



## **TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING**

RE: NOVUS ON VICTORIA, CHATSWOOD – BUILD-TO-RENT  
(SSD-63324208)

### **PUBLIC MEETING**

COMMISSION PANEL: ANDREW MILLS (CHAIR)  
SIMON SMITH

OFFICE OF THE IPC: JANE ANDERSON  
GEOFF KWOK

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES: JAMES LIDIS (Owners Corporations of “Metro Residences (69 Albert Street), Metro Spire (1 Post Office Lane) and Metro Grand (438 Victoria Avenue)  
IAN RUSHTON (Metro Complex “High Neighbours” Program Coordinator)  
CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN (Willoughby City Council)  
HENNY RAHARDJA (Owners Corporation, The Sebel – Chatswood)  
MARK O’DONOGHUE (Owners Corporation, 1 Post Office Lane, Chatswood)  
RENEE YOUNG  
VIVIAN LI  
SCHANDEL FORTU & CHARLES MAXWELL (Applicant’s representatives – if required by the Commission)

DATE: 10:00AM – 11:30AM  
FRIDAY, 10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

LOCATION: INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION  
LEVEL 15, 135 KING STREET, SYDNEY

## THE MEETING COMMENCED

5 **MR ANDREW MILLS:** Well, good morning and welcome to the Independent Planning Commission's public meeting into the State significant development application for Novus on Victoria, Chatswood – Build-to-Rent (State significant development 63324208).

10 I'm speaking to you from Gadigal land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the countries from which we meet today and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to Elders from other communities who may be participating today.

15 My name is Andrew Mills, and I am Chair of the Commission and of this Commission Panel. And joining me is my fellow Commissioner, Simon Smith. Panel members have made conflicts of interest disclosures and as Chair of the Commission, I have determined that the Panel can consider this application. A copy of that decision document is available on our website.

20 We have a limited and specific role at the end of the planning process. We decide if an application should go ahead, and if so, on what conditions. We consider the Department's Assessment Report, the application, your written and oral submissions, and other materials that the Planning Law requires us to consider. All of these materials are either already publicly available or will be made available on our website.

25 In making this decision in this case, the Commission must obey all relevant laws and consider all applicable policies and the public interest. We're also obliged to consider public submissions and that is the purpose of today. We want to hear what you think about the merits of this application. However, this is not a forum for submissions on whether or not you like or approve of the Applicant, of the laws we must obey, or the policies we must consider.

30 The application has already been assessed by the Department on our behalf, and many of you have already participated in the Department's processes and we thank you for that participation. There's no need to repeat your previous submissions; they are all available to us for our consideration. The Applicant and the Department have considered your submissions and taken them into account in the application and assessment and conditions we're considering today.

35 Today, we want to hear your response to the Department's assessment, recommendations and the recommended conditions. Even if your submission today objects to the application being approved at all, we encourage you to tell us whether any of your concerns could be addressed, either wholly or in part, by imposition of conditions. Your consideration of alternatives does not in any way compromise your submission, but it enables the Panel to consider all options.

40 While we will endeavour to stick to our published schedule this morning, that will be dependent on registered speakers being ready to present at their allocated times. I will introduce each speaker when it is their turn to present to the Panel, and everybody has

been advised in advance how long they have to speak. A bell will sound when a speaker has one minute remaining. A second bell will sound when a speaker's time has expired.

5 To ensure that everyone receives their fair share of time, I ask that people keep to their allocated time. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis, however, in the interest of fairness to other registered speakers, an extension may not be granted.

10 If you have a copy of your speaking notes or any additional material to support your presentation, it would be appreciated if you would provide a copy to the Commission. Please note that any information given to the Commission may be made public. The Commission's Privacy Statement governs its approach to managing your information and is available on the Commission's website.

15 In an emergency, please exit via the same door you entered, and follow all staff directions. Toilets are located outside the office. For female bathrooms, please use the main door and turn immediately right. For male bathrooms, please use the main door and walk to the end of the corridor where you can turn right.

20 At the conclusion of the public meeting, we may ask the Applicant to answer any questions or respond to any issues raised during the public meeting.

And with that, we will start and we will ask the first speaker, James Lidis, to present. James is coming to us via video, I believe.

25 **MR JAMES LIDIS:** Yes. Thank you, Chair and Panel. My name is James Lidis. I'm a town planning consultant. I can hear a bit of echo, so I'm not sure if I'm there twice. Oh, that's better. Hello?

30 **MR MILLS:** Yes, we can hear you.

**MR LIDIS:** Oh, thank you. So, I'm a town planning consultant and we were retained by the owners of Metro View, Metro Spire and Novus on Victoria to review the submission or review the details. You've got a copy of our submission originally made.

35 We reviewed the Assessment Report and I'm reading now from a draft that we've prepared which we will be submitting to the Independent Planning Commission on the Assessment Report. And these are the issues that we raise in regard to the assessment – it's a summary based on our review, and it focus on the issues of overshadowing, loss of solar access, view loss, and building bulk, scale and setbacks.

40 In overshadowing and loss of solar access, the Assessment Report acknowledges on page 30 that the proposed SSD will result in additional overshadowing of Metro View to the extent that only 45% of the units in Metro View will receive the minimum 2 hours solar access to private open space living areas required under the ADG.

At the present time, according to the Assessment Report, 84% of the units in Metro View achieve the standard. This will result in a significant loss of amenity to the affected units which currently receive solar access throughout the morning in mid-winter.

The proposed tower requires a minimum in our experience to address this impact and ensure compliance in the maintenance of the amenity of the affected units. The justification for the impact in the Assessment Report is rejected based on the large number of currently compliant units which will be adversely affected by the proposal, and that is 57 of those units. An extent of variations on the required compliance has reduced from 84% currently to 45% proposed.

The second issue is the loss of views. The Assessment Report acknowledges on page 31 to 34 the proposed SSD will result in a loss of views from both Metro Spire in easterly views, and Metro View in northeasterly views, resulting in a significant loss of amenity for units in both buildings. It is noted that the diagrams in figures 11 and 12 in the assessment incorrectly identify the location of Metro View south of its actual location, calling into question the CGI images of the impact on Metro View in table 7 of the Assessment Report, which is on page 33.

