23 May 2019

Ms Mary O’Kane,

Chair, Independent Planning Commission of NSW

Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street,

SYDNEY, NSW, 2000.

Dear Ms O’Kane,

**Re: IPC advice for St Leonards South Planning Proposal**

I am a concerned resident of Wollstonecraft. The Planning Proposal from Lane Cove Council is obscene. It proposes that up to 5,000 people will be squeezed into a small site of less than 9 hectares which is bad enough, but it will also result in those 5,000 people relying on my village of Crows Nest. That precious village is already under stress and attack by the proposed SLCN 2036 Draft Plan. Those 5,000 people will also add to the grid locks of traffic on River Road, Shirley Road and Pacific H’way and put pressure on already inadequate infrastructure.

The Planning Proposal has been prepared without one mention of population density, open space ratio and their impact on public amenity and infrastructure. The result is suboptimal and would result in further overcrowding, overshadowing, congestion, poor public amenity and no open space.

I list below comments in relation to the terms of reference of your inquiry requested by the Minister for Planning. I add comments about missed opportunities that a competent planner may have thought about before finalising such a misguided audacious proposal which is a plan that favours investors at the expense of the community:

**SCALE:** The scale and height of proposed buildings are vastly excessive. Development needs to be appropriately scaled to reflect existing Duntroon Avenue apartment buildings.

**PLACE:** The Planning Proposal doesn’t BUILD COMMUNITY - let alone vibrancy. It isolates people in high rise buildings without adding any nearby public amenities such as cafes, playgrounds, a local grocery store or significant new outdoor space. Newlands Park would be subject to unacceptable cumulative overshadowing in the afternoon, and therefore it does not meet one of the key design principles of the Draft Plan.

**BUILT FORM:** With both Lane Cove and North Sydney Council doing an excellent job of meeting or exceeding their housing targets, there is no good reason to jump from a low rise residential neighbourhood to a high rise residential neighbourhood.

**LAND USE:** Do we need 2400 more units when 91.3% of St Leonards’ residents live in apartments according to the 2016 Census – and when there are almost 2000 high rise apartments under construction in Lane Cove Council area near St Leonards station? We need diversity of housing – affordable housing, social housing, 3 and 4 bedroom housing.

The Planning Proposal fails to deliver diverse housing, variety of land use or support jobs growth. Given local councils are meeting housing targets would this land be more appropriately used to create new schools, new playing fields or an ***internationally competitive health, education, research and innovation precinct?***

**TOPOGRAPHY:** The SLS precinct topography is quite steep. Some consideration needs to be given to providing basic community services / local corner shops within the neighbourhood.

**LIVEABILITY:** A mass of high rise buildings with NO OPEN SPACE does not make for a liveable community. We are looking for a well-designed mix of open space to building, pocket parks for informal gathering and a suitable open spaces for leisure and children.

**TRAFFIC CONGESTION and SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE**: River Road and the Pacific Highway are already congested (not to mention the ‘main streets’ through St Leonards, Crows Nest and Wollstonecraft. An additional 2400 apartments will exacerbate the already heavy congestion, as well as making access to Royal North Shore Hospital Emergency Department extremely difficult. There is insufficient existing social infrastructure in place to support what is in the pipeline. Schools, hospitals, roads, open spaces, sports fields and swimming pools are already overcrowded. No further approval of residential units ought to be approved until we fully understand the implications of what is already in the pipeline.

**LOCAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE:** Local GPs are closed to new clients. There are no close bulk billing departments. The hospital is already stretched and overcrowded and traffic impedes easy access to the Emergency department.

## MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

The **2036 Plan** directs that the area is to become an **internationally competitive health, education, research and innovation precinct**. It is time to revisit this Planning Proposal with the 2036 Guidelines in mind.

Is this land appropriate for a new school and playing fields? A world leading establishment for Dementia care? A research institute for medical nanotechnology? Could this land address the ‘missing middle’ problem?

With Newlands Park there is the opportunity to provide for more group and resident activities by building a grass amphitheatre on the south and east park slopes that would provide wonderful spaces with afternoon and evening sunshine coming through reduced height buildings.

**IN CONCLUSION:**

Please listen to the community and ignore the pleadings of investors who have at their own risk, purchased land at ridiculously high prices. They misjudged the market, but you should not waste one thought on their self-inflicted financial predicament.

You might like to also censure Lane Cove Council who facilitated the proposal and their complete disregard for good urban planning and their failure to consult with the wider community. Also, the Department of Planning for approving a Gateway Determination in 2016. What were they thinking when planning was just beginning on the 2036 Draft Plan that they now set down as the marker when requesting your advice?