

Submission - St Leonards and Crows Nest 2036 Draft Plan

St Leonards Crows Nest is an area that has long been in need of a coordinated plan, as development in this area has been largely uncoordinated as three separate Local Councils control the area. For this reason I support the decision to develop a coordinated plan for St Leonards Crows Nest. The three councils, but especially Lane Cove and North Sydney, have pushed much of the residential density in the local council areas to St Leonards, creating undesirable planning outcomes for existing residents and without required infrastructure (other than rail transport).

I would like to raise the following objections and comment on the plan:

- The Draft Plan fails to deliver on a key Land Use objective of the Plan, namely **commercial premises to support the development of an employment hub**. The preference for developers to build residential high- rise developments for maximum financial gain does not necessarily meet the required planning criteria. Commercial space over or near to rail infrastructure has the advantage of making best use of rail transport, reducing parking stress and creating vibrancy for local business. Residential development is best created near by but not on or over main road or rail corridors.
- The **proposed building heights along the Pacific Highway must be reduced**. The existing “pilot sites” and approved developments along the Pacific Highway are creating a ghetto like environment due to concentration, height and density. Such heights will seriously impact residents in the adjoining areas of Wollstonecraft and Crows Nest, and cannot be supported. Topographically the Pacific Highway runs along the ridge line between St Leonards and Crows nest aggravating the effect of shadowing to the south. There will therefore be severe overshadowing impacts, blocking off light and sky, not to mention the severe negative visual impact created by high rise towers.
- The Draft **Plan fails to ensure the necessary infrastructure needed for population increase** (especially open space, schools, healthcare, and traffic management) is planned and provided for before further development occurs.
- The Plan fails to deliver on a key Land Use objective of the Plan, namely the **provision of a mix of housing**. There are already more than enough high-rise apartment developments in the area. **The St Leonards South area provides the opportunity to plan for a well-designed low to medium rise R3 area of terraces, townhouses, and low to medium-rise apartments, to be used as a model for other Council areas of Sydney. Aggregation and acquisition of properties in this area has already**

occurred. This has transpired prior to any of the usual community consultation process, and has now been referred to the Independent Planning Commission for advice. Developers have taken a commercial risk in acquiring the properties prior to rezoning. **Any commitments made which are not in the interests of proper planning outcomes must be rejected.**

- The Draft Plan has failed to address what it regards as proper planning in the St Leonards South Planning Proposal area. **The St Leonards South Planning Proposal as submitted fails many of the design principles outlined in the plan**, including confining high-rise development to the Pacific Highway, protecting public areas from additional overshadowing (Newlands Park, the only significant open space in the area, will be severely overshadowed in the afternoons after 3.00 pm.)
- **Building controls for the designated Significant Sites should be specified.** These heights must be set in consultation with the community.
- The **triangle site** bounded by Falcon Street, Alexander Street and the Pacific Highway **MUST BE EXCLUDED AS A SIGNIFICANT SITE**. This site is immediately adjacent to Crows Nest village, and high-rise development on this site would seriously impact **your stated objective of protecting the village character of Crows Nest**. The inclusion of this site also contradicts another of your stated objectives to concentrate high-rise development between the St Leonards and Crows Nest stations.
- To ensure public trust in the fairness and administration of the planning function, **ALL PLANNING PROPOSALS MUST CEASE** if the 2036 Plan is adopted.
- Planning guidelines must become standards and adhered to. When planning guidelines are not adhered to and extra height, scale or amenity given to new developments, when they deliver some “public benefit”, (including payments to council for their use), there needs to be strict oversight and transparency with adequate public consultation before such concessions are approved.

I believe that without significant infrastructure improvements, St Leonards Crows Nest cannot cope with the almost 100% increase of people from the time of the last census to 2036. Traffic in the area is already gridlocked at certain times of the day. There are often queues to enter the car park at Woolworths in Crows Nest, causing grid lock – what will it be like with the type of population increases predicted? Schools in the area are already at capacity.

Some of the population density needs to be spread further along the North Shore rail line to stations like Artarmon, Chatswood, Roseville and further north – like St Leonards, they too are serviced by rail lines.

St Leonards South Planning Proposal

I also want to make some additional comments on the Planning Proposal for St Leonards South, which is under the control of Lane Cove Council. I am commenting on this proposal specifically, because it appears to be well advanced.

The St Leonards South Planning Proposal has been flawed since its inception. Apparently a few owners in the Canberra Avenue area banded together in about 2012 to talk about amalgamating their properties in one lot, started talking to Lane Cove Council about the possibility of rezoning, involved developers, and the situation snowballed from there. Almost all of the properties in the three streets covered by the Planning Proposal are in the hands of developers. The average sales price was \$6.5 M – probably more than three times what the properties would have achieved if sold without the possibility of rezoning.

The problem was that this all happened largely without the knowledge of the wider “community”. The only “community” who knew about this in the early days were the property owners who drove the whole process, and who signed agreements (often with strict confidentiality clauses) which caused the process to lack transparency. I have no knowledge of any discussions with council or other processes which may have induced the developers to take this commercial risk.

There is huge angst in the local community about this proposal, when Lane Cove Council continually ignores the feedback from any community consultation process it conducts on St Leonards South.

