another La Niña weather event.

Visitation across the Parklands Estate was up – many more people were using the walking and cycling paths that criss-cross these beautiful areas during the extended lockdown. It was gratifying to see the phased return of events and education programs in person, and to see the delight on the faces of people as they reconnected with each other in our parks.

The teams and our partners who help to make the Parklands Estate so great to visit should be congratulated for all their efforts in adapting to support the community over the last 12 months.

They were there when the community needed outdoor space and they are there when we look to make the right investments and improvements to deal with the city's unique climatic challenges, particularly in areas of Western Sydney where the effects of extreme heat and wet weather can be felt.

We also continued our strong engagement with communities throughout the year, and I want to thank the community organisations and individuals I've spoken with or whose submissions I've read for their ongoing enthusiasm.

I also want to thank former Chief Executive Suellen Fitzgerald, who has created a Greater Sydney Parklands team that works as one cohesive group.

Thanks to her leadership, we are ready to take on the responsibility of working for Sydney's first city-wide parks agency by taking a metropolitan perspective and a local focus.

**Joshua French**  
Chief Executive  
Greater Sydney Parklands



# Achievements at a glance



The *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* created the legislative basis for **Greater Sydney's first city-wide urban parks agency**



## Environmental improvements

included bush regeneration of 1,500 ha of Western Sydney Parklands, and emergency dam works at Fernhill Estate to protect habitat for birdlife



We invested **\$42 million** in capital works including work on the Wylde BMX and Mountain Bike facility at Western Sydney Parklands and the commencement of the People's Loop at Parramatta Park



People returned for events, education and community programs including **Sydney Symphony Under the Stars** at Parramatta Park



Greater Sydney Parklands evolved into **one voice** for the city, advocating for parklands and open space to achieve the *50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands* to become 'a city within a park'.



## Community consultation

on various projects included the Mulgoa Road entrance at Fernhill Estate, a new Code of Conduct at the Centennial Parklands Equestrian Centre and ideas for the various buildings and Waterfront Green at Callan Park



Our restoration of Parramatta Park's **Boer War Memorial won top prize** in the Continuing Traditions category at the National Trust Heritage Awards



**850+ people** registered for **self-guided walks** of Fernhill Estate



We co-hosted the Sydney showcase day of the **World Urban Parks Congress** in December 2021



We prepared for the addition of **Wistaria Gardens** to Parramatta Park, which was formally vested through the passing of the new Act



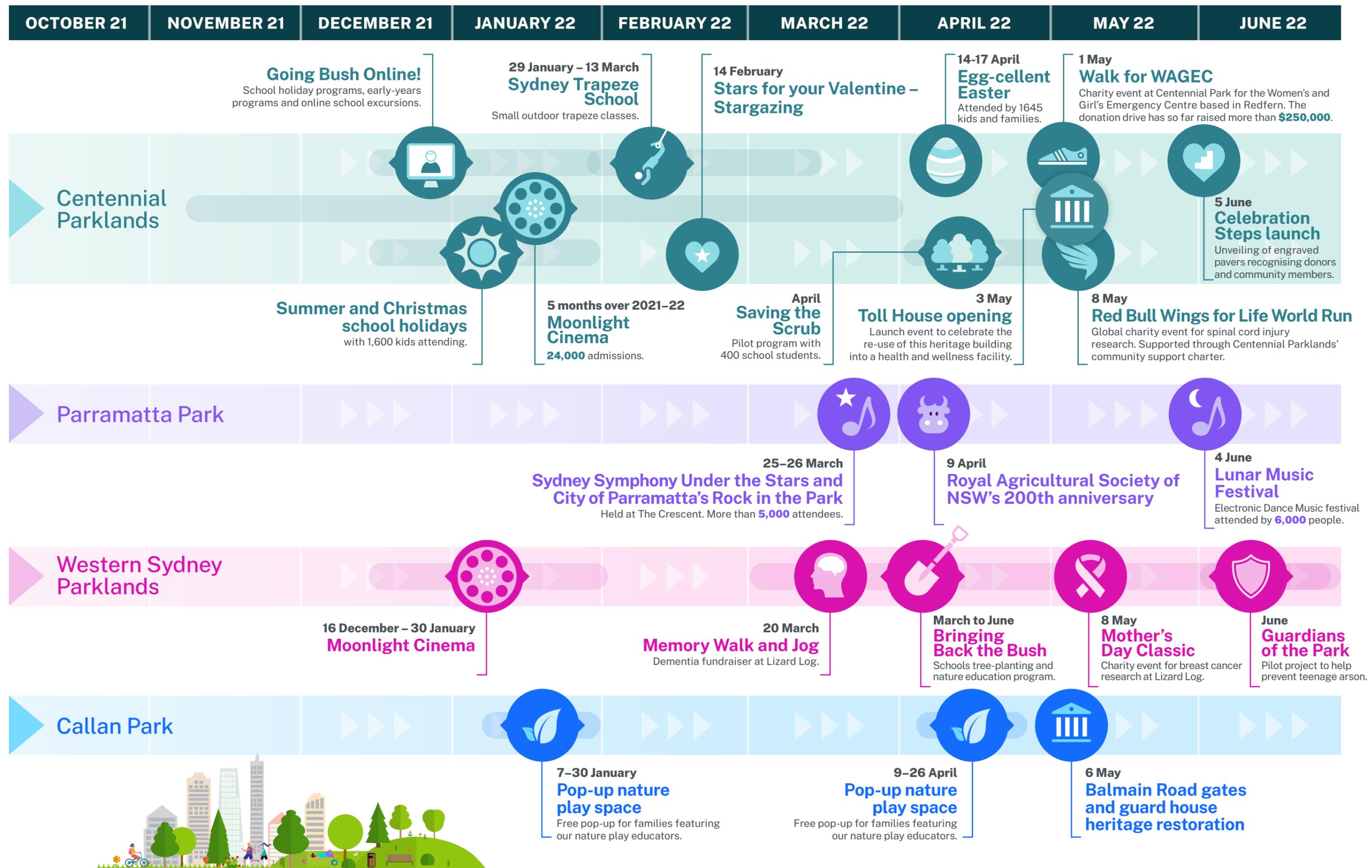
**Visitor numbers remained high** as the Parklands Estate provided respite for people during COVID-19 restrictions, and operations continued despite lockdowns and severe weather



