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PO Box 805  
Castle Hill  
2154  
R3 Showground Precinct

February 28, 2016

To: DoPE

Re: **Submission: regarding the showground precinct Castle Hill**

Dear DoPE Team,

I grew up in Castle Hill but I was forced to move when I went to university because public transport was taking 2 hours each way. After a gap of nearly 15 years I moved back. By then I was married and had a young family. Why Castle Hill? Well it was largely due to the lifestyle. The housing, schools and amazing access to shops and the services in the industrial area attracted us to the area. It had it all. In the last 10 years we have already seen the area change. It's getting busier all the time, the traffic is terrible in peak periods but our little area has remained peaceful.

All that is about to change. We live in the showground precinct in a large and fabulous house, we feel incredibly lucky to be where we are. Our home was essentially rebuilt just before we bought it. We bought the best house in the street and we spent the next decade paying off a large mortgage. Our children have gone from preschool through to high school in this home. The local public schools are magnificent and we are very involved in the school communities.

We imagined we would remain in our home at least until the children leave school (7 more years). When the work on the railway commenced we thought fantastic, it will be finished in time for our kids to get the benefits. They could use the train to get to university or work. They could live at home for longer and get themselves established. It took us a while to realise just how much our street would change. The council plans to rezone the other side of our street to 6 stories left us wondering if we would be the last freestanding house in the area and our home may be left in the shadow of apartment buildings. Some plans show our home could be a road and we may even be a forced acquisition.

We joined a large group of landowners in the area. We are now a group of over 100 residences. Together we have funded and contributed to development of the attached documents. It has become clear from discussions with developers and planners that the R3 zoning is not financially viable. We will have no choice but to stay where we are because developers cannot afford to pay the current land value for our properties. I fear that there will be small pockets of development amongst the existing homes. We will be left with an ugly poorly planned suburb in a gridlocked road system.

I work at Westmead Hospital. Westmead has been used in the attached documents as an example of what we can't allow to happen. Westmead has a railway station and a massive hospital complex. The residential area between Parramatta Park, Westmead Station and the hospital is a collection of small blocks of units, houses and commercial buildings. They are poorly designed, cheaply constructed and badly maintained. The streetscape is dominated by Roads, wheelie bins, on street parking, shopping trolleys, dumped rubbish and power lines. It has a depressing atmosphere of poverty and decay.

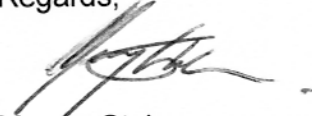
Westmead could have been fabulous. There are thousands of jobs in the hospital, the park is fantastic and transport is close by. Instead of redeveloping the area in a co-ordinated fashion when the hospital was built, small blocks of low cost housing were built in a haphazard and uncoordinated mess. Thirty years on and we are still living with the results of the lack of vision and planning. The quality of life for the residents is poor. What a missed opportunity!

What we have in our home is fabulous and the benefits of the new station are significant. It will take a lot to entice us to sell but we are willing to do so if the circumstances are right. Before we let our home be bulldozed we would want to know that something worthwhile was going to be done. The return for our property would have to be sufficient for us to buy a similar home in a nice area with enough left over to compensate our family for the reduction in access to public transport. Ideally the sale price would need to cover the cost of a new home with enough left over to help set our children up for the future. Wouldn't it be great if we could afford to buy an apartment in the new complex for our children to live in when they left school or move into ourselves when it is time to downsize.

I implore you to think big, we need a master plan that produces the extraordinary. This can only happen if everyone wants to sell. With the current zoning we simply can't sell to developers because it isn't economically viable.

If our area remains zoned as R3 then we will stay. We would prefer to tolerate the development rather than accept below market value. If our area is rezoned to a higher density as part of a world class master plan then we will sell.

Regards,



Murray Stokan