

Submission to PAC Hearing re Campbell's Stores Proposal

By John King OAM

My name is John King. I have had a 45 year background in highly successful and widely recognised international tourism marketing and management, including 9 years as Chairman of the Australian Tourism Export Council and also a member of the 4 person Visitor Economy Taskforce appointed by the O'Farrell Government in 2011 to develop a whole of Government/Industry strategy to double the value of the State's Visitor Economy by 2020. *(a key part of the NSW 2021 Plan).* I was also, at the invitation of the Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, a keynote speaker at the first UNESCO/UNWTO Cultural Tourism Conference held in Siem Reap in 2015 to look at ways of bringing closer together Tourism and World Heritage in better preserving and promoting the world's heritage.

The site of Campbell's Stores, Campbell's Cove is at the centre of one of Australia's most significant heritage and tourism locations. From the time in the mid 1980s when inbound tourism *was in its infancy.* began to grow, this site became one of the most visited in Sydney, largely through the vision and investment of Wolfie Pizem who established the Waterfront and other associated restaurants in this location. His efforts at the same time were

significantly responsible for the preservation and recognition of this historic asset by giving it a commercially viable future.

In preparing its report ^{to} the Government, the Visitor Economy Taskforce looked at the Campbell's Stores site and the then proposal by the Dockside Group as the basis for a number of recommendations to Government; i.e. That this site will become even more important for tourism through the eventual development of one of the world's great tourism promenades stretching from the Domain and the Botanic Gardens right around the harbour to Darling Harbour and beyond; that greater encouragement be provided by Government to support participation by the private sector in providing sympathetic and viable adaption of many of our heritage assets; by stream-lining the planning processes and reducing bureaucratic barriers that had, at that stage, stood in the way of this and other proposals. All of these recommendations were adopted by the Government.

With the significant development of Barangaroo and the redevelopment of Circular Quay and Darling Harbour, this precinct also needs significant redevelopment and upgrading, if it is not to become a backwater and a second class section of that great promenade as other areas become more vibrant and relevant to visitors and local Sydney residents.

Currently the presentation of these significantly important heritage assets is substandard, the pseudo nautical rigging in front of the buildings is ~~both~~ *and scul.* detracting, dated and gratingly artificial, the state of the buildings is deteriorating over time and the amenity provided to guests is not in keeping with the importance of the site. Basically they are as they were developed in the early to mid 70s. I stress this is not the fault of the current operators of the site who have endeavoured over time to address all of these issues through a major reinvestment, but have been frustrated by the lengthy processes over the past decade.

I believe the proposal before you is one that will significantly enhance the appeal, viability and preservation of this important asset and at the same time increase its contribution to the increasingly important visitor economy of Sydney and the State.

Just as Wolfie Pizem was both a visionary and a leader in the development of tourism in Sydney and that through his vision and investment this site achieved its increased importance; his successor the Dockside group is today exercising the same sort of vision and leadership to ensure this site retains its heritage and tourism value and values and that its viable future is reinforced. I therefore strongly support the proposal before the PAC.