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Title: Wentworth Park to stay in public hands after dogs leave, says minister

Wentworth Park to stay in public hands aft

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DEVELOPMENT

The NSW government has confirmed Sydney's Wentworth Park will not be turned into apartments when greyhound racing in the state ends next year.

Lands Minister Niall Blair yesterday said Rodney Gilmour

would be appointed grounds administrator and would oversee a redevelopment next year.

There has been widespread speculation that the area, in Sydney's inner city, would be developed into apartments once racing finishes there on July 1 next year.

"Mr Gilmour will be responsible for overseeing the operations of the Wentworth Park site, in-

cluding ongoing public use for community purposes, in the lead-up to and following the cessation of greyhound racing," Mr Blair said.

"The NSW government's commitment regarding the Wentworth Park site is clear — existing greyhound tracks on Crown land will be repurposed as open public space, alternative sporting facili-

ties or for other community uses."

The five-year term of the previous community board of the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust expired on May 26, which Mr Blair said meant an administrator needed to be appointed.

The current tenants of the 4ha grounds, the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association,

er dogs leave, says minister

has a lease in place for the next decade and are fighting Premier Mike Baird's decision to ban the sport.

However, Urban Taskforce Australia chairman Chris Johnson said the inner-city site had prime potential for affordable housing to be developed alongside community facilities.

"The state government has

done so much with developing public housing in areas like Miller's Point ... this is an ideal opportunity," Mr Johnson said.

"People talk so much about affordable housing — Wentworth Park is ideal."

Greyhound Racing Industry Consultation Group chairman Ron Arnold said he believed parts of Wentworth Park would still be

turned into apartments, even though a rail line runs under the greyhound track.

Mr Arnold said the state government's commitment against development was unlikely to eventuate. "I think a fair swag of the area will be left as a park, but it's a very large area so there's a chance that some of it will be made into apartments," he said.