



Greater Sydney Parklands

Corporate Plan

2023 – 2028



**GREATER
SYDNEY
PARKLANDS**

Acknowledgement of Country

Greater Sydney Parklands acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waters and sky upon which the parklands are located and pays respect to the Elders of these lands – past, present and emerging.

We recognise First Nations peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society. We acknowledge the rights and interests of First Nations 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 the First Nations communities of Greater Sydney. We will support their custodianship of the natural and cultural heritage of parklands so that these are places where First Nations peoples feel socially, culturally and economically included.

This plan commits to collaborating with First Nations peoples to restore and protect the people, culture and heritage of the parklands estate.



Bringing Back the Bush program, Western Sydney Parklands

[Read the Greater Sydney Parklands Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan here.](#)

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Message from the Chair and Chief Executive



Michael Rose
Chair

The work of Greater Sydney Parklands is shaped by the four strategic priorities of the NSW Government's *50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands*, as well as the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022*.

These set a clear ambition for Greater Sydney as a place where all people have access to great parklands – places where communities connect. Our conservation, management and expansion of our parklands estate are focused on this ambition.

The Board of Greater Sydney Parklands has a responsibility to ensure that our organisation serves the people of Sydney well, now and into the future. This requires careful stewardship and a commitment to best practice in the management, operations and conservation of our parks. It also requires us to plan carefully to ensure ongoing environmental and financial sustainability, so that we can continue to evolve with our growing city.

Taking a city-wide approach – while retaining our local focus with nearby communities – will help us meet the four strategic directions of the corporate plan over the next five years: growing parks for people, connecting people to parks, keeping Sydney green and vibrant, and caring for the environment.



Joshua French
Chief Executive

The Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022 (the Act) was passed on 29 March 2022 and established the new Greater Sydney Parklands Trust. The Act commenced on 1 July 2022, bringing together Western Sydney Parklands Trust, Parramatta Park Trust, and Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust. The Trust is responsible for protecting Greater Sydney's iconic urban parklands, while also establishing new parklands to realise the *50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands*.

We've established an initial five strategic priorities that focus on people, places and parklands. We will work with our community trustee boards, optimise partnerships of different types and scales, use place-based approaches so that more people use our parklands, and enrich precious environments sustainably.

We will report on our success, shift to new approaches as needed, and continue engaging with the people who love and use our parklands as we look to expand the estate, meeting our vision for a city of connected parklands.

[Read the 50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands here.](#)



01

About Greater Sydney Parklands

Greater Sydney Parklands is the NSW Government agency that is the custodian of Greater Sydney's most iconic urban parks. We take a strategic and metropolitan view of Sydney's open space and parklands, working in partnership with our local communities to achieve sustainable and positive outcomes for our city.

Introduction

We are established under the *Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022* (GSPT Act). We are led by an independent board and use a combined administration model to:

- be a steward and custodian for Greater Sydney’s most iconic urban parks
- maintain park infrastructure
- employ a team of experts to lead in parks management.

We champion the expansion of open space and parklands in partnership with communities, councils and community trustee boards.

As well as managing the parklands estate, we advocate across government for the *50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney’s Open Space and Parklands* by:

- promoting green space
- championing best practice and innovation
- caring for Country and the parklands estate.

Our corporate plan provides clear direction on what we want to achieve and how we will operate.

As part of the annual cycle of strategic and financial planning for our activities over the next five years, the plan clarifies how we will add value to the community, beneficiaries and the NSW Government.

About the GSPT Act

This plan responds to the GSPT Act, legislation for each park in the parklands estate, plans of management and the cultural values of the NSW Government. The objects of the GSPT Act are:

| | |
|----------|---|
| a | to maintain and improve the parklands estate across Greater Sydney and ensure the parklands estate is effectively managed and operated to deliver world-class and ecologically sustainable parklands for the public |
| b | to enable the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust to facilitate a connection to Country for First Nations peoples that – <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. recognises and conserves First Nations peoples’ cultural heritage and values through the use of the parklands estate, andii. establishes long-term and mutually beneficial partnerships that give effect to the ongoing relationships of First Nations peoples with Country |
| c | to ensure the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage values of the parklands estate and the protection of the environment within the parklands estate |
| d | to advocate for a long-term vision to achieve the outcome of quality parklands across Greater Sydney, particularly connectivity of green corridors and public access to open space |
| e | to encourage the use and enjoyment of the parklands estate by the community by promoting and increasing the recreational, historical, scientific, educational, cultural and environmental values of lands within the parklands estate |
| f | to ensure the parklands estate may be used by the community in a way that is adaptive and recognises and responds to the diverse needs of the community |
| g | to provide increased opportunity for community engagement to shape regionally significant parklands in response to diverse community needs. |

The parks of Greater Sydney Parklands

The iconic parks that form the parklands estate are, from west to east: Fernhill Estate, Western Sydney Parklands, Parramatta Park (including Wistaria Gardens), Callan Park and Centennial Parklands (Centennial, Moore and Queens parks), with opportunities for future expansion.