The third issue, we raised the tower bulk, scale and setbacks. The overshadowing impact of the proposal on Metro View and view-loss impact on Metro View and Metro Spire demonstrates that the proposed tower has an excessive bulk and insufficient setbacks to protect the amenity of surrounding properties.

To address the bulk matters and the loss of solar access to units in Metro View in particular, the design of the tower requires amendment to traditional setbacks and/or slimmer form so that 2 hours solar access, in compliance to the requirements of the ADG, is achieved.

So, that's a summary of the issues, Panel. We think that the tower can be better designed. We don't object in total to the SSD proposal, but we think that the scale can be modified in terms of a slimmer form of tower, and there hasn't been an alternative put forward to show what that might mean as a result.

Thanks for your time.

**MR SIMON SMITH:** Yes, James, could you – you mentioned that you think the tower design could be changed to reduce overshadowing. Have you got any particular suggestions about how that – the extent of change that would be needed?

**MR LIDIS:** I don't think – it's not the height itself, Commission, that's the issue, it's more the setbacks can be revisited, in our view. We think that there's both scope within the State Government's advisory panels, specifically their Design Advisory Panels and other expertise that would be able to examine the actual scale and the bulk of the tower to be able to look at a different and slimmer design, a more skilful design, and that's the principle that's used in many applications to get a better result for all parties.

So, that would be my recommendation, to go back and look, not necessarily the height of the building, it's more its actual bulk of it. So, we think that could be better considered and a better result, which would then probably alleviate some of the issues that arising from the loss of solar access, in particular.

**MR SMITH:** So, what you're looking for is a reduction, like, fewer residences no longer being –

**MR LIDIS:** That may be the outcome of that, Commissioner, that's right.

**MR SMITH:** Thank you for your suggestion. That's all from me.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you. I think you probably, in that last one, answered the question that I was going to ask, so thank you for that. Thank you, James, for your time.

**MR LIDIS:** Thank you.

**MR MILLS:** I think we can move to the next speaker, Ian Rushton. Good morning, Ian.

**MR IAN RUSHTON:** Good morning. Am I right to go?

**MR MILLS:** You are, thank you.

**MR RUSHTON:** Okay. Good morning, everybody. My name is Ian Rushton. I'm a retired Naval Veteran. I moved into Metro Spire Residence on the 15th of December 2014. I'm an active volunteer within Metro residents community and coordinator of High Neighbours Metro Residents Activity Group, which includes Grand, Spire towers, or the Grand, Spire and View towers. Activities include walking group, kids Christmas function, table tennis, and numerous social events as part of our annual social program.

I have reviewed all the objections to this build, however, noting time allocation, will concentrate on the impact this proposed building will have on commuters and general public, vehicle and pedestrian impact, and changes [unintelligible 00:19:04] and open space.

Of particular note is the commuter increase to and from Metro Chatswood, as both retail and business centres expand. Chatswood is now a thriving business hub. Growth has been substantial and ever-increasing since the Metro Rail Services were introduced. In May 2019, Metro Rail Tallawang to Chatswood commenced operation. August 2024, Metro Rail Tallawang to Chatswood and then onto Sydenham commenced. And subsequent commuter impact through growth was approximately 41,000 plus utilising Metro to and from Chatswood.

The main thoroughfare to commercial and retail is via Victoria Avenue Mall and Post Office Lane. Both these access and exit points are extremely busy, particularly during

business hours and weekends. A build-to-rent of the scale and size of proposed Novus on Victoria tower will impact greatly on commercial residents within the area, regardless of proposed ground and first floor premises.

5 The increased number of commuter and local residents will be affected by commuter chokepoints, particularly at Victor Street. Access to Westfield Shopping Complex western entrance via Victor Street will be greatly affected due to increased pedestrian traffic. It should be noted this is an existing issue at present, with limited mobility parking, kiss-and-ride, and Uber drop-off/pick-up.

10 At present, this area is chaotic, with vehicles also entering Post Office Lane to support retail. Vehicle traffic and associated access and the parking at Mandarin Centre and Sebel Building will also be an issue, as access from Albert Avenue interface creates an existing backlog of traffic. There are safety issues mixed with pedestrians and vehicle traffic within this area. Emergency services and waste removal services will also be affected, and access is extremely limited.

20 The proposed Novus on Victoria build will also impact greatly on the Metro Spire building due to build height, which will block sunlight and provide a shadowing effect over the area. In addition, Spire residents will lose their view, which was an initial key factor in many purchasing units facing east in the first place.

25 Conclusion. Chatswood is already experiencing rapid expansion, with many new-build apartments underway and many more in the proposed planning stage. The bulk, size and footprint of the building is excessive, particularly noting the location and position which impacts greatly on surrounding areas within its footprint.

30 In conclusion, I therefore do not support this Novus on Victoria Build-to-Rent proposal. Thank you.

35 **MR MILLS:** Thank you, Ian. You mentioned build height there. In fact, the site there is zoned to have a building of that height, irrespective of whether it's residential or commercial. Is there some other – I just want to focus on the nature of the building – are there some other features of the building that you would consider might improve the situation that you're concerned about in terms of the impacts?

40 **MR RUSHTON:** Initially, when I looked at the actual area, obviously living at the Spire I've got direct access to Post Office Lane and obviously the traffic into Woolworths etc. As you walk down Post Office Lane towards Victor Street, you've got that, the low level, now that, to me, if that was about the level of the existing build, it would be fine, because it's not excessively high and it doesn't lock anything out at the moment. So, those heights that were in the existing lane on both sides of the building would be quite acceptable, in my view, or even another level above, I guess.

45 I just feel, I mean, I do a lot of activities at Chatswood Oval which is adjacent to the other side and I watch the sun track across, and there's already, you know, enough high buildings or high rise and I'm very aware of the others that are going ahead as well within Chatswood.

So, yes, I guess the overall answer would be, yes, lower, I'd be happier. But ultimately it is still [unintelligible 00:23:56] blocks certain outdoor viewpoints overlooking east.