**Planning for connections** within the Parklands Estate and to the rest of Greater Sydney's Blue Green Grid included the new cycleway at Queens Park and wayfinding at Western Sydney Parklands



# Events and programs 2021–22 highlights



# 2021–22 in numbers

## SATISFACTION RATES

Our customer satisfaction surveys continue to reflect high standards of customer service.  
\*Data for Callan Park and Fernhill Estate not available.

 **81% satisfied**  
Parramatta Park

**85% satisfied**   
Centennial Parklands

 **83% satisfied**  
Western Sydney Parklands

## VISITATION

Visitation in 2021–22 of nearly

 **1.8 million people**  
Parramatta Park

**5 million visits**   
**3.5 million** visited recreation areas  
**1.5 million** visited our partner tourism venues  
Western Sydney Parklands

 **850 visitors** registered for the Sunday self-guided walking trail  
Fernhill Estate

More than **65,000 people**   
attended public events across the  
Parklands Estate

## SPORTS & RECREATION

 **76,916**  
rounds of **golf** played at Moore Park

**47%**  increase in **tennis**  
Moore Park

## ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS

Landscape works and environmental remediation of Musgrave Pond included the removal of

**2,780 tonnes**   
of accumulated sludge and sediment

  
Our annual tree planting yielded  
**377 new trees**  
Centennial Parklands

**1,500 hectares** of bushland were under bush regeneration management programs

We planted **2,000 trees** for Premier's Priority Tree Planting

 **1,142 students**   
**2,800 trees and shrubs** planted through the Bringing Back the Bush program  
Western Sydney Parklands

## INVESTMENT

We invested **\$7.3 million** in improvement and management of the park  
 Parramatta Park Trust

We invested **\$55.2 million** in improvement and management of the parks  
Callan Park & Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust 

 We invested **\$28 million** in improvement and management of the park  
Western Sydney Parklands Trust

## DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

 **400+ people** responded to online surveys 

We held community webinars for more than **300 people** to present plans for the Waterfront Green area, public toilets and Wharf Road car park

We surveyed the community asking people how they want Callan Park buildings to be adapted and used, receiving **1,000+ responses** from the community  
Callan Park

**470 people** completed the online survey about improvements to Fernhill Estate access and Mulgoa Road  
Fernhill Estate

## EDUCATION

We provided two nature play pop-up playgrounds to connect kids with nature and provide a fun, free family activity during the school holidays – around **2000 children**  enjoyed the associated activities led by our educators  
Callan Park

 In person and virtual nature education experiences reached more than **50,000 kids** across all parks

## SOURCE OF FUNDS

The Trust generated income of **\$6.2 million** from self-generated funds and government grants  
Parramatta Park Trust

The Trust generated income of **\$56.6 million**  from self-generated funds and government grants  
Callan Park & Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust

The Trust generated an income of **\$29.1 million** from self-generated funds and government grants  
Western Sydney Parklands Trust



# About Greater Sydney Parklands

The *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* came into effect on 1 July 2022. This legislation establishes the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust and provides for the management of the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Estate (referred to as the Parklands Estate).

The passing of this legislation follows extensive work by Greater Sydney Parklands, partners across government, stakeholders and community members to formalise arrangements that had been in place since 2020.

We are led by an independent board and use a combined administration model to care for Greater Sydney's iconic parks, maintain park infrastructure and employ park staff.

