

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

White Paper - Parklands for People

A proposed legislative framework
for Greater Sydney Parklands

May 2021



www.dpie.nsw.gov.au

Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands, waters and sky of Dharug, Gundungurra, Dharawal and Eora Country and pays respect to the Elders of these lands past, present and emerging. We recognise First Nation Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

We acknowledge the rights and interests of First Nation 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 our First Nation communities of Greater Sydney to facilitate and support their custodianship of the parklands natural and cultural heritage and to ensure our parklands are places in which First Nation people are included socially, culturally and economically.



Find out more:

www.dpie.nsw.gov.au

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It is my vision, and that of the NSW Government, for Greater Sydney to evolve as a city within a park. This means increasing the amount of parkland through a network of connected green and blue spaces.



Photo: Western Sydney Parklands

Ministerial foreword

As the first NSW Minister for Public Spaces, I am driven by the once-in-a-generation opportunity to make parks and public space as important as the roads, train tracks and trams that move our people around.

We are blessed in this city and state by an abundance of bushland, waterways, beaches and parks compared to other global cities. But I believe we can do more – create more parkland, grow more trees, conserve more bushland.

It's no secret that the pandemic has emphasised the inherent need we have as humans for clean and safe public and open space. At the height of COVID-19, being denied or restricted access to these wondrous natural environments, which we have probably taken for granted, emphasised just how much we need them on a physical, emotional and psychological level.

That is why the creation of the Greater Sydney Parklands (GSP), and recent release of our *50-Year Vision for Parklands*, could not be more timely or opportune.

In 1888 Sir Henry Parkes said “this is the people’s park” at the opening of Centennial Park, which has been safeguarded as parkland for the people of Sydney, and indeed NSW, for many years.

It is my vision, and that of the NSW Government, for Greater Sydney to evolve as a city within a park. This means increasing the amount of parkland through a network of connected green and blue spaces.

This could create a legacy for the city that will be just as visionary as that of our forebears who, more than 100 years ago, set aside land for Parramatta Park, Moore Park and Centennial Park.

Coordinating this is a big job. By establishing GSP, we now have a central agency that can work with councils and other park managers to promote a grid of green spaces across the city – known as the Greater Sydney Green Grid.



Rob Stokes
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

In this white paper – which I encourage everyone with an interest parks to read – there is a clear outline of what we would like to do, and what we won’t do. The potential for the GSP to be the state’s manager of all new parks created over the next 50 years is what we would like to do. Removing local park trusts and the community voice is not what we will do.

Any decision on the future of our parkland must be validated by the views of the community. They are the park users and the park experts. Their voice gives meaning to what we are trying to do.

So please, read this white paper and share your thoughts, ideas and your own vision. Only by working together can we secure a sustainable future for our parks.

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Introduction



About this white paper

In July 2020, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment released a discussion paper to support a new 50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's open space and parkland.

The consultation for the discussion paper provided vital feedback from the community – namely, that people highly value parks and support an integrated and metropolitan approach to planning and parklands in Greater Sydney.

This white paper sits alongside our 50-Year Vision. It provides more depth and breadth to the 2020 proposal for the creation of a GSP agency, and gives the community another chance to voice their views.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to establish the right framework and operating model and allow the NSW Government to expand and manage the state-owned parks for a growing Greater Sydney.

Greater Sydney Parklands is about enabling a living breathing city in a park. With community-focused parks and connected through the through the Greater Sydney Blue and Green Grid – a connected network of waterways, parklands and bushland across Greater Sydney. It's about parklands that are accessible, meaningful, sustainable and part of everyday life. It's about creating a positive legacy for future generations.

A 50-Year Vision for Sydney's Open Space and Parklands

Councils, government agencies and stakeholders – including community groups, heritage experts and individuals – provided valuable feedback to shape the 50-Year Vision.

The vision is for Greater Sydney to be a city in a park, rather than just a collection of parks in the city.

The vision will achieve:

- a living and breathing city with a protected, celebrated and embraced natural environment
- a city of community-focused parks and open spaces that are connected through the Greater Sydney Green and Blue Grid
- a place that reflects the value and stories of the past, nurtures the present and sets the stage for stories yet to be told, including rich First Nations culture
- a city within its landscape, where open spaces and parklands are accessible, meaningful, sustainable and part of everyday life
- as much a parkland city as it is a harbour and river city, where people can easily access diverse types of high-quality parklands
- a place where people are custodians and wholeheartedly embrace and care for open space and parklands.

The 50-Year Vision sets 4 strategic directions:

1. Growing parks for people
2. Connecting people to parks
3. Keeping Sydney green and vibrant
4. Caring for the environment.

What is Greater Sydney Parklands?

GSP is a NSW Government agency established in July 2020. It is led by an independent board and has a combined administration model to care for the parks, maintain park infrastructure and employ park staff for Greater Sydney's iconic parks.

GSP is the custodian of more than 6,000 hectares of parklands. 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.

GSP was established to:

- advocate for parks to ensure a unified voice that will drive the 50-Year Vision
- be an innovative manager and responsible custodian of the current Parklands Estate
- identify new parks to include in the Parklands Estate
- lead the discussion with state agencies and councils to champion for future needs.

Why are we proposing legislative change?

While GSP is established through administrative arrangements, legislative change can further strengthen protections for the Parklands Estate and the community's participation in their parks.

The current legislation framework does not support our vision of a city inside a park, supported by strong management, maintenance, conservation and community engagement.

Currently, there are 3 trusts established under 4 acts, created over many years, managing 5 parks.

All of this legislative complexity generates unnecessary costs that do not contribute to the improvement of parklands. Some parks have no legislated consultative processes or requirement to expand community consultation.

There is currently no legislative capacity to look for ways to expand our Parklands Estate. There is also no standard prohibition on the sale of parkland.

The proposed legislative reform focuses on:

- supporting the existing park trusts to operate and manage parklands in ways that meets the community's needs, aspirations and expectations
- prioritising community participation
- establishing strong governance and operating frameworks for new and existing parklands
- creating sustainable funding streams while protecting the parks from inappropriate commercialisation
- further protecting and enhancing the parkland's heritage and environmental assets
- building in additional environmental protections that acknowledges the critical natural habitat for plants and animals within the parklands.

