

THE FUTURE OF MOORE PARK SOUTH

A proposal to convert part of
Moore Park Golf Course to a new park

DISCUSSION PAPER

FEBRUARY 2024



Acknowledging Country

We acknowledge 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.

We will 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.

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Minister's foreword



The Hon. Paul Scully

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Parks are places for people to meet, relax, exercise and connect with Country. As our cities grow so does the importance of providing equitable access to green space.

In October 2023, the Premier and I announced the NSW Government's plan to transform part of Moore Park Golf Course into a new public park. This park will provide the communities of Waterloo, Zetland, Redfern and Green Square with access to green space that improves quality of life. It also recognises the regional significance of Moore Park, as part of Centennial Parklands, and its social, cultural, economic and ecological contribution to Sydney as a global city.

This Discussion Paper outlines the Government's plan to repurpose 20 hectares of Moore Park Golf Course while retaining a minimum 9-hole golf course, the existing driving range and clubhouse. It is an important step to addressing the needs of residents living in the city's most densely populated suburbs while providing a pathway for golf to continue in Moore Park.

Our plan builds on the NSW Government's 50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands. Greater Sydney Parklands (GSP) will deliver the Government's plan for Moore Park South and has an important role in advocating for open space and parklands across Greater Sydney. GSP is a recognised leader in park management.

Consultation on repurposing of part of the golf course will build on our understanding of community needs and aspirations for a new centrally located recreational park.

I encourage you to get involved and have your say to help shape this important recreational space.

A handwritten signature of Paul Scully in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

1.0 Introduction

In October 2023, the NSW Government announced plans to transform 20 hectares of the Moore Park Golf Course into a new public park for Sydney. This decision responded to the needs of the growing communities surrounding Moore Park. Currently, there are almost 690,000 people within a 5km radius of Centennial Parklands (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 census data). Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure population projections estimate that the population will rise by 100,000 people to almost 790,000 in 2041.

The large majority of these people live in higher density housing forms such as apartments and terraces, with limited access to private open space. To support this density, the Government is acting on a need to deliver more public open space for people to enjoy the outdoor environment.

The NSW Government will repurpose the current golf course's western boundary and part of the lands north of Dacey Avenue for transformed public open space and retain a minimum 9-hole golf course and the operation of the existing driving range and clubhouse.

Implementation of the proposal will commence after the current operating agreement ends in mid-2026.

1.1 Purpose of Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper provides the community and stakeholders with an opportunity to share views on the future for Moore Park South. It provides information about Moore Park, the NSW Government's plan for the future of the parkland and considerations for the implementation of the proposal into the future.

We are seeking your feedback to understand:

- **How would you like to use the new recreational area within Moore Park. What would you like to see and do there?**
- **What opportunities are there to reimagine golf at Moore Park?**
- **What, if any, barriers are there for you in accessing this area of open space?**
- **What else should we be thinking about with this proposed change?**

Understanding what is important to you will help shape the development of the proposal in the future.

Overall, the proposal will deliver:

- **High quality, sustainable outcomes**
- **Operational excellence**
- **A legacy for future generations**

A new park that is:

- **Inviting**
- **Accessible**
- **For everyone**

A future for golf in Moore Park that is:

- **Innovative**
- **Public**

1.2 Measures for success

Guiding this discussion paper are seven core measures of success. They are:

1. A high quality recreational park of 20 hectares that is easy to access and well connected to Inner and Eastern Sydney
2. A multi-use space which creates a legacy for the diverse needs of a growing city
3. A backyard for residents of Zetland, Waterloo, Redfern, Surry Hills and Kensington
4. A destination which extends the Moore Park visitor experience and retains its status as a sporting and entertainment hub for the community
5. An enhancement of the existing environmental and cultural values of Centennial Parklands, including Caring for Country outcomes.
6. A future for public golf at Moore Park that retains a minimum 9 hole golf course, the driving range and clubhouse
7. A sustainable approach which enables operational excellence

Implementation of the Government's proposal by Greater Sydney Parklands will be informed by community feedback and seek to achieve design and operational excellence to ensure a high quality outcome and lasting legacy for the people of Sydney.

2.0 Strategic context

2.1 Caring for Country

The Traditional Custodians of the area, known today as Moore Park, are the Gadi and Gamey people. Prior to colonisation the land was part of an extensive complex of freshwater wetlands and swamplands interspersed with gently undulating and rolling coastal sand dunes. Moore Park held abundant plant and animal life, and the Country was maintained through sustainable hunting, fishing, and plant collecting practices.

