



state of **AUSTRALIAN CITIES**

national conference >03

Carlton Hotel, Parramatta

3-5 December 2003

## Shaping the parklands, shaping Western Sydney

Authored by:

Linda Corkery

University of New South Wales

[l.corkery@unsw.edu.au](mailto:l.corkery@unsw.edu.au)

## **INTRODUCTION**

This year marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Central Park in New York City, one of that city's most famous landmarks and the premier legacy of landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted. A century and a half later, Central Park continues to be the epitome of the urban park ideal, ie. an open space reserve that contrasts nature-like environments with the density and development of the city that crowds its perimeters, providing habitat for plants, birds and wildlife integrated with infrastructure for a range of recreational pursuits. It is symbolic of how a park shapes the development of a city, and evolves to meet the changing needs of its residents over five generations. Central Park became the model for hundreds of other city parks across North America, and the influence of its design principles are seen as far away as Sydney's Centennial Park developed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At the time of Central Park's construction in the mid-1800's, New York was experiencing severe environmental crises resulting from overcrowding in dirty and disease-ridden tenements and poorly serviced neighbourhoods lacking the most basic sanitary infrastructure and social services. At the beginning of the new millennium, our urban areas are still confronted with many environmental concerns, although the specific problems are different from 19<sup>th</sup> Century cities. Rather than overcrowding, we are experiencing sprawling, ill-considered development, which has degraded eco-systems, and contributed to deteriorating water and air quality. Along with ecological malaise, many individuals struggle with health problems related to lifestyle, such as heart disease, diabetes, mental illness and some cancers. Among Australian children, there is an alarming increase in the incidence of obesity associated with poor nutrition and lack of physical exercise. And so, again, parks are being considered for how they might ameliorate urban conditions.

The NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources has been charged with the task of developing the open space strategies for Sydney. The catchphrase for this undertaking is: "People in Sustainable Metro Parks." No other state government agency in New South Wales has an established role for open space planning on a regional basis, so the delivery of an open space strategy will be particularly significant.

The development of the Western Sydney Regional Parklands (WSRP) has been a component of the metropolitan area's masterplan for many decades. Previous NSW state governments had the foresight to set aside these lands with the idea that one day they would be needed for recreation. These were investments made for future generations, in the same way that New York City bought and set aside the land for its future Central Park. Many of the land parcels now assembled into what will become the WSRP were earmarked in the County of Cumberland Plan of 1948 to be gradually acquired and landbanked in anticipation of Sydney's growth into the western areas. With the residential 'land creep' now virtually on its doorstep, it is timely for the WSRP to be formally recognized and developed as Western Sydney's major open space.

### **The Western Sydney Regional Parklands**

The remaining areas of open space in western Sydney face increasing pressures as residential and industrial development continues to advance over once largely agricultural lands. Over the next ten years, thousands of new residents will be added to this area, and those communities will require access to quality open space and recreation provision. At the same time, it is critical that the environmental health of these areas and continuity of their ecosystems, which in some places now is barely discernible, be conserved and bolstered to meet the current and projected demand.

With the recent State Government announcement regarding forward planning activity for new community at Bringelly, southwest of Sydney, expected to accommodate a population of up to 300,000, the urgency to plan for open space and recreation needs in this region is intensified. However, recreation is not the only value embodied in the corridor earmarked for the Western Sydney Regional Parklands. Its scenic and visual values, ecological, cultural, heritage values and environmental values are equally intrinsic to the character and spirit of these landscapes, and must be protected and enhanced in future visioning for the region.

Creating the WSRP will require much more than simply drawing a line around the lands that have been acquired and putting up a sign that declares the WSRP "open". Considerable political will and community support of the potential industries and interest groups will need to converge to develop and implement a coherent vision for its development and management as unified "parklands". With the philosophy of a

“whole of government” approach to this open space planning, the planning strategies for Western Sydney open space will be a first step in outlining the directions and identifying the challenges that lie ahead in establishing a robust and meaningful parkland system for this dynamic metropolitan area.

