



MOORE PARK GOLF HAS FELT THE WRATH OF CITY OF SYDNEY LORD MAYOR CLOVER MOORE (INSET), WHO HAS PROPOSED CUTTING IT BACK TO NINE HOLES TO PROVIDE RECREATIONAL GREEN SPACE FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS.

WARRINGAH Golf Club on Sydney's northern beaches is the type of course where many of us learnt how to play the game of golf. It's relatively flat and not overly penal. It offers that shot euphoria that so entices beginners. It's the sort of easy-walking course you could play from the age of 8 to 80.

But Warringah is under threat of losing half its 18-hole layout because of a shortage of sporting fields in the surrounding area. The Northern Beaches' council administrator recently gave Warringah a 20-year lease for the club's southern-most nine holes but just a five-year lease for the northern nine.

The decision follows a concerted campaign by a number of other sports that pressured council for more playing fields. Northern Beaches Council has estimated the shortage to be 41 fields by 2032. By a quick calculation, you could put 16 decent-sized playing fields on the entire Warringah site with room for parking and other related activities.

"A logical decision would be turn over the [Warringah golf course] land for sport fields," council administrator Dick Persson told the *Manly Daily* newspaper. "There is clearly a much greater need in terms of numbers of people wanting alternatives to golf."

In the meantime over the next five years, council will look at how to increase supply of playing fields by improving the configuration and usage of existing facilities. It has also identified crown land to create more fields and will speak to the New South Wales Department of Education about using under-utilised school ovals in the area.

But it doesn't look good for Warringah's long-term future. Working against the 80-year-old club is that seven of the 13 courses on the northern beaches are privately owned and therefore can't be easily seized without significant compensation. That places the six public courses under scrutiny.

Warringah is the tip of the iceberg. Consideration has already been given to demolishing the nearby Balgowlah Golf Club and turning its nine holes into sporting fields. And Gordon Golf Club, an 18-holer on Sydney's upper north shore, faces certain closure after costing ratepayers half a million dollars a year. In 2016, Ku-ring-gai Council resolved that Gordon would remain a golf course until the lease option expires in 2023 when the site is likely to be converted into a regional park with playgrounds, picnic areas and cycling trails.

The hostility towards golf appears to be growing. City of Sydney lord mayor Clover Moore last year gave the impression she doesn't care much for the sport with her suggestion to appropriate half of Moore Park



Golf. The club, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2013, is the closest 18-hole public layout to the CBD.

More than 60,000 people will move into apartments surrounding Moore Park, hence the Sydney lord mayor was playing to her constituency when she told Fairfax Media: "Across the world, golf courses are slimming down to a modern nine-hole format. I'm open to working with the state to investigate options for reducing the size of the golf course at Moore Park and returning some of that land to the community."