Since then, the landscape has changed considerably with bush scrub disappearing and three of the four large sandhills in the Moore Park area being levelled, including Mt Rennie where the Moore Park golf clubhouse is now located. Moore Park’s land uses have also changed over time, from traditional hunting and gathering, a camp settlement, a place to graze animals, a cemetery, a public park, a garbage tip and now a public park and golf course. Aboriginal people cared for this land for thousands of years prior to colonisation and their ongoing connection with Country will be considered in outcomes for the site.

2.2 Moore Park 2040

Today, the use of Moore Park is guided by the Moore Park 2040 Master Plan (MP2040) which was developed with the community and finalised in 2017. The vision for Moore Park in MP2040 is a place for everyone, a place that offers a diverse range of engaging recreational and sporting activities. MP2040 is built on 4 principles that continue to guide GSP’s management of Moore Park.

These are summarised in Figure 1 [below].

MP2040 acknowledges Moore Park plays a number of different roles at a variety of city scales:

- It is a backyard or local park for the surrounding communities from Paddington in the north to Kensington in the south. At this level, City of Sydney has identified a need for open space to address existing deficiencies, housing pressures and growth (refer Figure 6) near Moore Park, specifically large unstructured green space for environmental outcomes, exercise, rest and relaxation as outlined in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050.
- As part of the broader Centennial Parklands, Moore Park is a regional area of open space for people across the inner and eastern suburbs of Sydney. Randwick and Waverley Councils have identified additional open space needs for their communities and a preference for a regional approach due to spatial limitations within their local government areas.
- As a unique entertainment, sports and events precinct, Moore Park is a valuable metropolitan asset drawing people from across the state. The open space role and function of Moore Park is part of Centennial Parklands as a destination and needs to respond to this context.

Overall, the proposal needs to find a balanced outcome that accommodates each of these different ways of interacting with public open space, addresses the recreational needs of a growing city and cares for the environmental and cultural values of Aboriginal people and their connection with Country.

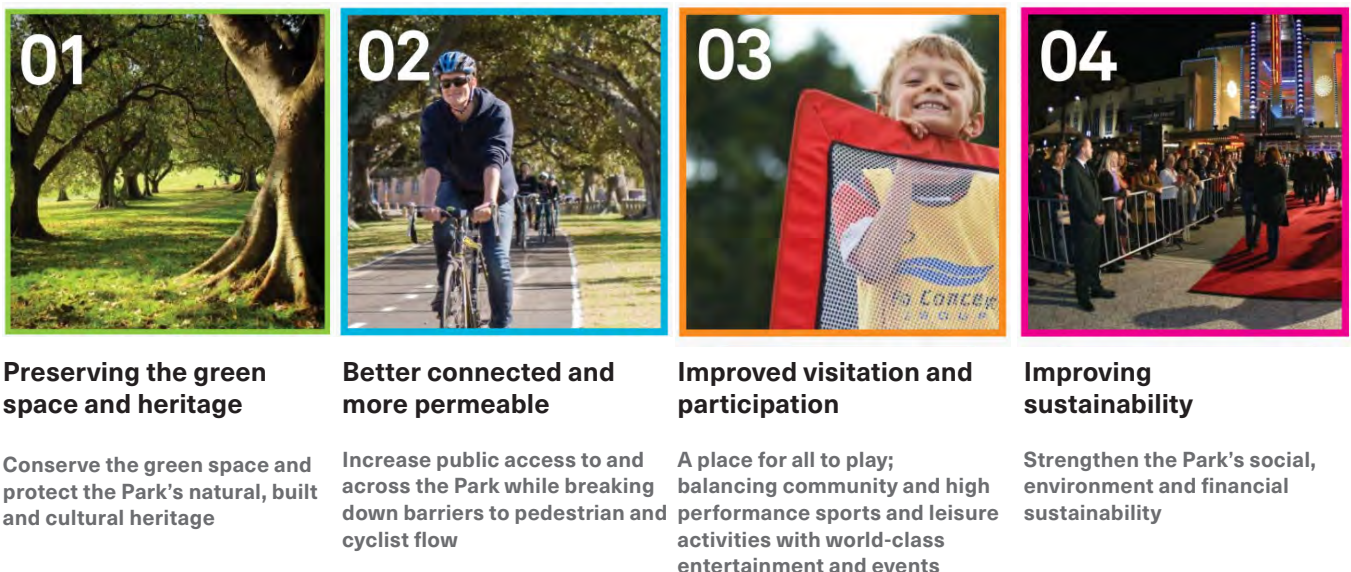


Figure 1: Moore Park Master Plan principles

3.0 About the location

Moore Park is part of the broader Centennial Parklands which includes Centennial, Moore and Queens Parks. Combined, these parks are 370 hectares and are the largest area of open space in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, stretching across the three local government areas (LGAs) of Sydney, Randwick and Waverley and adjacent to a fourth, Woollahra LGA.