We want each of these parks to retain their distinctive qualities while enhancing their value. This will give the people of Greater Sydney a diversity of options and experiences, alongside consistent and best-practice policy, advocacy and management.



Figure 1 – The parks of Greater Sydney Parklands



50-Year Vision

Councils, state agencies and others – including community groups, heritage experts and individuals – have shaped the *50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney's Open Space and Parklands*.

The long-term aspiration sets out a bold vision for Greater Sydney to be:

- 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 stories

- 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.

This plan builds on the 50-Year Vision by creating a business framework that helps us to champion the Vision while also creating a sustainable agency over the next five years.

The 50-Year Vision sets four strategic directions

1.
Growing parks
for people



2.
Connecting
people to parks



3.
Keeping Sydney
green and vibrant



4.
Caring for the
environment







02

Our work

We work on behalf of the NSW Government to provide safe, accessible and inclusive parklands for the people of Greater Sydney including residents and visitors. We prioritise a safe environment, accessible to all abilities, ages and ethnicities, with inclusive programs and activities.

Our work balances objectives for natural and cultural heritage, communities and local economies. We continuously assess how achieving one objective impacts another so we can adapt to the changing context.

Purpose

Caring for parklands and connecting communities

We are protecting, activating and growing Greater Sydney's parklands in a sustainable way for future generations and to promote the community's engagement with the parklands.

Why? To enable people to connect spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially and culturally to Country through the parklands. To be a champion for safe and inclusive spaces and places that enhance the community's health and wellbeing.

We believe connecting people and parklands will enhance a society that continues to protect the land, water and cultural heritage for the future.

We are a guardian of the parks where people grow and learn about themselves, others and the world around them.

Our purpose is to preserve the parklands and inspire the next generation to activate, grow and develop the parklands in a sustainable way. Together, we can create environments where people pause, breathe, relax and connect.



Misc. Restaurant, Parramatta Park
(Shayben Moussa Creative)

Strategic framework 2023-2028

The strategic framework draws on the 50-Year Vision and engagement with our board and staff.

VISION

A city of connected parklands

PURPOSE

Caring for parklands and connecting communities

OBJECTIVES

Accessibility



To create environments that are accessible and enjoyable, inclusive and engaging for all visitors.

Partnerships



To foster public and private partnerships that improve the visitor experience and return value to government and the community over a range of policy areas.

Advocacy



To advocate for a connected network of waterways and parks, and policies that align with our purpose.

Sustainability



To contribute to long-term social, economic and environmental sustainability through the management and growth of the parklands estate.

Growth



To plan for a growing parklands estate with a scalable and efficient operation that allows us to meet our statutory objectives.

ENABLERS

Engagement



To engage with and involve the community and partners to protect, activate and grow the parklands in a sustainable way for future generations.

Governance and culture



Through good governance and culture, to create an environment where staff can grow and feel valued and recognised for their contribution.

Support



To invest in the people, partnerships, systems and processes that will enable us to achieve our objectives.

Strategic priorities 2023–2024

The critical success factors we need to get right over the next 2 years are:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Support community trustee boards to protect and activate the parklands estate in a sustainable way through our Consultation and Engagement Framework |
| 2 | Develop place-based approaches that improve accessibility and foster enjoyment and partnerships for sustainability |
| 3 | Prepare to expand the parklands estate through efficient, effective and scalable operations, and to support the NSW Government's housing agenda |
| 4 | Identify and cultivate key partnerships with state and local agencies and private partnerships to improve the visitor experience and generate revenue |
| 5 | Create programs that protect and enhance our natural and cultural heritage and connect with First Nations Culture |
| 6 | Continue to strive for operational excellence across our parklands estate with well maintained and cared for parklands |
| 7 | Foster a culture of looking after our people where our staff can grow and feel valued and recognised. Be proactive in advancing work health and safety initiatives and encouraging a resilient workforce. |



TreeTops Adventure Western Sydney, Western Sydney Parklands

Measuring success

Objectives

Accessibility

Park usage, domestic visitation, brand awareness and visitor satisfaction

Partnerships

Private and public investment and self-generating revenue

Advocacy

Recognition of our voice across government, stakeholders and the community

Sustainability

Environmental, financial and social sustainability

Growth

Financial and parks under management

Enablers

Engagement

Community trustee boards and public engagement

Governance and culture

Employee engagement and satisfaction

Support

Continuous improvement measured through the NSW People Matter Employee Survey



Advocacy

By advocating for the NSW Government's 50-Year Vision, we want the city's parklands to be globally recognised and make a contribution to NSW as the premier visitor destination in the Asia Pacific.

