

Ryde Community Alliance
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The Secretary
Department of Planning & Environment
Sydney NSW

Submission re Herring Road Urban Activation Precinct, Macquarie Park.

This submission on the proposed Herring Road Urban Activation Precinct (UAP) is made on behalf of the members of the Ryde Community Alliance, which comprises individual residents and community groups opposed to the overdevelopment of the Ryde local government area (LGA). The Alliance was formed to fight the proposed rezoning and sale of the Ryde Civic Centre site by the former Liberal Council, and to oppose the NSW Government's approval of overdevelopment under Part 3A and the NSW Government UAP program, all contrary to accepted land use planning under established planning instruments applying to the LGA.

Introduction:

Development approvals under Part 3A and two Urban Activation Precincts in the Ryde LGA are excessive. There are no strategic planning studies by the Council or the State to justify the scale of development approved and proposed, which will effectively double the resident population. No consideration has been given to the cumulative impacts of the approval of numerous applications to increase residential development in Ryde LGA, commencing with the Ryde Rehabilitation Centre site. No assessment has been carried out to determine the demand for infrastructure, facilities and services necessary for twice the existing population. Nor have environmental impact studies been carried out on measures to address the impacts of climate change, in particular, local flooding and other extreme weather events which are already being experienced across the LGA.

In August 2013, figures published by Ryde Council, confirmed that approved and potential residential development in Ryde LGA has already exceeded the Metropolitan Strategy target of 12,000 dwellings by many thousands of dwellings. What is the future population of Ryde? Is it 150,000 or 200,000 people? The State Government must make public the actual projected population of Ryde LGA under current Council and State approvals and proposals; and engage with the people of Ryde to review the cumulative impacts on the local economy, the environment, and the community.

The approval of excessive residential development in Ryde is not addressing the issue of housing affordability. It is encouraging speculative development. For example in the North Ryde Urban Activation Precinct, the privately owned Goodman site which had existing approval for commercial office development was included in the UAP and received planning approval for up to 33 storeys of residential development and 800 units. It was immediately sold to Country Garden for \$73 million.

*GOODMAN Group has capitalised on its industrial land bank, selling its Global Business Park in Sydney to a residential developer believed to be China-backed Country Garden Australia for \$73 million. **Sarah Danckert**, THE AUSTRALIAN, NOVEMBER 08, 2013*

Ryde Community Alliance calls for the State Government to impose a moratorium on further development approvals pending an independent inquiry into planning in the Ryde LGA, including the planning approval for the two Urban Activation Precincts. The inquiry, to be chaired by a person or persons independent of the NSW Department of Planning, is required to address the issues and concerns identified in the Alliance's submission.

1. Lack of genuine community engagement on major development proposals:

There has been a lack of genuine engagement with the local people in the preparation of planning proposals, and the approval of major development and planning decisions by the State Government. Submissions to both the Council and the Department of Planning have been dismissed without full and proper consideration as required under the provisions of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act, 1979.

All of the following development proposals and planning approvals demonstrate a disregard for the views and interests expressed by the community:

- **Top Ryde Redevelopment** was approved under Part 3A. The heritage listing of the first regional shopping centre was ignored and development many times the height and scale of the Council's development standards was approved. One and two floors across the site became 19 storeys. Commercial zoning was then substituted with residential.

This became the precedent for Ryde Council to seek to repeat this action on the Ryde Civic Centre land, even though it had no mandate and no majority on the Council.

- **Ryde Civic Centre rezoning.** A total of more than three thousand submissions opposed the proposed redevelopment and sale of the Civic Centre for two 24 storey residential buildings. These were dismissed by the Council. The former Minister for Planning, Mr Brad Hazzard, also ignored the three thousand objections when he approved the rezoning. After an excessive delay in processing the matter by the State Government a Special Purposes zone is awaiting approval by the present Minister
- **North Ryde Urban Activation Precinct** was not consulted with the community. Instead a Community Reference Group was selected to represent the people but the participants have said that their input was not wanted and not valued. The approved scheme is largely on public land that is urgently required for a public transport interchange at North Ryde Station. Instead of maximising high rise residential the land would be better suited to a range of community, recreation and cultural facilities to serve the rapidly growing population of Ryde. The Tennis World site was excluded from the UAP but the State Government has not yet rezoned it to public recreation.
- **Herring Road, Macquarie Park Urban Activation Precinct.** A total of 5,400 new dwellings is proposed in the Precinct. The UAP includes demolition of Ivanhoe Place public housing precinct and the forced removal of the existing residents. It was a purpose built estate, is well-designed and houses a tenant community that wishes to remain in situ. The tenants have been ignored by the Government which is causing a great deal of distress day by day as the planning process continues.
- **Increased development in Gladesville contrary to planning recommendations.** The findings of heritage and planning studies and consultation in respect of Gladesville have been ignored and land identified by the Council in a corridor

strategy has been rezoned by the State Government for development. Community representations have been ignored.