## **NEW URBAN PARKS**

A central question this discussion paper addresses is how the future Western Sydney Regional Parklands can consolidate and/or challenge contemporary trends in urban park design and management as evidenced elsewhere in Australia and overseas. In the past two decades, there has been a shift in thinking about public parkland design, development and management in response to changes in the social, economic and built environments of our cities. The resulting urban parklands are presenting new visions of urban landscapes with associated recreation or social experiences for their users.

Over the past two decades, park designers have begun to explore new urban park forms that respond to contemporary concerns, lifestyles, pastimes and aspirations. Many of these parks also incorporate ecosystems that might have previously been filled in or avoided, or they incorporate facilities sited in areas that would have been ‘discarded’ because of their previous, industrial land uses. Many recent park projects have been initiated through international design competitions, which generate exciting and innovative concepts for future parks. As a prelude to thinking about what the Western Sydney Regional Parklands might become, it is worth giving consideration to some of the characteristics of 21<sup>st</sup> Century urban parks that are becoming apparent in other world cities, and to reflect on how might the regional parklands now being imagined by DIPNR shape the future form of western Sydney?

A number of current park models are presented below as examples of contemporary approaches to planning and design of urban parks and their projected evolution to better reflect and adapt to changing urban lifestyles. These examples were compiled as part of a recent discussion paper prepared for the DIPNR at the commencement of strategic visioning for the WSRP, and more details of each can be found in that paper (Corkery 2003).

## **Parks on disused landscapes**

### *Parc de la Villette*

Regarded as the first post-Modernist urban park, La Villette is located on a 55 ha site in an area of Paris that previously housed livestock yards and an abattoirs. In 1982, architect Bernard Tschumi won the international design competition with his proposal that questioned the conventional concept of a park as green open space.

([www.galinsky.com/buildings/villette/](http://www.galinsky.com/buildings/villette/) cited 25 May 2003).

### *Duisborg Nord*

The Duisburg Nord Landscape Park in Germany incorporates as its centerpiece a former blast furnace plant and associated coal and steel industry infrastructure. The park's 200 ha site has been purposely planted in some areas, and left to grow wild in others. The massive elements of the site's industrial heritage have provides the framework for the park's gradual transformation as the vegetation matures. (Broto 1998).

## **Recommissioned lands**

### *DownsviewPark*

The proposed Downsview Park in Toronto, a 145 ha park at the perimeter of that city, will be developed on the site of the former Canadian Forces Air Base. Rather than expressing their concept in an illustrated, end state "master plan", the winning scheme, "Tree City" is a long-term strategy and open-ended approach to creating a park that will change and mature. This radical approach to urban park design takes the premise that no urban park in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is likely to have *carte blanche* from the outset to fully implement a traditional, landscape master plan vision. The scheme wholeheartedly expresses the temporal qualities of landscape change and adaptability in its planting programs and landscape management.

### *Fresh Kills Parklands, Staten Island*

This 1000 ha recreation reserve will be created on the site of the former Fresh Kills Landfill on New York City's Staten Island. The site has served as the main landfill for New York City for many years, and significantly, was the site that received the hundreds of truckloads of rubble from Ground Zero following the destruction of the World Trade Towers on 11 September 2001.

The plan for the converting the landfill, entitled 'Lifescape', into a parkland comprising nature, recreation and residential programs was also won through the design competition process. The program is described as 'a reconstituted matrix of diverse life-forms and evolving ecologies' which will reverse the urban sprawl of Staten Island to an expansive 'nature sprawl', characterized by greenways of lush vegetation, recreational open space, and restored habitats for birds and wildlife. (Field Operations website, cited May 2003).

## **Federation of parks**

### *Berlin-Brandenburg Regional Parks System, Germany*

With the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany that followed in 1990, the areas outside of Berlin (situated in the state of Brandenburg) suddenly became available for development, and a rapid process of suburbanisation began. To help control this spread of development and to encourage a more sustainable and regionally appropriate approach to development, a system of eight Regional Parks was established within a 15km ring surrounding Berlin. This model of a federation of parks allows them to develop a unique identity for the parks, identify regionally appropriate means of economically sustaining their development and management, enlist the participation of local stakeholders and municipalities in supporting the parks, etc. are all relevant to the challenges facing the WSRP.

