

NSW Department of Planning and Environment - Submission on Arncliffe and Banksia Priority Precinct Rezoning Proposal and Development Control Plan

I would like the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (“DPE”) to consider the following concerns in the draft Arncliffe and Banksia Priority Precinct Rezoning Proposal and Development Control Plan.

Publicly accessible open space

It is critical that any planning for the area carefully considers the access to publicly accessible green space for physical and mental public well-being. The recent development application to Bayside Council for the relocation of Kogarah Golf course to the area known as Barton Park would significantly reduce public green space. Creating a handful of sporting fields, a cycleway and a few pocket parks in no way compensates for the loss of this large tract of crown and mixed use land. With the proposed increase in the population under this proposal, access to green space becomes even more critical. Research in the medical, public health sectors support this view - I have provided a link to well-known research by Deakin’s University “feel Blue, Touch Green” that cites the correlation between mental health and access to green space.

http://www.deakin.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/523133/Feel-Blue,-Touch-Green.pdf

I also reference a famous study by Richard Louv which demonstrates the importance of children having access to nature. <http://richardlouv.com/blog/every-child-needs-nature-not-just-the-ones-with-parent-who-appreciate-nature/>

The Cooks Cove Southern precinct contains a number of wetlands and is still widely used by the community despite failure by the Council to maintain facilities. Cooks Cove South must remain in public hands and a long term strategy should be completed which considers the remediation of contaminated sections of the area, protecting the wetlands, regenerating sporting fields and giving the public access to the foreshore. It must remain a place that students, children, workers and all residents can reconnect with nature.

Effect on public infrastructure

Adding an additional 10,000 dwellings to the Arncliffe, Banksia and Cooks Cove area will put additional stress on public transport. Trains on the Illawarra line are already at capacity and any plans to add additional housing to the area must align with a robust public transport plan that will ensure that a sufficient number of trains are in use during peak travel times to service the community.

It should be noted that the area designated for 5000 dwellings at Cooks Cove is greater than the industry agreed distance for a walking commute to public transport. At a recent planning Info session at Wolli Creek Discovery markets I was told that shuttle buses has been proposed for this zone. This is simply not workable. Marsh St is one of two access roads to the airport and is heavily used to the extent that police are needed most weekends and some weekday mornings to ensure the main intersections are not blocked. Establishing a shuttle bus service to take residents to either Arncliffe or Wolli creek stations not feasible with traffic congestion on Marsh St.

In the Arncliffe area traffic flows have been appropriately considered when deciding on the areas for rezoning. For example the proposed rezoning around Gore and Somerville streets does not take into consideration that these streets are busy and narrow thoroughfares, with many drivers not keeping to the 50kmh speed limit. These streets are frequently used as an alternative to the Princes Highway and therefore would be too dangerous as location for frequently used apartment driveways. Greater thought needs to be put into traffic flows for the whole area before any rezoning is approved; it cannot be treated as an after- thought.

Number and allocation of proposed dwellings

Given current conditions and the current number of new dwellings in our area, the height and bulk of the new developments would see Bayside West far exceeding its target for new dwellings, which would have a negative effect on the area. The current rezoning proposal allows for approximately five thousand new dwellings in Arncliffe and Banksia. The DPE's own Bayside West Precincts Draft Land Use & Infrastructure Strategy document outlines in Section 6.4 the forecasts of new dwellings for both Arncliffe and Banksia. Table 1 (page 27) shows that the number of additional dwellings in Arncliffe and Banksia by 2026 is projected to be 2,265, yet this number had already been exceeded in 2016. According to an analysis prepared for Balmain MP Jamie Parker in December 2016 and [reported on by James Robertson in the SMH](#) on 06/02/17 Rockdale Council is over its projected target of new dwellings by 2,414 new dwellings.

The excessive approval of dwellings at Wolli Creek without proper controls is just one example of a lack of an overarching authority to ensure that dwellings do not increase at a rate outside of what is appropriate for the area. The proposed number for the Arncliffe area would fundamentally change the fabric of the community and is excessive.