The iconic parks that form the Parklands Estate are Centennial Parklands (Centennial, Moore and Queens parks), Callan Park, Parramatta Park, Western Sydney Parklands and Fernhill Estate.

As a city-wide parks agency, we take a strategic view of what the city and its community need in terms of open space and parklands. We have a seat at the table when major decisions are made for Greater Sydney's future parks, so that open space and parklands are just as important to Greater Sydney as the transport, utilities, centres, housing and other elements that make it a great place to live, work and visit.

We partner with local communities and local councils to provide great open spaces for the community. We are committed to developing new ways to involve Sydneysiders in the management of the Parklands Estate, while expanding and improving the city's public green space and parklands.

We will continue to advocate across government for the NSW Government's *50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands*, taking a metropolitan view while embracing the local perspective.



## Our work

**Our work is driven by the NSW Government's 50-Year Vision. We're charged with championing this vision, to create Greater Sydney as a 'city within a park'.**

We will recognise and conserve the cultural heritage and values of First Nations Peoples, so that the Parklands Estate can provide the opportunity for First Nations Peoples to connect with Country. We will also establish long-term and mutually beneficial partnerships that support the relationships of First Nations Peoples with Country.

### Our work aims to:

- protect, respect and care for the natural environment
- ensure best practice community involvement in parkland planning, activation and management
- keep a local focus and a metropolitan perspective
- nurture important and unique heritage and special landscapes
- advocate for contemporary and holistic strategic planning for Sydney's network of parklands
- build our reputation as a recognised leader in design excellence for the community
- create and manage a sustainable network of Sydney's iconic State-owned open space and parklands
- help the NSW Government to realise city-wide objectives for a green, cool city.



## Our vision

**We will advocate for the NSW Government's vision for Sydney to become a 'city within a park'. We aspire to enhance Greater Sydney as a global city through the parklands' links to international visitors, a stronger economy and a window to the world.**

The simple word 'within' is critical, as we position the city within the parklands and not vice versa.

We're enabling a living, breathing city in a park with community-focused open space that is connected through the city's grid of waterways and green space – a connected network of waterways, parklands and bushland across Greater Sydney.

It's about parklands that are accessible, meaningful, sustainable and part of people's everyday life and community health.

It's about creating a positive legacy for future generations and protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage.

This vision puts people at the centre of the parklands experience, including residents, domestic and international visitors, local businesses and community groups. The vision suggests the notion of people being active within and engaged with the Parklands Estate.

The vision is realised by making the Parklands Estate accessible, and by building partnerships and advocating for sustainability and growth. Our work is enabled by First Nations reconciliation and celebration, community engagement, business support, and people and culture.





## Our Board

Our Board brings together a group of experts across public policy, business and parklands management.

Some members have been on the boards of our associated trusts and each member has the knowledge and skills to advocate to communities and government for the Parklands Estate.

Their expertise guides our work to improve how we plan for, manage and enhance open space and parklands.



**Michael Rose AM**  
BA LLB (Chair)



**Ceinwen Kirk-Lennox**  
BBus (Land Economy), GAICD



**Julie Bindon**  
BTP, DipLE



**Kaylie Salvatori**  
BA, BLandArch (Hons 1), Fellow AILA



**Dr Robert Lang PhD**  
BE (Hons), BSc, FAICD, FIE(Aust)



**Sharon Veale**  
BA (Hons), MA (Applied History), GradDip (Urban and Regional Planning)



**Siobhan Toohill**  
BSc(Arch), BArch, GradDipUrbDes



**Suellen Fitzgerald\***  
BSc(Ecology), MLandArch, FAILA, MAICD (former Chief Executive)



**Lyall Gorman\***  
BEd, MBA



**Patrick St John\***  
BCom



**Joshua French**  
BSc, BLandArch, Fellow AILA  
(Acting Chief Executive from 1 July 2022)

\* Term ended 30 June 30 2022



## Our staff

Our people come from a range of backgrounds and form a professional group of individuals dedicated to parks and open spaces.

Our team of 92 staff – plus our partners and contractors – range from those working in visitor services, events, education, sport and recreation, heritage protection and planning and design, assets and property, to our park rangers, horticulturalists and environmental officers.

Around a quarter of our staff has been recruited since the agency's formation – we're both a young team with fresh ideas, and an experienced team with expertise and knowledge. Together, we're drawing from a diversity of skills that will help us to achieve the strategic directions of the 50-Year Vision.