Moore Park is 146 hectares in total with the Moore Park Golf Course itself being 45 hectares, representing approximately 12% of the total Centennial Parklands.

The site for the proposal is the Moore Park South precinct which is bound by Anzac Parade to the east, Cleveland Street to the north, South Dowling Street and the Eastern Distributor to the west and existing residential development to the south.



Figure 2: The proposal in context

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3.0 About the location

3.1 Moore Park South over time



40,000 years ago - 1788
The Country later known as Moore Park is lived on and cared for by its Traditional Custodians, the Gadi and Gamey people.



1840
A space contained by Mount Steele and Mount Rennie, where the Moore Park Golf Course now stands, is used as a cemetery.



1901
The "Perfectus Garbage Destructor and Disinfecter" is built at the corner of Dacey Avenue and Dowling Street.



1922
The golf course doubles in size with the acquisition of land on the south side of Dacey Avenue.



Photo: City of Sydney Archives

1936-7
The Sydney Athletics Field in Moore Park, dating from 1906, is renamed the E.S. Marks Field. A year later, the decommissioned incinerator chimney is demolished and the golf course expands into the site.



2022
Upgrades to E.S. Marks Athletics Field are completed.

Moore Park's future
The NSW Government announces that 20 hectares of Moore Park Golf Course is set to be transformed into a new park.

1811
Governor Lachlan Macquarie makes a bequest of 405 hectares of land, known as the "Sydney Common", for people to graze animals.



1866-7
153 hectares of the Common is designated a public park. A year later, it is named after Charles Moore, the mayor of the City of Sydney. Part of the park is levelled for planting ornamental trees and laying out recreation grounds.



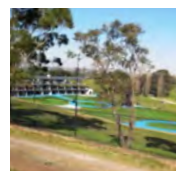
1913
Moore Park Municipal Golf Links, a 9-hole golf course, opens. It must share the land with garbage tips.



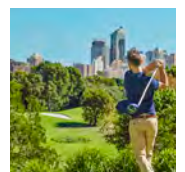
1926
The Moore Park golf clubhouse is constructed on top of Mount Rennie, incorporating two wings of the historic toll house.



1996
The golf course completes work on new facilities, including a new driving range.





Today
Moore Park Golf Course is a popular public 18-hole course used by golfers of all ages and levels of experience.






3.0 About the location

3.2 Site analysis

Opportunities

- 1** There is an important separated cycle route along Bourke St that can be connected to.
- 6** Provide a connection to the existing active transport network via Danks St and Gadigal Ave.
- 2** There are sufficient active recreation facilities in and around the site, such as Bat and Ball oval and E.S. Marks Athletics field (refer Figure 8).
- 4**
- 10**
-  The site includes many mature trees that provide shade, amenity and habitat.
-  The distinctive topography of the site is part of its heritage value, provides views and can continue to form an important part of the landscape.

Constraints

-  The site is not directly serviced by public transport and bound on all sides by busy roads. Pedestrian access to the site is challenging; crossings at Charles St and Edmund Resch Reserve are inadequate, while major intersections do not prioritise pedestrians or cyclists.
-  South Dowling St-Eastern Distributor forms a noisy, unattractive barrier for pedestrians.
- 8** Dacey Ave is dark, noisy and unattractive to pedestrians and park users.
-  Golf course fencing provides safety for park users but is a barrier to east-west connectivity.



4.0 The future of Moore Park South

The proposal involves repurposing 20 hectares of the existing 18-hole Moore Park Golf Course as a new park to deliver more green space for recreation. The government will reclaim the golf course's western boundary and part of the lands north of Dacey Avenue for transformed public open space and retain a 9-hole golf course and the operation of the existing driving range and clubhouse.

In response to the NSW Government's commitment, Greater Sydney Parklands is exploring how to deliver the new parkland and a renewed golf experience for the community. This includes asking the community what they would like to see, use and do within this new park to inform the next phases of the project. It is important to note that space is limited, there are a number of considerations in transforming the parkland, and not all open space uses can be accommodated.