- **The disposal of public land which is required for provision of public facilities, open space and transport interchanges.** One high school site has now been sold for retail development at North Ryde and another at Smalls Road, Ryde, is subject to a proposal to lease the buildings to the Armenian school when the entire site will be required for a public high school to accommodate the projected population growth in the next decade.
- **The use of State Government planning powers to exceed existing established land use and planning controls does not contribute to improving housing affordability.** The Inquiry provides an opportunity to address community concerns that residential approved by the State Government in Ryde LGA in excess of existing planning and land use controls does not contribute to addressing housing affordability.

2. State Government planning decisions undermine Metropolitan Strategy 2036.

Approvals by the State Government that override existing and accepted planning controls in Ryde LGA have jeopardized the Metropolitan Strategy 2036. The Strategy employment target for Ryde LGA is 21,000 new jobs, with 16,000 of these proposed for the Macquarie Park/North Ryde Business Park which is a key element in the Global Economic Corridor. The Business Parks are nationally significant research and business centre, specialising in Defence, communications, medical research, pharmaceutical and IT&T sectors.

The extract below, from Ryde Council's website establishes the principles which have informed the planning decisions by the Council in respect of the Macquarie Park and North Ryde Business Parks.

Ryde City Council Vision for Macquarie Park.

Macquarie Park will mature into a premium location for globally competitive businesses with strong links to the university and research institutions and an enhanced sense of identity.



Riverside Corporate Park

The Corridor will be characterised by a high-quality, well designed, safe and liveable environment that reflects the natural setting, with three accessible and vibrant railway station areas providing focal points. Residential and business areas will be better integrated and an improved lifestyle will be forged for all those who live, work and study in the area.

The Council's Vision for the Business Parks above, would produce a much better outcome than the two Urban Activation Precincts will do. The success of the Business Parks has been

the result of the existing land use and planning controls implemented by Ryde Council. The Council web site provides the following assessment of the Business Park:

“The Council has guided the vision for Macquarie Park for more than a decade and this approach has proved successful with the business precinct outperforming expectations as an economic and employment hub of national significance. A recent Price Waterhouse Cooper report identifies Macquarie Park business precinct as a ‘powerhouse of employment and economic growth’ where last year economic growth topped 6.8 percent, double the combined efforts of the CBDs of Sydney, North Sydney and Parramatta. The Price Waterhouse Cooper report predicts that Macquarie Park will become NSW’s second largest economy and Australia’s ninth, in the next four to five years”.

Other independent commentators have also highlighted the economic success of the Business Parks:

North Ryde office sector booming

FOLLOWING a spate of large leasing deals, researchers are tipping that North Ryde will in the next two years overtake North Sydney to become Australia’s second-largest suburban office market behind the Brisbane CBD fringe and the biggest in NSW.

According to research by Savills, 54,874 sq m of office space was leased in the greater north shore market, which includes both North Ryde and North Sydney, over 2012, with 66 per cent of tenants choosing the North Ryde precinct, which includes Macquarie Park, as their new digs.

The largest leasing deal for the North Ryde precinct over the year was an 11,160sq m precommitment by Canon at 5 Talavera Road, Macquarie Park.

Fujitsu has also precommitted to 9452sq m in a new office tower at 181 Talavera Road in Macquarie Park, while Ecolab has leased 4093sq m on Drake Avenue, also in Macquarie Park.

Simon van Grootel, divisional director of leasing at Savills, said the two Talavera Road developments that Canon and Fujitsu are anchoring were both slated to be completed in the second quarter of 2014 and would make the North Ryde office market larger than North Sydney on a square metre basis.

(Sarah Danckert, Leasing, The Australian, March 20, 2013).

And also:

Office Boom for North Ryde

BIS Shrapnel are predicting North Ryde will be a major office precinct over the next 10 years. Once major CBD sites such as Barangaroo are completed, North Ryde is expected to account for 13 per cent of the new office construction during the next 10 year period. This compares to Parramatta at 7 per cent.

(Australian Financial Review 07/11/2013)

3. Residential versus Employment Land uses.

The use of extraordinary State government planning powers to override the established zoning and planning controls in Ryde LGA has resulted in a massive conversion of land within the North Ryde and Macquarie Business Parks, and Macquarie University, to permit high-rise residential development. The approval of as many as 10 -15,000 new dwellings in high-rise towers has absorbed land that would have otherwise been available for future expansion of employment uses, placing significant constraints on the expansion of business and technology uses in the Business Parks in the future. It has not been demonstrated whether the high technology and research businesses that have traditionally been attracted to the Business Parks will coexist happily in the future with many thousands of residents and shoppers in vastly more congested mixed use centres that Macquarie Park and North Ryde Business Parks will become.

4. Lack of integration of existing and proposed development with public transport.

The Chatswood-Epping Rail Line currently provides direct rail access to North Ryde/Macquarie Business Park from Sydney Airport via Central Station and Chatswood. However, of the three railway stations constructed, only Macquarie University Station has a transport interchange, with buses and taxis, and public parking available at the adjacent Macquarie shopping centre and Macquarie University. The absence of an interchange at both North Ryde and Macquarie Park stations, and the approved conversion of the Chatswood-Epping rail link to single deck trains in the renamed North West Rail Link is a major future disadvantage for the Business Parks and the Global Economic corridor.