We're about enabling a living, breathing city in a park with community-focused open space that is connected through the city's network of waterways, parklands and bushland. We're creating parklands that are accessible, meaningful, sustainable and part of everyday life and community health. Our work is about creating a positive legacy for future generations.

This Vision places people at the heart of the parklands experience, including residents, community groups, domestic and international visitors, and local businesses. By being inclusive, the Vision suggests the notion of people being active within and engaged with the parklands.

The Vision is realised through these experiences and our work to make them more accessible while building partnerships, and advocating for clean and green, sustainability and growth. Our work is enhanced through First Nations reconciliation and celebration, community engagement, business support, people and culture.

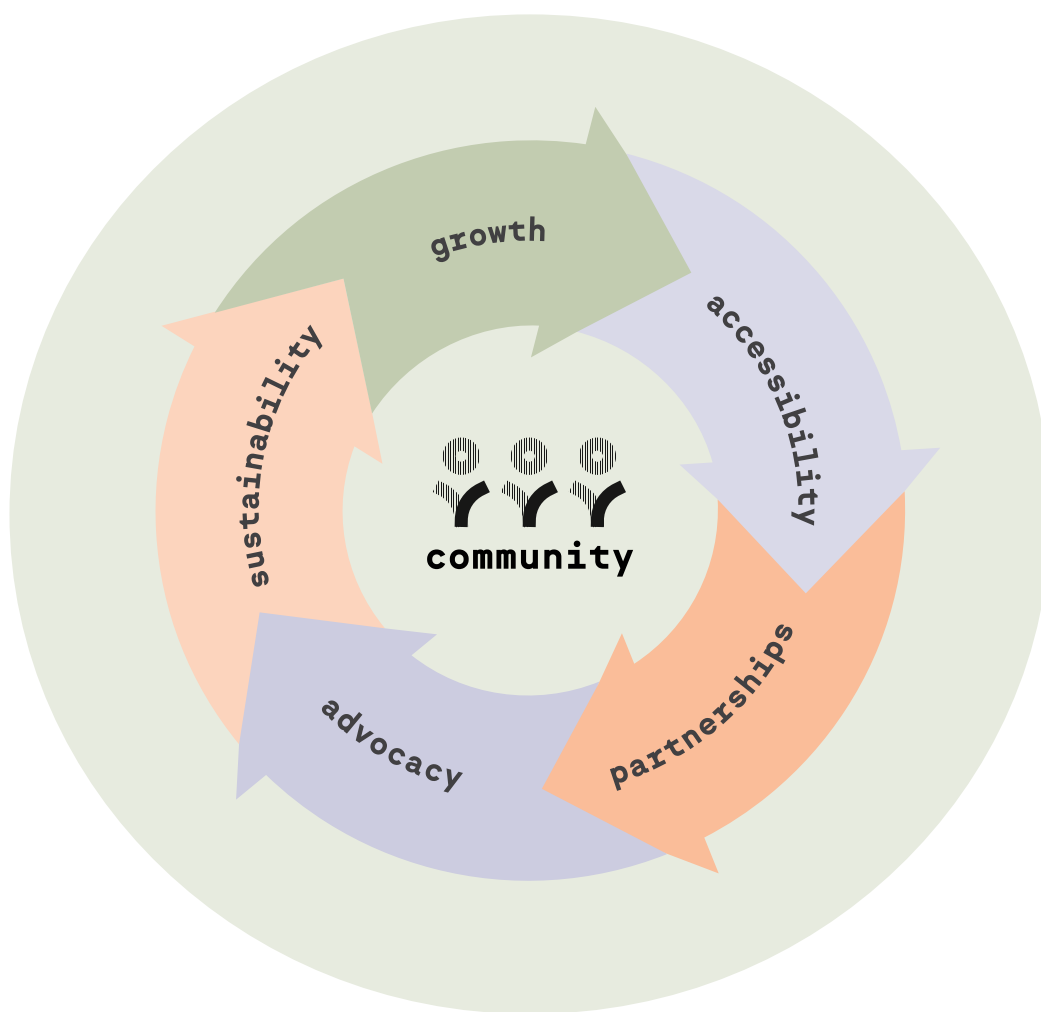


Figure 2 – Greater Sydney Parklands strategic objectives





03

Our operations

Our operating principles and foundation documents help us to achieve better outcomes for all and meet the NSW Government and community's expectations.

