

To: Sydney Metro
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From: Wollstonecraft Precinct
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23 July 2018

Crows Nest Integrated Station Development Feedback on behalf of the Wollstonecraft Precinct and 87 Residents who attended a public meeting in Crows Nest on Monday 16 July

The Metro

We are totally supportive of the Sydney Metro project because it provides much needed expansion of public transport and eliminates the current choke over the Harbour Bridge and through the Sydney CBD to Central station. A metro with end to end terminals and no crossings with other lines will result in a brilliant transport solution. Integration of over station buildings is another matter entirely:

The Development Over the Station

The Process

We object to the current timeline, steps and milestones for the following reasons:

We strongly believe the planning process and timetable as set out in the explanatory brochure is significantly flawed because it does not anticipate a truly collaborative approach to the task of achieving a satisfactory outcome for all stakeholders. The steps in the remaining months of 2018 and early 2019 could be rearranged thus saving time and resulting in an urban design that meets the objectives of the Greater Sydney Commission, satisfies the intent of the Northern District Plan and deals with the community's concerns in an open and transparent manner. A pause is necessary to rethink the process and to provide time to much better integrate the above ground proposals in the area surrounding the new metro station.

We object to the State Significant Development designation for the OSD for the following reasons:

Whilst using grand statements such as "design excellence principles will support the place making and urban design requirements of station developments" it does nothing of the sort. In its proposed form the OSD is nothing more than a commercial development with negative impacts and no public benefit. It seeks to over-ride North Sydney Council's planning controls to transfer the risk/reward to private interests. It ignores North Sydney Council's years of public consultation that delivered the Placemaking and Principles Study for Crows Nest.

The OSD ignores the whole thrust of the community consultation which, reflected in the 2016 EIS for the Sydney Metro was for low to medium rise at Crows Nest consistent with the character of the area. This resulted in the image on p 52 of that 2016 EIS, now reproduced on the current hoardings around the site, showing 4-5 levels and wide sky above the Crows Nest Station. How deceitful is it now, even before the Crows Nest St Leonards Precinct Plan is published and digested by the community suddenly to propose the very opposite of all the prior process and allow a month of comment before plans are then locked in by the government, hiding behind the title of its agency Sydney Metro as development authority,

acting entirely outside the planning process and not subject to any of the controls or review under proper planning law. It is Orwellian to speak of 'process' and 'planning' in relation to this abuse of the system which shows contempt for the community and the Council.

Sydney Metro is the last organisation that should be proposing development over stations. That responsibility more correctly rests with Council representing the community and DPE. Sydney Metro should then be told what to build. The OSD requires a total rethink.

Crows Nest village

We object to the narrow focus and description of Crows Nest village for the following reasons:

The explanatory brochure briefly refers to the Crows Nest village but concentrates on the Willoughby Road precinct. Actually, the area that is to be protected according to the Department of Planning and Environment is the Crows Nest village yet that is ill-defined. The DPE has described it vaguely by a colour shaded triangular space that is included in their Interim Statement for the Planned Precinct of St Leonards and Crows Nest. That vague depiction is misleading because for some unknown reason it excludes the sharp corner bounded by the Highway, Willoughby Road and an arcade to the north between the two roads. No wonder we are seeing developers proposing 60+ storey buildings in that space.

The Crows Nest village covers an area contained by Oxley Street as the boundary between St Leonards and Crows Nest, the Pacific Highway, Falcon Street, Alexander Street and Albany Street. This village is home to a multitude of small businesses such as retail, pharmacies, bookshops, health foods, fruit and vegetable markets, butchers, gift shops, picture-framers, optometrists, hairdressers, tailors and shoe repairers, gymnasiums, yoga venues, travel agencies, homewares, art shops, places of worship, cafes and restaurants and the like that together make Crows Nest something of intrinsic value and worthy of protection. The same area already lacks both sufficient public space and open areas to support the proposed increase in employment. For example, there was a Crows Nest Post Office that is now located in St Leonards - without good access and is totally inconvenient for residents of Crows Nest. Sydney Metro's approach in that regard has been to compulsorily acquire the site without consideration for a future relocation of a post office back onto the site.

Integrated Station Development

We object to the two 27 storeys accommodation towers above the station for the following reasons:

These will be massive towers the same height and more dense than the Loftex tower at south St Leonards. They will be one and a half the height of the Ralan building on the corner of Oxley Street and Pacific Hwy. They will loom right over and take away the whole sky and light from the East Wollstonecraft precinct from the Highway down to Christie Street.

The buildings do not meet North Sydney Council's planning controls. Sydney Metro is seeking to have the controls varied for no other reason than to maximise its 'value capture' from developers. These buildings do not satisfy the requirement of the Northern District Plan for preference of commercial space to encourage employment. Each has five floors starting at ground level devoted to above ground car park for the residents in the tower and plant rooms for those buildings and the station, which means that there will be visual blight and no public benefit. Put simply these buildings are proposed because of financial benefit to Sydney Metro

at the expense of the public benefit. Further, when Sydney Metro acquired the site for the station it virtually extinguished a public benefit promised by an approved DA that delivered money for the creation of increased public space in Crows Nest. We are also concerned about an increasing rate of vacancies in residential properties as reported in the SMH (page 16) on 18 July. Why build more apartments when vacancy rates are increasing?

We object to another 17 Storeys building on the Highway on the south side of Hume Street because:

It is shown as only 6 levels above what appears to be a podium. The illustration is therefore totally misleading and brings into question the reliability of any of the explanatory brochure. It is even closer to the Crows Nest village than the two 27 storey towers and it is in the location that should be reserved for the return of the Crows Nest Post office. If a hotel is to be built at all it should be further north on the corner of Oxley Street

We object to the location of the 8 storeys commercial building on the corner of Hume and Clarke Streets for the following reasons:

This building will significantly overshadow the only existing local park, rendering it user unfriendly. This would be a tragic loss, indifferent to the need to provide open area for small children and their parents who live nearby and who want a safe open local park area for children to play amongst what is otherwise likely to be a high-rise tower complex. If built it should include some form of community facility and be located fronting the Highway.

We object to the 'lost opportunities' inherent in this current proposal for the following reasons:

There will be a need in the rejuvenation of the area surrounding the new station, for up to a kilometre radius, to ensure the newly re-created suburb also achieves other socially useful goals. For example, the provision of sites for elderly care within a short and level walking distance to the station and shops; the provision of high calibre preschool sites with some outdoor play areas; and the provision of community social housing for important public staff like those at nearby RNSH or the local Fire Station, who could not otherwise afford to live anywhere near their place of work.

These do not need to be in the Metro station OSD, but there is a responsibility between the various arms of the State Government (of which Sydney Metro is one) and the local Councils to coordinate these results. Sydney Metro should stop acting as if it were a private developer only interested in maximising commercial 'value capture' above its own site.

As Sydney Metro and the DPE both know - and indicate in their publications - the new railway station will be transformative to Crows Nest. Both parties should take a halt now and better integrate these developments to create a great example of cohesive, popular renewal in Crows Nest for the public benefit.

Crows Nest Precinct together with the [Committee for North Sydney](#) is ready to cooperate with Sydney Metro, Department of Planning and Environment and North Sydney Council to help create an integrated station development that above all satisfies the public benefit.

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