Legislative reform can elevate the importance of parks by giving the GSP a seat at the table alongside other cultural, social and sporting institutions. As a city-wide agency, it can take a city-wide approach to better represent park users in planning and government decisions.



Photo: Centennial Parklands



Proposed timeline for legislative change

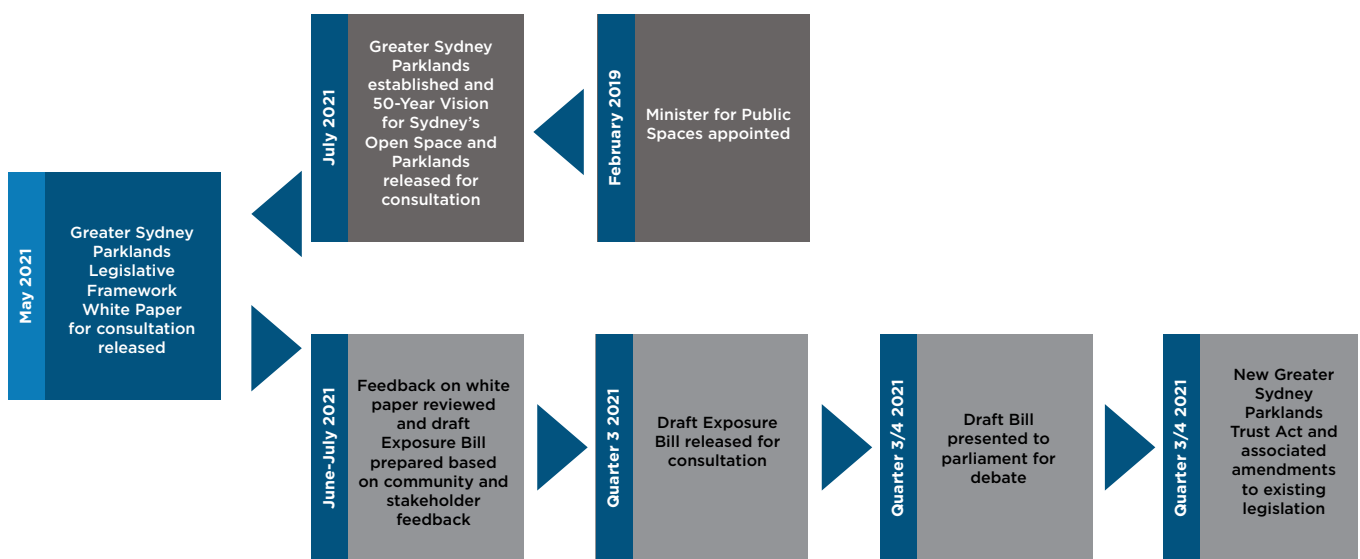


Figure 1
Timeline for proposed reforms

How you can give feedback

We want the community to be involved in the proposed legislative reform, firstly by providing feedback on this white paper. This will be followed by an Exposure Bill before final legislation is developed.

Submissions are welcome on this white paper

commencing: 9am Monday 24 May
ending: 5pm Monday 5 July

You can make a submission here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/GSPwhitepaper

Find out more information here: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/GSPwhitepaper

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Case for change



The case for change

Now is the right time to think about the future of Greater Sydney's parklands.

The city is growing in size and the community is changing. This drives a need for an agency that has a city-wide view to plan for diverse spaces and a range of activities in parks that reflect community values and aspirations.

At the height of COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, visitation to Greater Sydney's parks increased by more than 20% and this is expected to rise. The pandemic reminded us of the importance and value of public space. With a strong and united voice, one parkland agency can ensure that these values are communicated to all levels of government.

Parklands also help mitigate biodiversity loss in the city and the impacts of climate change, particularly the urban heat island effect. They can preserve vital wildlife habitat and play an important part in keeping Sydney cool and green.

Since the appointment of the first Minister for Public Spaces, there has been record investment in public space across NSW, almost \$500 million spent on public spaces programs including \$108 million for GSP itself. However, this investment must be matched with the development of an ongoing, sustainable funding model for the future.

This is an opportune time to establish the right governance, partnerships and funding structures.

The framework we establish today can create the legacy we want to leave for future generations.

Creating new parklands needs a long-term view

The visionary approach of governments over the past 160 years led to the protection of parks today. For example, the Western Sydney Parklands was planned in the 1960s as part of the Sydney Region Outline Plan. Over 50 years, successive governments have acquired land to create the 5,280 hectares that comprises Western Sydney Parklands as it is today. Foresight, a legislative framework and long-term strategic implementation have created an invaluable asset for Western Sydney communities now and into the future.

Sydneysiders love their parks



27%

Playing self-organised ball games



49%

Visiting playspaces



70%

Sydneysiders consider parks as an important factor in their lives



34%

Sydneysiders are now spending more time in public space than before COVID-19 restrictions



55%

Sydneysiders visited a public space daily or more often during COVID-19 restrictions



85%

Walking, hiking, jogging or running



34%

Walking the dog



64%

Gathering in parks for BBQs and picnics etc

¹ NSW Department of Planning and Environment (2019), Greater Sydney Outdoor Study

NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (2020), Public Spaces: Streets as Shared Spaces Engagement Report

Social and community benefits



Adults and children who visit parks and live within walking distance to parks are more likely to be physically active.



Parks can be places that recognise and conserve First Nations peoples' cultural heritage. Access to these spaces and waterways supports connection to Country, and the sharing of cultural connection with park users.



Parks contribute to urban cooling to enhance people's comfort. This has health benefits and reduces incidence of heat stress.



Trees create clean air and oxygen and improve urban air quality. Green spaces help to maintain healthy soil, minimise erosion and reduce stormwater flows and nutrient flows to maintain healthy waterways within our urban environments.

Environmental and ecological benefits



Open space and parks provide wildlife with food, shelter and habitat.



Trees create clean air and oxygen and improve urban air quality.



Green spaces help to maintain healthy soil, minimise erosion and reduce stormwater flows and nutrient flows to maintain healthy waterways within our urban environments.

