

## 5.1. MM01: Enough is enough: it's time to fight for our open space

I do not believe I am exaggerating when I say that the NSW Government has launched an outright assault on North Sydney's open space. Like all campaigns of war, the Government is attacking us on several fronts.

On one hand, it has approved plans that would add 20,000 new workers and 19,500 new residents to our area by 2036. At the same time, the Government has annexed more than 45,000 square metres of open space for infrastructure works and plans to take more than 15,000 square metres of that parkland permanently.

This might be tolerable if we had ample open space per person. But as you can see in the comparison of open space with the Northern Sydney Regional Councils below, we have significantly less open space than any other Council.

<b>Council area</b>	<b>Number of residents per hectare of open space</b>
Hornsby	113
Hunters Hill	145
Ku-ring-gai	87
Lane Cove	186
Mosman	174
<b>North Sydney</b>	<b>566</b>
Ryde	167
Willoughby	221

The latest salvo in this war on our quality of life is the plan to build a cycle ramp in Bradfield Park North and Central for access to the Harbour Bridge. Last Friday afternoon, Transport for NSW emailed me to say that it was opening consultation for two cycling ramp options.

It is a sign of the contempt with which the Department is treating North Sydney residents that it is pursuing options that the community has already rejected and closing consultation before the next scheduled Council meeting so that our corporate voice is silenced.

The two options on the table are wrong on many levels. Both options have a detrimental effect on the beauty and heritage of the Harbour Bridge, an asset that belongs to all of Sydney.

Both options cut into our open space. It's not just the footprint of the ramps that is at issue, it is how the park will feel when the ramp is installed. The sunny, open parkland

of Bradfield Park North, for example, will have an entirely different feel with massive support pillars and a cycle way stretching above it.

These are not odd bits of open space that are never used. Bradfield Park (South, Central and North) is one of our most used and best loved areas of open space – by residents, school children, workers and visitors.

Ironically, the land was given to Council for public parks and recreation by resolution of both the Legislative Assembly and Council in 1935, in recognition of the significant impacts the construction of the Bridge had on the local community. I fail to see how commuter cycling meets that legislated purpose.

For the past six months, Council and residents have negotiated in good faith with Transport for NSW. Council has a long history of supporting active transport and reducing dependence on motor vehicles. We understand that cycling has to be accessible for everyone and that some cyclists and families may find it hard to get up the existing stairs.

So why can't Transport for NSW understand how important open space is in our densely populated area and find a solution with less impact? We have suggested a compromise, such as a lift, which can be used until a longer-term solution is found. Transport for NSW didn't even include it as an option for community consideration.

As I said in a Mayoral Minute in April, if these proposals gave us visionary active transport infrastructure that would support the city for the next 50 years, perhaps the trade-off on open space and heritage would be passable. But the proposed ramp options will link to a narrow substandard cycleway that is unfit for any real growth in commuter and recreational cycling.

It's time for North Sydney to stop being passive about the changes going on around us. If we don't call a halt to this pattern of the NSW Government taking over or destroying our open space, there will be even less per person for the generations to come.

I propose we start a community grass roots campaign to get Transport for NSW to rethink this proposal. Council will need to allocate between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to get the message out through corflutes, flyers, social media etc.

To keep costs down I propose we seek volunteers to hand out flyers at the major transport hubs including Milsons Point Station, North Sydney Station and the Milsons Point ferry wharf. I will be the first to volunteer. I hope I will be joined by community groups, the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre and businesses who can display information in their shop windows.

**I therefore recommend:**

**1.THAT** Council write to Transport for NSW, the Minister for Transport and Roads, and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces:

- calling for the current community engagement program on the two ramp options to cease immediately
- calling for a short-term solution to cycling access to the Harbour Bridge that doesn't reduce open space or impact the heritage curtilage of the Harbour Bridge
- calling for a long-term, world-class solution to be developed that rethinks cycling access rather than adding Band aid solutions to piecemeal cycling routes

**2.THAT** Council develop a community information campaign to advise the community of the proposed ramps and their impact on open space, to a maximum cost of \$15,000, funded from communications and promotions budgets.

**3.THAT** Council seek the support of residents, community groups and local businesses to support the campaign.

**COUNCILLOR JILLY GIBSON  
MAYOR**