

**19 December 2018**

**Ms Carolyn McNally,  
Secretary,  
Department of Planning and Environment,  
GPO Box 39,  
SYDNEY NSW 2001**

Dear Secretary,

I am writing this submission on behalf of members of the Bays Community Coalition. A number of our member groups have been members of various Community Reference Groups and Community Liaison Groups spanning 20 years as various plans, strategies, masterplans etc. were developed.

The latest plan; the *Bays Precinct Transformation Plan* October was developed 2015. While the community contributed enthusiastically at the International Summit it was disappointed to be locked out of the sessions on financial issues.

The subsequent CRG that was established did not genuinely consult with the community. The community was provided with very limited briefings and drawn into a number of 'tick box' processes seeking our 'input'. We never got any feedback on how the input was assessed, evaluated and accepted or rejected.

At our last meeting we were told that the principles and objective were supposedly working to for the 8 "Destinations" are out of date. Since then nothing.

This experience means we did not come to the recent workshop on the Draft Community Participation Plan (CPP) (October 2018) with much optimism.

### **Comments on the Objectives**

#### ***Community participation is open and inclusive***

This has not been our experience and it is not clear that the proposed process will change this.

1. While having a stall at a local event is a great idea it cannot realistically be called community consultation. People coming to the stalls are given glossy brochures and friendly chats with staff but it is far from sufficient information to be fully informed of the community impacts or indeed what the final result will actually be.
2. We have found that the consultation is a top down process not a collaborative process and we do not as yet see anything in the proposed process that makes it more collaborative. Community participation should be two way dialogue not the top down provision of information. Communities know their local areas well and can be active participants in the planning process.
3. A good start would be to have people involved in the decision making whether they are a state owned corporation like UGDC, BDA, LandCom etc. and relevant decision makers from other state agencies. While the customer service staff are very professional and also the various staff working on what we experience as 'tick box' consultation they are but a blockage for the community as they do not have authority to speak on many issues we raise and simply note then as queries and are not

heard of again. If the consultation is to be genuine then bring in the people who make the decisions.

4. There is also the question of who the community is? Is there a broad enough range of genuine engagement? While engaging community members experienced in the planning process is fine there is also the issue of genuinely engaging a wide range of views and demographics. Setting up a randomly selected panel that will work throughout the process has merit. This panel should be compensated for their time and work. This panel could work alongside a panel of locals who have deep local knowledge and experience of the planning system. Locals should also be invited to be part of the group providing information and insights at open days and stalls at events etc. the community voice should be heard there as well.

### ***Community participation is easy***

1. The marketing events are easy but they are very limited as they do not provide information that can be said to make the community better informed about the final results, likelihood of changes to the concepts, plans etc. , the impacts of increased pressure on social infrastructure
2. Agree a range of methods can be used to allow people the option to review and comment on plans at times that suit them. Using various digital methods should be explored. However it is likely that people will disengage if the process is not collaborative. The next time they engage is most likely when it hits their street/neighbourhood and the full impacts become clearer.
3. The planning journey is long, complex and full of jargon. Providing clear Plain English information is critical for continuing engagement.
4. An example of overload on the community is the 45+ studies and proposals sent out for public consultation over the Christmas and New Year for the Waterloo Metro Project managed by Urban Growth Development Corporation. It is very hard to link that type of 'consultation' to any of the objectives proposed.

### ***Community participation is relevant***

1. During the long planning journey there are a range of reports, studies etc.that are developed by developers. These reports should be made available at all stages of the development process and not just at the Development Application stage when it is all over bar the shouting. A request for these studies and reports to be made available was raised at the October consultation in Sydney. It would be good to know how that request has been considered and what the result will be.
2. In terms of relevance and ease it would be useful if the various reports included a list of the assumptions and the methodology used when reaching conclusions and this information was provided to the community.
3. An example of overload of technical documents is the recently released documents for the Waterloo Metro Quarter
4. There are numerous examples of variations occurring to proposals after the main consultations have concluded and consent has been given. The example provided by a representative from Pymont included the massive changes to the consent for the second stage of the Star Casino development. Modifications of Development Consent should be required to undertake Community Engagement in the same way as a DA is.

### **Community participation is meaningful**

1. It can be meaningful if people participating find it so. If people find they are getting lots of emails and updates and all their input is rejected, invisible, etc. it is not engagement. it would be very useful to make any limitations; legislation, planning rules, policies etc. very clear from the beginning. Giving the impression that you are open to all sorts of good ideas when that is not the case will not build trust. At present trust is fading fast. The perception is that developers and a government putting profits before the public good is gaining a lot of traction.
2. The proposal to move the party boats from the head of Blackwattle Bay to land identified for public open space and the promenade for the Bays Precinct undermines trust in the feasibility of the ideas embraced at the beginning and now eroding fast.
3. The proposal that community input is recorded, clarified and feedback provided on why was or was not included is welcome. However that is currently done during DA exhibitions and the way in which community input is treated in the reports is generally cursory, dismissive etc. At least that is how it appears to the community.
4. Communities are generally not aware the Treasury rules around business plans for the development of public land ranks higher than social, environment and the public good. Developers also put profits first but the community is aware of that.

### **Comment on the Approach**

#### ***Inform, consult, engage and determine***

1. The approach appears to be linear and leaves engagement to the end of the process. We were advised at the October consultation in Sydney that the process would not be linear and inform, consult, engage could occur at any stage of the planning journey. It is interesting however that engage appears at the end of the linear process (as it appears now). Is this because there is an intention to provide information that will assist members of the community to 'engage'. This does need to be clarified as it is highly likely that staff, consultants and members of the community will interpret the process as it appears now - linear and with 'engage' at the very end of the process.