## **Community initiatives**

### *Baldwin Hills Park, Los Angeles*

This 900-acre parkland will be developed over a site that has been a source for oil drilling and gas production since 1924. The existing site conditions are described as 'a mosaic of oil extraction and production, areas of native habitat, and a heavily used park that, while satisfying some neighborhood cravings for open space, was created without a strong sense of the underlying landscape or ecology'

([www.mlagreen.com/pp/bhp1.html](http://www.mlagreen.com/pp/bhp1.html) cited 23 May 2003). The parklands' design will create an open space resource within an ethnically and socially diverse, well-established community, rather than preserve unused land at the edge of urban development. A community organisation, Community Conservancy International (CCI) is leading the effort to create the Park in partnership with federal, state and local officials, agencies and members of the community which signals a departure from the expectation that local or state government agencies will deliver these major

new urban park developments in the future.

([www.asla.org/meetings/awards/awds02/baldwin\\_hills\\_park.html](http://www.asla.org/meetings/awards/awds02/baldwin_hills_park.html) cited 23 May 2003).

## **Urban wilds**

### *Bos Amsterdam*

Construction of this park began almost 70 years ago on totally reclaimed land in Amsterdam. It is significant because it was the first attempt at a structured but unmanicured landscape design using native species as the dominant planting palette. The Bos Park uses native plant species 'as an aesthetic alternative to a formal and pastoral parkland'. (Spirn 1984, p. 195). The park's design contains "biological" patterns that result from the hydrological and ecological processes, and "artificial" patterns which relate to the functional aspects of the site, that change in response to the seasons.

The thinking behind the conceptualisation of this park presaged the ideas of Rem Koolhaas' competition entry for the Parc de la Villette and their successful "Tree City" submission for Downsview Park. It represents a move away from the pictorial park tradition and the "park as refuge" ideals of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries to a new understanding of the integral role of park as productive landscape and park as part of the urban infrastructure. (Berrizbeita in Corner 1999, p. 195).

## **"Productive" parks**

This term describes public/private partnerships that are created to generate money for creating and maintaining public parks. The examples given relate to ways in which parks can co-exist with environmental restoration, for example, floodplain rehabilitation, shore protection, sewage and ground-water cleaning. In the State of Washington, a state cigarette tax and increased local sewer rates raised US\$250 million to build the Seattle West Point Treatment Plant Park and add nine hectares of trails, bridges, wetlands, restored beach and forested hills to the public open space system in and around the new facility. So the parklands were "productive" in the sense that their creation was linked to a facility that would continue to generate revenue for its on-going maintenance (Balmori 1992).

Other kinds of "productive" parks include lands that stay in agricultural or horticultural uses, such as the existing market gardens in the central region of the WSRP corridor.

Parklands can also “produce” ecological benefits such as clean water and reductions to greenhouse gas emissions which can be assigned an economical value. Expenses of tree planting can become carbon storage areas for industries interested in green carbon credits.

*I/S Hedeland, near Roskilde, Denmark*

This parkland is productive in the sense that 1,500 hectares of parkland have been created in an area used for gravel and clay extraction. While the gravel mining continues, recreation facilities are being developed to serve the population southwest of Copenhagen. A partnership of three townships is transforming this “sublime moonscape” into an array of regenerated landscapes and recreation facilities, including nature areas and woodlands, an 18-hole golf course, a network of bridleways, footpaths and cycle tracks, narrow-gauge tourist railway, a vineyard, ski slope mountain, wildflower meadows, motorcross center, an arboretum, allotment/weekend leisure gardens and a scout camp (Holden 2003, p. 88).