Operating principles

Our operating principles are the foundation for a system of business practice and consistent decision-making across the agency. To be successful, we need a comprehensive understanding of the communities and visitors we serve and the capability to implement programs consistently and strategically. These principles, together with the strategic directions, will align our work toward the strategic framework's vision and purpose.

1

VISITOR FOCUSED

We aspire to serve others with empathy in mind

We actively engage with diverse groups of visitors and stakeholders, placing the park user at the heart of our decisions. By seeking to understand their unique needs, we stand beside them as a trusted partner in every experience.

2

EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

We make choices that arise from thorough analysis and wisdom

Our science-driven, best-practice methodologies are not only responsive to current demands but also adapt to the ever-evolving context. We act not just on information, but on validated evidence.

3

ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

We believe courage and creativity come hand in hand

We combine innovation and strategy to optimise public policy outcomes from our investments. Balancing risk and reward we prioritise sustainable business solutions.

4

CITY-WIDE FOCUS

We champion collaboration that values inclusivity

We seamlessly integrate local spaces with the overarching urban matrix. Our efforts enhance parkland-community bonds with connection to environment and culture.

5

SCALABLE AND ADAPTABLE

We strive to be flexible, through continuous improvement

As we plan for growth, our business models, systems and processes are designed to scale sustainably and to adapt efficiently. With minimised administrative burdens, we cater uniquely to the opportunities and challenges each park presents, ensuring tailored solutions for every setting.

8

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are committed to driving meaningful outcomes

Clear roles for every member of our team are not just defined; they are designed with utmost clarity to foster an environment of collaboration. We ensure that responsibilities are communicated, agreed upon and directly aligned with the DPE values.

7

INTERNAL EXPERTISE

We are dedicated to evolving and expanding

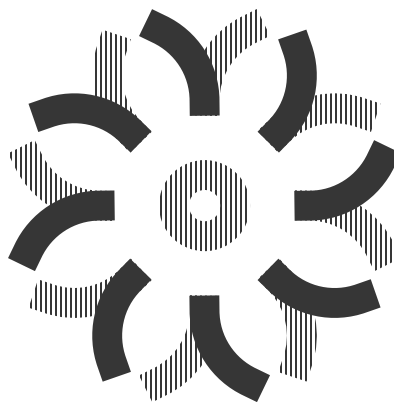
As leaders in parks, we harness our internal strengths and seek alignment with communities, local or state agencies and the private sector. This ensures our workforce remains agile while consistently moving toward our long-term goals.

6

EXCELLENCE

We achieve through a results-focused mindset

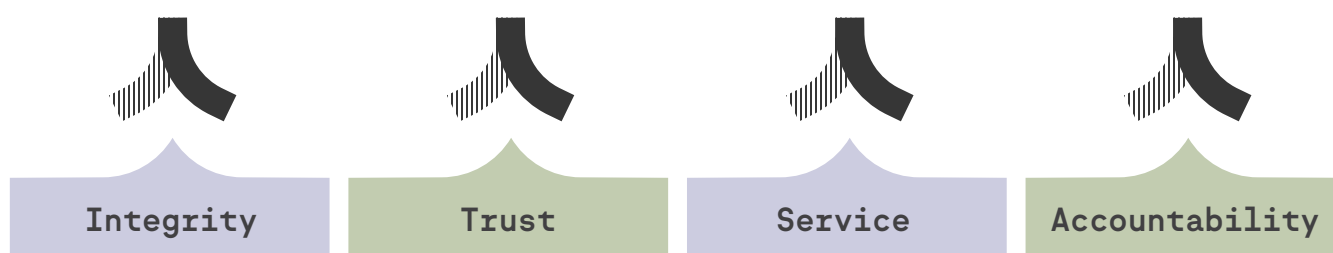
When we take on a task, we aim to deliver it with unmatched precision. By identifying our core functions and activities, we immerse ourselves in a culture of continuous improvement, embracing trials and learning.



Culture, values and behaviours

The NSW Government's core values

set out in the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* are:



Aligned with the NSW Government's core values are the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) values of daring, collaborative, creative, kind and inclusive. As we evolve, we will continue to align to these values while also discovering what is unique and distinctive about what we do and how we operate.

DPE values



Agency structure

We are a NSW Government agency that has an independent board to advise the NSW Government on the collective parks under management. The board and chief executive work within legislation, providing advice and recommendations to the NSW Government through the Secretary and portfolio Minister.

The executive team implements agreed strategic objectives within the board's risk appetite.

