

## Sporting Venues Authorities Amendment (Venues NSW) Bill 2020: What's in it for SOPA?

This year has seen a period of upheaval for the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) with the sacking of the SOPA Board and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by NSW Government severely affecting commercial and sporting activities. Members would now be aware of the *Sporting Venues Authorities Amendment (Venues NSW) Bill 2020* that has since moved through the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) of NSW Parliament. Without further amendment there are some concerning effects for the continued administration of SOPA and how it will interact with the revamped Venues NSW and to a lesser extent, the Greater Sydney Parklands Trust.

The fundamental concern for members at SOPA, apart from those Venues staff who would be transferred to Venues NSW, is the beginning of the effective dismantling of SOPA piece by piece and the removal (vesting) of those facilities/venues that generate income for a self-funding Authority. With reduced income comes the need to provide more spaces within the confines of SOPA for unsustainable development – be it further residential or commercial.

As it currently stands there are several amendments to the *Venues NSW Bill* that have been put forward in the Legislative Council (Upper House). These are designed to support the continuation of staff public sector employment through the direct reference to the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*; remove the declaration of controlled land or designated land except by Act of NSW Parliament and; a wholesale removal of SOPA venues/facilities and staff from the bill in its entirety. You can see those amendments [HERE](#).

At a time when Sydney is celebrating 20 years since the best Olympics ever, the concern is that this Bill will trash the Olympic legacy and leave SOPA to effectively die on the vine as this Government looks towards a commercialisation and potential privatisation of State Owned Venues. Where that will leave the public who attend, and sporting organisations that rely on these top-flight facilities, is anyone's guess. It won't be cheaper, that's for sure.

The PSA says keep Sydney Olympic Park Authority as it is for future generations of residents, commercial entities, sporting event attendees and budding sporting heroes to enjoy.

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