

Department of Planning and Environment

Submission on Bayside West Precincts (Arncliffe, Banksia and Cooks Cove) Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy (The Strategy)

My concerns about this strategy are that it needs to explicitly articulate that the following features are necessary and how they will be achieved:

- Connectivity between town centres and local schools,
- publicly accessible open space,
- extra playing fields for sports other than golf,
- local employment hubs
- increased capacity for local public schools
- capacity of the Illawarra train line to cope with added commuters

It also needs to explicitly state:

- Cooks Cove North is unsuitable for residential development because of the distance of Cooks Cove from public transport, and toxic load due to WestConnex exhaust and proximity to the airport
- Existing saturation of the road network due to WestConnex, the airport and other nearby development precludes residential development at Cooks Cove and limits development at Arncliffe and Banksia

Connectivity

Rockdale, Banksia and Arncliffe town centres need to be connected to each other and to local schools with mixed use bicycle and pedestrian paths. Many parents and children currently make their way to and from the local schools on foot, often pushing prams. Many more parents and their children would consider this option if there were dedicated footpaths away from the Princes Highway, on which they could feel safe from the cars and trucks using the roads.

Publicly accessible open space

I am very concerned about the deficit of publicly accessible open space in the area to which The Strategy applies. When referring to open space of any kind there is no reference in The Strategy to the kind of access provided to each area, such as whether it is publicly accessible or not. This must be remedied by designating green open space to be publicly accessible.

Many people do not have backyards to enjoy because they live in apartments. These people are particularly at risk from recently identified diseases such as Nature Deficit

Disorder. Recent research in the medical, public health and urban design literature¹ shows the importance of publicly accessible green open space for both physical and mental public health. The beautiful river fore shore, landing lights wetlands and the playing fields are particularly important in this respect. Recent increases in the density of the local population, including at Wolli Creek and Rockdale, together with planned future population increases at Arncliffe and Banksia, increase the importance of public green open space such as parks and playing fields. The recent development proposal by Cooks Cove Inlet Pty Ltd would cause a net loss of about 56 hectares of public free open space at Barton Park, and a net loss of 2 large playing fields, 1 baseball field and 2 mini fields. This would be unacceptable.

Playing fields

Newspaper reports² support what locals already know, which is that we have a shortage of sports fields. For this reason, all the fields at Cooks Cove South need to be maintained and provided with facilities such as public toilets so children can use the fields. Cooks Cove South should not be considered for a golf course, given the low membership, the large area of land required for golf, and the shortage of public open space in the Bayside area in general. Therefore, a golf course does not fit the category of "highest and best use" of the land.

Employment – local jobs

Local employment hubs are very important for liveability because they reduce the time that people need to spend commuting. As the Bayside West area already has enough new residential development³, job creation is now more important.

Schools

¹ Milligan, C., Gatrell, A., and Bingley, A. (2004). 'Cultivating health': Therapeutic landscapes and older people in northern England. *Soc Science & Med*, 58. doi:10.1016/s0277-9536(03)00397-6
Pleasant, A., Scanlon, M. M., and Pereira-Leon, M. (2013). Literature review: Environmental design and research on the human health effects of open spaces in urban areas. *Human Ecology Review*, 20(1), 36-49,67.
Sarkar, C., Webster, C., and Gallacher, J. (2014). *Healthy Cities : Public Health through Urban Planning*
Retrieved from <http://USYD.eblib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1681119>

² <http://www.theleader.com.au/story/2378807/on-shaky-grounds-rockdale-council-close-three-parks-until-further-notice/>
<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydney-faces-sports-field-shortage-20170104-gtm7b5.html>

³ <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydneys-tale-of-two-suburbs-new-analysis-shows-the-wide-spread-of-development-20170204-gu5hwq.html>

The Strategy mentions that: 'The Department of Education will look at expanding the capacity of public schools, as required, as part of their annual monitoring and planning process.' Currently, many local schools are already at capacity. For example, Arncliffe Public School has around 420 students, which is an ideal size for such an institution because the Principal can get to know each child, but there are enough children to form clubs such as chess club. Primary schools should not be forced to take many more students, because they become more impersonal and overwhelming for students to navigate.

The proposed new primary school at Cooks Cove is located next to the WestConnex unfiltered exhaust stack and operations compound. Abnormalities in fungi were found in Wolli Bush linked to diesel exhaust from the nearby M5 exhaust stack⁴. The precautionary principle needs to be applied here, such that no schools can be built in the area around the exhaust stacks or on-and off-ramps.

Train lines

Currently, the Illawarra train line is at capacity. This is a problem which will take a considerable amount of time to remedy. Any re-zoning of Arncliffe, Banksia or Cooks Cove for residential development would have a catastrophic effect on the amenity of this transport mode due to severe over-crowding. No new development should be allowed until extra capacity has been created on the Illawarra train line and the Airport Train fares have been reduced to standard suburban rates.

Roads

Many local roads are also at capacity, with Marsh Street being particularly affected due to motorists wishing to access the airport. Any population increase is likely to make traffic even more congested than it already is. The surrounding arterial road network will be saturated anyway due to WestConnex and other nearby development. The Strategy needs to take these traffic problems into account and prohibit residential development until the transport infrastructure can cope.

Future Road Projects

Cooks Cove North is located near the WestConnex stub for the planned F6, from Arncliffe to Kogarah. Details of this project are scarce, but it is reasonable to expect that if it goes ahead, adjacent receivers will be exposed to years of high impact construction. If completed, a second unfiltered exhaust stack will be located near the proposed Westconnex stack and operations compound. It is also reasonable to expect on / off

⁴ <http://www.wollicreek.org.au/abnormality-in-fungi-found-near-turrella-m5e-emission-stack-a-find-from-a-recent-survey-of-fungi-in-the-wolli-valley-bushland>

ramps in this location future exacerbating Arncliffe's chronic traffic congestion if the project goes ahead. Any southern extension of WestConnex should thus be explicitly ruled out.

Cooks Cove North is unsuitable for residential development

As a rule of thumb, people will walk up to 1km to access good quality public transport. Cooks Cove falls outside the perimeter for reasonable access to public transport as Arncliffe and Wolli Creek stations are more than 1km (network distance) from Cooks Cove and suggestions for shuttle buses would not work due to the traffic problems that exist on Marsh St. Additional residential development would cause more rat-running on local residential streets.

This area will be subject to high concentrations of air toxins from the airport, WestConnex exhaust stacks, and major highways (e.g., Marsh St, Princes Highway). Noise from the airport is also at very high levels there. I believe it to be irresponsible to house large numbers of families there, exposing them to such health hazards.

Arncliffe and Wolli Creek stations are within cycling distance of Cooks Cove. However, existing bicycle routes do not provide adequate comfort or safety, and there is limited bicycle parking at the stations.

Due to the reasons outlined above, I object to the large increase in residential densification and lack of specific reference to public accessibility of green open space in The Strategy. Please amend the strategy to accordingly.

Regards,
G Werner