

12 THINGS:

**FRANK SARTOR
& THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY**

**WON'T
TELL YOU**

Friends of Callan Park Newsletter • March 2008

THE FUTURE OF CALLAN PARK – ONE OF SYDNEY'S ICONIC PLACES - HANGS IN THE BALANCE. FRANK SARTOR AND HIS COLLEAGUE VERITY FIRTH, ALONG WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, ARE BUSY SPENDING TAXPAYERS' FUNDS IN A BID TO "SELL" THEIR PLAN FOR CALLAN PARK TO THE PUBLIC...

They know they have to win public support before they can implement their plan to give the bulk of Callan Park's 61 hectares to the university. So far, all their pretty pictures and spin have not done the job – only 6% of residents of Leichhardt Municipality support the plan, according to a telephone poll commissioned by Leichhardt Council. The same poll did reveal a large minority is still undecided. This leaflet spells out the drawbacks and dangers in the Sartor/University plan to which thousands of people objected when it went on public exhibition over summer. We also present the alternative.

– Hall Greenland, President, Friends of Callan Park

1 THE PLAN WAS FIXED

The Minister for Planning Frank Sartor paid a group of consultants to draw up a plan for Callan Park, but the fix was in from the beginning: the consultants were told in their brief the only option was the University takeover. The public's preference for a mental health hospital and preservation of public open space didn't get a look in. Other possibilities, such as a small city farm, were not even on the radar. It's for this reason that the Friends of Callan Park and Leichhardt Council have called for the re-opening of public consultation - without preconditions. Real public participation and genuine planning still need to be done.

2 THE CAMPUS AT CALLAN PARK IS A BUSINESS PROPOSITION

"University leaders are now motivated by the market imperative", writes Glyn Davies, vice-chancellor of Melbourne University in the latest issue of Arena Magazine. Unis have to sell their services and facilities to survive, because the government doesn't adequately fund them.

The University of Sydney is no different. In fact, last October its acting pro-vice-chancellor Richmond Jeremy told the community reference panel on Callan Park that any university expansion at Callan Park must work in a business sense. This is why the Memorandum of Understanding between Mr Sartor and the University's vice-chancellor has a clause allowing the University to commercially exploit its presence on what are public parklands.

3 AS A CONSEQUENCE OF CLOSING CALLAN PARK, MENTALLY-ILL PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO BE IMPRISONED, BECOME HOMELESS - OR COMMIT SUICIDE!

For the University takeover to occur, Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital at Callan Park has to be closed forever. We already know the results of too few mental health hospital beds in NSW: hundreds of mentally-ill people end up on the streets, or in jail, or dead.

Closing Rozelle Psychiatric Hospital and "relocating" it to the locked-down mental health wing at Concord will make those beds comparatively inaccessible (ever tried getting to Concord from the inner-city on public transport?). And it will do nothing to increase the number of beds we need – especially if there is to be real action on Kevin Rudd's pledge to reducing homelessness.

One possible and disturbing consequence of the removal: we know, from the reports of the NSW Sentinel Events Review Committee, that areas with the least mental health beds have suicide rates among the mentally ill that are twice, yes twice, that of areas with a more adequate supply of beds.



4 THE SHEER BULK AND SCALE OF THE PROPOSED CAMPUS

The University is proposing building a campus at Callan Park with nearly one-third the floor space of the main campus. The proposed buildings would be up to six residential storeys high, as the Leichhardt Council report on the plan emphasises. The impact of this on the parklands and neighbours is unacceptable

5 THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IS PROBABLY UNDERESTIMATED

The university hasn't been exactly trumpeting the fact, but they have admitted that the 5000 students, the 400 staff and the 700 to live on site are "minimum" figures. It could easily be two or three times as many.

For instance, the 34,000 effective full-time students at the University of Sydney now occupy 250,000 square metres of floor space. That's 7.5m² per student. The university is proposing a campus of 100,000 square metres at Callan Park – a quarter of it reserved for student accommodation. If we divide the remaining 75,000 by 7.5m², we're looking at 10,000 students.

Arts students – and they are mentioned in the Land Use Plan as users of any Callan Park campus – occupy less than 2.5m² per student. If it was a campus principally for Arts students, we could be looking at many, many more than 10,000.

6 HERITAGE LANDSCAPE WOULD BE DESTROYED

The plan's promoters claim that the university takeover would restore heritage buildings, yet the price would involve destroying what is essential to the heritage value of the site.