² Heart Foundation, Evidence supporting the health benefits of public open space, www.healthyactivebydesign.com.au/design-features/public-open-spaces/evidence#summaryPOS

Government Architect NSW, Greener Places, www.governmentarchitectnsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/design-guides/frameworkdocument-greener-places-2020-06-02.pdf

Greener Spaces, Better Places, How to grow an urban forest, www.greenerplacesbetterplaces.com.au/media/163136/howtogrowanurbanforest.pdf

AECOM, Green infrastructure: A vital step to Brilliant Australian cities, <https://aecom.com/content/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Green-Infrastructure-vital-step-brilliant-Australian-cities.pdf>

Greater Sydney Parklands today

The Parklands Estate – Western Sydney Parklands, Fernhill Estate, Centennial Parklands, Callan Park and Parramatta Park – is owned and managed by the NSW Government.

Each park is individual and unique with its own rich history and characteristics. Combined, they make up Sydney's most iconic parklands.

About your parklands



Western Sydney Parklands

The Western Sydney Parklands are Australia's largest urban park with 5,280 hectares of public open space stretching for 27 kilometres over 3 local government areas (LGA) (Blacktown, Liverpool and Fairfield).

The Western Sydney Parklands is on the traditional lands of the Gandangara and Darug First Nations peoples. This corridor through the suburbs and former farming and grazing lands of Western Sydney is 16 times the size of Centennial Parklands and 62 times the size of Parramatta Park, a scale that provides for a unique suite of land uses and opportunities, including the revival of 2,000 hectares of native bushland alongside major sports and tourism facilities and revenue-raising business hubs.

The *Western Sydney Parklands Act 2006* formerly set the boundaries of the parklands and established the Western Sydney Parklands Trust. The Western Sydney Parklands Plan of Management 2030 provides the framework for the parklands' operation and development.



Fernhill Estate

The 423-hectare Fernhill Estate sits on the edge of the Cumberland Plain within Penrith LGA.

Fernhill Estate is on Darug Country, close to Gundungurra Country, and was part of a vast First Nations estate across the Cumberland Plain prior to the 1800s.

Fernhill House is one of the most significant Greek revival houses built in the early colonial era, with an almost intact estate setting today of rural open parklands leading down into the valley below and natural bushland up into the mountains behind.

The historic approach to Fernhill House was consciously set out to reveal key views and vistas of the estate and the house. Early pictorial representations of the house and estate show a natural landscape setting for Fernhill House that historical records imply were consciously created, and curated, from the native woodland of the Cumberland Plain.

The estate was vested into the Western Sydney Parklands Trust in December 2020. A draft Fernhill Estate Plan of Management 2030 was released in 2020.



Centennial Parklands

Centennial Parklands are one of the world's leading public urban parklands and cover 360 hectares within the LGAs of City of Sydney, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra.

Centennial Parklands are on the traditional lands of the Gadigal and Bidjigal First Nations people.

The parklands include Centennial Park, Moore Park and Queens Park and are the home for passive recreation and sports in the Eastern Harbour City. They have a long and celebrated history, including stories about Moore Park military connections.

The parklands are managed under the *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983* by the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust. The Centennial Parklands, Great Parks for a Great City, Plan of Management: 2018 and beyond establishes a direction for the future.



Callan Park

Callan Park is located on the Parramatta River within the Inner West LGA. It is the traditional land of the Gadigal and Wangal First Nations people.

Callan Park is the site of Sydney's first purpose-built mental health facility following reforms in treatment in the 1870s. The buildings and grounds of the facility remain within the grounds of Callan Park today.

With its significant history as a place for healing, respite and care, the Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan proposes a series of parkland improvements that celebrate the unique heritage and picturesque waterfront setting of Callan Park.

The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust manages 38 hectares of Callan Park under guidance of the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* and *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983*.

The remaining 22 hectares is managed by NSW Health under the *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*.



Parramatta Park

Parramatta Park is one of the earliest gazetted public parks in Australia, originally dedicated as a park in 1857.

It is a place of significant Aboriginal and European heritage and is located on the traditional land of the Burramattagal First Nations people.

Across 85 hectares, it is home to world heritage-listed convict historic sites.

The park is managed under the *Parramatta Park Trust Act 2001* and by the Parramatta Park Trust. Your Parramatta Park 2030 Conservation Management Plan and Plan of Management was released in 2020.

Existing legislative framework

Currently 3 trusts, shaped by 4 separate pieces of legislation, manage 5 parks within the Parklands Estate. Each trust was established at different points in time and legislation was drafted to support independent management of the parks by individual trusts.

Existing legislation directs the governance, financing and planning arrangements and permitted activities in each park.

GSP was established as an administrative arrangement in July 2020 to bring together the Parklands Estate and streamline governance, administration and staff resourcing.