*Resource Recovery Park*

A Resource Recovery Park (RR Park) is ‘the co-location of reuse, recycling and composting processing, manufacturing and retail businesses in a central facility to which the public can bring all their wastes and recoverable materials’ ([www.epa.gov/jtr/topics/liss.htm](http://www.epa.gov/jtr/topics/liss.htm) cited 21 May 2003). Typically these RR parks are sited around or on a landfill or transfer station, or in a renovated building on an abandoned industrial site.

Another version of this is the Eco-Industrial Park (EcoPark) that is a ‘group of businesses that work together and with the community to efficiently share resources (materials, water, energy, infrastructure, natural habitat and information), enhance economic prosperity and improve the environment’ ([www.epa.gov/jtr/topics/liss.htm](http://www.epa.gov/jtr/topics/liss.htm) cited 21 May 2003). These businesses are often related to promoting interest in “Green Building” and “Zero Emission Parks”.

*The Health Park*

The “Healthpark Quellenbusch” in the city of Bottrop, Germany, is located on a derelict site, formerly used for coal mining and steel production. Within the 40 ha site situated within a regional greenbelt, about 10 ha were earmarked for the healthpark,

which was to be located between the hospital of Bottrop and another district park. (Ebert 1995).

The concept behind the healthpark was to create a design focused on 'sensual to support out-patient rehabilitation, general healthcare and self-help groups, including a multi-purpose hall for sports, health training activities, saunas, hydrotherapy pools, and alternative therapies associated with a perfumed garden, herb garden and meditation spaces. While the park is to have a direct connection to a health center attached to the hospital, the general public is also welcome to use it for recreation and leisure. (Ebert 1995, p.13).

## **Local exemplars**

### *The Parklands of the Sydney Olympic Park*

In the afterglow of the 2000 Olympics, the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Act of 2001 established what has become the true environmental legacy of those Games – the Parklands of the Sydney Olympic Park. The 432 ha Parklands include remnant native woodlands, saltmarshes and mangrove stands along with historic naval munitions storage structures and layers of significant Aboriginal heritage. Because of its advantageous location at the geographic heart of the Sydney metropolitan region, Homebush Bay has been the focus of planning and design attention, and the largest site remediation project in Australia for over a decade, long before the city was announced the successful bidder for the 2000 Olympic Games.

The recently completed Plan of Management 'identifies the desired character for the Parklands as the major conservation and passive recreational resource of Sydney Olympic Park' and notes that 'the Parklands will play an important role in defining the edge of the urban areas and in providing a major educational and recreational resource for the future residents, workers and visitors to the Sydney Olympic Park area' (Grant 2002, p.15).

There are numerous parallels between the parklands at SOP and the WSRP, not the least of which include the presence of several Olympic sporting venues, landfill sites, remnant vegetation of great ecological value, and heritage values, both indigenous and non-indigenous. To some degree these Parklands will operate within the same

visitor catchment, so it would be an advantage for both to consider ways to jointly market and coordinate their unique offerings.

#### *Centennial Park Moore Park Trust*

The Centennial Parklands are Sydney's "Central Park", comprising 385 ha of open space over three major park areas – Centennial, Moore and Queens Parks – and are located about four kilometers from the Sydney CBD. Activities throughout the Parklands center on aesthetic, cultural, historical and recreational pursuits.

The formal management structure of the CPMPT, its creation by state legislation, its cultural and historical status, and its geographic position within the city of Sydney all combine to give this Parklands a very special status. Because it is seen as a heritage site of major national significance as well as a local and regional recreation resource, there are a multitude of competing demands on its use that must be delicately balanced.

The increased numbers of visitors and their contemporary expectations place certain strains on the parks' infrastructure. In recent years, there has been considerable effort on the part of the Parklands management to develop a network of international park managers to keep up with best practice in this field, so there is much to be gained by the WSRP in tapping into the experience represented in these connections.