**I love that we are driven by excellence in all our outcomes, and although many of us work in different groups, with different outcomes, we are all incredibly connected to deliver what is the most phenomenal green space for the people of Sydney.**

**Bernadette Taylor-Frankland**  
Fundraising Officer



**It's fair to say that no two days working in Major Events are the same. What makes Greater Sydney Parklands so special is the way that working groups come together to assist with the event delivery. It's this collaboration that provides so much engagement with the wider general public thus creating special moments and long lasting memories.**

**Ross Morrison**  
A/Senior Programs Officer





# The Parklands Estate

**Greater Sydney is encircled by national parks and intersected by diverse open spaces, parklands and waterways.**

Across government, we are working towards the creation of a Greater Sydney Blue Green Grid – an interconnected network that will keep the city cool, encourage healthy lifestyles, protect waterways, enhance biodiversity and ensure ecological resilience.

Anchoring the Blue Green Grid are Sydney’s national parks and the iconic Greater Sydney Parklands Estate – urban parks that are owned and managed by the NSW Government.

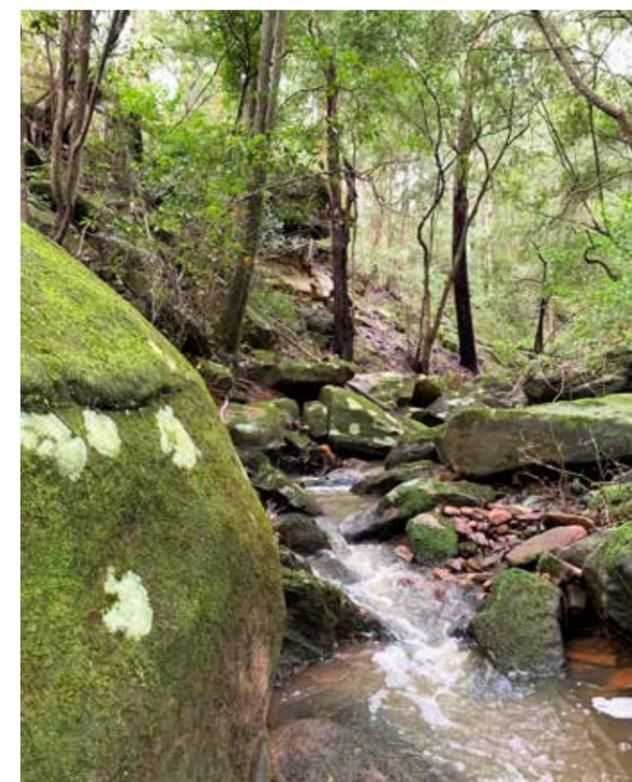
We want to connect the Greater Sydney Parklands Estate with the variety of open spaces and parklands across Greater Sydney. Many of these spaces – from smaller pocket parks and footy fields to longer cycling trails, bushland walks or spaces along rivers, the harbour or the ocean – are managed by local councils.

As the pre-eminent voice and advocate for parks and open space in Greater Sydney in government, we will establish a Blue Green Grid Committee to advocate for a connected network of waterways and parks.



## Centennial Parklands

Centennial Parklands covers 360 hectares and includes Centennial Park, Moore Park and Queens Park. Created in the 19th century on the traditional lands of the Gadigal and Bidjigal people, today it is a much-loved mix of world-class sporting and entertainment events, local community sports or a place for casual get-togethers, and vast walking and cycling options.



## Parramatta Park

Parramatta Park was dedicated as a park in 1857. Across 85 hectares, it is home to World Heritage-listed convict historic sites and sits on the traditional land of the Burramattagal people. Today, the community can enjoy a variety of activities, while exploring ancient Aboriginal history as well as convict and colonial history.



## Callan Park

Callan Park on the Parramatta River sits on the traditional land of the Gadigal and Wangal people. Once home to Sydney’s first purpose-built mental health facility – with these 1870s buildings still intact today – it is a place where we’ll work to celebrate and preserve the area’s unique heritage and picturesque waterfront.



## Fernhill Estate

The 423 hectare Fernhill Estate near Penrith is on Darug Country, close to Gandangara Country. At its heart is Fernhill House, one of the most significant Greek Revival houses from the Early Colonial era, surrounded by rural open parklands and now open for self-guided weekend walks. We’ll work with the community to optimise this beautiful estate while protecting the legacy and stories of the past.

## Western Sydney Parklands

At 5,280 hectares and stretching 27 kilometres, Western Sydney Parklands is Australia’s largest urban park. Sitting on the traditional lands of the Gandangara and Darug people, the parklands offer a variety of things to do, from the 200-hectare park at Bungarribee to over 60 kilometres of tracks and trails, and picnic and BBQ areas.





# Working with the community

We know we'll be able to do more for the Parklands Estate by proactively collaborating with Greater Sydney's communities, councils, state agencies, industry and others.

- We're engaging with local communities and listening to local voices – as we get to know more, we can better respect and embrace each park and its community.
- We're looking to talk to a true diversity of people: people from different cultural backgrounds, people living with disability, older people, younger people, women and girls, and families.
- We're working closely with local councils and community stakeholders, so that we can translate their local perspective when we're working at a city-wide level.
- We'll consistently partner with First Nations Peoples and communities so that shared decision-making and co-design practices can help us to realise Caring for Country principles.