5 **MR MILLS:** Okay then. Did you have any other questions, Simon?

**MR SMITH:** Could you just give us a bit more information about – you said there's existing backing up of traffic in, I think you said Victor Street – is it Victor Street is it in the lane, could you just talk about what it's like day to day there?

10 **MR RUSHTON:** Yes, it is. Look, to be honest, it's chaotic. I travel across, I use that access to get into the western side entrance to Westfield, it's an easy access. A lot of people use it because they're coming from all directions either from Albert Avenue walking up or from the mall, they'll cut through. That is a traffic bottleneck, if you like.

15  
20 And the problem is with the vehicles that are trying to turn at the end, they're doing three-point turns, other vehicles are trying to get in. And I remember one case where there was an emergency, someone had collapsed outside near by Westfield, and the emergency vehicle couldn't get in at the time, it took quite a while for ambulance and police to clear it out.

25 Now, I know that's one situation I observed, so it's not everyday activity. However, vehicles, it's constant with parking, people doing early three-point turns, not waiting till the end, so it does become very congested. And a lot of people trying to get across there also, because there's no dedicated crosswalk, they just skirt around the traffic.

30 Market day is a bit confusing also because they have to have the vehicles come through that common area like where the seating is into the mall, to set up for their markets. Again, that becomes another choke point as well.

**MR SMITH:** Thank you very much, that's really helpful.

35 **MR RUSHTON:** Okay. Thank you.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you, Ian. We'll now move onto our next speaker, Christopher Nguyen, who's from Willoughby Council.

40 **MR CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN:** I'd like to thank the IPC for allowing Council to present today on this item, for the Novus on Victoria Avenue. My name is Christopher Nguyen. I'm representing Willoughby City Council today.

45 I'd just like to start by saying that Council does support additional housing and diverse housing in well-located areas with infrastructure, services and amenity. We do have an opportunity though to improve architectural urban design outcomes, public domain outcomes, and standards.

When the Chatswood CBD Strategy was adopted, it was with the intention of having purely commercial development here, and so all the controls regarding built form, lot size, FSR, height, etc., is not really adequate or appropriate for residential development. Regardless, we don't expect full compliance numerically, but I think the outcomes architecturally, in terms of urban design and public outcomes, is really important.

I'd like to just start with the single most important issue that the Council has with this development, and that's the visual massing of the design of this development. Currently, it appears as a single tower, one single form that's uninterrupted. In Council's view, it doesn't have the appropriate articulation or modulation to state that it meets the threshold that we're seeking in terms of architectural outcomes or urban design.

The Applicant in their application references 88 Walker Street in North Sydney as an example. But that example has articulation and modulation, well designed materials, so that tower appears as actually two towers in its form.

This tower – architecture is objective, however, we feel that this tower does not provide that articulation and modulation and would appear visually extensive. When you couple this with a zero site setback to the adjoining neighbour, there is that potential that future development along with this development may appear visually excessive from the public domain. We're seeking great architectural and urban design outcomes and I feel we can achieve this.

The second point I'd like to raise is public domain conditions. The Department of Planning has imposed a public domain condition in the consent and we're appreciative of that. What we're finding with state significant developments is the public domain condition varies quite a lot. Sometimes it references a concept plan. Sometimes it will reference a few items in the public domain but not an extensive list that we'd like to see.

So, in our submissions to the IPC we've provided a consent condition that we feel addresses the important aspects of public domain. We feel that this is essential for this location, when you consider how prominent and how important this is in Chatswood CBD. There's going to be a high level of interaction with pedestrians that enter through Post Office Lane, Victoria Avenue, Victor Street. As we've heard before, there's a high level of vehicles that, from our perspective, do – well, depending how large the vehicles are – do three/four/five-point turns in Victor Street.

So, we need to – we're willing to work with the Proponent and the Department to come up with a public domain design that really addresses safety, provides good public amenity, landscaping. So, that we can have a development that's a great outcome for generations to come.

My third point is basement connectivity. There have been discussions in the past about allowing basement connectivity to the adjoining neighbour to this site. However, in the approval, we don't see any evidence as to how this would be achieved in terms of



consent conditions or approved plans. There are some structures within the basement plan that may limit that, and I think that there's other mechanisms to allow for basement connectivity.

5 Just to cap off, we do feel that there are many alternative design options out there to achieve better design outcomes, reduce the visual massing when viewed from a public space. This does have the potential to set precedent within the Chatswood CBD. We don't want to see single-form towers all across Victoria Avenue, which potentially may happen. So, that's the single-most vital outcome here.

10 Thank you for your time.

15 **MR MILLS:** Thank you, Christopher. Before you leave the podium, can I just check on one thing. In terms of basement, are many buildings in that area, do that have that as part of their design already?

**MR NGUYEN:** Do you mean proposed development, currently in operation or ...?

20 **MR MILLS:** Well, existing or proposed.

25 **MR NGUYEN:** Existing? No. So, I believe the adjoining neighbours of Post Office Lane, they may have areas, but I don't think basement access, no. But that may be a potential ... What we don't want to see is increased vehicle movements in Post Office Lane. So, I think the optimal outcome is to have basement connectivity in this development where there may be a breakthrough panel wall that goes to the adjoining neighbour. I think that would provide the best public domain outcome/urban design outcome.

30 **MR MILLS:** Right.

**MR SMITH:** Just on that. Has Council had any discussion with the adjoining landowners about that potential?

35 **MR NGUYEN:** No.

**MR SMITH:** With the Proponent, any discussion about that?

40 **MR NGUYEN:** We have, in a past meeting, and they've expressed openness to it. However, I don't think those discussions have progressed.

**MR SMITH:** Right. And is there specific features of the proposed basement design that would preclude future access that you would want changed?

45 **MR NGUYEN:** We are concerned with structures in the basement that might preclude this from occurring. If you view the basement layout, there are some things within the basement that might obstruct vehicle access from going to the adjoining neighbour if you were to try and have basement connectivity.