My daughter owns an apartment in Duntroon Avenue, St Leonards (South), so I am very concerned about the density increase in this area. From when she purchased the apartment about three and half years ago, the scale of developments already approved is just mind-boggling. Only one of these is already under construction – the Mirvac development on the Pacific Highway, St Leonards. Although only complete to half its planned height, it has already soared above east Wollstonecraft, looming over and destroying its residential ambience.



In the last 2 years there have been at least 7 developments of apartment towers approved in St Leonards core, ranging between 28 and 50 storeys, and this is not counting whatever gets built over the Crows Nest Metro and any other towers in the pipeline). From the already approved apartments, my daughter's north facing apartment will be subject to the type of overshadowing never envisaged when she purchased her property – the same for around 400 other residents in her complex alone, not to mention other developments of around 8 storeys in St Leonards in the vicinity of these new developments. And if the St Leonards South proposal goes ahead at the heights displayed, many residents will have additional overshadowing from the North-west because of the heights of the towers included in the St Leonards South plan (close to my daughter's apartment, heights of 19, 15 and 12 storeys are planned).

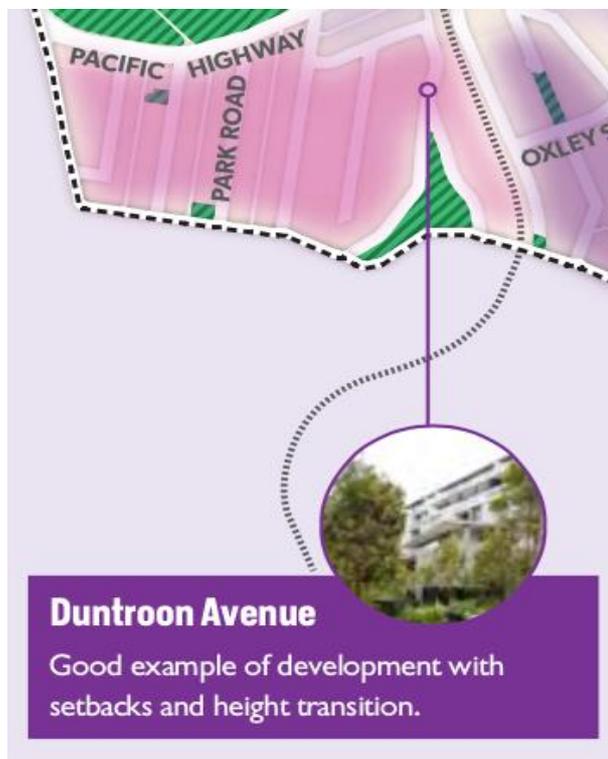
This is neither fair nor reasonable. Why are you permitting a ghetto to be developed in this location while purporting to have higher design aspirations for the area?

Not to mention the additional 10,000 people who will live in the almost 5,000 apartments which will be constructed in this immediate area (already 2,500 approved on the highway area of St Leonards, and 2,400 proposed for St Leonards South).

Pavillions on the Park is the name of the Duntroon Avenue complex where my daughter's apartment is – it was built about 12 years ago, and in 2010 won an award for Medium Density Development from the Urban Development Institute of Australia (NSW). The buildings in this development have a range of heights from 5 – 7 storeys, generous setbacks, quality landscaping, and height transitions.

Duntroon Avenue is the type of development people like, and would be accepting of in the area – people just do not want high density high-rise towers! In fact, Duntroon Avenue features prominently in the Draft Local Character Statement and in the St Leonards Crows Nest 2036 Draft Plan as an example of good design, good setbacks and height transition, and is shown as an example of what new development in the area should look like. For example,

From Page 17 of the Draft Local Character Statement



Also on Page 17, this is the Duntroon Avenue development:



From page 18 of the Draft Local Character Statement:

There is a range of residential density, from single storey houses to high-rise apartments. Some of the community has identified development along Duntroon Avenue as a good example for new development in the area.

From page 19 of the Draft Local Character Statement, this is the Duntroon Avenue development: - the same photo is also on pages 25 and 27 of the Draft 2036 Plan document:



Clearly the Duntroon Avenue development is one which appears to have the support of the DPE, as it is used frequently in both the Draft Local Character Statement and the St Leonards Crows Nest 2036 Draft Plan as the example of the type of development which may be appropriate for the St Leonards Crows Nest area, and which the community would be supportive of. Your comment on page 18 of the Draft Local Character Statement: ***“Some of the community has identified development along Duntroon Avenue as a good example for new development in the area.”***

Why then will the Duntroon Avenue development be surrounded by developments bearing no resemblance to it, if the DPE and the community say it is the type of development they like?

Why is there nothing proposed in the St Leonards South proposal which remotely resembles the Duntroon Avenue development? Properties at 2 and 4 Duntroon Avenue especially will be severely affected by the 19, 15 and 12 storey towers proposed for St Leonards South, just to the northwest – as they will be similarly affected by the up to 48 storey towers just to the north-east.

Why is the Duntroon Avenue development being swamped by other developments that will severely affect the livability and amenity for those living in Duntroon Avenue. For example, just 200 hundred metres to the north, on land which is much higher than Duntroon Avenue is the huge 88 Christie Street development which will severely overshadow much of St Leonards South – imagine living under the bulk and scale of this development:



A recent article in the Sydney Morning Herald on 31.1.19, “Terraces before towers – Sydney-siders want more medium density housing” reported on a recent commissioned for the Committee for Sydney which found:

Overall, 47 per cent of respondents were supportive of more medium-density housing where they lived, while only 25 per cent were in favour of more high-density residential development nearby.