We will reflect, honour and celebrate the elements that people love for future generations. Our commitment is embedded in Caring for Country principles and we will be guided by knowledge and ideas of local First Nations Peoples.

We want to understand the breadth of people's needs, aspirations and priorities, then translate these into practical ideas and solutions for the Parklands Estate.



## Already, several messages from our engagement processes are clear:

- People support a strong voice for open spaces and parklands, as expressed through the 50-Year Vision, and see the uniqueness of each park as integral to how we will advocate for Greater Sydney's open spaces and parklands.
- People seek to be included in our decisions, and for these decisions to be made with transparency and efficiency.
- People support the implementation of the Greater Sydney Blue Green Grid.
- The community loves its parks, and engagement that recognises local and diverse voices will be vital.
- The community wants us to seek out a range of opinions, expertise and feedback from all segments of society.
- Our decisions must be based on evidence and driven by data.
- People want to know that those making decisions, including at Board level, are skilled in best-practice park management, with experience relevant to each park's attributes and challenges.

Our engagement will continue to cover the many aspects of enjoying and caring for Sydney's open space and parklands across nature and the environment, sport, health and recreation, culture and creativity, learning and education, philanthropy and heritage.

Having worked across a range of capital works projects in collaboration with both external stakeholders and teams within the agency, working at GSP is a rewarding and enriching experience to be a part of.

Charbel Rizk  
Project Officer

Over the past year, we undertook or reported on several engagement processes.

**At Centennial Parklands and Callan Park:**

- The Centennial Parklands CCC met five times over the year, providing a forum for communication, input and relationship building between the Trust and the community.
- With a phased approach to remove parking from the grass at Moore Park, we are consulting with the community on new uses for these green spaces.
- We worked constructively and extensively with the equestrian community to create a new Code of Conduct at the Centennial Parklands Equestrian Centre.
- We held community webinars for more than 300 people in August and September 2021 to present plans for the Waterfront Green area, public toilets and Wharf Road car park at Callan Park. More than 400 people responded to online surveys.
- In October and November 2021 we surveyed people to understand how they want buildings in Callan Park to be adapted and used, receiving more than 1,000 responses.
- Following extensive engagement with the community, we released a Companion Animal Management Plan (CAMP) for Callan Park in June 2022.

**At Parramatta Park:**

- We held an online seminar to let people know about the first stage of the People’s Loop – a new, protected walking and cycling loop – at Parramatta Park.
- We consulted with the community on the future of Wistaria Gardens, which is now part of Parramatta Park.
- We partnered with City of Parramatta on its Parramatta Nights festival and presented ‘Rock on the Park’ at The Crescent.

“ This year in particular has seen great progress in the revitalisation of Callan Park with the start of capital works at the waterfront and some key planning initiatives to make the space a safer and more inviting place to visit. We couldn’t have achieved our goals without the cross-agency collaboration.