## **SHAPING THE WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL PARKLANDS**

The Western Sydney Regional Parklands will be the first of the major urban parklands to be developed in Sydney for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It may well be the largest parklands in Australia to be conceived in one program. There are multiple, pre-existing social, environmental and political conditions that will impact how the WSRP takes shape. This final section of the discussion paper raises some of the issues and questions that will shape the form and content of the WSRP, and leads in to the final section of the paper which maps out the components that might initiate thinking about a vision for the Parklands.

## **Residents' expectations and aspirations**

To estimate the potential catchment for the WSRP, it is useful to consider the findings of a 1998 report prepared for the Sydney Urban Parks Education and Research (SUPER) Group. In reporting generally on urban park visitation to Sydney's major parks, the report found that most park visitors lived within a 30km radius of the park/garden they visited most frequently. On average, visitors took about 30 minutes to get there, but the majority took less than 15 minutes. Using the 30km radius to map a potential user catchment a potential user catchment can be projected of about 1.9 million people. On top of that will be the people who come to the Parklands as a destination for special facilities and/or special events (Centre for Visitor Studies 1998).

The SUPER Group research found, generally, parks and gardens attract a broad cultural and demographic cross-section of visitors. However, visitors to certain parks tended to exhibit the demographic characteristics similar to those of the park's local visitor catchment area. These conclusions were consistent with what was reported to be the most common reason for visiting a park: the fact that it was convenient, close to home and accessible (Centre for Visitor Studies 1998).

How do we know what people want in the parklands and how will the audience for these new facilities be generated? The visitor study asked people to imagine what parks and gardens might be like in 5-10 years, ie 2003-2008. There was a strong view expressed that parks and gardens should not be significantly different from their current format and offerings, as a counter to the pace of life which was expected to become ever more hectic. Improvements to current facilities were considered acceptable, but 'high technology' additions to parks, such as laser water and light shows were not felt to be consistent with the peace and tranquility that is sought in the park environment. (Centre for Visitor Studies 1998).

From these response, there appears to be a preference for what Baljon calls the "ordinary" park, that is, one typified by the traditional, pastoral aesthetic that many park planners and landscape architects are eager to transcend or remake to meet a changing urban lifestyle (Baljon 1992). The image of Central Park, New York, that mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century ideal of the escape from the city, is still very strong in people's

minds. Sydney's Centennial Park fits this image of the pastoral, piece of countryside with aspects of "natural wilderness"-feel to it.

### **New patterns of open space use**

The way we use Sydney's urban open space in our daily lives has changed over the past ten years. This is particularly noticeable on the streetscapes and in the open plazas of many suburban shopping streets. Urban dwellers use the cafes and footpaths for the promenading and social activities that once might have been accommodated in urban parks. Some commentators suggest this may free up open space parklands to provide for a more specific range of activities, or for specific groups (Thompson 2002). However, it is still popular to enjoy food/coffee concessions within the environment of the park as at Centennial and Vaucluse Parks. Many people also want to have access to parks for safe evening and night-time use.

Population change in these areas of western Sydney will bring some shifts in the distribution of ethnic communities. While on one hand there is a desire to integrate and become part of the Australian society, there are many meaningful traditional cultural activities and celebrations that still valued and public open spaces, such as parks, as frequently the venue for these cultural expression of various communities.

### **Sustainability**

With "environmentally sustainable design", or ESD, an underlying expectation of planning and development is that almost any site, no matter how degraded, can now be successfully remediated from a toxic state to a development-ready state. But the "sustainability agenda" is greater than just environmental or ecological sustainability. It also encompasses social, economic and cultural sustainability to an equal degree. Sustainability in this context must conceive of parklands that are true to these values in all aspects of the design, construction and management; parks that teach about and demonstrate sustainability and are themselves sustainable in how they will endure for future generations.

