

# Council's skate park proposal to be scrapped by Heritage Minister

Woolahra Council's controversial skate park and recreation facility project for Rushcutters Bay Park has been thrown a curveball by the State Government yet again, following the the NSW Government's State Heritage Register Committee's recommendation to Environment and Heritage Minister, Don Harwin that both Rushcutters Bay Park and Darling Point's Yarranabbe Park be listed on the NSW State Heritage register.

The Council's plan to create a state-of-the-art \$1.1 million facility for its youth and fitness-minded residents has always been met with mixed opinions by nearby residents.

One elderly resident told LattéLife, "To have a skateboarding amenity in our wonderful harbour-side park will result in attracting 'undesirables', potentially leading to graffiti and other issues."

Whilst the Council was going through the necessary planning and public consultation phases of its proposed development, then NSW Heritage Minister and current Vacluse MP, Gabrielle Upton announced that her office placed a 12-month Interim Heritage Order (IHO) on Rushcutters Bay Park in January 2019.

The IHO sent shockwaves to the Council's urban planning and development staff, as with an IHO, the proposal had to be deferred for 12 months. The eight out of 15 Liberal Councillors were left with a particular disdain as their local Liberal Member of Parliament did not thoroughly engage with the Council before announcing the slapping of the IHO.

At the time the IHO was issued, Council's Director of Technical Services, Tom O'Hanlon

explained to media, "We've met literally hundreds of people and had hundreds of submissions from people who are in favour."

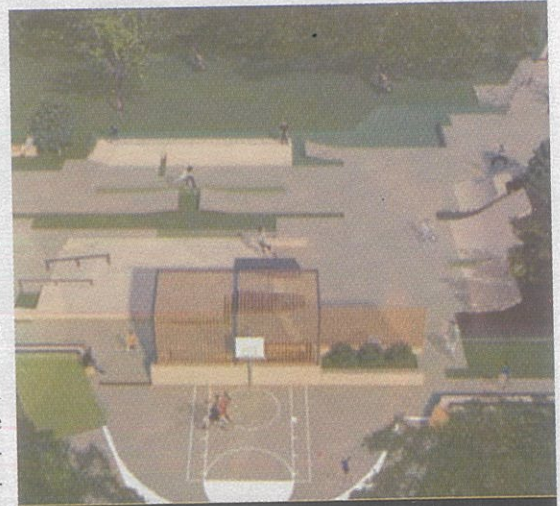
Paddington Ward Greens Councillor, Matthew Robertson slammed the NSW Government's Statement of Environmental Effects report at the 8 July 2019 Council meeting, stating, "It's a hilarious read!"

He continued, "This interim order was made during intense political circumstances on the eve of an election. Gabrielle Upton had a small opposition to what we were proposing, and she did what she did to appease them with their misinformation campaign."

One of the strongest supporters for the development was Cr Anthony Marano, who then went on the attack of protesters, stating at the same July meeting, "I did enjoy the photo of the half dead people on the steps of Parliament with a known bankrupt..."

"May I say that things have changed since the 19th century with the ladies walking with their parasols. People these days like to go for a jog and we need to move on with it, and get this order lifted." He said.

Gabrielle Upton stated in a press release on 6 December, "I'm very pleased with the final recommendation of the NSW Heritage Register Committee which acknowledges that both these local parks are examples of valuable green space in the



Woolahra Council's proposed facility

Eastern Suburbs enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

"If the parks are approved for state heritage listing by the Heritage Minister - this does not mean the parks must remain untouched, however it does mean that any proposals to change the parks must have Heritage approval."

President of the Potts Point & Kings Cross Heritage & Residents' Society, Andrew Woodhouse has been a strong advocate for State Heritage Listing of Rushcutters Bay Park. He told LattéLife, "Council's two-fingered salute to the community and council's abusive comments have backfired. They will now not be the ultimate decision-making authority for changes to this beautiful, cherished harbour-side park.

"We call on the Heritage Minister, Don Harwin, to approve the listing before Christmas."

Current NSW Heritage Minister, Don Harwin is yet to approve the heritage status, but sources have informed LattéLife that it would be "highly unlikely" for the Minister to defy the State Heritage Register Committee's recommendation.

By Cristian King