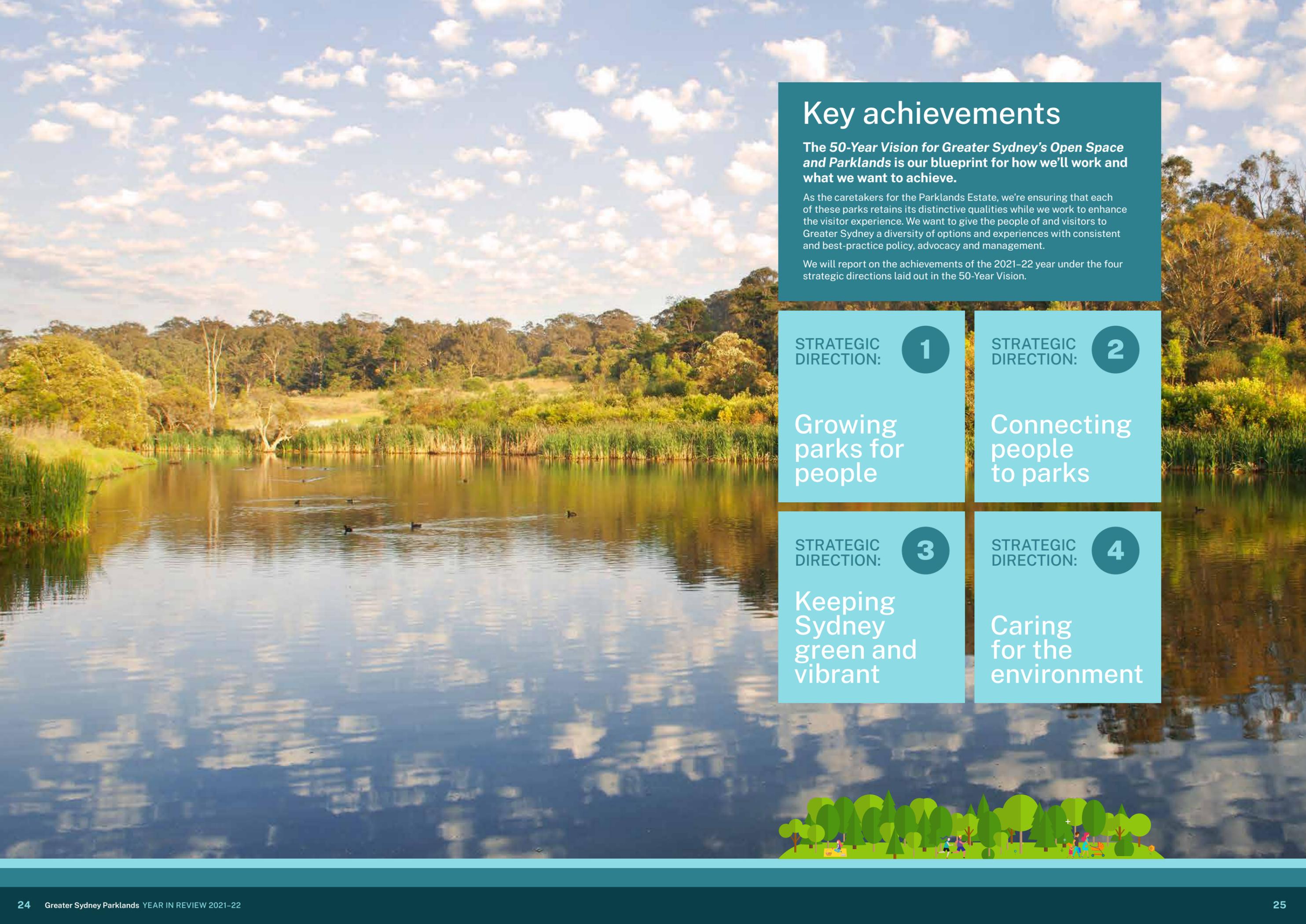
Sarah Cameron  
Senior Manager Callan Park



**Western Sydney Parklands and Fernhill Estate:**

- We worked with farming tenants to better understand the potential for agri-tourism opportunities at Horsley Park Precinct in Western Sydney Parklands.
- In addition to welcoming new community members to Fernhill Estate through self-guided walks, we directly consulted with people on ways to improve access to Fernhill Estate from Mulgoa Road, and worked through feedback on the draft Landscape Master Plan.
- We are continuing to work directly with Aboriginal knowledge holders on effective landscaping works, habitat remediation and tree planting at Fernhill Estate, drawing from Caring for Country principles.





# Key achievements

**The 50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands is our blueprint for how we'll work and what we want to achieve.**

As the caretakers for the Parklands Estate, we're ensuring that each of these parks retains its distinctive qualities while we work to enhance the visitor experience. We want to give the people of and visitors to Greater Sydney a diversity of options and experiences with consistent and best-practice policy, advocacy and management.

We will report on the achievements of the 2021-22 year under the four strategic directions laid out in the 50-Year Vision.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

1

Growing parks for people

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

2

Connecting people to parks

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

3

Keeping Sydney green and vibrant

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

4

Caring for the environment





Invested  
**\$42 million**  
in capital works programs



Commenced  
**improvement works**  
at Queens Park amenities, Hordern Pavilion, E.S. Marks Athletic Field and the Royal Hall of Industries



Began restoring  
**Wistaria Gardens**  
in June, with the agreement of NSW Health



**Consulted**  
with the community  
on Callan Park's Companion Animal Management Plan



Invested  
**\$2 million**  
in restoration works  
to the Moore Park Toll House



Key achievements **STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1**

# Growing parks for people

**Strong visitation as people flocked to the Parklands Estate during the extended COVID-19 lockdown.**

**Our events and community programs – both in person and online – allowed the community to come together and connect with nature in the heart of the city.**

We want Greater Sydney's open spaces and parklands to always meet the needs and aspirations of residents and visitors. If we want to encourage people to be active, get healthy and feel good, we need to work with councils, the community and other partners to help make these places accessible to everyone, with flexible and multipurpose spaces for a range of experiences.

## Visitors

The Parklands Estate was essential to many people across Greater Sydney as the financial year kicked off with an extended lockdown from late June to mid-October 2021. As people flocked to the outdoors, we also switched some of our programs online – for example, kids could still virtually discover Centennial Parklands and Western

Sydney Parklands during Science Week activities.

We worked with the community to consult on Callan Park's Companion Animal Management Plan. The plan clearly identifies on-and off-leash areas for our furry visitors, while balancing the needs of other park users.

At Centennial Parklands, we commenced improvement works at Queens Park amenities, Hordern Pavilion and the Royal Hall of Industries. At Centennial Park Equestrian Centre, we released a new Participant Code of Conduct, shaped by the centre's community, and welcomed new riding school businesses and an equine therapy service.