Principles of sustainability, in all its dimensions, can be expressed through:

- restoration and revelation of ecological processes throughout the Parklands
- catchment and water quality management
- energy use, generation and conservation

- selection of construction materials and on-site recycling facilities
- environmental education re: sustainability – school use, sites for research initiatives by universities and other organisations
- encouragement of alternative transport to and throughout the parklands – walking, cycling...horse riding in appropriate areas
- expressing the multitude of cultural values inherent in this part of the city and offering a venue for community celebrations

### **Creating accessible and meaningful parkland places**

Parklands that are memorable and meaningful in the minds of the population will be those with unique landscape experiences and facilities. Initially, local communities must value and use these areas, and eventually the Parklands will become known throughout the metropolitan area for their desirable destinations. The configuration of the WSRP, with its long, linear shape presents a challenge in generating a single image of the place. The length of the parklands' perimeter relative to the total area can be considered advantageous for providing accessibility and permeability into the various areas of the open space corridor.

Concepts of “placemaking” and “wayfinding” have relevance to this discussion, also, Park designs should be encouraged that respect and reveal the unique natural systems of the corridor and reflect a local vernacular, rather than an inner city design aesthetic. Notions of the past, present and future should be embedded in the Parklands' sense of place. So much of the new residential development of Western Sydney is disconnected from place, denying a connection to the rich heritage – indigenous and non-indigenous of the area. These considerations would include designs that highlight or reveal the layers of history in this area, starting with the Aboriginal people who lived throughout these lands.

The size and diversity of the Parklands will allow different kinds of environments and activities to be provided throughout it. Designing flexible spaces that can be “loose fit” open environments, ie ‘which can allow for a variety of functions and which are often undersigned, unregulated, spaces’ (Thompson 2002, p. 69) will be desirable. These sorts of spaces might receive a variety of plug-in options for different kinds of events, or activities within a framework that has strong visual references/markers. Loose fit spaces are not places without rules, but are places where the rules of use, or the programmatic content, are free to change and adapt to what is needed or desired.

## **The economic value of open space**

There will be an on-going challenge to identify appropriate income generating opportunities to fund on-going development and maintenance. Concomitant with this will be pressure to find an economic use for every hectare of the Parklands and to firmly advocate for the retention of this open space, rather than selling bits of it for short-term resource generation. Potentially, the WSRP can be a place where employment opportunities are generated, as well as being a place the population of western Sydney accesses for its leisure activities.

The existing agricultural activities in the Parklands' holdings are examples of income generation that could continue in a harmonious manner with open space and recreation land uses. Negotiation for this to continue must be weighed up with a perceived mandate to ensure public access to all areas of the Parklands, and also with the goals of promoting sustainable land management practices.

## **Robust management structure**

Given the very large size and diverse nature of the Parklands setting within the rapidly growing western Sydney region, it will be essential that a robust management structure be established. Definition of the appropriate management structure will require input from a diverse range of organisations and experienced individuals.

An overall management structure may be far more effective than a series of district precincts managed by different authorities and may have a range of implications for attracting government commitment and funding, and for attracting potential industry partners into mutually beneficial arrangements.

## **Community support in management**

Equally important to good leadership of parklands, is what Harnik refers to as good "followership", ie those volunteers committed to a particular parklands or specific activity within. These people provide physical labour, money, time, personal knowledge and skills to participate in the on-going maintenance or improvement of a place. And in doing so, the result is that in some locations parks '...are taking on the physical, spiritual and economic roles that they have been unable to assume since before World War II' (Harnik 2000, p. 4).

An example of how this sort of “followership” has been effectively harnessed is the National Parks Service’s Adirondack Trail, the first national park in the USA that is operated without paid employees. (O’Sullivan 1996). Bush regeneration groups in Australia are a good local example of this kind of active volunteering that results in the ecological restoration of many thousands of hectares of bushland every year throughout Australia.

### **Building social capital**

Sustainability also has social dimensions, and the planning and ongoing management of the Parklands can make a positive contribution to the social sustainability of this area of Western Sydney. Social sustainability can be supported by creating structures for participation and decision making that integrates a wide range of views and ideas, that allows local communities to influence decision making on social, economic and environmental issues, and that accounts for inter-generational equity or social justice. (Benson & Roe 2000) This will require a management structure that is flexible and responsive to community needs and desires.