**MR SMITH:** Right. Because that was the – the substation was one of those issues, wasn't it?

**MR NGUYEN:** Yes, I believe so.

**MR SMITH:** And what was relocated in the more recent version.

**MR NGUYEN:** Yes, that's right.

**MR SMITH:** Yes, okay, all right. Can I just ask another question? So, we heard from the previous speaker about traffic difficulties in the existing use of Victor Street with the vehicles bringing the structures in for the market stalls and people doing three-point turns before they get to the turning circle and so on and so forth. And you indicated Council's open to working with the state authorities and the developer.

What sort of things could be done to – even if this development wasn't going ahead, like, what sort of things would Council be considering? Would you consider having someone in there during peak times directing traffic or what sort of ...?

**MR NGUYEN:** No, more so built form design outcomes.

**MR SMITH:** So, it's about design.

**MR NGUYEN:** Yes. Not having staff manage the traffic, no.

**MR SMITH:** So, what you want to do is to use the opportunity of the open space works associated with this to also address prior problems with the traffic flow and the pedestrian flow in the locality?

**MR NGUYEN:** I do believe we can work with the Proponent, as has been conditioned as part of the SSD today.

**MR SMITH:** Yes.

**MR NGUYEN:** We can have public domain plans where Council staff initially review urban design, traffic and engineering, there could be considerations for traffic calming measures, signage. The design itself of the building, there's a small tenancy on the corner, and we question whether that's required or not.

I understand from the Proponent's point of view, the activation was the intention – and it was a good intention. But I think now we need to start focusing on how this interacts with the pedestrians and the vehicles. We may request the removal of that small tenancy in the corner. Yes.

**MR SMITH:** The one right on the corner, that's the booth? Yes, okay. So, it could be that if the Council is able to work well with the Proponent, that perhaps some of the existing problems might be – that raised by the previous speaker – would actually be improved.

5 **MR NGUYEN:** That's the intention today. And we've been doing that with some state significant developments in Anderson Street where we, our Traffic Department has created a public domain plans, concept plans, and that's been included in the consent. We don't have a public domain consent plan for this particular development, but I do think it's definitely achievable.

10 **MR SMITH:** That's very helpful. And thank you also for Council's detailed submission.

**MR NGUYEN:** Sure.

15 **MR MILLS:** Thank you. I'll now move to the next speaker, Henny Rahardja, I believe, is online. You're very faint. If you just improve your sound a little, that would be great, thank you.

**MS HENNY RAHARDJA:** Can you hear me okay?

20 **MR MILLS:** We can now, thank you.

25 **MS RAHARDJA:** Good morning. My name is Henny and I am speaking on behalf of the Owners Corporation at the Sebel, which is the 28-storey building as shown in the picture. We're basically a couple of doors away from the proposed Novus development. There are 300 parking spaces in our building, which is shared majority by owners of the building, but also with Willoughby Council, because their parking is also downstairs.

30 Given that this is essentially a rubberstamp exercise and the Novus proposal has been sort of slated for approval, we would like to focus on traffic mitigation conditions that we hope the IPC can impose. Both temporary measures as well as hopefully permanent ones. And we note that Novus is already promoting the approval of this project on their website.

35 In this proposal, Novus repeatedly and proudly mentions that there is no car parking proposed as part of the development. They argue that because there is no parking available, there will be no increased traffic. We would argue that this logic is highly flawed and somewhat reckless.

40 As Willoughby Council notes in its submission, the traffic figures presented by Novus seem to be grossly underestimated and deliberately neglected to account for associated traffic. When you have a 46-storey building with 260 apartments, especially given the nature of build-to-rent, there will be an increased number of removalist trucks in particular, not to mention friends, dropping off and picking up etc.

45 It is also worthwhile to point out that the proposal by Novus also conveniently neglected to mention that [unintelligible 00:38:16] is home to approximately 300 car spaces. These are cars on a short dead-end street that all need to exit and enter via this end of Victor Street.

These are some of the traffic challenges that we see during construction, but also beyond construction. As we all know, Victor Street is a no-through road on this end of Victor Street with already significant traffic congestion.

Four high-rise apartment block entrances, Mandarin Centre car park entrance, Westfield entrance, as well as Willoughby Council car park entrance already on this short stretch of Victor Street. Traffic during peak hours is extremely congested and as you can see in the photo that was taken around 10:30/11 a.m. on a weekday.

How will up to [unintelligible 00:39:08] trucks and semi-trailers and other construction vehicles go in and out on this stretch of Victor Street?

The crossroad between Victor Street and Albert Avenue is often backed up with cars trying to turn into Victor Street. This is a result of cars queuing up to enter Mandarin Centre car park. Often, the total number of cars that can enter and exit this section of Victor Street in the timeframe of a traffic light change is zero.

**MR MILLS:** Henny, can I just jump in there please for a second. You've been on the same slide the whole time. Were there other slides that you wanted to move through?

**MS RAHARDJA:** Oh yes, sorry.

**MR MILLS:** If you could just let us know as you want to move to the next slide, that would be good, thanks.

**MS RAHARDJA:** If you wouldn't mind going one-by-one through the slides. The next one. Okay, just stay there – yes, that's fine, if you just stay there.

**MR MILLS:** Okay. Thank you. Just tell us as you want them to move to the next page.

**MS RAHARDJA:** Oh sorry, yes.

**MR MILLS:** That's fine.

**MS RAHARDJA:** So, you can see that photo was taken around 10:30/11:00 on a weekday. So, this short stretch at Mandarin Centre car park, Westfield, Sebel parking, Willoughby Council parking, not to mention all the drop-offs into Post Office Lane for all the retailers as well.

In the Novus proposal, I think there was a mention that up to, say, 25 concrete pouring trucks will come at a time, at a day, so I don't know how you're going to fit all that in there, personally.

The next slide, please. So, the traffic that backs up means that even it would take a full traffic light change and there will be no cars that progress, so they're all queuing to get into Mandarin Centre and exit Mandarin Centre.

We do have – the next slide, sorry. We do have a proposed solution, particularly during construction phase. We would like to ask that residents be allowed to get in and out during peak travel hours, and that heavy vehicles should only be allowed to enter Victor Street after 9:30 a.m. and they must exit before 2:30 p.m. on Monday to Friday.