## Health and wellbeing

We're continuing to provide even better sporting and

recreation facilities that encourage people to get outdoors, exercise and spend time with others.

We continued our work to relocate the 86-hectare Wylde BMX and Mountain Bike facility and commenced the upgrade of the E.S. Marks Athletics Field at Centennial Park, including an internationally-certified athletics track.

We invested \$7.3 million in park facility improvement, management and renewal works at Parramatta Park, including refurbished toilet blocks at Murray Gardens and West Domain, and new practice wickets at Old Kings Oval.

The \$2 million in restoration works to the Moore Park Toll House transformed the building into a health and wellbeing hub for the community while preserving a gorgeous heritage building on one of Sydney's busiest intersections.





# Connecting people to parks

We are also focused on how people get to and from open space and parklands. This is about the provision of quality open space near where people live and work and how we can help to provide better connections to and from the Parklands Estate – especially when these connections can be safe, sheltered green hubs that form part of the Greater Sydney Blue Green Grid.

## Walking and cycling

Along the 27 kilometre corridor of Western Sydney Parklands, we're working to connect the area's many spaces and places, and we saw a 100% increase in people using the parklands' 60 kilometres of tracks and trails.

Cyclists can now ride safely all the way from Sydney's east to the CBD with a new pathway completed along Queens Park, modernising what was once a goat track alongside Darley Road. We collaborated with Randwick and Waverley councils on the project, which was funded by Transport for NSW.

We consulted with the community on stage 1 of the People's Loop at Parramatta Park and commenced work on what will become a car-free space in the West Domain for walking, running and cycling.

We consulted with the community on the Waterfront Green at Callan Park, which will include new green space, new amenities, car parking, and improved paths and lighting including along the Bay Run.

## Community connections

We're connecting communities with ongoing initiatives and annual events and activities or one-off experiences. The Horsley Park Urban Farms precinct in Western Sydney Parklands, for example, continued to thrive as many people looked locally for their fresh food.

Centennial Parklands' Volunteer Program involved the community in programs such as Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub bush regeneration, Guriwal Trail restoration, bird surveying, Flying-fox monitoring, native plant nursery assistance, litter pick-up and more.

We provided two nature play pop-up playgrounds for children at Callan Park and around 600 children enjoyed the associated activities led by our educators.

In person and virtual nature education experiences at Centennial Parklands reached nearly 4,000 kids. At Western Sydney Parklands, we held the Bringing Back the Bush program with 1,142 primary school aged students, who planted 2,800 trees and shrubs throughout the year.

Sydney Symphony Under the Stars was postponed from its original January date due to COVID-19 and restaged in March, with around 5,000 people enjoying the spectacular surrounds of The Crescent at Parramatta Park despite some wet weather.



**100% increase** in usage of the tracks and trails of Western Sydney Parklands compared to the previous year



Staff undertook an online **cultural competency program**, run by Mirri Mirri



More than **50,000 kids** took part in education programs – both in person and online



Over **1,000** students planted **2,800 trees and shrubs** at Western Sydney Parklands



**Sydney Symphony Under the Stars** welcomed around **5,000 people** to Parramatta Park



# Keeping Sydney green and vibrant



**Our work is shaped around the city's landscapes, its complex natural processes and unique heritage stories. As an urban parks agency, we aim to understand how people feel about natural and cultural landscapes and where these places sit in people's hearts and minds.**

**We want to keep working towards remarkable, memorable and distinctive parklands and help to expand the Parklands Estate in a sustainable way.**

## Creating public spaces and places

We worked with the community during the exhibition of a draft Landscape Master Plan for Fernhill Estate and have commenced planning works to start creating community and recreation facilities over time.

The phased approach to remove parking from the grass at Moore Park East has allowed us to add a new cricket wicket and turf Upper Kippax field, seeing a return of community cricket for locals to enjoy. We will come up with potential ideas for Lower Kippax and Showground Field with the community as the parking is removed in stages over the next three years.

As part of the environmental remediation of Musgrave Pond on the edge of Centennial Park, we removed 2,780 tonnes of accumulated sludge and sediment and undertook landscape works around this popular picnic spot.

We lodged development applications to transform one hectare of waterfront land into a beautiful, safe and accessible recreation area at Callan Park.

## Heritage

Parramatta Park's Boer War Memorial won top prize in the Continuing Traditions category at the National Trust Heritage Awards. We worked with apprentices from

the Traditional Restoration Company's stonemason apprenticeship program to carry out this careful repair.

The NSW heritage-listed Wistaria Gardens and Glengarriff House were vested to Parramatta Park Trust, adding around two hectares to the 85 hectares of the park. Our work to restore and caretake Wistaria Gardens commenced in June with the agreement of NSW Health in preparation for the transfer.