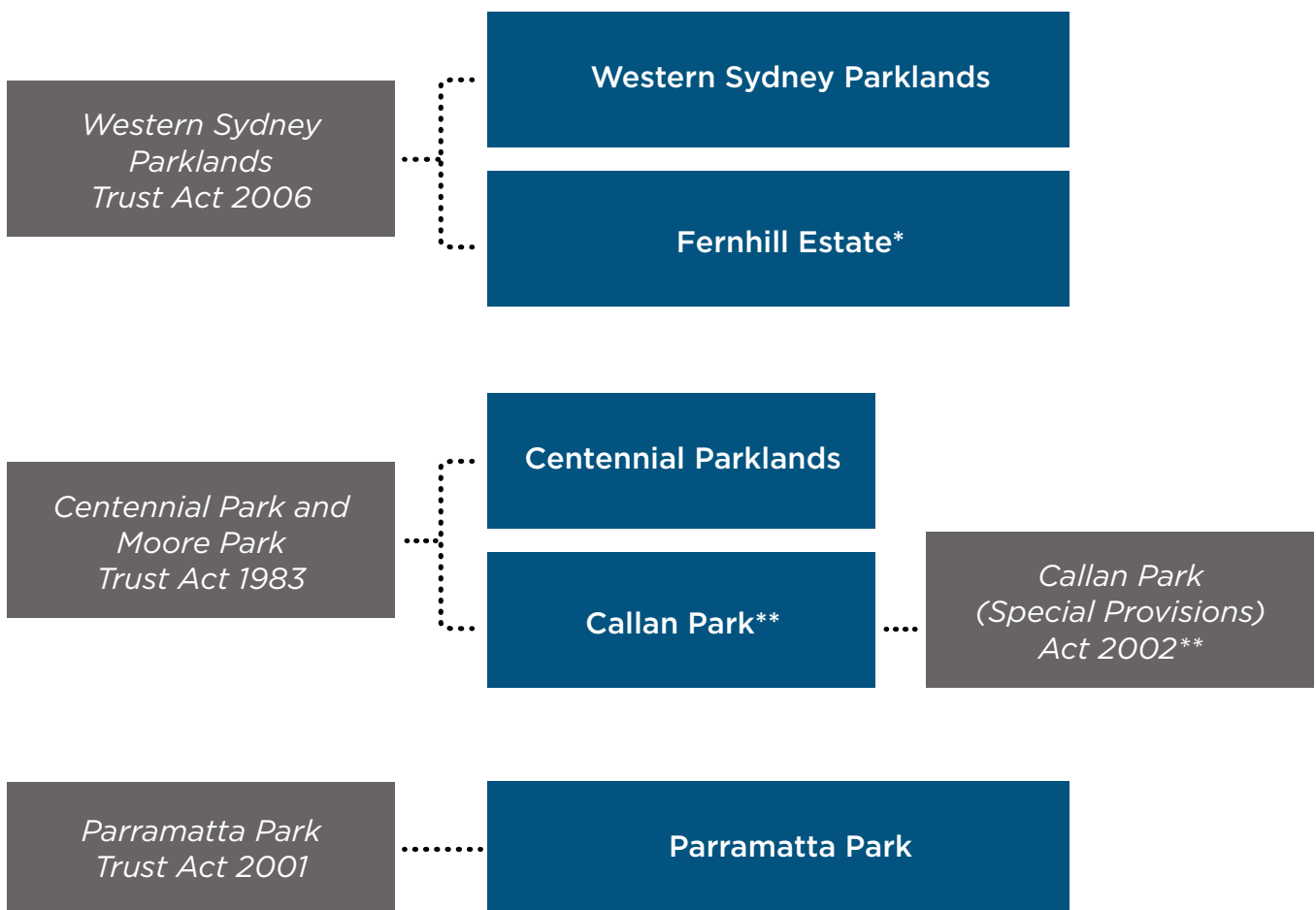


Figure 2
Current legislative framework

*Fernhill Estate is managed and owned by the Western Sydney Parklands Trust.

**Callan Park is managed and owned by Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust. The trust owns part of Callan Park (38 hectares), which was transferred to the trust in December 2020. The remainder of Callan Park is owned by NSW Health. The *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* applies to the whole of Callan Park.



Options for a new legislative framework

To meet the community's expectations of quality parks and the ambition to reimagine Sydney's parklands as a city-wide green grid, we need to review the current park legislation and explore the creation of new legislation.

Developed over many decades, the current park legislation is focused on each individual park at a particular point in time without reference to the city-wide context or plans to expand the parklands.

New legislation and an update to current legislation will acknowledge the individuality and uniqueness of each park while taking a city-wide approach. It will enshrine local community consultation in park legislation and allow for more parks to be added over time.

We can use this opportunity to reimagine the existing parkland framework and give it even greater legislative protection. This will support a stronger and more unified approach to advocating for quality parks as well as the long-term care and management of parks.

Legislative reform provides the opportunity to establish a framework that can support the management of parks in a growing and changing city.

Options for change

As part of the inquiry and research for this paper, we considered several options. These are now open to community and stakeholder feedback.

Preferred option

Our preferred option is to have one umbrella trust with new legislation, while maintaining existing trusts and Acts.

This option creates a new trust with new legislation while maintaining existing trusts, their Acts and their land ownership. It recognises the importance communities place on their local parks.

It also recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach may not reflect the character and special values of individual parks – this approach may be less flexible in meeting the variety of local community needs and expectations across Sydney.

This option gives the GSP a framework to support a city-wide, integrated approach to planning and management of parks that is beyond the boundaries of the individual park trust ownership.

It maintains the legal protections on the existing park trust's lands while allowing for the efficiencies created by a bigger organisation, a broader perspective and more contemporary financial structures.

Other options

Keep as is

This option does not support expansion or growth of the Parklands Estate or the opportunity for stronger protections and community representation. Greater Sydney would not have a city-wide agency to advocate for and promote the green grid beyond individual park boundaries.

Legislative change: a new Greater Sydney Parklands Trust under a new Act and dissolving existing park trusts

This option involves significant change and reform to existing trusts and dissolution of existing park trust legislation. While it specifically addresses the objectives in creating the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust, it does not maintain local trusts, which the community have indicated they want to keep.

Legislative change: centralise ownership to an existing trust and dissolve other trusts

The possibility of transferring all parks to one trust, such as the Western Sydney Parklands Trust, would streamline governance and management arrangements but will not maintain local trusts, which the community has told us they want to keep.

The *Western Sydney Parklands Act 2006* is the most contemporary existing legislation but has been designed for a unique parklands corridor specific to its size and location with some features that are unlike other parks.



Opportunities created under each option	Allows a local focus on each park	Allows more efficient management of each park	Allows a city-wide view on parks	Allows addition of new parks
Preferred option – one umbrella trust with new legislation, while keeping existing trusts and Acts	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keep as is	✓	✗	✗	✗
New trust and dissolve existing trusts	✗	✓	✓	✓
Centralise ownership to one existing trust and dissolve other trusts	✗	✓	✗	✗

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The proposed Greater Sydney Parklands Trust



Summary of how the GSP would work

There are 4 main themes that shape the GSP proposal:

- governance
- community consultation
- funding and finance
- planning.

This section provides further details of how GSP could be improved through legislative change.