The Sartor/University plan would chop up Callan Park – a rare, intact 19th century private and subsequently public estate – into five subdivisions. The University would then fill the open parklands section in the centre of the site with multi-storey buildings. These buildings would block views across the site to and from Kirkbride and Broughton Hall.

Incidentally, the plan would also leave at least half the prime heritage items under the management of NSW Health – the very body demolishing them by neglect.

7 PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WOULD BE SACRIFICED

Frank Sartor's consultants claim their plan would increase "open space" by 2000m², but they define open space as including parking lots (they would at least double in area), roads, paths, spaces between buildings and enclosed courtyards. On the other hand, Leichhardt Council's planners have estimated that, in fact, this "open space" will be decreased by nearly 1000m².

Yet open space, properly understood, is parkland accessible to the public. On this definition, there can be little doubt that a major university campus will reduce genuine public open space.

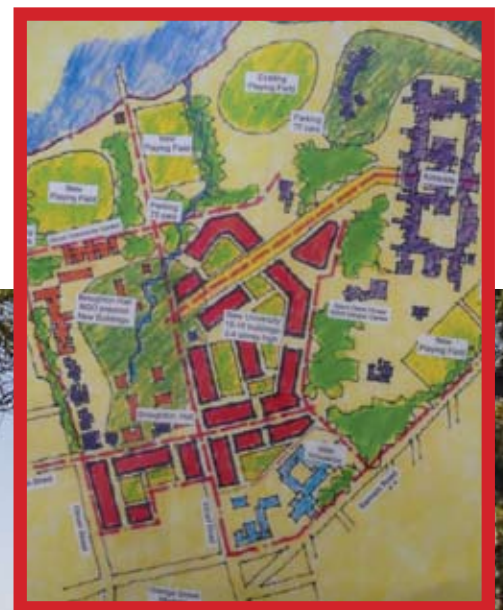
In addition, the current open space at Callan Park is special. It has a unique tranquillity and serenity which strikes every visitor – and it is these qualities that would be destroyed by the intrusion of thousands of students and 75,000m² of new building. As people are saying: Would the government allow the University of NSW to take over a huge part of Centennial Park?

8 CITY FARM WOULD BE BLOCKED

On the face of it, this is a proposal that needs serious and sympathetic consideration yet it has been completely ignored in the rush to give Callan Park away.

9 SPORTING OVALS WOULD NOT BE LOCALLY CONTROLLED

At present local teams have first call on the main oval at Callan Park. If the traditional cricket pitch on Balmain Road and the oval at the end of Glover Street are restored (and Council has said it is willing to pay for this) the same rules should apply – local teams are, after all, short of usable fields and current fields are over-utilised. But the University is claiming the major role in the use of these ovals.



10 LEICHHARDT'S TOWN PLAN IGNORED

Any other big developer proposing to add residents to Leichhardt's population would be required to donate new open space to the municipality so that the current ratio of open space per residents doesn't go any lower. The current ratio is 16.5m² per resident. For 700 residents, as the University proposes, that would be 11,550m².

There is no mention of this in the Sartor/University plan – their aim is to take over rather than add to public open space.

11 THE CALLAN PARK ACT WOULD BE STRIPPED OF MAJOR PROTECTIONS

The Sartor/University plan is illegal. For it to be implemented, the Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002 would need some drastic surgery. For instance, the Act caps development on the site. It's proposed to remove that cap and increase current floor space by at least 50%. This is what the plan's authors call a "minor" change.

12 YET THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

Like any other major park in Sydney, Callan Park needs to be managed by a Trust with strong local representation (there is provision for this in the Callan Park Act). It also needs a master plan which would aim for the best social and environmental use of the site. From the Friends' point of view, there is no reason why the current uses on the 61 hectare site cannot continue – the mix of a psychiatric hospital, public open space, the ambulance headquarters, the Sydney College of the Arts, the NSW Writers' Centre and handful of publicly funded voluntary organisations.



DO YOU WANT 6 STOREY BUILDINGS HERE?

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. **JOIN THE FRIENDS OF CALLAN PARK** by sending your details and just \$20 to Friends of Callan Park, 17 North Ave, Leichhardt 2040
2. Follow the issue on our website **WWW.CALLANPARK.COM**
3. **COME TO A FRIENDS MEETING** – we meet the first Monday of every month at 7pm in the NSW Writers Centre in Callan Park (come in the gates at the Cecily St traffic lights and follow the green signs). Our next meetings are: April 7, May 5, and June 2.
4. For **MORE INFORMATION:** contact Michele McKenzie 0415 815 552 or Dr Jean Lennane 9810 2511 or Phillip Marsh 0416 099 464