These hours coincide with the busiest drop-off and pick-up times for commuters and schoolchildren accessing the station. There should be no heavy vehicles allowed onto Victor Street on weekends due to substantial increase in pedestrian traffic and heavy traffic from Mandarin Centre car park.

Next slide, please. The two-lane Albert Avenue is effectively a single-lane because it is a loading zone as well as a kiss-and-drop-off zone near the Victor Street turn-off. You can see a photo that I took. This part gets extremely blocked up with traffic trying to turn left into Victor Street. Mostly again, it is Mandarin Centre traffic, which is likely to become worse with the future redevelopment and expansion of the Mandarin Centre.

I've only got a few more slides; do you mind if I continue?

**MR MILLS:** Sure, keep going.

**MS RAHARDJA:** Thank you. We would like to propose that a clearway is established on Albert Avenue outside the Mandarin Centre. Truck staging and waiting cannot be on Albert Avenue. We also propose that no heavy vehicles should take a left-hand turn into Victor Street from Albert Street, and they should enter only from the south end of Victor Street.

We also propose no right-hand turn for heavy vehicles onto Albert Avenue from Victor Street. This is to alleviate vehicles backing up onto Victor Street trying to turn right to exit onto Pacific Highway. So, we propose heavy vehicles can go straight off of Victor Street or go left onto Albert but not go right onto Albert.

Next slide, please. Please don't be fooled into thinking that this photo has no cars and therefore there isn't a traffic problem. I had to get up very early to try and take photos without cars everywhere, otherwise I won't be able to show the traffic lines fully. The current congestion is severely compounded by cars queuing to turn left into Mandarin Centre. Overtaking currently cannot take place until beyond the entrance to Mandarin Centre car park. Most people currently cross the double unbroken line to overtake illegally.

We would like to propose a solution which is that the overtaking lane is to be brought forward to allow more efficient overtaking of queued car park traffic. Next slide, please. This shows you what I'm talking about. That you can see where the overtaking line is, where that silver car is, so it's pretty much right where the entrance to the parking is – we feel that should be brought forward.

Next slide. We anticipate – next slide, please. We anticipate increased illegal parking in the Sebel's drop-off zone and utilising our parking area to U-turn and exit out of

Victor Street. We would like to request Novus to pay for a boom gate which is programmed to only be accessible to Sebel residents.

Given Novus has zero parking for its residents apart from a car-share parking, they will be relying on opportunities nearby to get dropped off and picked up to go to the airport. Where will all the removalist trucks park? There's only a 15-minute parking zone outside and also loading zones. But residents all need to share the space. So, we would like to request a boom gate installed so that our facility isn't used by Novus residents because they have no facility of their own.

Next slide. One of our long-term residents who has lived in the Sebel for 28 years, has the following observation to make. "Victor Street is a two-lane dead-end street, and as a local resident, I have observed that even private cars currently require a three-point turn to exit. The street simply does not have the space or turning radius necessary for larger vehicles such as excavation trucks, concrete delivery vehicles, and especially semi-trailers to manoeuvre or turn around. It's just physically impossible. This lack of access makes it impractical, if not impossible, for these types of construction vehicles to safely enter, operate and exit the site without causing significant disruption to local traffic and safety risks for residents."

I would like to say that no one from Novus has contacted the Sebel's Owners Corporation at any stage. There was mentioned about community engagement post DPHI, but from what I have read, those community engagements were focused on asking market stall owners to sign a petition – and I think only four or five people signed those petitions – and random people to write superficial statements in support of the development, rather than genuine engagement with those who will be most affected, such as the residents of 202 apartments at the Sebel Building.

This is my final slide. This is a summary of both temporary and permanent solutions we would like to propose. I won't read them all over again, except to add that Novus should pay to resurface this portion of Victor Street when it's finished, given it is anticipated that they will do significant damage with all their heavy vehicles during construction. And that we would like Council rangers to be proactive and issuing fines for illegal parking and breach of any traffic conditions imposed on Novus.

We understand that the state is calling for more housing. However, we really hope that the IPC will consider the daily struggles that current residents will face if these restrictions are not imposed on the developer. Thank you.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you, Henny. I just want to take issue with the very first thing you said. This is not a rubberstamping process. The Commission decides the application and if it decides to approve it, it determines which conditions it should apply. So, this is a decision for the Commission, as I outlined at the beginning.

Henny, I appreciate the pragmatic approach you've taken with the suggestions you've offered in the presentation in terms of the [unintelligible 00:47:45]. Thank you. Simon, questions?

**MR SMITH:** Yes, I just really wanted to thank you for the detailed thinking that you've done about the existing traffic issues and the ideas that could be put in place by the Proponent. Has the Owners Corporation had any discussion with the Council about making improvements into Victor Street traffic flows?

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**MS RAHARDJA:** You mean in regards to Novus? Not that I'm aware of.

**MR SMITH:** No, just regarding existing issues.

10

**MS RAHARDJA:** Not that I'm aware of.

**MR SMITH:** Okay. Thank you for that. But I do really appreciate the thought that's gone into your submission. Thank you very much.

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**MS RAHARDJA:** And I'm not even a town planner, I'm just a mum.

**MR SMITH:** Very well, thank you.

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**MR MILLS:** Okay, thank you. Thank you for your time. Our next speaker is Mark O'Donoghue from the Owners Corporation at 1 Post Office Lane. Can you hear us, Mark?

25

**MR MARK O'DONOGHUE:** Oh, my apologies, yes, I can. Thanks very much. I appreciate the opportunity to provide a small piece of feedback. My name is Mark O'Donoghue, I'm a long-term resident in the Spire, Chatswood, so I'm the representative of the body corporate.

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I already heard a fair amount of feedback from both Ian and Henny, so I will keep my comments to the side of that. Clearly, we're very concerned about the traffic flow into that Victor Street/Post Office Lane precinct.