Governance

Current limitations

- Siloed parklands management in individual trusts does not allow for a coordinated and city-wide approach to creating a city in a park and implementing the green grid
- Individual park trusts do not have a powerful enough voice at the table within government
- There is need to ensure that there is the right balance between an overarching city-wide strategic board and local community input
- Under the current trust legislation, board membership is at the complete discretion of the minister with no criteria for certain skills or experience

What we've heard

- The community is supportive of a stronger voice for GSP as part of the 50-Year Vision
- The community loves their parks and wants to play a role in shaping and supporting realisation of the vision through future engagement that recognises local voices and diverse voices
- Skills of the board should be relevant to park management
- Desire for greater transparency in how the board makes decisions

- There is concern that a combined administration will result in a 'one-size-fits-all' approach that does not recognise the uniqueness of each park

Our proposed solution

We're proposing a new legislative framework to establish a GSP Trust that will:

- provide the highest level of park governance and management expertise
- maximise funding for park and recreation purposes by streamlining back-of-house administrative functions
- maintain all existing trusts, meaning ownership and care of Western Sydney Parklands, Fernhill Estate, Centennial Parklands, Callan Park and Parramatta Park remains under the conditions and protections of their existing Acts
- take ownership of new regionally significant parks created to meet growing population needs in Sydney in the future
- establish one skills-based, strategic board with common membership across the new GSP trust and the existing park trusts to provide strategic oversight of park management within the terms of the new and existing Trusts' legislation
- establish community trustee boards to represent community voices and advise the GSP Trust
- provide a consistent approach to consultation and engagement with the community.

In addition to those traditional roles, it will:

- provide a city-wide approach to parks planning and management and participation in metropolitan-scale strategic planning discussions to embed good outcomes for parks
- commit to community consultation and set expectations for how the community can participate through a Consultation, Engagement and Advocacy Framework
- be supported by a contemporary and enduring financial operating model that enables the GSP Trust to manage parks and deliver new parks over the long term as Sydney grows and changes.

Importantly, the GSP Trust will take on the responsibilities and an operational management role for the whole Parklands Estate, using a consistent approach to consultation and engagement with the community, and managing finances and funding for the whole estate in accordance with the new and existing parks trusts' legislation.

Have your say

- What do you see as some of the benefits of this proposed approach?
- What do you feel are the disadvantages?

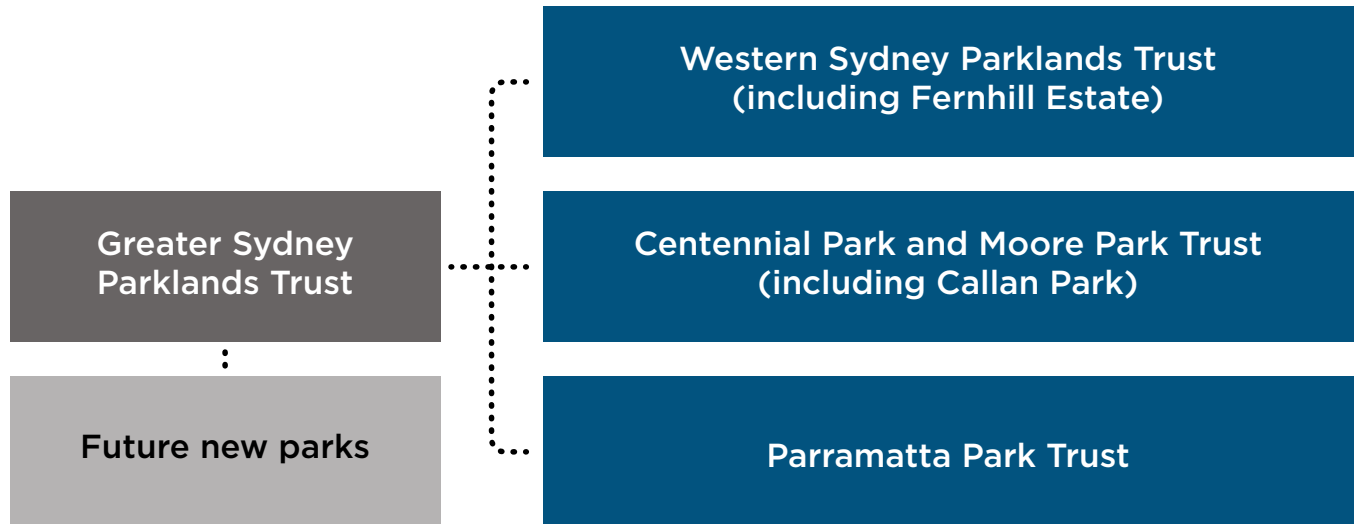


Figure 3

Relationship between the GSP Trust, existing park trusts and GSP



🔍 Governance case study: Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria was established as a statutory authority under the *Parks Victoria Act 2018* to manage Victoria's diverse parks system, that cares for 4.1 million hectares. It replaced and merged a previously disparate collection of agencies and statutory bodies to better manage the parks and enhance coordination.

Parks Victoria is directed by the Parks Victoria Board and is accountable to the minister for its performance.

The day-to-day responsibilities for operation and administration is delegated to Parks Victoria's Chief Executive and executive team. Parks Victoria places a strong emphasis on ensuring its stakeholder ecosystem, including Traditional Owners, communities, government and non-government organisations.

This case study is an example of how a board-governing structure has been established to deliver a diverse parks system

Community consultation

Current limitations

- The community is diverse and the parks belong to all – all voices need to have a say on local park issues and decisions
- The GSP serves a local park and a regional park purpose – both local and city-wide voices need to be heard
- Parks are for the long term and the needs of future communities should be considered in decision making

What we've heard

- Meaningful and ongoing community engagement is needed to help shape the future of the parklands
- When GSP was established, there was some concern that this would mean less opportunity for local knowledge to be heard

Our proposed solution

- Require that a Consultation, Engagement and Advocacy Framework is prepared for public exhibition and ministerial approval that sets out how the trust will listen to both local and wider views across Greater Sydney and can ensure equal access to the park and park facilities
- Establish community trustee boards to represent local views

A legislated framework for consultation

We will establish the GSP Trust to incorporate a commitment to consult with the community and involve them in the planning and delivery of parks. Legislation will require the GSP Trust to develop a GSP Consultation, Engagement and Advocacy Framework to guide its approach to communications and engagement and advocacy for the long-term vision for parks in Greater Sydney.