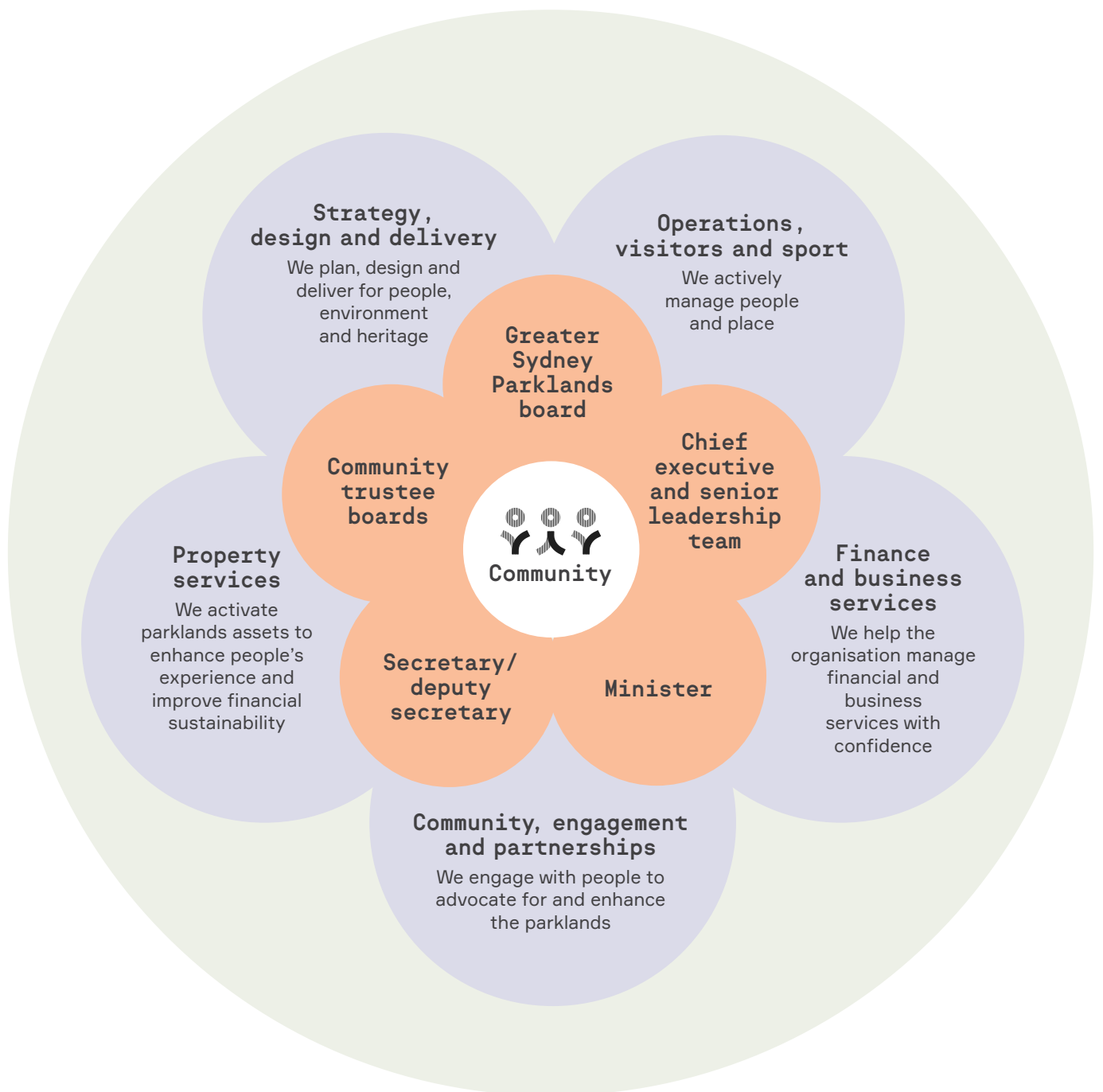


Figure 3 – Organisational structure

Permanent staff focus on our ongoing core business

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Strategic park planning | Recreation, natural and cultural heritage protection | Community engagement | Park, property, asset and visitor management |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------|--|

We bring in contracting and consultancy services to provide non-core, short-term or highly specialised business expertise and services to deliver the objectives of our key planning documents.

Maintaining a lean and agile workforce builds our capability and capacity to sustainably expand the parklands estate while keeping costs low and quality high.

