

Supplementary Submission from the Committee for North Sydney

10 July 2018

- 1 On 25 June 2018, the Committee for North Sydney was appointed by the Board of the newly formed Association for the Committee for North Sydney Incorporated, to facilitate public and expert contributions to the progressive improvement of North Sydney, through visionary strategic planning, good public policy and imaginative urban design.
- 2 The Association for the Committee for North Sydney made a submission on the above DA on 22 June 2018, pending the preparation of a submission by the Committee for North Sydney. In its submission, the Association advised that the substantive submission would follow within two weeks, and requested that full consideration be given to it as part of the initial submission.
- 3 The Committee for North Sydney met on 29 June 2018 and again on 9 July 2018, to finalise this supplementary submission. Although we were unable to meet our timetable of two weeks, we renew the request that this submission be given full consideration, as part of the initial submission of 22 June 2018.
- 4 The Committee for North Sydney registers its strong objection and concern regarding two aspects of the above DA:
 - The comprehensive failure of the project to do anything other than exacerbate the present deficiencies of the North Sydney city centre as both an economic centre and a central place for the surrounding community; and
 - The serious inadequacy of the planning process adopted for the Victoria Cross Metro over station development.
- 5 **The Committee for North Sydney strongly objects to the adoption by Sydney Metro of a single criterion – maximising the value of the site it compulsorily acquired – at the expense of many potential WIDER BENEFITS to the city centre. The over station development:**
 - **is based on an essentially private view of ‘value capture’, ignoring the many values that are increased and diminished beyond the site, and ignoring the many mechanisms that governments can use to redistribute the costs and benefits of place-based investments;**
 - **makes no attempt to replace or reproduce the significant community and economic contributions that the now-demolished Tower Square made to social life and services in the city centre;**
 - **fails to acknowledge the fact that a formal planning process had irrevocably transferred the develop rights on the Tower Square site to 65 Dennison Street;**
 - **exploits the benefits of being in the North Sydney city centre but makes no attempt to overcome the absence of green spaces, public space, community and civic facilities and cultural resources;**
 - **ignores the negative impacts of the proposed building, that will have the highest concentration of workers in the city centre, and cast the biggest shadow;**
 - **misses a critical place-making opportunity: acquiring 65 Berry Street and the Misty Mug cafe would have offered Sydney Metro an integrated site with the potential for transformative city development;**
 - **fails to provide below-ground space for community and retail opportunities, and for access to the station from distributed locations, as in the Sydney CBD;**
 - **ignores the evident needs of the city centre for a strategic process of revival, improvement and enrichment, including progressive transformation of traffic surfaces into pedestrian and green spaces.**
- 6 In February 2017 the North Sydney Council adopted an updated Sydney Metro Planning Study, containing many principles that the Council expected would govern the design of the over station development. These principles include the following:

- A comprehensive transport strategy for North Sydney will consider further interventions to achieve the vision of Miller Street as the Centre's premier public domain.
- Council will pursue its vision for Miller Street as the civic heart of North Sydney.
- The potential for Miller Street to function as North Sydney's key piece of civic space / public domain will be maximised.
- An uninterrupted linear space that includes the MLC building setback along the eastern side of Miller Street is a priority.
- Reinstate important lunchtime infrastructure to compliment improved public domain and add value to site's destination qualities.
- Incorporate community uses into above station development.

7 **The Committee for North Sydney:**

- **Supports the Council's planning principles related to the Metro station.**
- **Objects to the proposed over station development, which is comprehensively inconsistent with these principles.**

8 At its meeting on 25 June 2018 the North Sydney Council considered a draft submission on the DA. Five members of the Committee for North Sydney addressed the Council at the meeting. The Council resolved that a new submission be prepared, on the following basis:

THAT the submission advocate design excellence and design options that promote a public plaza providing a heart for the North Sydney CBD including:

- Consideration of no building above the station;
- The alignment of the setback of any built form with the MLC building; and
- Full or partial closure of Miller Street between Berry Street and Pacific Highway.

THAT Council write to the Minister responsible seeking further community consultation in relation to revised design options.

9 **The Committee for North Sydney strongly supports the call by the North Sydney Council for a halt in the planning and tendering processes, to allow for genuine community consultation around revised design options.**

10 The Committee for North Sydney believes that high levels of community and passenger satisfaction with public transport systems is only achieved through consultation and open planning. We urge the NSW Government to apply those fundamental principles to the planning of the over station development at the Victoria Cross Metro station.

The Committee for North Sydney also believes that lasting space-forming and city-building contributions from public infrastructure such as this are only achieved through consultation and open planning.

11 **The Committee for North Sydney objects to a failed PLANNING PROCESS that is:**

- **SECRETIVE**, during the phase when all significant decisions are being made;
- **RUSHED**, during the phase when the proposal was briefly exposed for comment;
- **PRE-EMPTED** by the tendering process before public exhibition or approval; and
- **HOLLOW**, since the proposal is being prepared by a statutory corporation, it is designated state significant development even though the over station development will be a private commercial building, and it is intended to be approved, in effect, by Ministerial executive action.

12 **The Committee for North Sydney:**

- **Requests that this supplementary submission be carefully weighed in assessing the over station development.**
- **Looks forward to working with Sydney Metro, the North Sydney Council, Transport for NSW and the Department of Planning and Environment on maximising the local public benefits, and minimising the negative impacts, of any over station development at the Victoria Cross Station.**