



## POSITION PAPER

### Western Sydney Stadium Proposal

#### BACKGROUND

Old Government House at Parramatta was listed on the National Trust Register in February, 1974 and Parramatta Park / Former Governor's Domain was listed on the Trust Register in April, 1978. A Permanent Conservation Order was placed on Parramatta Park and Old Government House in June 1989 and this place was listed on the State Heritage Register in April, 1999.

Old Government House and the Government Domain was listed on the National Heritage List in August, 2007 and Old Government House and Domain was listed on the World Heritage List in July 2010 as one of eleven sites across Australia that form the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property.

In 1979 there was considerable public and Trust opposition to the State Government's approval in principle of a 40,000-seat football stadium at the oval, major problems being traffic, access and parking. The historic urban park was suffering from neglect and far too many alienations but the Government passed the Cumberland Oval Act of 1981. The Trust stated: *'It made a mockery of the Government's own planning procedures...'* and in the Trust's 1979-80 Report added *'...the Government accepted the vote-catching Parramatta Leagues Club proposal without holding an open inquiry'*.

In late 1981 the Trust and others placed their objections before the Land and Environment Court. The Court decision of March and a Supreme Court appeal in September declared the local Council's decision to permit construction as null and void. In December 1982 the State Government resolved to approve a 30,000 seat stadium project which would be exempt from the provisions of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act. *The Sydney Morning Herald's* editorial of 13 December in reviewing the proposal stated: *'The Government's alleged commitment to environmental protection must now be considered thoroughly suspect...'* and quoted Tom Uren MP as stating it was: *'an act of political, environmental and urban vandalism.'* In February, 1983 the Chief Judge of the Land and Environment Court was reported as criticising the State Government for the proposed legislation, which would have the effect of overturning his judicial decision. A further *Herald* editorial of 15 March again was critical of the Government's actions but the controversial amendments to the Cumberland Oval Act were assented to on 4 May, 1983.

In June 2016 the NSW Government announced the construction of a new stadium to replace the existing stadium in Parramatta Park.

The proposed stadium has the potential to severely impact on the Parramatta Park broader landscape and on the views from Old Government House which form part of the World Heritage Listing.

The Historical Heritage section of the Environmental Impact Statements notes that the concept proposal has the potential to significantly impact the heritage values of Old Government House and Domain and Parramatta Park both directly and indirectly. The recommendations state that further consideration should be given to reducing the height of the structure such that it is further concealed behind the current park plantings. This might mean sinking the entire complex further into the ground, reducing the height of the grandstands, or making changes to the proposed roof structure. If this aim could be achieved, the impact on World and National Heritage values would likely be reduced to slight and therefore non-significant.

It is anticipated such measures could be incorporated into the built form controls

#### NATIONAL TRUST POSITION

- The Trust believes that there should be no increase in built form in Parramatta Park.
- The Trust maintains that, if the facilities at the Parramatta Park Stadium are now inadequate then a permanent move to the 100,000 seat Homebush Stadium should be undertaken.
- The Trust also believes that the Parramatta Football Club should not be expanding its facilities in Parramatta Park but should also be encouraged to relocate to a site at Homebush.

#### ACTION TO PROMOTE THE TRUST'S POSITION

The Trust will promote its views on this issue in the media, and with the State Government.