35

I heard mentioned earlier about the turning circle. In reality, at the end of Victor Street to the north is not a turning circle, it's simply a slightly wider section of the road where even motor vehicles are doing three-point turns. And I ask the question that if the construction commences in that area, I think any semi-trailers would be completely incapable of performing any sort of turning at the end, when even rigid-body trucks to a certain size would clearly just not have the swing room to be able to do it. So, I'd just park that to the side, and I want to talk in plain speak today. But the building lines of what's currently there just doesn't apply the amenity for a turning circle of any significant nature at that particular point.

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Some of the other points I wanted to bring up in this small session that Ian has already mentioned the increased flow as a result of the Metro. The recent monitoring of Post Office Lane saw the number of passenger movements up and down that lane from 10,000 people a day to 14,000 people a day. So, it's substantially increased.

And to the point made by both Ian and Henny, as people come down Post Office Lane to move towards the western entrance to Westfield, they just jaywalk across that street

area, which is populated by kiss-and-rides and Ubers and other vehicular traffic flow. It's already a pretty significant mess.

5 When I looked at the plans for the build-to-rent, and I'm certainly not opposed to the concept of build-to-rent. With 260 apartments and no parking, the view that, well, these tenants won't require motor vehicles but they're in a significant transport hub. I think the absolute reality is that there will be vehicles owned by those tenants and that they will look to essentially populate any of the non-time-limited streets within the greater Chatswood area, such as Tryon Street. So, the knock-on effect from having a  
10 260-apartment with no parking clearly is going to have some issue. To say that there is going to be little to no vehicles owned by those tenants, I think, is just beyond the pale.

15 And then additionally, if these are tenanted buildings with an average tenancy of, say 12 months, there's going to be over 500 removalist van movements in that area alone, forgetting about the construction, but just simply the ebb and flow of tenants in that area in a really congested space.

20 I've been quite fascinated to see that Novus has two development requests in Chatswood. One is Novus on Victoria which we're talking about. The other one is Novus on Albert, which is quite close to the railway station, so the same amount of public amenity in terms of transport. But as I can see, that particular building has three floors of parking, allowing for 150 spaces for 198 apartment residents.

25 We've got one building with zero parking and the other [unintelligible 00:53:00] problematic from an access point of view, having an enormous amount of parking. And the other thing which is of interest is there's currently [unintelligible 00:53:12] apartment buildings, predominantly high rise, which are slated in some form of process from an initial planning concept etc., etc., and most of them sit on the periphery of the greater CBD Chatswood area, so along the Pacific Highway and on the edges. And  
30 unfortunately, Novus on Victoria is right in the middle of all the congestion.

35 So, they're the primary areas that I have of concern. And because I'm on this Zoom call, I can't actually hear you, so I'd probably switch back – oh no, I can hear you, my apologies. So, they're the comments that I had. Thank you very much.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you very much, Mark. Do you have any questions, Mr Smith?

**MR SMITH:** No, thank you.

40 **MR MILLS:** All right. Thank you. Nor do I. But you're very clear on the issues that you've raised, so thank you for that. Well, now we'll move onto Renee Young. Thank you. Renee, can you hear us?

**MS RENEE YOUNG:** Yes, I can, hello.

45 **MR MILLS:** Hello. Please go ahead.



**MS YOUNG:** Great. Thank you. My name is Renee Young. I currently live in a build-to-rent development called Novus on Sturt in Melbourne. I've been living here for about 11 months with my husband, my two children and dog. And we're doing that because we're renovating our family home.

In my experience, build-to-rent has been a really wonderful place to live. It's offered a lot for us in terms of the amenities, community and our general wellbeing. Some of the things that make build-to-rent different, and I have experienced both, so I have lived in traditional rental properties but build-to-rent has been quite incredible for us.

So, some of the things that have been great include some flexibility without any long-term commitment. So, our home renovation, as I'm sure a lot of people can appreciate, was given a certain amount of time and that's gone over because of issues with some of our neighbours. So, we've been able to go month-to-month from our original rental agreement, which has been amazing and obviously reduced a lot of stress for us.

The on-site management team also have been amazing. So, they're very professional and also really friendly. So, anything I need, I often have a chat with them, they give treats for my dog every morning, has been above and beyond. So, [unintelligible 00:56:09] in terms of other experiences I've had. And issues that have arisen, with a leaky shower or dishwasher not working, I've been able to talk to them straight away and it's deal with immediately and to a very high standard.

In terms of the community here, it's been an amazing. So, there's a lot of connection through events, shared spaces and obviously then the on-site team as well. So, I know all the people who live on my floor, we say hello to each other all the time. And also, we have a lot of interaction with other people in the building in the common spaces, so that could be in the foyer, in the lift, the pool deck and the gym.

Everyone I've met so far has been very kind, considerate and welcoming, especially as I have a family. Most people here probably don't; there's not a lot of families, there's a good mix of people but everyone's been really lovely and [unintelligible 00:57:23].

In terms of the location, it's very accessible. So, I walk every day, twice a day with my dog, there's lots of amazing parks, we have the botanical gardens across the road. Also, there's a tram stop out the front, and the new Anzac Station which also should be in walking distance.

So, if you walk to the NGV, the gallery is just down the road in the city. It's been great to be so close to the city, to experience a different part of Melbourne but also still very close to my kids' school and all their extracurricular activities. It's kind of the best of both worlds really.

In terms of the amenities in the building, that's probably the most amazing thing about living here. So, there's a swimming pool which has been fantastic, we've had a hot summer in Melbourne, so my kids and I and my husband, we go down there pretty much multiple times a week, especially after school.

The gym is awesome, so there's free classes for residents and given that we're on quite a bit of a budget restriction with renovating our home, it's meant that I've still been able to do regular Pilates and yoga classes, and all I need to do is go downstairs.

5 The co-working space gets used by my husband twice a week. So, he works from home on Mondays and Fridays, so he's able to go down there, he's still in the building but in a separate space. In our home previously, he used to have work out of my daughter's bedroom, which was less than ideal. So, to be able to have a separate space with all the facilities he needs, has been a God send for him.

10 The communal social areas downstairs – there's a big resident room with a full kitchen and big tables, which has meant that we've been able to host extended family dinners. And also, the pet-friendly facilities for our fur baby, so the dog wash and the pet area means that I can easily wash her, take her down to the toilet, whatever she needs, and also she's incredibly welcomed within the building.