Parklands should provide activities/facilities that encourage and accommodate the interaction of people who do not know each other while at the same time incorporating areas/facilities for individuals or groups who come there to enjoy each others company, eg family groups or organized clubs.

Social capital also includes assisting populations to achieve healthy Lifestyles. The Parks Victoria focus on Healthy Parks is a good example of this, where research is underway to determine the impacts of parks and the local environment on the physical activity habits of families. A close relationship between parklands and residential areas provides for easy accessibility and the parks themselves can become centers of activity for this kind of promotion. A similar initiative (“Healthy Parks, Healthy People”) has just been launched in Sydney through the SUPER Group. Baseline data will be collected prior to implementation of the program in order to compare the impact that this type of promotion has on individual and community health indicators.

Learning as recreation/environmental education is becoming increasingly significant. Bush regeneration groups are an example of direct involvement – learning while

helping to restore environments. Parks will increasingly become places for social research, historic research, natural systems research, and there are already groups engaged in this, such as Sydney Olympic Parklands Foundation. The SOPA environmental databank provides an example of how different groups of people can be involved in measuring various aspects of change on the sites eg: biodiversity indicators, health/well-being indicators, increasing involvement with a wider range of special interest groups, increased visits from people who may not ordinarily use parklands, etc. Additionally, universities and TAFEs will use the WSRP for research projects, field excursions, and field study centers. These types of uses open up many other possibilities for parkland management partnerships.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of this discussion paper suggest a number of key approaches for developing an overall vision and specific development options for the Western Sydney Regional Parklands. They include:

- Moving away from the traditional master plans to conceptualizing an evolving park form, driven by operational strategies that recognize incremental development and changing character over time.
- Replacing high maintenance, “fixed in time” pastoral aesthetic landscapes with an ecologically-based design character
- Taking a “loose fit”, or more flexible, approach to assigning specific park programs to specific locations within the parklands
- Forming partnerships with non-governmental agencies, commercial and industry interests, community groups and educational institutions
- Promoting links between human health and environmental sustainability
- Expressing and exposing cultural heritage as vital layers and unique design motifs in the natural/cultural landscape
- Creating a robust management structure which will be critical to the successful implementation and evolution of the parklands, through a coherent image and promotional program.

As of December 2003, planning for the WSRP has just begun. It is an opportune time for researchers, state and local government agencies and private enterprise to work

together creatively in imagining the possibilities for these lands. All of the ideas raised in this paper suggest areas that are ripe for continued research and investigation, to bring the best concepts forward in promoting beneficial outcomes for the Western Sydney Regional Parklands.

## REFERENCES

Baljon, L. 1992, *Designing Parks: an examination of contemporary approaches to design in landscape architecture*, Architectura and Natura Press, Amsterdam.

Balmori, D. 1992, "Park Redefinitions", in Muschamp, H., *The Once and Future Park*, Princeton University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, pp. 39-45.

Berrizbeitia, A. 1999, "The Amsterdam Bos: the modern public park and the construction of collective experience", in James Corner (ed.) 1999, *Recovering Landscape: essays in contemporary landscape architecture*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, pp. 186-203.

Broto, C. 1998, *Urbanism*, LINKS International, Barcelona, Spain.

Carr, S. et. al. 1992, *Public Space*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England.

Centre for Visitor Studies. 1998, *Sydneysiders' Use of Parks and Gardens*, report prepared for the SUPER Group, Sydney.

Corkery, L. 2003, "Western Sydney Regional Parklands: Vision and Concept Options", unpublished draft discussion paper prepared for the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources, Sydney, NSW.

Cranz, G. 1982, *The Politics of Park Design: a history of urban parks in America*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Czerniak, J. 2001, *Case: Downsview Park Toronto*, Prestel Verlag, Munich, Germany.

Ebert, R. 1995, "Urban Parks in Germany", Working Paper No. 12, Comedia/Demos Park Life Study, London.