The framework will be endorsed by the minister and reviewed at least every 5 years. The framework will:

- confirm the GSP Trust's commitment to communicating and working with communities
- support strong and enduring relationships with First Nations people to care for parks
- identify opportunities and processes for community input
- establish clear expectations about community consultation
- outline best-practice approaches to engaging with communities
- aim to capture a diversity of voices
- detail the establishment, constitution and operations of community trustee boards.



The community trustee boards

Community trustee boards would provide advice from a local perspective on park stewardship, usage and activities plus environmental, heritage and cultural issues.

They would advise on park plans of management and sustainable funding options.

The GSP Trust would be required to consider the advice of the community trustee boards in its strategic oversight of the Parklands Estate.

We propose drawing on the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust's community consultative committee model (other trusts do not have a similar, formal function). In this regard, the Centennial Parklands community consultative committee would be renamed and operate as a community trustee board.

The proposed make-up of the community trustee boards

Community trustee boards would be required to reflect the communities they represent, with members selected through a public expression of interest process run by the GSP Trust.

Successful appointees would have a demonstrated interest in and sound knowledge of parks and activities, and the ability to communicate effectively with residents, community groups and park visitors.

Members would offer a diversity of experience and be a mix of people in terms of gender, age and cultural background.

Responsibilities of the community trustee boards

We propose that community trustee boards would:

- advise on the sustainable management of the park, including revenue generation
- advise, and assist the GSP Trust in the development and review of its plans and policies, including park plans of management, and consultation, engagement and advocacy frameworks
- advise the GSP Trust on the development of possible new or modified services and facilities
- provide advice to the board on local park-user needs and issues, including environmental and heritage issues
- provide input on specific proposals, masterplanning or design (eg. a new playground or a companion animal management plan) for the relevant park.

The framework will detail the processes to establish the community trustee boards and their constitutions. The constitutions will set out the terms of reference including composition, terms of appointment, roles and responsibilities, vacancies, procedures, and minutes and frequency of meetings.

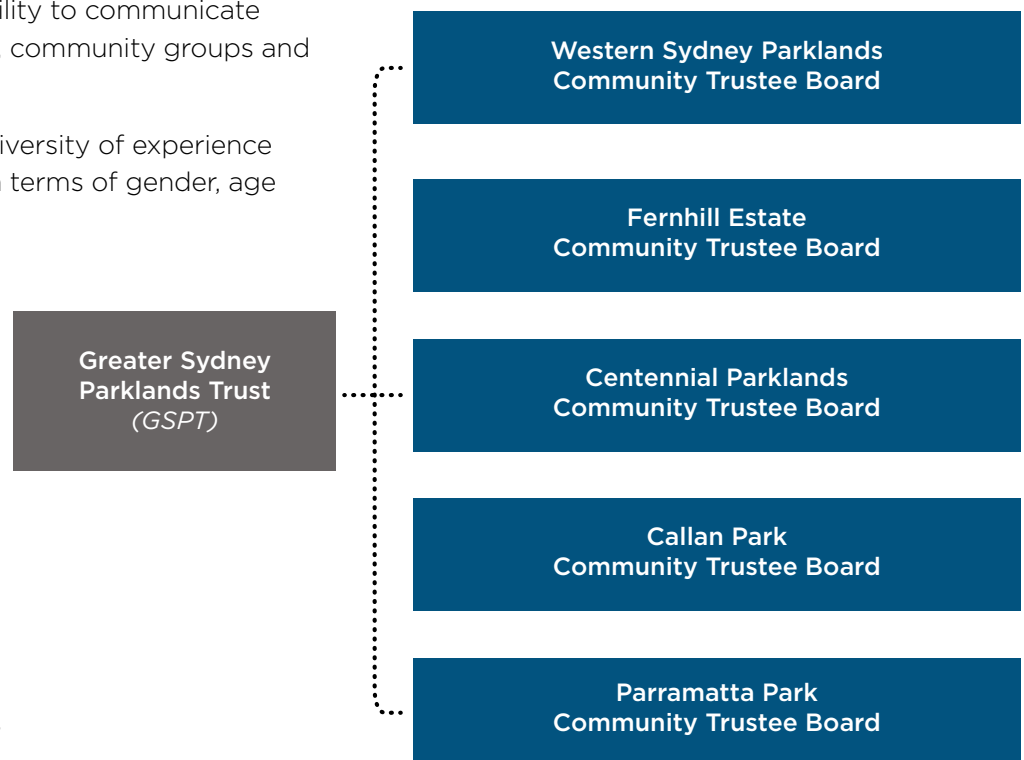


Figure 4

Greater Sydney Parklands trustee boards



Governance case study: Community planning in Aberdeenshire, Scotland

Aberdeenshire established a community planning partnership (CPP) to work with the community to deliver agreed outcomes in their suite of local and community plans.

The CPP is supported by a Community Engagement and Participation Guide that sets out ways the community can have a say, be listened to and get involved.

Community members can serve as a representative on community councils to ensure decision makers are fully informed about the circumstances, needs and wishes of local communities.

This case study is an example of how community boards convened by government can be representative of community voices and inform and support GSP activities and delivery.

Have your say

- How do you see the community trustee boards interfacing with the overall GSP umbrella trust?
- How long should community trustee board membership be in place? When should it be refreshed?
- Who are some of the diverse groups who should be involved to reflect the broad range of interests relating to each park?
- When should these boards provide advice to the overall GSP Trust Board?
- What are the most important areas of focus for the framework to consider?
- What feedback do you have on the proposed community trustee board model?
- What is your response to their proposed role?
- Should specific demographic groups within the community be appointed to these boards and, if so, which ones?

First Nations community participation

We want to build enduring relationships with First Nations people and communities so that they share in decision-making. The Parklands Estate is rich in stories and significance.

Relationships with local custodians will embed their knowledge in the management of parks.