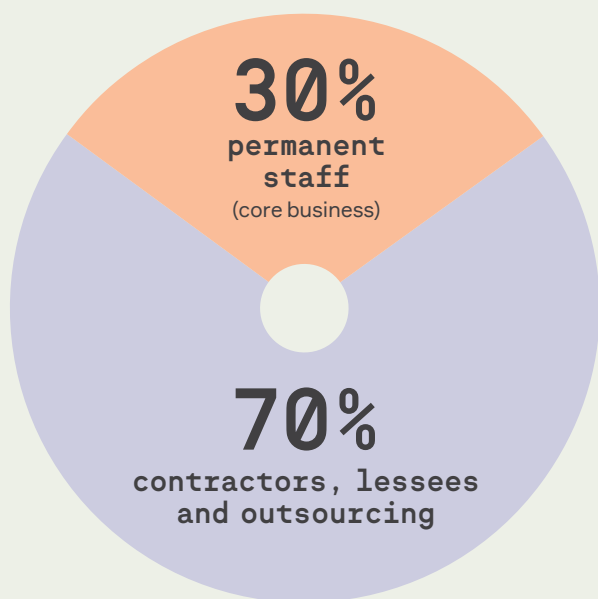


Figure 4 – Staffing levels

We partner with communities, local government, the NSW Government and the private sector, including lessees, to provide services and meet our strategic objectives.



Figure 5 – Building partnerships



Sydney Zoo, Western Sydney Parklands

Operational strategies and plans

Asset Management Strategy

Our Asset Management Strategy improves how we manage assets throughout their life cycle. It identifies requirements to manage and develop public assets valued at around \$3 billion.

The strategy is moving us towards a more mature approach to asset management. It means we can align with NSW Treasury's Asset Management Policy, a strategic and systematic approach to physical asset and infrastructure planning and management across the NSW Government.

As part of this work, we are enhancing and integrating asset management system software, which helps us to ensure physical assets support our services within the limits of available resources. While the system helps us to manage assets, it also helps us to meet the objectives set out in plans of management.

Our Asset Management Strategy has helped us to:

Develop asset maintenance plans

for each asset class within each park

Improve financial management

by articulating the financial commitments to operate, maintain and renew assets over their life cycle

Inform decision-making and planning

for future works, including provisions for development, operations, maintenance, depreciation and asset renewal

Create robust processes for NSW Government reporting

including asset attestation, maturity assessments, strategic asset management plans, asset management plans and cost plans

A key challenge over the life of this corporate plan will be to improve the integration of new operational and financial asset data into the system as part of 'business as usual' as well as adequately supporting operational staff in the further input of detailed data about individual assets.

Plans of management

Each individual park will continue to have their own identity, as expressed in plans of management for Fernhill Estate, Western Sydney Parklands, Parramatta Park and Centennial Parklands.

Plans of management set out the land uses, park development, programming and management goals for each park, generally over a 10-year planning horizon.

Each was developed with local communities and adopted by the Minister.

We will develop a plan of management for Callan Park and update existing plans as required.

This individual focus will leverage the leadership, policy, advocacy and management of Greater Sydney Parklands.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Read our plans of management |  | Fernhill Estate |
| | | Western Sydney Parklands |
| | | Parramatta Park |
| | | Callan Park (Landscape Structure Plan) |
| | | Centennial Parklands |



Enterprise risk strategy

The creation of Greater Sydney Parklands allowed us to review strategic and operational risk profiles through the lens of the larger combined agency.

The review aligns with the DPE's risk management approach.

The refreshed Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Framework identifies 16 strategic risks with eight high risk and eight medium risk areas.

We also refreshed the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Officers Due Diligence Framework.

Our strategic risk management approach includes

ERM
Framework

Risk maturity
assessment

Risk appetite
statements

Establishing risk and
control ownership

Enhanced enterprise
risk reporting

We developed a five-year internal audit plan of our ERM Framework and risk registers. The plan guides due diligence processes, risk mitigation and risk reporting.

Our WHS Committee meets quarterly and reviews the WHS risk register to ensure our risk control and minimisation measures are effective. WHS and visitor safety incident reports are provided to the Audit Risk and Compliance Committee and Compliance Committee and board meetings.

Work health and safety

Within the legislative context of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *WHS Regulation 2017*, we have a duty of care to our workers, volunteers and visitors to

do all we reasonably can to ensure people can work in or visit the parklands estate safely.

To achieve our duty of care objectives, we manage WHS risks through:

- the ERM Framework
- staff WHS induction, refreshers and training
- a contractor induction system
- staff and visitor risk register
- incident procedures manual
- bushfire management strategy
- visitor safety policy and procedures.



Community, partnerships and sustainable funding

Community focus and building partnerships

To remain community focused, we will be guided by our operating principles and strategic directions. Working with a diversity of community groups, we will engage with and involve people through various projects, program and policy development and implementation. We will work to balance competing interests and will endeavour to explain the rationale for our decisions.

We commit to formally engaging with each park's local community and involve others as required. We will foster partnerships that will advance our objectives, caring for parklands and connecting our communities. Together we will be proud of Sydney's parklands.