We invested nearly \$3.3 million on restoration works in 2021-22 to Callan Park's heritage assets, including renovations to Bonnyview, the Cane Room, Balmain Road Gates and Guard House and Repatriation Ward.



**16,000 trees** planted in Western Sydney Parklands

**377 trees** planted and grassland improvements in Centennial Parklands



**Removal of exotic weeds** in Parramatta Park's woodland settings and along the Parramatta River



**\$6.38 million** heritage restoration works across the Parklands Estate





# Caring for the environment

**Greater Sydney's parklands provide native vegetation in urban and suburban places as habitats for animals. They are the lungs of the city and we are focused on how we can use these areas to respond to changes in the climate as they support and sustain biodiversity. This also requires a focus on healthy waterways to cool the city.**

**We are continuously looking to smart and resilient solutions as we plan, manage and maintain open spaces and parklands.**

## Bushland protection

The Parklands Estate's native bushland gives us an insight into what these places were like before colonisation.

Our work this year included a focus on the endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub and pond edge vegetation at Centennial Park and 200 new trees at the Sandstone Ridge Woodland.

Callan Point Bushcare volunteers continued to work on remnant bushland, improving biodiversity, removing weeds and planting native trees in Callan Park.

Bush regeneration works continued in natural areas of Parramatta Park with Muru Mittigar, an Aboriginal social enterprise that develops workplace skills training and increases sustained employment opportunities for Aboriginal Australians.

Record rainfall impacted the banks of Parramatta River and other tributaries, causing significant erosion. While we were able to mitigate the erosion, we have commenced design works to develop a long-term solution.

With 1,500 hectares of bushland under bush regeneration management programs at Western Sydney Parklands, Cumberland Plain Woodland and River-flat Eucalypt Forest communities continue to improve, with grasses and wildflowers in abundance after the heavy rain.

In addition to tree planting at Western Sydney Parklands, we removed invasive weeds, particularly the Lantana that has enjoyed the heavy rain and mild weather. We undertook similar work at Fernhill Estate, controlling invasive Lantana and privet from the corridors along Littlefields Creek and Mulgoa Creek.

## Species protection

We planted 377 canopy trees from tubestock, 200 mid-storey shrubs and 200 grasses native to the Sydney Basin to enhance and expand the Grey-Headed Flying-fox Camp in Lachlan Swamp, Centennial Park. The Centennial Parklands Foundation helped to support habitat for microbats by installing 10 roosting boxes.

Working with Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service (WIRES), we installed a sprinkler system in six trees at the Grey-headed Flying-fox camp at Parramatta Park to give wildlife carers a mechanism for cooling stressed animals during extreme heat events.



### Undertook emergency repair works

at Fernhill Estate, Western Sydney Parklands and Parramatta Park due to severe weather



### Supported and worked with local bushcare and landcare groups

including Mulgoa Valley Landcare Group, Callan Park Bushcare and volunteer groups at Centennial Parklands



### Worked to improve biodiversity

and remove weeds and feral animals, leading to return of native flora and fauna





**We will recognise and conserve First Nations Peoples' cultural heritage and values.**



## Looking ahead

**In the next 12 months, we're looking forward to championing our work – and our position – as a city-wide urban parklands agency, advocating for quality, open green space, in partnership with stakeholders and the community.**

Foremost on our minds will be protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of the Parklands Estate, including the ongoing enrichment of Fernhill Estate and Callan Park, and other recent additions to the estate, including Wistaria Gardens at Parramatta Park.

Looking ahead, we will review new parks that may benefit from inclusion in the estate, while also working across different levels of government to improve Blue Green Grid connections between Greater Sydney's open spaces and parklands.

While those efforts will require a metropolitan perspective, we will be steadfast in our local focus, so that we can see more people enjoying the parklands and more people involved in their management and care through community consultation.

We will recognise and conserve First Nations Peoples' cultural heritage and values. We will endeavour to provide opportunities for First Nations Peoples to connect with Country and will establish long-term and mutually beneficial partnerships that support the ongoing relationships of First Nations Peoples with Country.

### Over the next 12 months, we will focus on:

- delivering new recreation facilities for the community, such as the Waterfront Green at Callan Park, phase one works at Moore Park East
- implementing the objectives of the new Act and the ambitions of the 50-Year Vision
- developing a Consultation and Engagement Framework to guide how we consult and engage with the community
- establishing community trustee boards for each of the parks in the Parklands Estate, while continuing to engage extensively and creatively with the community
- improving and expanding the Greater Sydney Blue Green Grid, including progressing the establishment of a Blue Green Grid Committee
- investigating potential additions to the Parklands Estate, particularly in response to the expected population growth in Western Sydney
- building the resilience of the Parklands Estate to a changing climate and more intense natural hazards
- continuing our ongoing efforts to sustainably and efficiently manage the Parklands Estate.



Prepared by Greater Sydney Parklands,  
Level 1, 6 Parramatta Square, Parramatta, NSW 2150

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