We will include the following First Nations community engagement principles in the Greater Sydney Parklands Consultation and Engagement Framework:

- Engagement with First Nations communities will be early, inclusive and ongoing to provide genuine opportunities to participate in decision-making on matters that affect Country, through representatives chosen by the communities in accordance with their own processes.
- The trust will negotiate respectfully, fairly and in good faith with First Nations people and create opportunities for communities to be involved in planning, management and interpretation.
- The trust will negotiate First Nations community access to, and sustainable use of, the Parklands Estate for cultural, social and economic purposes, recognising the importance of connecting to Country to First Nations peoples' health and wellbeing.



Have your say

- What approaches do you consider essential if we are to engage meaningfully with the community and with First Nations people?
- What elements would you like to see in the new Consultation and Engagement Framework?



Funding and finance

Current limitations

- More funding is needed for the Parklands Estate to meet growing demand and be sustainable long term
- Siloed park trusts can lead to duplication of effort and expenses, leaving less funding for park restoration and management
- Each existing park trust has different constraints and opportunities for creating sustainable funding streams and different funding solutions are required, along with equitable and transparent distribution of available funds
- Commercial activities and facilities in parks can benefit the community and park users but can also be viewed as excluding the public or as detracting from park tranquility
- Existing legislation is not always clear about acceptable levels of commercial activities across the parklands

What we've heard

- Long-term government funding is needed to realise the 50-Year vision
- Funding models should not depend on over-commercialisation of parklands
- Financial efficiencies to release more funds for parks is important

Our proposed solution

- Investigate new and innovative ways to fund the city-wide Parklands Estate and consider different funding solutions for different parks
- Remove duplication and streamline park administration, management and operations under the umbrella of GSP Trust to create efficiencies to free up more funds for park improvements
- Maintain all the protections in the existing Acts that prohibit land sale and retain the conservation function of the existing park trust Acts
- Ensure there is a nexus between where park revenues are raised and where they are spent, ensure all park funds are spent only on the parklands estate and prepare a combined annual report that is transparent about how the Parklands Estate funds are managed
- Restrict any major new commercial activities to the existing commercial precincts in the existing parks as set out in the current plans of management
- Allow fundraising activities in the parks only when it adds to the amenity of the site and does not significantly impact on recreational, heritage or environmental values of the park



Savings to go back into park management

Since GSP was established, operations and management of parklands can now be streamlined through one agency. This creates efficiencies that translates to more funding for parks and a high standard of parks management across the Parklands Estate.

For example, when a security contract expired at Callan Park, GSP negotiated a combined security and ranger services contract at both Centennial Parklands and Callan Park, reducing costs by 25% while improving the level of ranger service at Callan Park.

Sources of funding for the Parklands Estate

The parks generate revenue through a range of low-impact activities. In addition to the Western Sydney Parklands business hubs, Centennial Park and Moore Park, Moore Park Golf Club, the Parklands Sports Centre and sports activities contribute to a significant share of revenue. At Parramatta Park, parking is also a major source of funds.

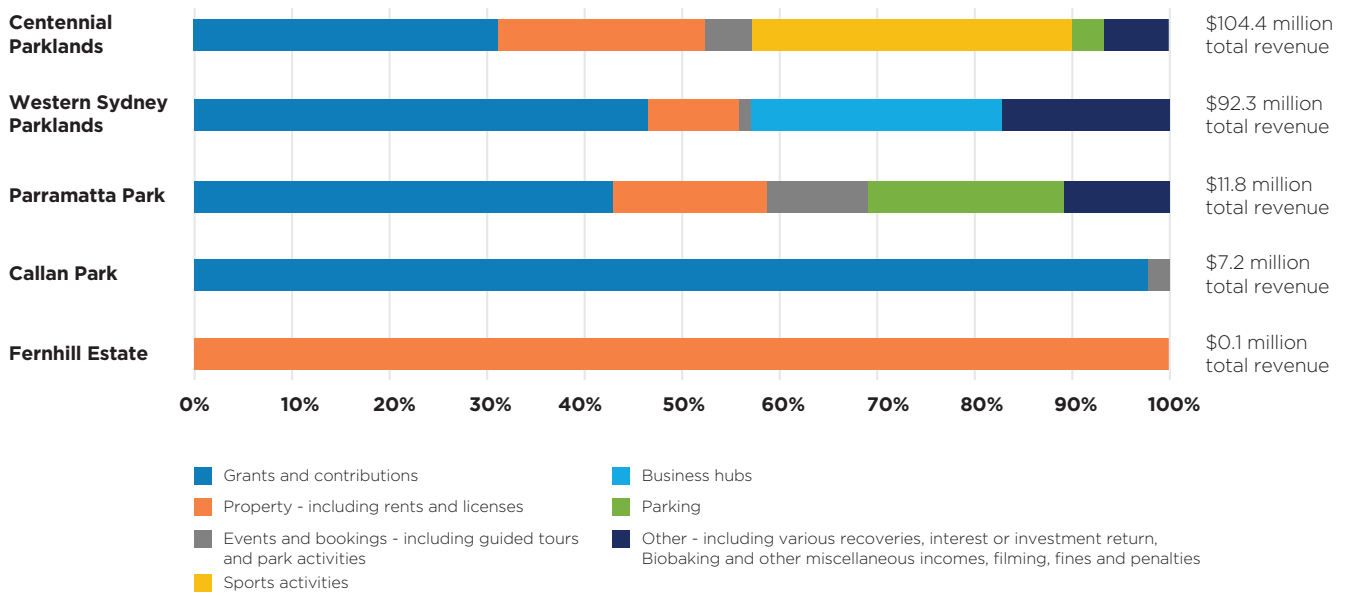


Figure 5

Share of revenue from different activities in each park, over 3 years (2018-19 to 2020-21)

New idea: off-park business hubs

Western Sydney Parklands (WSP) financial model has successfully created a sustainable revenue base to develop and manage over 5,280 hectares of public land, its assets and strategic and operational expenditure.