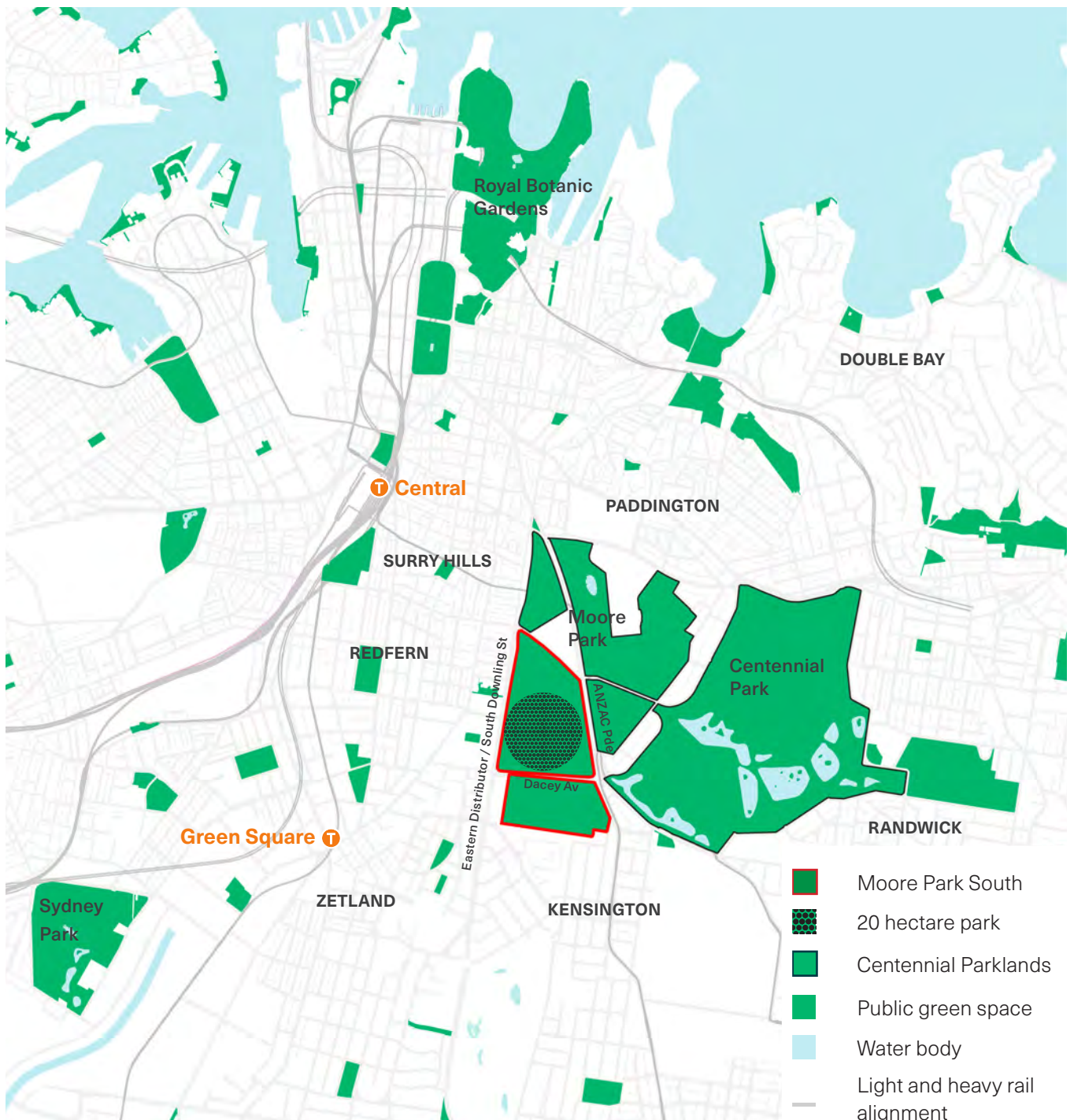


Figure 4: Context

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4.0 The future of Moore Park South

4.1 A new park

The proposal for a new park of 20 hectares will need to be inviting and accessible for everyone. A park of this size has the potential to deliver a number of new facilities such as those shown in the images below.

How would you like to use the new recreational area within Moore Park? What would you like to see and do there?



Nature play



Informal play and exploration



Open space play



Native grass meadows / places to dwell



Youth facilities



Walking and running paths



Outdoor fitness

4.0 The future of Moore Park South

4.2 A future for golf

The NSW Government has committed to a future for golf in Moore Park. With advances in technology and other changes, the proposal provides an opportunity to reimagine the golf offering at Moore Park to ensure it is innovative and continues to allow the public to enjoy different forms of the game. The images below provide some ideas of what the future of golf at Moore Park could be.

