



MEDIA RELEASE

David Borger
Minister for Housing
Minister for Western Sydney

Councils Take up Challenge for Parks Makeover

April 22, 2009

Western Sydney Minister David Borger today welcomed the first step in a program to help Western Sydney councils revitalise parks in their area.

Mr Borger said representatives from 11 Western Sydney Councils had attended a Parks Forum on Tuesday 21 April armed with details of local parks in their area in desperate need of a makeover.

“The aim of the forum was to put leading urban planners together with Councils to come up with innovative cost effective solutions for dead beat parks,” Mr Borger said.

“Unfortunately well-designed parks that attract multiple activities and people can be hard to find in most areas of Western Sydney.

“Somewhere in the last 50 years we have forgotten how to design urban parks - too often these “parks” are left over land with no clear value for the local neighbourhood.

“They are just huge swathes of grassed areas with no movement, no trees and no activity – with absolutely no incentive to lure kids from the playstation to the great outdoors.

“As Western Sydney grows with more housing and employment, Councils and communities need to turn their attention back to building great urban spaces and that’s why late last year I asked for an audit on all the parks and reserves in the area. “

Mr Borger said all 14 Western Sydney Councils responded to the audit. Some of the nominations of under utilised parks included:

- **Remembrance Park at Lidcombe nominated by Auburn Council;**
- **Bennett Park at St Marys nominated by Penrith City Council;**
- **McQuade Park at Windsor nominated by Hawkesbury City Council; and**
- **Bella Vista Village Green nominated by The Hills Shire Council.**

“I’m absolutely delighted with the response I received from the Councils involved. All have demonstrated that they are keen to take a fresh look at how to better improve parklands for their local community,” Mr Borger said.

Mr Borger said two leading urban planners - leading environmental architect Tone Wheeler, Managing Director from Environa Studio and Martin Butterworth, the

Director of Space Syntax an international firm specialising in building thriving urban environments - were at the forum to help the Councils.

“At the forum Councils were invited to talk about their nominated piece of land and were then given cost effective and fast acting solutions to turn things around by the two leading urban planners,” Mr Borger said.

“We wanted solutions that could be put to work straight away that wouldn’t cost Councils a lot of money – these parks don’t need exorbitant funds thrown at them to turn things around, they just need some clever thinking and expert advice.

“We will certainly be working closely with Councils over the next few months to help them put ideas from the forum into action.

“Western Sydney is such a dynamic part of NSW - we deserve nothing less than great parks that families and other local residents can enjoy all year round.”

MEDIA CONTACT:

Shehana Teixeira

9228 3555 or 0418 238 373