



26th August 2020

The Hon Rob Stokes MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
GPO Box 5341 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Support for increasing access to Crown Land occupied by golf courses.

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture (AILA) is the national peak body representing the profession of Landscape Architecture. Among AILA's four strategic pillars is the commitment to advocacy, which runs hand in hand with building the profile of our profession, in turn affording us a greater voice with which to advocate for the Australian landscape.

AILA is committed to supporting our members to strive for high ideals manifest in their landscape designs, striving to contribute ethically towards better environmental, social and economic outcomes for all life outdoors. In addition, as stewards of the land we are committed to making space for important conversations and listening inclusively to the needs of all Australians.

The Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore, recently reignited public debate on the issue of Crown Land being used by golf courses. She drew attention to the 18-hole Moore Park golf course, directly adjacent to the Green Square Precinct, soon to be Australia's most densely populated urban area, suggesting that in light of the Coronavirus pandemic we open the discussion on reclaiming a portion of this public land for public outdoor use. Moore suggests reducing the lease down to 9-holes to strike a balance between all stakeholders and provide the local community with much needed open space. AILA supports the intent of the suggestion as well as suggesting alternate methods to negotiating release of the land, such as brokering a reduction in the hours the landscape is used as a golf course, allowing all members of the community to (respectfully) use the landscape before and after a shortened golf day.

While it should be acknowledged that golf courses are businesses and communities in their own right, providing jobs and maintaining large tracts of green open space, the conditions and administration of their long-term leases could be more transparent, their use remains limited to a privileged few. Of the 5000 parcels of land in greater Sydney owned by the State, 453 are used in conjunction with golf, yet the game itself is only played regularly by 2-3% of the population. However, recent world events have highlighted the need for free, accessible open spaces for all Australians to exercise and recreate safely close to their home, whilst also maintaining social distancing in preparing for possible subsequent waves of infection.

To this end, AILA is writing to reinvigorate this issue, and calling for increased public access to what is, in essence, public land. In addition, we see this issue as intersecting with AILA's support for the NSW Government's Priority Projects initiative, championing projects that deliver socially responsible initiatives and green public spaces to support the recovery of NSW economy during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The reclamation of access to parts of the public landscapes currently used by some golf courses would deliver broad reaching effects for the local communities, provide local jobs and make a significant impact of the lives, health and local community immediately and also well into the future. AILA believes this is issue is a



relevant, meaningful way the NSW Government can deliver immediate health benefits to its citizens in the recovery phase of the Coronavirus pandemic, and in doing so strengthen community and health.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Andrews, AILA NSW President

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<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/scandalous-clover-moore-tees-off-on-size-of-sydney-golf-course-20200428-p54nwz.html>

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<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Other/priority-projects-criteria-2020-04.pdf?la=en>

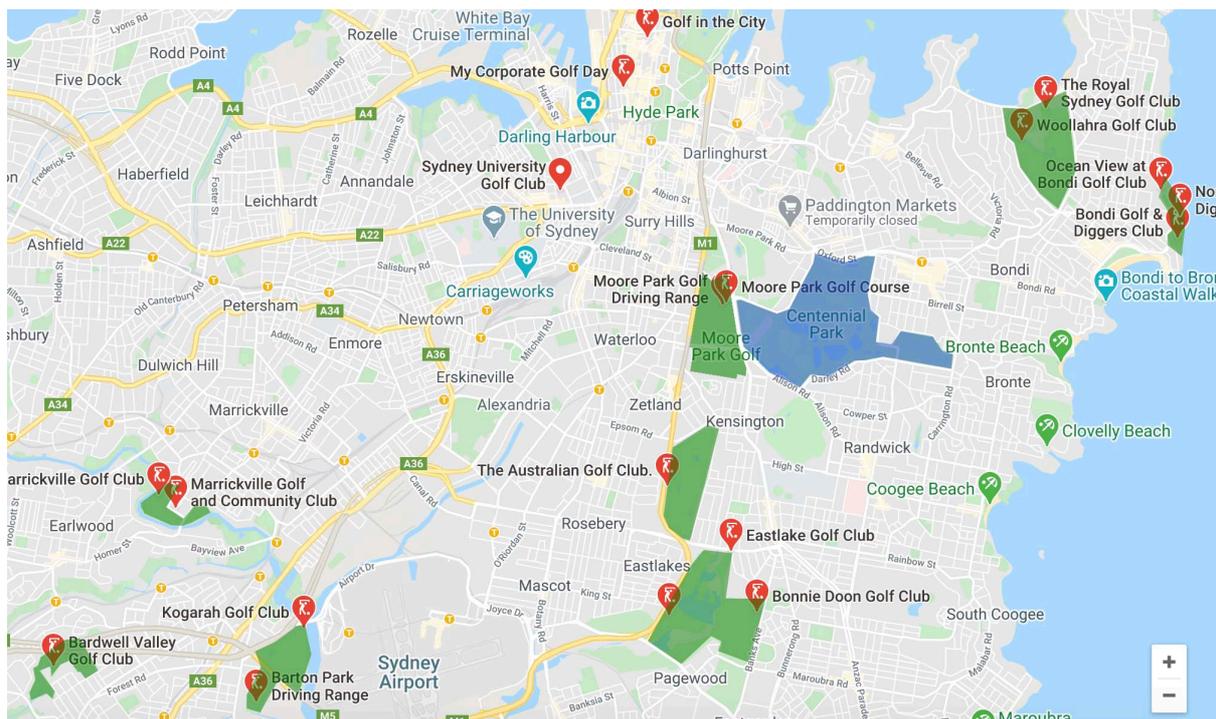


Fig 1. Snapshot of high-density residential zone of Sydney CBD and surrounds referred to by Mayor Clover Moore. Dark green outlines golf courses, light green is open space public and/ or private and blue is Centennial Park.