What opportunities are there to reimagine golf at Moore Park?



Youth pathways



Range technology



Short form golf



Outdoor entertainment



Night golf



A vibrant golf course

5.0 Considerations

Key areas to be considered in the development of the proposal are discussed below. Other factors will be addressed during the next phases of the project as required.

5.1 Demographics

There are almost 690,000 people within a 5km radius of Centennial Parklands (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 census data). The median age of the population is 36 years and the dominant household composition is families (58%). Of these families almost half are couples without children (48%). Couples with children and single parent families together represent a further 50% of the community.

While half of the community was born in Australia (50%), a large number was born in China (5%) or England (4%). Three quarters of the community (74%) speak English at home, while the remainder speak a variety of languages including Mandarin, Greek, Cantonese and Spanish. Higher density housing forms dominate with apartments and terraces comprising more than 80% of the dwellings

around the parklands. Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure population projections estimate that the population in the 5km radius around Centennial Parklands will rise by 100,000 people to almost 790,000 in 2041, a 15% increase.

The existing population directly surrounding Moore Park in 2021 was 120,000. It is expected to rise by 23,000 people to 143,000 by 2041 (a 19% increase). The largest increases in population are adjacent to the south western boundary of Moore Park. Specifically, Waterloo-Beaconsfield (incorporating Zetland) is expected to increase by more than 10,000 people to 52,000 people in 2041 and Kensington is expected to increase by more than 5,000 people to 22,000 people in 2041. These projections are subject to change.

The prevalence of higher density living with little access to private open space makes public open space even more important. Facilities provided in the future park need to respond to the demographics of the community and feedback gained through community engagement.