Responding to the local character and heritage values

As per the Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy Document, any new developments must take into consideration the character and heritage values of our local area (Section 5). Section 5 also states that one of the key considerations is the importance of maintaining and enhancing views to significant landmarks. The 2011 Rockdale DCP “specifically identifies the views of the St Francis Xaviers Church and St David’s Church spires on Forest Road as key landmarks which should be considered in site planning.” (Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy Document, page 22). Yet the proposed changes show that both churches would be surrounded by high- rise development. This proposal is thus not in keeping with the strategy guidelines or the current DCP. Greater consideration needs to be made to maintain and value the heritage of our area, such as these churches and their associated church buildings.

Appropriate Transitions in height

The Strategy states that medium density, low rise residential development should adjoin existing areas of low density to ensure an appropriate transition in height and built form. This consideration has not always been adhered to in the draft rezoning plans.

For example, the block bordered by Forest Road, Somerville Street, and Pitt-Owen Street is proposed to be high density of eight storeys. Given that in the current proposal the majority of dwellings surrounding this block are low density, the rezoning of this block to high density does not provide a suitable transition in heights to ensure that development is in keeping with the local character. In addition, the proposed Development Control Plan (DCP) states that properties on Forest Road opposite the block bordered by Forest Road, Somerville Street, and Pit-Owen Street and closer to Arncliffe town centre should have a street wall facing of two storeys, while any new build on the block bordered by Forest Road, Somerville Street, and Pit-Owen Street should have a street wall facing of 5 storeys.

In addition, the proposed DCP states that any new build should maintain the current set backs on Somerville Street and Pitt- Owen Streets. At present on Somerville Street the main dwellings are set back approximately 10 metres, however there are a few garages with only a 2 or 3 metre set back. The DCP needs to specify whether the current setbacks apply to the main properties or to any built form, such as garages. Moving on to Pitt- Owen Street, there is currently a one storey property which has no setback from the footpath, and two additional two storey properties which have two metre setbacks to the footpath.

While on paper maintaining current setbacks may sound like a good idea, in reality by following these guidelines Pitt-Owen Street could have a development with a five storey street wall height with a set-back of as little as one metre, and Somerville could have a five storey street wall height at

a set-back of as little as two metres. The properties on the opposite side of Pitt- Owen Street have set backs of four to five metres. The proposed DCP guidelines for this block are not specific enough, and as they stand do not provide an appropriate transition in height and built form. In addition, they do not follow the State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65, which states the principle of “ensuring good building separation between buildings on site and those around the site, for visual privacy, amenity and outlook.” The DCP needs to be amended to reflect the above.

Height of development around schools

As well as the churches and their associated buildings, this proposal means that St Francis Xavier's Catholic primary school and Arncliffe Public School would be surrounded by high rise buildings. St Francis Xavier's school would have buildings of up to 31 metres surrounding it, and Arncliffe Public School would have buildings from 12 to 22 metres surrounding it. Allowing such developments puts our children at risk. The State Government requires that any person coming in to school premises must have a Working with Children Check, yet anybody at all could sit at the window of any of these high-rise buildings and watch our children while they are at school. In addition, school is a place where children should be able to play in open green space, not space which is hemmed in on all sides by high rise. Lastly, with all these additional dwellings our schools will need room to grow to accommodate a larger population. This must be considered before making any decisions about rezoning, not after the fact.

Cooks Cove

This submission has previously referenced the impact 5000 dwellings in the Cooks Cove northern precinct would have on public transport and surrounding roads. However it should be noted that the section designated for development will be immediately adjacent to two Westconnex unfiltered stacks. There is overwhelmingly evidence about type one carcinogens on people, particularly children. A planner who I spoke at the Discovery Markets (Feb 2017) spoke of the school that would be built in this area, and the fields that would be created nearby. Combined with airport and Marsh St noise pollution, those who would live in this zone would need double glazing and keep their windows permanently close to protect themselves. This is unacceptable.

The above summarises my main concerns with the Arncliffe and Banksia Priority Precinct Rezoning Proposal and Development Control Plan. Please amend the Proposal and Development Control Plan accordingly.

Regards

Wendi Aylward

February 28, 2017