To create the revenue stream to continue to deliver these facilities and to manage the parklands long term, WSP's plan of management sets aside 105 hectares (2% of land owned by the trust) to be used as business hubs. Commercial leases of the hubs are estimated to generate around 80% of the funds to manage the remaining 98% of the WSP.

Business hubs typically include retail and/or industrial uses and are located on land with low environmental and recreational value – generally vacant lands impacted by major arterial roads and motorways.

Through the use of surplus government-owned land that is not suitable to be used as parkland, there is an opportunity for GSP to create 'off-park' business hubs. These lands can become the funding engine for all of the parklands, owned by GSP Trust and providing a source of long-term, sustainable funding for the Parklands Estate.



🔍 Funding case study: Education and festival programs in the parks

Popular activities across the Parklands Estate bring communities together and support operations and management of the parks.

Education and community programs in Centennial Park are being extended to Callan Park and Western Sydney Parklands as a new form of community engagement and education.

Since 2012, Nature Play has been the philosophy behind the programming. The Bush School program invites children under 5 and their carers to experience the parklands' natural beauty. Programs then follow children through their childhood and teenage years with school excursions, the popular Centennial Parklands Bushrangers holiday camp or family programs such as Camping 101. Nature connection programs - including wellness, mindfulness, or art workshops - bring the benefits of being outdoors to people of all ages.

These community activations generate more than \$350,000 in revenue each year.

Centennial Parklands also hosts the popular Moonlight Cinema outdoor event every summer for 4 months. It is a legacy community event that generates more than \$250,000 for the park each year.

At Parramatta Park, the Crescent, a beautiful natural amphitheatre on the Parramatta River, hosts the annual Crescent Summer Series of music festivals and concerts.

The mix of free community concerts includes the Sydney Symphony Under the Stars (a partnership with Sydney Festival and Sydney Symphony Orchestra) and New Year's Eve (a partnership with Parramatta City Council).

Ticketed commercial concerts have included Download, Ultra Music, FOMO and Good Things, generating valuable revenue for Parramatta Park Trust, creating awareness of the park's important First Nations and world heritage cultural values, and welcoming up to 100,000 new visitors annually.

Have your say

- Can you identify examples where parkland sustainability has been enhanced by appropriate funding models/commercial opportunities?
- Are there aspects of this approach that have relevance for one or more of the parklands?
- What are your thoughts on the ideas identified above, such as off-park business hubs?

City-wide planning

Current limitations

- A city-wide approach is needed to create a 'city in a park' but the existing park trusts are required to focus on their own land holdings
- New parks will be needed as Sydney grows and there is no city-wide park trust to own and manage new parks
- There is no unified agency that can be a voice for parks in city-wide planning processes and to advocate for city-wide green grid networks
- There is an opportunity to realise the government's ambition for net zero by 2050

What we've heard

- A commitment to the preservation and protection of open space and parks and a long term vision is critical
- Connectivity of green space is critical to recreational and environmental links
- The role of parks in conserving the environment is fundamental

Our proposed solution

- An umbrella GSP Trust can take a city-wide approach and look outside its ownership boundaries to make green grid connections as well as focus on individual parks
- An umbrella GSP Trust can accept new parks regardless of where in Sydney they may be needed to meet new growth
- A unified parklands agency will have a stronger voice for parks, provide strategic advice to government on parks issues and have a legislated role in city-wide planning processes
- GSP will operate as a net zero agency and contribute to the government's goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050 through programs such as carbon sequestration

Planning case study: London as a National Park City

London was declared the world's first National Park City in July 2019 with the aim of making more than 50% of the city green by 2050.

A London National Park City demonstrates the importance of park planning being led by an ambitious vision. The National Park City aims to encourage more people to take an active role in thinking about green spaces and projects at all levels – from city wide to local communities

and gardens – to achieve the vision. The City of London brings together many different groups, organisations and advisors to deliver on the National Park City agenda.

This case study is an example of how a strong vision at a city scale can support coordination, planning and action by all that contributes towards better green space outcomes.

Have your say

- What are some of the opportunities that could be realised under a city-wide approach?
- How do we ensure that local values and aspirations are recognised and respected?
- How can the GSP best work with councils to support and realise the vision and the green grid and connect local parks to create a city in a park?

Proposed changes to current Acts

Our vision for GSP is to support and strengthen the existing park trusts and existing park legislation. Aligning all existing governance structures will enable a city-wide approach to parks and will support the community's enjoyment of parks in line with their expectations.

To ensure cohesive, effective and seamless management across the parklands, the following amendments to existing legislation are proposed:

- recognise the GSP Trust's proposed operational and financial management role and responsibilities for the Parklands Estate while meeting the objects and functions of each park trust legislation
- prohibit the sale of any parklands owned by GSP
- introduce new limits on commercial activities and leases in areas used for passive recreation, biodiversity and heritage conservation
- ensure that any commercial activities contribute to enhancing the community's experience and enjoyment of the parklands
- ensure that all parks support the objectives of environmentally sustainable development
- improve transparency of board membership by legislating skills relevant to park management
- allow for state agencies to access underground land for critical infrastructure, subject to having no physical above-ground impact on the parklands.

Have your say

- Are there other changes to existing legislation that would support the city-wide approach and access to similar opportunities across the Parklands Estate?





Planning,
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4

Next steps



What happens next?

This white paper outlines the key proposals for legislative reform to support delivery of the vision of Sydney as a city in a park and enable NSW Government to secure new parks for the people of Greater Sydney. It also takes a holistic approach to the care and management of these parks in partnership with communities, First Nations people, local government and other government agencies.

Parks are for people and it is important that you have your say on how legislative reform can best support our shared vision and ambition for GSP and deliver quality parks for the people of Sydney now and in the future.

Submissions and feedback received during the public exhibition period will inform the review of legislation and direct instructions for drafting of a Bill to be introduced to Parliament.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will be consulting with councils, community groups and First Nations people about the white paper to improve the proposals for change. A submissions report and draft Exposure Bill will be released prior to introducing the Bill to Parliament.

Have your say

Exhibition period: Monday 24 May - Monday 5 July

You can make a submission here: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/GSPwhitepaper

What will happen after the Exhibition Period: A Submissions Report and Exposure Bill will be released.





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