

2nd April 2019

To the independent Planning Council (IPC) – A085-18 Crown Cemetery Development, Varroville

Dear IPC,

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL: for a cemetery at 166-176 St Andrews Road, Varroville – A085-18

I STRONGLY OPPOSE the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT) proposed development application for a cemetery at 166-176 St Andrews Road, Varroville NSW.

I am writing to you as a concerned resident of Varroville, Campbelltown. I am the longest residing resident in Varroville. I have resided here since 1971.

I give permission for my first name ONLY to be published, along with the suburb VARROVILLE only.

There are a numerous reasons that are of concern to me about this DA, as to why I object to this, as a resident of Varroville. The implication of this DA, and also for any surrounding areas, especially those currently protected for the future, are of great concern!

Our local community has been fighting since 2007 against developments (Business Park, CSG, Truck Stop and now a cemetery) in this protected zone. This clearly demonstrates to the NSW State Government, and has demonstrated to Campbelltown City Council, that the community of Campbelltown, in particular residents of Varroville, do not want a cemetery, or any other development that will impact on the rural cultural heritage value, and aesthetic views within the Scenic Hills at Varroville, especially in an area which includes the historical Varro Ville Homestead which is steeped in history from early settlement days of our Nation!

We want it to remain protected and used for those purposes only permitted under the Zone E3 Environmental Management plan.

This CMCT cemetery DA should be denied as it does not meet CLEP requirements! It would appear the CMCT does not understand, nor appreciate the significant cultural heritage value of this beautiful rural land. Not to mention the beautiful Varro Ville Homestead in which it surrounds.

This land should only be used for purposes that had been outlined as in the Zone E3 Environmental Management CLEP 2015. Deviating for this not only breaches those zones, it will also be the demise of the naturally beautiful aesthetic cultural landscapes of the Scenic Hills.

Residents who have purchased to live here, did so for a reason. We chose to live here for this rural aspect; for the peace and quiet, and beautiful surrounding hills. Residents know these areas are protected and this is why they choose to reside here.

There is no shortage of burial land locally. Forest Lawn cemetery claims it still has enough burial space for the local area for another 70 years!! Refer to the Macarthur Chronical 19/02/16 where they state: 'Burial plots are not in short supply in the Macarthur region, says Forest Lawn...'

The NSW State government even released a capacity report on November 2017 demonstrating this shortage is not true. That the South-West of Sydney is 'well served' (pg. 39) and will only run out of space in 2056 as it will be taking the dead from South Sydney (pg.34). The report demonstrates strongly the need for cemeteries in South and Northern districts of Sydney (pg. 39). Please refer to link listed directly below:

https://www.crownland.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/746947/CCNSW-Metropolitan-Sydney-Cemetery-Capacity-Report.pdf

Our cultural land should not be used to serve as a cemetery as an overflow for people in other areas of Sydney. They have NO connection to this area. There are plenty of other areas that would be better suited that CMCT could use.

The Scenic Hills is a protected area, which was established in 1972, and needs to remain protected for the future; for our future generations to enjoy. It is one of the last truly beautiful natural parts of the Campbelltown District. Lush rolling hills which are home to a few lucky people, including the Discalced Carmelite Nuns and The Friars. The Friars have been in Varroville since 1964. The Nuns since 1987. They are also against this proposed development as it will be disruptive. It will contradict the reasons this area was chosen for them to reside, as it will for other residents of Varroville, as it will ruin the beautiful landscape that they find solace and peace within. This is a historical part of the Campbelltown region.

There also is flora and fauna in the Scenic Hills at Varroville that needs to be considered– which also raises concerns about their endangerment. There are black foot wallabies, echidnas, wombats, foxes and the like. There are more of these now with all the development in Willowdale and Emerald Hills, these animals are being forced into the Scenic Hills. Their habitats destroyed so they become displaced. It is no uncommon to drive up the hill on St Andrews Road and encounter wallabies, kangaroos and/or foxes.

I also cannot understand how this DA for this cemetery is even being considered when access will also be limited, as St Andrews Road is a rural road, and in! This is due to the objectives about the road not meeting its environmental objectives as the road upgrade would mean the rural, peaceful and scenic nature of the area could not be maintained.

In fact, the proposed extension and upgrade to St Andrews Road was amended in the NSW Planning & Environment Leppington (Stage 1) Finalisation Report October 2015, it clearly states in section 4.4 Traffic and Transport – St Andrews Road that the proposed extension and upgrade was amended. That St Andrews Road link is NOT included in the road network that is currently being evaluated, that alternate road connections have sufficient capacity for future traffic growth, therefore completion and upgrading of St Andrews Road from Camden Valley Way to Campbelltown Road will NOT be required!

There is no public transport directly to the proposed cemetery. There is no train station in walking distance. There is only access via Campbelltown Road or Spitfire Drive as main access roads. It is a long walk, and it is not an easy walk for anyone who is elderly. It is extremely hot in Summer with no real shade. There are often snakes, deadly eastern browns which like to lurk in the bushes, and many red belly blacks. In Winter it also can be unforgiving with winds, and rain. The area near the roundabout often becomes flooded and lots of run off. There is NO protected area for walking. It is a rural road!

It really is disgraceful that this cemetery is even being considered, even in the context of access. Any changes made to St Andrews Road to accommodate this cemetery will take away this rural, peaceful and scenic nature of this area! It is in breach of the Zone E3 Environmental Management CLEP 2015.

Campbelltown City Council already made a huge mistake when allowing development in Blair Athol. Here is an excerpt from the Macarthur Advertiser dated March 11th, 2016:

In a 2002, former Campbelltown councillors admitted to Fairfax Media that the development at Blair Athol was not sensitive to the area's heritage.

"In the case of Blair Athol, we messed up badly," former councillor and three-time mayor Aaron Rule said at the time.

Now the NSW State Government intends on possibly making an even bigger blunder. These things cannot be reversed once done. It is history lost forever, and views that are changed forever.

The increased traffic and noise will be cumbersome. I was horrified to hear in the public meeting at Wests that the Nun's etc., were just expected to keep their windows closed and/or get more insulation. This is NOT city living. This is rural land, with rural outlooks and one should not have to close their windows to reduce noise in a rural environment. The noise does travel in the area. So a cemetery is going to totally disrupt the serenity of this area.

Varroville is a small pocket of the past. It is unique and any development like a cemetery is going to change this landscape forever. It is pretty easy to make things appear 'pretty' in a brochure, but the reality is generally always a lot different. The landscape would need to be dramatically changed to accommodate a cemetery. Roads, buildings and carparks cannot be disguised. There are just so many bad elements to this proposal.

Please reject this absurd development proposal for a cemetery by the CMCT, and allow our local community at large, and the residents of the Scenic Hills in Varroville, and the owners of Varro Ville Homestead to stop feeling threatened that our rural heritage, and cultural landscapes of the Scenic Hills is under threat. Please ensure these areas remain protected for future generations to enjoy.

Yours Sincerely,

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Varroville ██████████