

Thank you for the opportunity to present comments on the latest Concept plans for the Harbourside Redevelopment. I speak on behalf of Pymont Action members but also reflect the views of other members of the Pymont community who have expressed concerns about the scale and impact, not only of this proposal but all the other recent and approved developments at Darling Harbour which have not only walled off the Pymont Peninsula, but also enclosed and overshadowed Cockle Bay reducing views of the water from Darling Harbour itself, from Pymont and the CBD.

These buildings have been developed under the State Significant Development regime which, effectively, allows developers almost free reign in a rules-free planning environment and thus I will restrict my remarks to those elements of the design which may yet be improved. I don't intend to tilt at the windmill of the tower and podium height, now sanctioned by the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy through Harbourside's identification as a Key Site. However it's hard reconcile a tower of RL166m with the objectives of Direction 2 of the Strategy – "Development that complements or enhances the area". The proponent claims "consistency of this excessive tower height with the existing and future context", citing building heights in Barangaroo, the CBD and the Haymarket, totally ignoring the local context of buildings in Pymont and Ultimo but, we have been disappointed that the Statements of Environment Effects only talk about its impact on the CBD and Darling Harbour. It's as though Pymont and Ultimo don't exist!

Some improvements have been made, with the re-positioning of the tower structure away from the heritage Pymont Bridge and the tower has been slimmed, and moved further south reducing the view impacts on some residents of 50 Murray Street but perpetuating the impacts on others. We note the provision of a 1500 sq m public park, Guardian Square. We note that this Square will be publicly accessible 24/7. This will likely generate even more noise and anti-social behaviour than is experienced already by nearby residents. At least, currently, Harbourside provides a buffer from such disturbances occurring at ground level.

We ask that the IPCN make it a condition of approval that the park be closed after 10pm/7days per week.

The rest of the 8,200 sqm of public open space is made up of steps and stairs, concrete pathways linking spaces and the claimed widening of the boulevard. Whilst there might be a net increase in the total area of the boulevard, the area of the current public plaza outside Harbourside has been reduced by around 50%. This plaza is a gathering place and the site of the popular ferris wheel. The proposed boulevard is just a pathway of around 20m width in its entirety, as the proposed podium encroaches ever closer to the water, and requiring installation of an over-water boardwalk. **We urge the Commission to require retention of the existing plaza as a condition of any approval of this project.**

In view of the huge waiting list for Social and Affordable Housing (currently over 50,000), **we ask that a 2% developer levy be imposed on the development**, similar to that imposed on developments when Pymont and Ultimo were transformed from an abandoned industrial area, to the vibrant mixed use precinct it is today. Such housing was provided across the Peninsula and the placement has enabled the development of a socially integrated community. But we deplore the current Government policy of selling of these public estates for private development which will result in fewer people needing public housing being accommodated.

The current and proposed Harbourside development, as with all the new developments on the W boundary of Darling Harbour, turns its back on Pymont and, currently, there is no pedestrian access along its W street frontage, leading to the intersection of Pymont Bridge with Murray Street. Pedestrians are forced to walk to the Eastern side of the building to gain access to this intersection. Similarly, the bike path along Darling Drive peters out. **We have long advocated for the construction of a vehicular tunnel under this intersection enabling traffic to travel seamlessly from Darling Drive to Murray Street, and thence to The Star and**

beyond. Given the substantial increase in traffic which will be generated by this redevelopment, and the fact that, in pre-Covid times, traffic in Darling Drive often came to a standstill when major events occurred, removal of the bottleneck would be a positive result from this redevelopment. We note that ~300 parking spaces will be allocated for residents and visitors and **urge provision of public EV charging stations associated with this development.**

We would also welcome street activation at ground level on **all** sides of the retail section of the podium with easy access to shops and venues for residents and workers from Pymont. Such activation, assisted by **good exterior lighting and CCTV cameras will enhance safety and public amenity.**

In summary, in our submissions we have opposed the excessive height and scale of both the podium and the tower, but understand that with Government adoption of the Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy, we are powerless to prevent their approval. We would welcome serious consideration being given to these proposed improvements which will not only enhance what's proposed, but give something back to the people whose public domain is being handed over for private residential and commercial development.

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