15 All of the amenities as well are professionally managed and actively used. So, they're not sort of just sitting there gathering dust, everyone in the building uses them and they're always really well maintained.

20 I think the building as well is purpose built to live here for a longer term. So, because they've been designed basically for renting, it's meant that we're able to live and not worry about damaging things because everything's quite durable. Very high standards of soundproofing, so while we live in the city if I open the windows, I can often hear a lot of noise. If you shut the windows, the double-glazing is incredible.

25 The natural light – I'm sitting here at the moment in the apartment looking out over the blue skies and I can see the botanical gardens in the distance. It's just wonderful. And also, the energy efficiency, so our bills are pretty low here. I would say we live very comfortably in a two-bedroom apartment which is pretty amazing given that it's two adults, two kids and a dog. I don't think many other places would be able to [unintelligible 01:01:22] if we didn't choose a build-to-rent.

30  
35 **MR MILLS:** Renee, you're considerably over time now. Is there any concluding comment that you'd like to make?

40 **MS YOUNG:** Yes, absolutely. So, build-to-rent is really resident-focused. It's given us stability, service and community in a way that traditional housing rarely does. It's clear that this model supports wellbeing and offers great rental quality. That's it.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you and thank you for your time.

**MS YOUNG:** Thank you so much.

45 **MR MILLS:** Okay. Our next speaker is Vivian Li. Thank you, Vivian.

**MS VIVIAN LI:** Hi, good morning, Chair, panel members. My name is Vivian Li. I'm the first-generation residents in Metro Spire. I enjoy living there. I'm here to share how this development will significantly impact the residents in Chatswood.

5 Well, firstly, parking. This project proposes 260 apartments but only has 8 car spaces. So, for build-to-rent, these long-term residents, they are not short-stay visitors, so over time the new residents will still need a car, whether for shift work, family responsibility, medical appointment or trips that are not practical by public – you know, you can't reach by public transport.

10 So, if there is virtually no parking on site, those cars don't disappear, they spew into surrounding streets, impacting existing residents and local businesses. And also on traffic, on people circling to find a space. And this will greatly impact the neighbourhood.

15 My second point is the traffic assumption. The report of Transport and Accessibility Impact Assessment prepared by [unintelligible 01:03:40] states on page 26 section 5.3 that, "The Department would generate a maximum of one vehicle movement in the morning and afternoon peak hours." Well, I believe it is not credible for a 260-apartment building.

20 Even if many residents use public transport, there will still be ride-share, pick-up and drop-off, delivery, visitors, tradespeople, cleaners, and some residents driving, especially at peak times. This model sounds like building on unrealistic assumptions. If this goes ahead, I believe this will cause detrimental impact and accent the issue to the existing residents in Chatswood like myself.

25 Third point. Pedestrian congestion and safety. So, surveys showed that the pedestrian numbers have risen from 10,000 to 14,000 people a day since the opening of Metro. That increase is concentrated in the narrow street of Post Office Lane and Victor Street. Adding a large residential building will increase pedestrian flows – that is not just inconvenient, it becomes a safety issue as well, especially at peak times.

30 The fourth point is the solar access. Well, I think this is a core liveability issue. In the submission and amendment report prepared by Ethos Urban, page 21, table 7, solar access analysis to surrounding properties. The developer said that some apartments at 84 to 86 Albert Avenue will only receive 1.6 hours of sunlight, and some apartments at Metro View, which is 69 Albert Avenue, will retain 1.8 hours of solar access between 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the June solstice.

35 This does not strictly meet the Apartment Design Guide requirements under objective 4A.1. NSW Apartment Design Guide Standard is minimum 2 hours of direct sunlight midwinter for primary living areas and private open space. Midwinter is the key test, because that's when the sunlight matters the most.

40 The report says it's better at other times of the year does not fix the shortfall at the time the standard is designed and set. If we accept permanent midwinter sunlight loss as good enough, we are locking in poor amenity for future residents. And furthermore,

this significantly reduces the value of those apartments; the loss can be more than a million for the high levels.

5 I, myself, live in the Metro Spire, as I mentioned, and the distance between my apartment and the proposed location of the Novus is actually a very short distance. If we go to the website to see it. I can foresee that it will be very significantly – because it's very close, this will significantly really affect our residents living in east facing apartment in the Metro Spire, it will be very dark and will significantly impact our value.

10 The fifth point is the view loss. The Ethos Urban report describes the view impact to the surrounding buildings as minor to moderate. But that wording does not reflect what many residents are likely to experience in practice. The proposal is expected to significantly reduce valued long-distance views for nearby buildings, particularly Metro View, Metro Spire, and Pacific Place.

15 In Pacific Place, which is on the railway street, those developed/built by Mirvac, a number of south-facing apartments are likely to lose views towards the harbour and the Sydney CBD skyline. Therefore, Metro Spire and Metro View in facing apartments, it significantly blocks the view over the Chatswood CBD in the foreground, lower north shore and northern beaches in the immediate background, and north and the Pacific Ocean in the far background. These impacts are likely to be more for east-facing apartments in Metro Spire because of the close proximity.

25 When a new building is this close, there is not just a loss of a distant view, it creates a more enclosed outlook and reduces overall residential amenity. This can also cause less daylight, overshadowing and darker interiors which directly affect residents' quality of life and significantly impact value of the apartment.

30 Growth in Chatswood is expected, but this should not come at the expense of unreasonable impacts on existing homes. These view losses should be clearly acknowledged and even properly weighted in assessments. Chatswood will grow but it should grow in a way that is safe, fair and liveable for the people already here and for the people who will live in this apartment.

35 So, thank you for your time.

**MR MILLS:** Thank you very much, Vivian. Do you have any questions?

40 **MR SMITH:** Yes. Thanks, Vivian, thank you for just so clearly expressing your five points. I just wanted to ask about the solar access and the view impact points that you raised. So, as Andrew mentioned, the land was zoned already for high rise, when the Council planned for that, it was expected to be commercial. But now, because of changes, it can be residential. So, I guess what we're really interested in is if you have ideas on how, acknowledging that that's what the Council plan anticipated, the impacts could nevertheless be mitigated. Is there any idea that you – like, the Council representative suggested, you know, the change in shape or whatever. Do you have any other suggestions for us to consider?