Figure 5: Demographic overview

5.0 Considerations

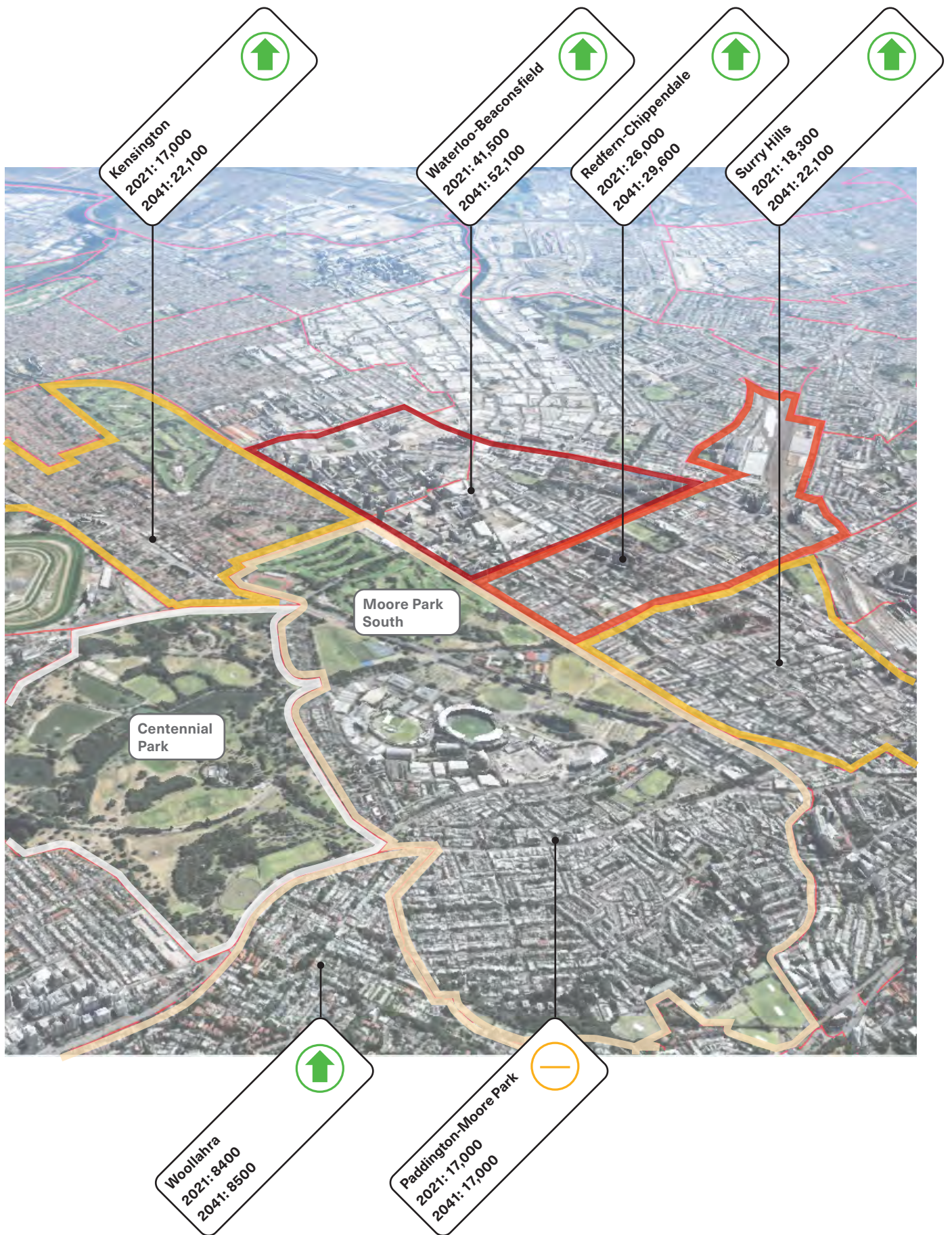


Figure 6: Projected population changes

5.0 Considerations

5.2 Access and connectivity

As a regional park within 2km of Sydney's CBD, walking, cycling or public transport should be the main modes of transport to reach the park. However, access is challenging as there is limited parking and it is surrounded by arterial roads on three sides and private residential development to the south. The at grade crossings of the arterial roads for pedestrians and cyclists limit ready access to the existing facilities. There is a dedicated pedestrian and cyclist bridge across the Eastern Distributor that provides access for the residents of Redfern to the northern part of the site. The width and location of this bridge will not accommodate the growth in demand likely with the creation of a new park of 20 hectares.

Buses and light rail both service the site, but the location of the stops do not remove the need for pedestrians to walk a distance and cross arterial roads to access the site.

Resolving access and connectivity issues will be further investigated in the development of the proposal.

Connectivity of the site to the broader Centennial Parklands is important as a critical piece of the blue-green grid in eastern Sydney. Connectivity should be facilitated to be as seamless as possible to allow the community to access the different recreational offerings across Centennial Parklands.

What, if any, barriers are there for you in accessing this area of open space?