Sustainable funding

We will look to extend our partnerships with a model that also allows sustainable long-term funding (both capital and operational expenditure) to ensure the ongoing sustainability of our parklands.

Off-park business hubs – like those already in place on-park at Western Sydney Parklands – will enable us to generate revenue to support the capital and operational funding deficit for Parramatta Park, Callan Park and Fernhill Estate, and any future parklands.

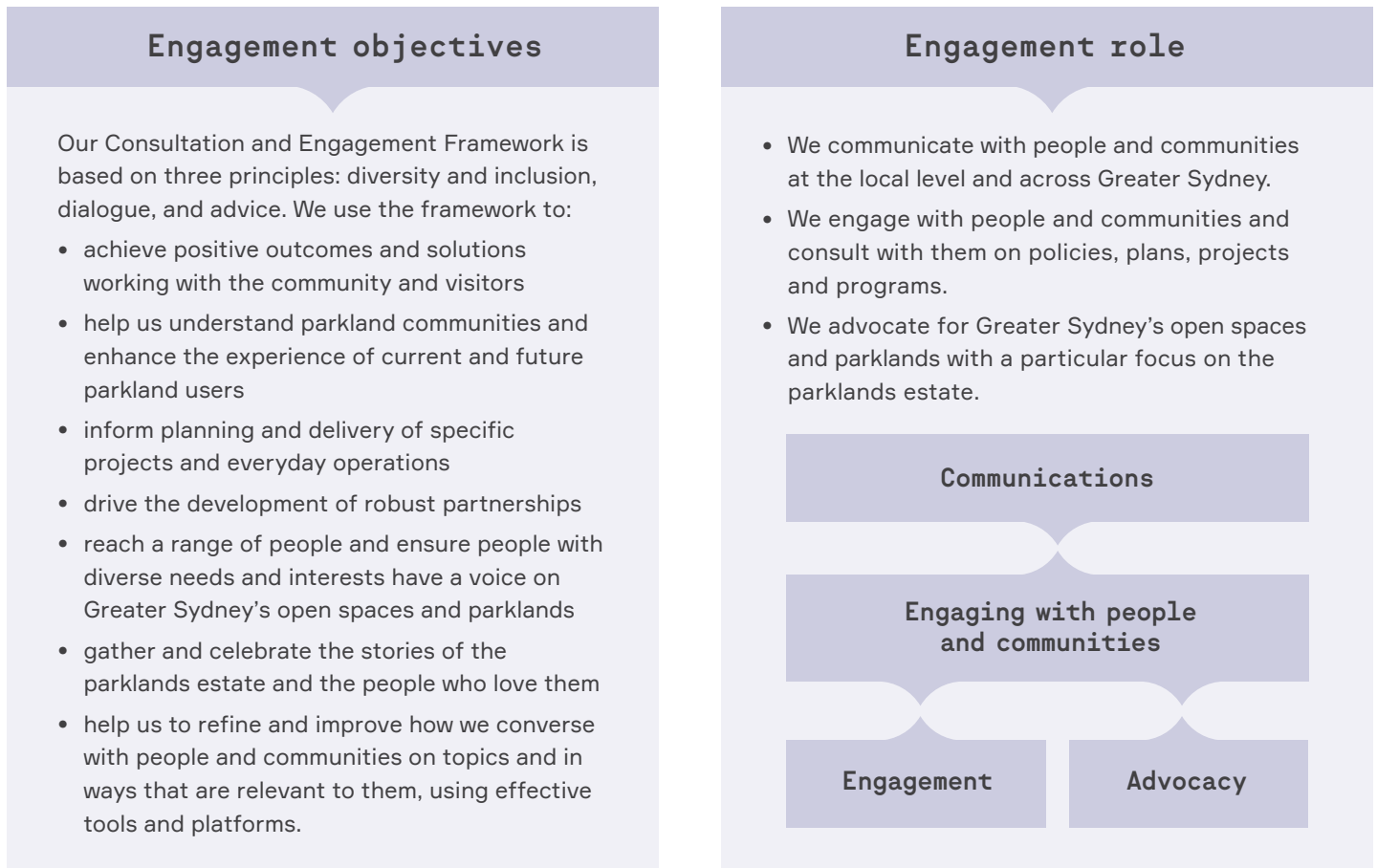
By having business hubs outside of existing parks, we can continue to protect the landscape and heritage values of our parks, while also allowing us to build partnerships with businesses and broader communities.

This is a win-win situation: local communities can enjoy our beautiful parklands for generations to come, and our parklands will be sustainably funded into the future.