Gardner, C. 1995, "Reclaiming the Night: night-time use, lighting and safety in Britain's parks", Working Paper No. 7, Comedia/Demos Park Life Study, London.

Grant, D. 2002, *Parklands 2020: the concept plan for the Sydney Olympic Parklands*, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Sydney, Australia.

Hajer, M. and Reijndorp, A. 2001, *In Search of the New Public Domain*, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam.

Harnik, P. 2000, *Inside City Parks*, Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C.

Holden, R. 2003, *New Landscape Design*, Laurence King Publishing Ltd., London.

Jackson, J.J. 2001, "What Olmsted Knew", Ad Hoc Committee on Environmental Stewardship, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia ([www.environment.emory.edu/who/olmsted.shtml](http://www.environment.emory.edu/who/olmsted.shtml) cited 22 July 2003).

Kaplan, R. et al. 1998, *With People in Mind: design and management of everyday nature*, Island Press, Washington, D.C.

Muschamp, H. 1992, *The Once and Future Park*, Princeton University Press, New Haven, Connecticut.

O'Sullivan, E. 1996, 'The Four E's: changing roles for parks and recreation', *Parks and Recreation*, Vol.31, No. 10, pp. 60-66.

Phillips, P. 1992, "Present Tensions: the nature of public space", in Muschamp, H., *The Once and Future Park*, Princeton University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, pp. 23-29.

Suter and Associates Leisure and Tourism Planners. 2003, *Assessing Recreation Demand and Opportunities: Western Sydney Region – Summary Report*, PlanningNSW, Sydney.

Thompson, C.W. 2002, "Urban Open Space in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", *Landscape and Urban Planning*, Vol.60 No.2, pp. 59-72.

Thompson, C.W. 1998, "Historic American Parks and Contemporary Needs", *Landscape Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 1-25.

Unpublished paper, "Demonstrating Innovative Ideas for the Use of the Open Space on Fringe Areas of Cities: case study, Berlin, Germany".

Van Herzele, A. and Wiedemann, T. 2003, "A monitoring tool for the provision of accessible and attractive urban green spaces", in *Landscape and Urban Planning*, Vol.63, No.2, pp. 109-126.

Warner, S.B. 1992, in Muschamp, H., *The Once and Future Park*, Princeton University Press, New Haven, Connecticut.

Wearing, S. et al. 2002, *Cultural Diversity in the Social Valuing of Parkland: providing management tools for best practice in parkland use*, SUPER Group Technical Report Series, Sydney.

([www.asla.org/meetings/awards/awds02/baldwin\\_hills\\_park.html](http://www.asla.org/meetings/awards/awds02/baldwin_hills_park.html) cited 23 May 2003)

([www.brucemaudesign.com/treeCityImage3.html](http://www.brucemaudesign.com/treeCityImage3.html) cited 10 May 2003)

([www.epa.gov/jtr/topics/liss.htm](http://www.epa.gov/jtr/topics/liss.htm) cited 21 May 2003)

(Field Operations website, cited May 2003)

([www.galinsky.com/buildings/villette/](http://www.galinsky.com/buildings/villette/) cited 25 May 2003)

([www.mlagreen.com/pp/bhp1.html](http://www.mlagreen.com/pp/bhp1.html) cited 23 May 2003)

# STATE OF AUSTRALIAN CITIES NATIONAL CONFERENCE

**SYDNEY, 2003**

## **SPONSORS**

University of Western Sydney  
Australian National University  
The University of New South Wales  
Griffith University  
The University of Melbourne  
Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment  
NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources  
ACT Planning and Land Authority

 **For all enquiries, please contact:-**

**University of Western Sydney**  
**Urban Frontiers Program**  
Building 22, Campbelltown Campus  
Locked Bag 1797, Penrith South DC NSW 1797

Phone +61 2 4620 3443

Fax +61 2 4620 3447

Email [urbanfrontiers@uws.edu.au](mailto:urbanfrontiers@uws.edu.au)

Web [www.urbanfrontiers.uws.edu.au](http://www.urbanfrontiers.uws.edu.au)