

## Response to Interim Report on St.Leonards/Crows Nest Priority Precinct

This response is from the Naremburn Action Group (NAG) which is supported by the Naremburn Progress Association. Its members are residents living in or near the Naremburn Conservation Area (NCA).

We are pleased that in this current coordinated vision for the St. Leonards/Crows Nest Priority Precinct the 3 Councils, with Planning NSW, have acknowledged the need to refocus on employment in the area and have confirmed the value in diversity of our residential spaces.

As Planning NSW moves into Stage 2 of the precinct plan it is extremely important that Council planners are strategically involved. The community has been given opportunities to engage with their Councils about our area but this is the first time we've been asked by Planning NSW for a response. For recently designated Priority Precincts the need for community consultation is acknowledged from the beginning of the process. This has not been our experience. Willoughby and North Sydney Councils in particular have a wealth of information from their community about this precinct.

Item 7 of the report states that the St. Leonards/Crows Nest station area will be a "true high density centre". We assume that this means there will be a corridor of high density between the 2 stations along the Pacific Highway. The height controls are extremely important so that overshadowing of Willoughby Road Crows Nest, Chandos Street and community spaces does not occur at crucial times eg between 10am and 2pm.

In regard to height controls, NAG is particularly concerned about what is meant by "appropriate transitions between conservation areas and any new developments". We are anxious to maintain the current height limits within the NCA(7 metres) and the bordering streets where the heights are from 26-40 meters. Graduated development is the key so that existing low density areas don't become ghettos.

The essential first step before any increased density is to plan for utilities and services. Our roads are constantly being dug up for each new development!

Provision of schools, health services, safety for pedestrians, community centers and green space either new or upgraded for both passive and active pursuits, must be in the precinct plan before any new development is approved.

Christie Street at St. Leonards station must be a strategic focus in the precinct plan, with innovative solutions to traffic management, pedestrian safety to and from the station, parking and access for service vehicles/ taxis to commercial and residential high rise buildings that currently rely on Sergeants Lane. Any further residential development along Christie Street or Chandos street at this transport hub needs to be part of an integrated strategy with the focus on good design.

The St. Leonards/ Crows Nest precinct has to build on the commercial life that brings people into the area. With the current focus on residential development many commercial spaces have been lost. The report talks about employment but there is little substance about building to provide for employment. To continue to concentrate on shop top developments allows even more poorly designed cafe spaces. The precinct plan requires a robust approach where commercial premises are either in commercial podiums of high rise buildings or occupy the entire building. Then there will be workers coming into St. Leonards as residents leave each day.

Yours sincerely

Julie Waddington

Naremburn Action Group Steering Committee