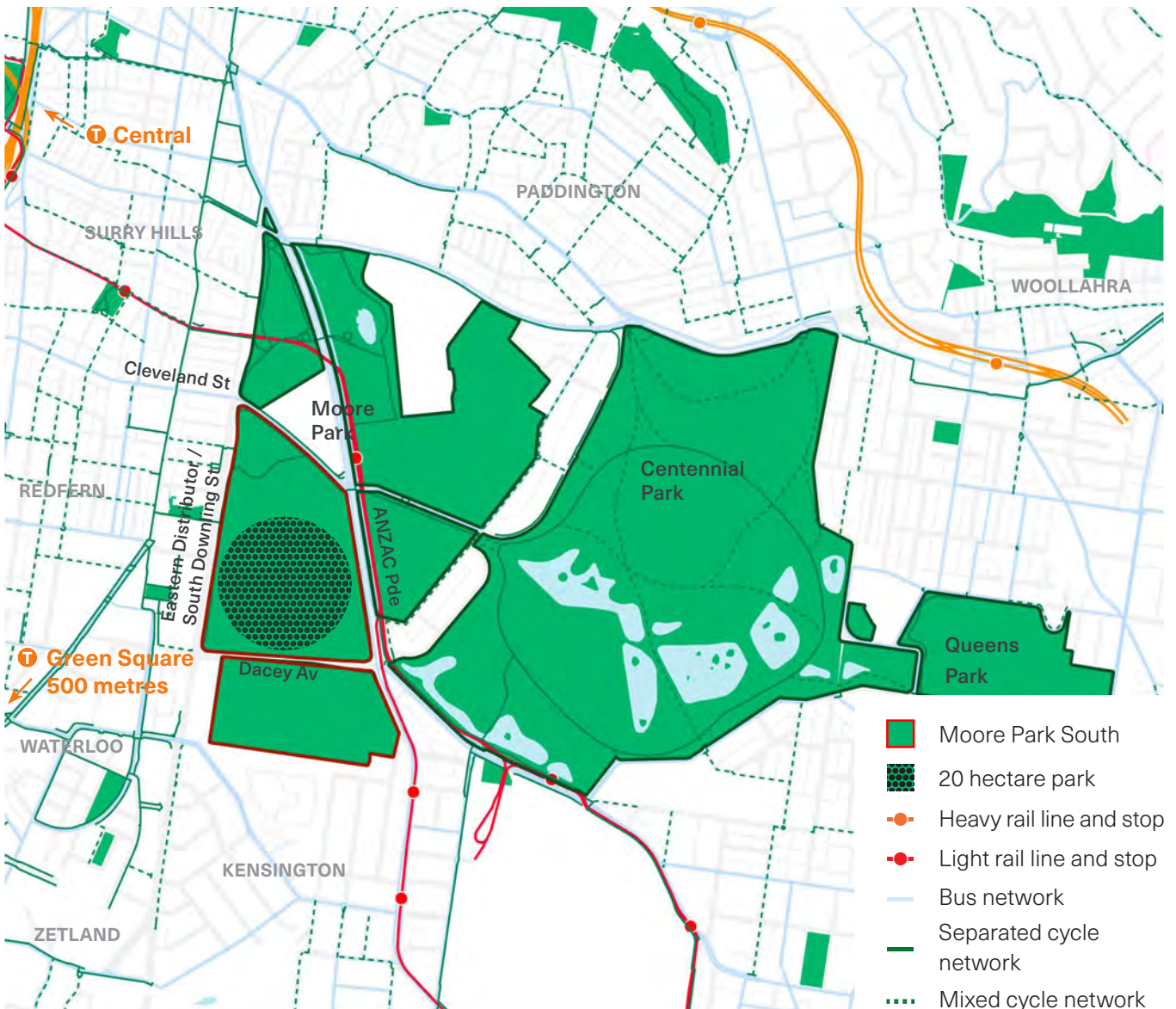


Figure 7: Connectivity overview

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5.0 Considerations

5.3 Recreational needs and facilities

The Parklands

Centennial Parklands is Australia's largest consolidated community sports precinct. It currently boasts over 120 community sports facilities accommodating over 30 different sports including golf, cricket, athletics, equestrian, tennis, soccer, netball, basketball, rugby league, rugby union and AFL.

The Parklands host over 900,000 active sports participants, with over 600 clubs, schools and associations using our facilities for a combined 400,000 booked community sport hours per annum.

While the sport and recreational offering in Centennial Parklands (including Moore Park) is extensive, strategic recreation and open space planning done by surrounding councils, indicates that as the availability of additional land for open space is very limited, planning for open space and recreational needs should focus on improved access to existing areas of open space and increasing flexibility of open space areas to deliver parks that are multipurpose. Looking at open space from a regional perspective is also important with planning and implementation being done cooperatively between local and state government.

In addition, with the increase in use of parklands during the COVID-19 pandemic the community is now seeking additional recreational opportunities in our parklands, including Moore Park. There are several types of recreational offerings that are not catered for in the broader Centennial Parklands, such as youth facilities or fitness equipment, or additional facilities that are lacking in this area of Moore Park such as public amenities, picnic shelters and BBQs. This proposal provides an opportunity to consider which, if any, of these facilities may be appropriate to provide in the new park.

Golf

Golf is one of the most played sports in Australia with studies showing 15% of the population participates each year. Golf contributes significant economic, social, health and environmental benefits to the community and continues to attract a diverse range of players across demographics.

Golf Australia's Community Benefits Report 2023 demonstrates young people, women, and families with children are more likely to engage in social and alternative format golf, such as mini golf.

The current proposal for Moore Park presents an opportunity to reimagine the golf offering and provide golf facilities that cater to a broader community base and activate the space for longer periods of time such as short form golf, hospitality, complementary entertainment and night golf.

5.0 Considerations



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- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Centennial Parklands | Netball and basketball courts | Randwick Racecourse |
| Fields for sports such as football, soccer | Walking and cycle track | Public green space |
| Cricket pitch location | Golf course hole | |
| Tennis courts | Driving range | |

Figure 8: Existing outdoor recreation facilities in the parklands

5.0 Considerations

5.4 Other considerations

5.4.1 Environment and sustainability

Moore Park has been referred to as the 'green lungs of the city'. Preserving habitat for wildlife and tree canopy for shade are important priorities. Golf courses are an important type of urban open space providing for a diversity and abundance of beetles, birds, bees and bats. Renewal of the golf offering will consider how to maximise trees and habitat, accommodate wildlife refuge and promote biodiversity hot spots. We will also consider opportunities for dark, night-time refuge areas for nocturnal species and retention of water in the landscape for cooling, amenity and habitat.

