

Submission to the Independent Planning Commission

David Eyre 603/38 Refinery Drive, Pyrmont

Re: Glebe Island concrete batching plant and aggregate-handling-facility (ssd 8544)

Thank you for considering this submission. In summary, my family and I object to the development proposal in its current form:

1. Firstly, it is a step back to an ugly Sydney that disregards amenity and environment. The proposal is brutal. We can see the benefits of maritime supply of construction materials during an intensive phase of inner urban development. This is not the only or best way to achieve this. Other solutions are feasible but appear to have been ruled out without public discussion of relative merits and cost benefit analysis.
2. Secondly, no provision is made for onshore power. Given that the development is deemed to be of state significance, additional investment should be made by the state in modern port technology that will minimise the impacts on the environment and local people.

Transparency and consistency in strategic planning

The development site is flanked by new residential properties. Over decades of successful urban renewal in Pyrmont during which the southern side of the dock was seldom used, the dominant land use of the area has changed from industrial to residential and recreation. This part of the harbour has become a valued resource for many Sydney residents including my family.

Consistent with this renewal strategy, the NSW government has previously floated plans to develop Glebe Island for mixed residential, recreational and port use for smaller ships.

The Port Authority, however, is now seeking to recommission the dock for intensive 24/7 use and a concrete plant in direct conflict with previously achieved renewal and amenity goals.

It is not transparent why the development must be sited and configured as proposed:

- Construction material freight and the smaller freights involved in this trade could be accommodated on the northern side of the dock and with lower and less permanent impact.
- There is no necessity for a major concrete plant to be located in a prime waterfront site so close to residences.
- Further, as noted above, no provision has been made for onshore power to mitigate the noise, atmospheric and water pollution from freighters. Onshore power is becoming a standard requirement in modern urban ports.

What is onshore power?

Onshore power enables ships at dock to use shoreside electricity to power onboard electrical systems, such as lighting, ventilation, communication, cargo pumps, and other critical equipment, while turning off their auxiliary engines. These ships can be connected to onshore power supplies so ship operations can proceed uninterrupted while eliminating diesel emissions resulting from auxiliary engines. The electricity comes from the local power grid through a substation at the port and is plugged into special power connectors in the shore power system on the ship. Benefits include reduced noise, atmospheric and water pollution.

Why is onshore power so important for this particular dock?

As it stands, the tramp freighters servicing the facility are likely to be owned by smaller operators and their engines are likely to be dirtier and noisier than those operated by major lines.

Couple this factor with the proximity of the unit complexes and promenade constructed alongside the dock over the past two decades and you have a recipe for ongoing conflict.

Realistically, true compliance with the proposed consent conditions for freighter emissions is unlikely and will be subject to continuous complaint, dispute and cost to both residents and regulatory authorities.

Requiring freighters that use the dock to be equipped for onshore power would select for shipping companies with more advanced fleets and would massively reduce the impacts of the development.

Onshore power is the future of urban ports

Onshore power has been installed in more than 20 ports, mostly in North America and Europe, with Chinese ports now uptaking the technology under clean air mandates. Mandates include California's at-berth regulation, the Shenzhen Air Quality Enhancement Plan in China, and the United Kingdom's Clean Maritime Plan.

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) jointly publish a voluntary standard for shore power systems. The standard, IEC/ISO/ IEEE 80005-1, covers onshore, onboard, and shore-to-ship connection and interface equipment.

Many ships are equipped to receive onshore power due to mandates in ports they visit or simply for use in dry dock. Onshore power would be relatively cheap to install and operate at this site compared to solutions for major ports, due to the relatively low peak power and small number of connection points required.

Conclusion

The proposal to approve the southern side of Glebe Island for diesel-intensive, heavy industrial use has come from left field and is inconsistent with NSW Government air, water and noise and urban renewal policy.

The Port of Sydney should be a leader in shipping emissions control. Requiring onshore power would be a historic step in this direction and could enable sustainable use of the dock for construction freight.

The concrete plant should be taken off the table. It belongs under the bridge or on some other site that is less blessed with natural amenity values.

Overall, this proposal seems piecemeal and a flow on from other decisions made in relation to the Wattle Bay Precinct rather than something that is genuinely appropriate for Glebe Island (which is the jewel in the crown). I hope that the Panel sees fit to refuse consent for the proposal in its current form. The future of Glebe Island should be determined by an exemplary integrated planning and urban design process. This could be a world class sustainable port for small ships, integrated with recreational and residential development and with some greening of the point similar to Barangaroo. The current proposal is way below what Sydney and our great harbour deserves. Thank you