Fernhill Fair, Fernhill Estate

Consultation and engagement



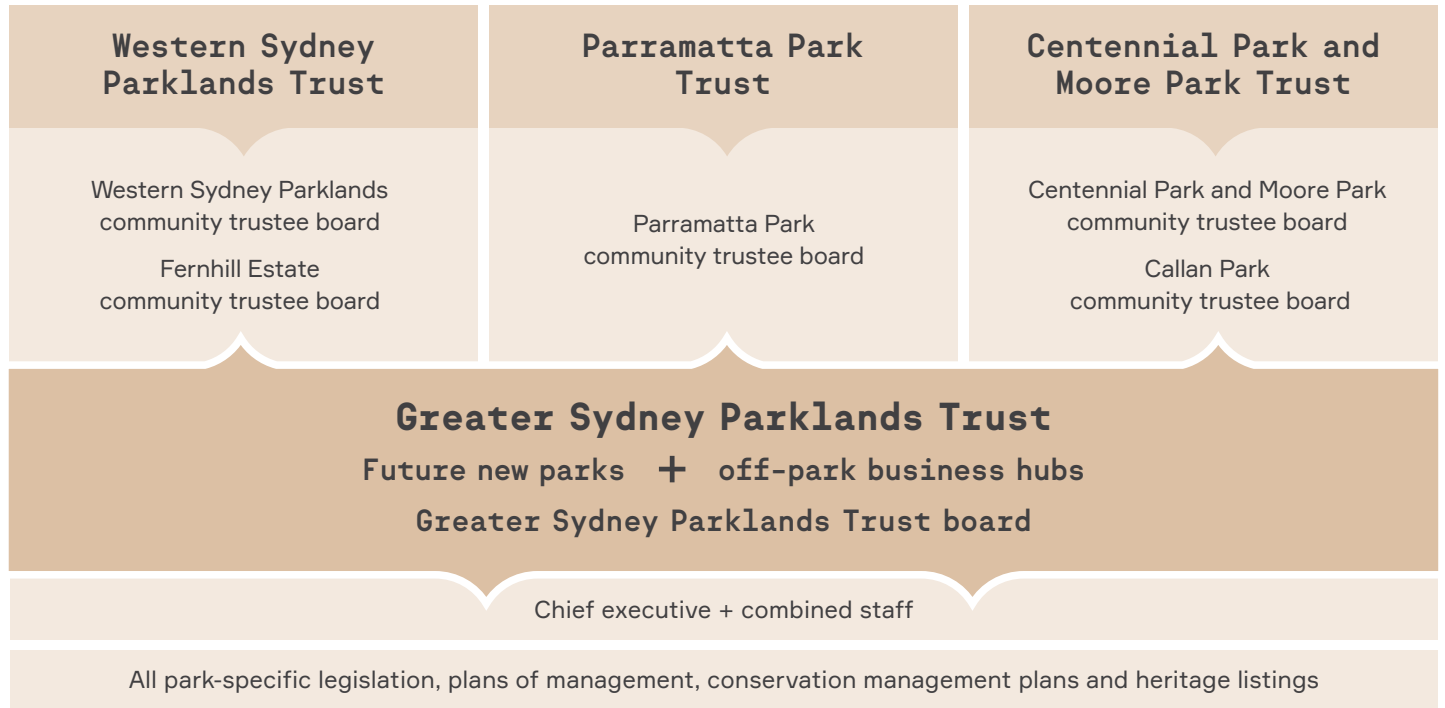
Stakeholders



Figure 6 – Stakeholder matrix

Community trustee boards

Community trustee boards are a legislative mechanism for ongoing engagement on the parklands estate and individual parks. Established for each of the parks in the parklands estate, they are a unique opportunity for community members to directly impact decision-making in their local park. These advisory boards include diverse community members that advise us on parkland matters.



For more information refer to the [Consultation and Engagement Framework 2022](#).





References

- 1 Greater Sydney Parklands Trust Act 2022
- 2 Greater Sydney Parklands Consultation and Engagement Framework 2022
- 3 Greater Sydney Parklands Year in Review 2021–2022
- 4 Greater Sydney Parklands Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan March 2023–March 2024
- 5 NSW Public Spaces Charter October 2021
- 6 Western Sydney Parklands Corporate Plan 2015–2020
- 7 White Paper, 50-Year Vision for Greater Sydney Parklands, Exposure Bill 2020
- 8 NSW Government Values, Government Sector Employment Act 2013

Version control:

| Version | Date released | Amendments |
|---------|---------------|---|
| 1.0 | July 2023 | Published |
| 1.1 | December 2023 | Pg 13 – Additional priorities for operational excellence and caring for a resilient workforce Pg 18 – Revised operating principles |