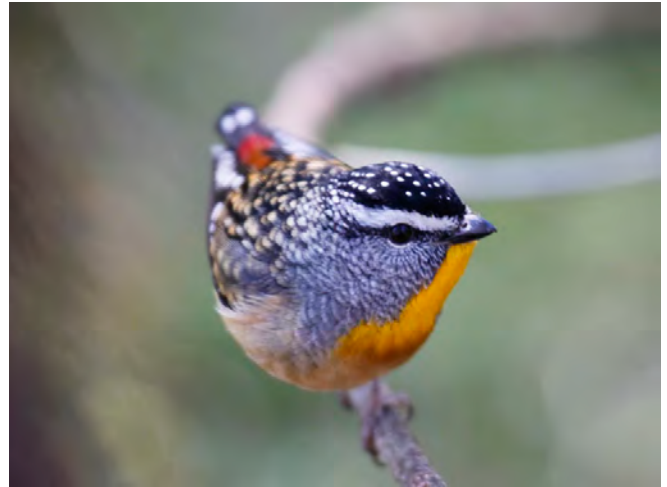
Greater Sydney Parklands takes a triple bottom line approach to sustainability considering environmental, social and economic factors. The proposal will seek to increase environmental benefits and respond to climate change, provide additional social infrastructure for the community and ensure long term economic viability including in ongoing care and management.



5.4.3 Activation and safety

The new park and golf offer will need to consider how best to activate the site to ensure adequate passive surveillance throughout the day and night. Transport for NSW's Safer Cities Survey (2023) found that people feel safest in public spaces with plenty of people around and that people's sense of safety can differ across age, gender, ability, cultural background and identity.

Providing appropriate access to the site across traffic corridors and ensuring a safe interface between the new park and golf offer will also be important considerations in the development of the proposal.



5.4.2 Culture and heritage

As the Country of the Gadi and Gamey people Moore Park remains important to Aboriginal people today. The landscape seen by the early colonists was the direct consequence of Aboriginal land management practices now lost through modification. Culture and knowledge of the site remain with Aboriginal people and the proposal allows us to recognise and connect with First Nations people, cultural heritage and values.

Moore Park is of state and local heritage significance and is associated with Aboriginal culture, knowledge and historic land management practices, early colonial animal grazing, and recreational sport and leisure use. The contemporary cultural landscape of the park is a distinctive one. Mount Steele is the only obvious pre-contact sand hill remaining and is a significant feature in the park's landscape.

The proposal will explore opportunities to acknowledge, recognise and conserve the site's cultural and heritage values.



Image: Transport for NSW

6.0 Where to from here?

6.1 Have your say

Following the NSW Government's decision to transform 20 hectares of the Moore Park Golf Course into a new park for Sydney, Greater Sydney Parklands is now seeking feedback from the public on how this decision can be implemented.

We are keen to learn more about:

- **How would you like to use the new recreational area within Moore Park. What would you like to see and do there?**
- **What opportunities are there to reimagine golf at Moore Park?**
- **What, if any, barriers are there for you in accessing this area of open space?**
- **What else should we be thinking about with this proposed change?**

Greater Sydney Parklands is seeking feedback on the discussion paper until 10 April 2024. You can get involved and have your say by:

- Sending us a submission via mooreparksouth@gsp.nsw.gov.au
- Completing our short survey: surveymonkey.com/r/mooreparksouth
- Greater Sydney Parklands will also be conducting some pop-up consultations within Moore Park and surrounding suburbs. Please go online to centennialparklands.com.au/mooreparksouth to find the details of these events. We look forward to seeing you there.

In addition to the above we will be meeting with nearby councils, as well as community and golfing groups to seek their perspectives on the proposed changes.

Following the close of the consultation period we will review feedback received and prepare a What We Heard Report on the outcomes of the consultation. All submissions received will be made publicly available and, along with the What We Heard Report, published online at centennialparklands.com.au.

6.2 Next steps

Greater Sydney Parklands is committed to understanding and responding to the needs and aspirations of all those with a passion for Sydney's open space and parklands. Understanding what is important to you will help shape the development of the proposal in the future.

It is anticipated that a What We Heard Report will be released later in 2024. The NSW Government has announced implementation of the proposal will commence after July 2026. Further detail regarding next steps will consider community feedback, site opportunities and constraints, operational requirements and ongoing financial implications to Greater Sydney Parklands.