The State Government has commenced selling off a substantial holding of public land around the North Ryde railway station for private development. The public land at the Station is sufficient to provide a transport interchange to serve the Business Park and the residents of surrounding suburbs to the south-west that currently have no access to the Station by means of buses, taxis or public parking. Pedestrian access is also extremely poor being below normal standards across the network.

5. The Loss of Ivanhoe Place Public Housing Estate.

The documentation for the Herring Road Urban Activation Precinct on the Department of Planning website states in part;

“Reasons for precinct selection

Renewal of this area will provide housing and employment close to transport to help meet Sydney's growth needs. It maximises the use of existing infrastructure, particularly Macquarie University Station. There is existing market demand for new housing and employment in this area.

Investigation of the precinct will also take forward work started by the Macquarie Park Taskforce to examine opportunities to redevelop government lands within Macquarie Park.

Ivanhoe Place Public Housing estate occupies a substantial area of public land in the Precinct. It is occupied by a mixture of three storey and two storey dwelling units, townhouses and open space. This public land has been identified for disposal for redevelopment without proper consideration to the existing resident population.

The tenants are proposed to be relocated, but do not know where or when, and are naturally very worried about their future as the public housing estate has been identified for demolition and redevelopment for multiple tower buildings in the Herring Road Macquarie Park Urban Activation Precinct.

Ivanhoe Place Estate has a current and future use for the provision of much needed public housing. Ryde has traditionally provided housing of various tenures and forms and the decision to sell the Estate for redevelopment means a loss of a valuable public asset.

It is unclear how this Estate came to be subject to disposal without arrangements for the tenants being made prior to any proposals being put on exhibition in total disregard of the tenants interests and concern. This is not an accepted planning process.

6. Overdevelopment will result in traffic chaos, air pollution and loss of bushland.

The community is also concerned that all the developments approved and proposed in the Ryde LGA will result in traffic chaos. The solution recommended in reports on the North Ryde UAP for example is more road widening. Epping Road north of the Lane Cove Tunnel is already the equivalent of 12 vehicle lanes wide. The Northconnex road tunnel will bring up to 5,000 more vehicles into the Macquarie Park and North Ryde Business Parks if it is approved. The Ryde LGA has accommodated heavy rail, road tunnels, road widening and motorway construction over the last two decades, all of which have impacted on the natural environment and amenity of the area. There is no modelling of the traffic generated by all of the developments proposed or approved in this area and in adjoining LGAs. Proposals for road widening to accommodate future demand are an inadequate response to the scale of the issues.

7. A moratorium on development is required.

The State Government and Ryde Council have separately pursued similar planning agendas in the Ryde LGA. This has resulted in existing planning controls being overridden and successful planning strategies for increased residential density and employment growth being overturned. Proposals by Ryde Council to carry out strategic studies on the lands south of Epping Road have not yet been given effect. The State Government commenced approvals of multi-unit residential development in this area without regard to the potential long term expansion of Macquarie Park/North Ryde Business Parks. Multi-storey residential development on key sites such as Whiteside and Allengrove have pre-empted strategic studies.

Existing State Government approvals of approx. 6,000 high-rise dwellings in Macquarie Park and North Ryde Business Parks is contrary to the State Government's Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney which identified these same lands for 16,000 additional jobs to continue the success of the Business Parks as specialized business centres. The achievement of the growth of jobs in the Business Parks has been jeopardized by the ad-hoc approval of high residential and mixed use development. The ongoing success of the Business Parks is also cast in doubt as these were developed as attractive low and medium scale buildings which are now to be overwhelmed by high-rise residential.

8. Independent review of planning proposals for Ryde LGA.

Ryde Council reported that it had met the Metropolitan Strategy target of 12,000 dwellings and 21,000 new jobs in Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2010. The Council Corridor Strategy subsequently proposed increased building heights and densities along Victoria Road, Lane Cove Road, and Epping Road. The State Government has rezoned land in this corridor in Gladesville to permit high rise redevelopment and disregarding the objections of the residents and contrary to studies that recommended a smaller scale of development and retention of heritage items.

Ryde Council is currently pursuing a proposal to allow separate titling of dual occupancies across the LGA above a minimum lot size of 580 square metres. If approved by the State

Government this would contribute to yet another increase in the total resident population of Ryde LGA without any recognition of the impacts. East Ryde was developed as a small lot subdivision characterized by single storey dwellings. This suburb will inevitably be targeted by speculative investors with little concern for the amenity of the residents and the environmental impacts of doubling the density over the entire suburb.

The State Government should make public the projected total population of Ryde LGA under current Council and State approvals and proposals. It should also engage with the people of Ryde in an Inquiry to address the cumulative impacts of excessive residential development and the use of State Government powers to override existing established land use and planning controls on the local economy, the environment and the community.