5 **MS LI:** Yes. Well, this morning, I think, Ian – the existing location, actually there are some low-rise buildings there. I think the heights does actually does matter significantly, because due to the distance between the Metro Spire and the very close proximity to the Novus, the proposed site. It will, in this close proximity, it will definitely make all the apartments quite dark and also look very big in front of us as well.

10 And also, it will create a wind tunnel. Already in Chatswood there are lots of high, tall buildings, just in Thomas Street, if you've been there, the two sides are surrounded by high buildings there, and also there's build-to-rents by Meriton as well on Thomas Street. I hate walking on that street because it's always very windy – it's very cold and windy there.

15 And also, in Post Office Lane, this is already very narrow and also surrounded by – it's already very windy. So, Victor Street, the street is very narrow as well. So, yes, it will definitely – I think if you reduce the height a bit it might improve the situation. Yes.

20 I think, like, the lower building, those heights, I think it's okay, it's acceptable. But with this high, tall – and you know it's actually even taller than us, the Metro Spire and View and also Grand. It will be like, you know, the appearance of it, well, firstly, it will affect the urban appearance and also, I think it's just too tall.

25 **MR SMITH:** Okay. Thank you very much for that, and thank you for coming today.

**MS LI:** Thank you so much.

**MR SMITH:** Yes.

30 **MR MILLS:** Thank you. We do have a few questions for the Applicant, and we do have representatives from the Applicant here. So, if they'd like to come forward. Thank you.

35 **MR MILLS:** Do you want to start?

**MR SMITH:** Yes, great. Thanks. So, I've just written down a few questions that have arisen out of hearing the submissions that have been made today. So, if it's possible for you to respond to them now, that would be great. And if you need to respond on notice, that would be a good backup.

40 **MR MAXWELL:** Yes.

45 **MR SMITH:** So, in no particular order. So, one of the submissions from Council related to the hours during which excavation works are permitted. So, there's a difference of view between what the Proponent seeks and what the Planning Department has recommended and what the Council recommends. Can you just – how many weeks do you think excavation is going to be required for this, because it's on a

very deep basement, so I just would like to know how many weeks you think it might be approximately.

5       **MR MAXWELL:** Yes. It's hard to say off the top of my head just because it's a relatively unique site in terms of access and site constraints. So, it's not necessarily a simple sort of calculation, but we'd be happy to get back to you ...

**MR SMITH:** That'll be good.

10       **MR MAXWELL:** ... once we get some feedback from the contractor.

15       **MR SMITH:** Okay. Thanks. And that kind of leads into some of the traffic issues that have been raised by a number of people speaking today. And when you think of that photo of looking up Victor Street towards the site, you know, it isn't a turning circle, I've been there, I know how narrow it is. It's like what is the plan for the trucks that would be needed to remove the spoil from excavation or bring in the concrete for construction?

20       **MR MAXWELL:** So, we put forward a preliminary Construction Management Plan as part of the development application. I think it was within the application that was subsequently lodged. There are diagrams within that plan which indicate a staging area in Victor Street public domain; the intention being that because there are improvements proposed to Victor Street as part of the development, during construction a portion of that public domain would be used for construction vehicle access and loading the trucks.

At the conclusion of the project, that will then form part of the –

30       **MR SMITH:** So, this is right up next to the development site is where you would – so, part of what's a footpath or a road ...

**MR MAXWELL:** Yes, so if you envisage the [unintelligible 01:14:53] ...

35       **MR SMITH:** Yes.

40       **MR MAXWELL:** That's where the pedestrianised area of the street is, a portion of that will effectively be cordoned off and used during construction for traffic movements and staging. And then on completion, it will form part of upgrade of the street public domain area.

**MR SMITH:** Okay.

45       **MR MILLS:** Sorry, can I just ask something supplementary to that. Will that be during the whole of the two-and-a-half years of construction?

**MR MAXWELL:** Yes.

**MR SMITH:** And are you envisaging that it would be articulated trucks presumably reversing all the way up to Victor Street to be loaded, or would you have rigid trucks that would be a bit smaller?

5 **MR MAXWELL:** We're not anticipating use of articulated trucks because of the concerns that a few people here have raised today. So, it's likely that it will be restricted to rigid vehicles.

**MR SMITH:** Yes.

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**MR MAXWELL:** That process, we envisage, would be determined after the finalisation of a CTMP with Council post consent. There'd be swept path analysis that would be done by the traffic engineer as part of that, all that documentation will be submitted to Council and the right outcome in terms of what vehicles are accessing will determined at that stage.

15

**MR SMITH:** All right. So, it seems like there's quite a lot of existing problems with access in Victor Street. We saw the photographs of the queued cars and heard from people. I'm guessing that from what I've heard from Council and I'm hoping that I'll hear from you is that you're prepared to work together so that the final form of the public domain is – that's better than the current situation.

20

**MR MAXWELL:** Yes, yes. We're committed to working with Council for that. I think both of our interests are very clearly aligned – it's the public domain that's at the front door of the new building we're proposing to build.

25

**MR SMITH:** Yes.

**MR MAXWELL:** Similarly, it's within a very key part of the Chatswood CBD. So, I think both Novus and Council will find an outstanding result for the Victor Street public domain. The way that it's been structured in the consent conditions that the Department of Planning have put forward, we feel, is the right approach. Being that for the last [unintelligible 01:17:09] years that this process has been running for, there's been a public domain concept plan that has been iteratively designed with Council and with the Department of Planning.

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That concept plan is now referenced into consent conditions as the Garden Plan for future public domain design. And ultimately, the approval of the public domain [unintelligible 01:17:31] iterative design will take place with Council, assisting the Planning Secretary as an independent third party to the process.

40

**MR SMITH:** Yes, okay, thank you. So, clearly a lot of residents have also talked about solar access and view interruption. Council has said something about the bulk or form needs to change to reduce those impacts, as have other submitters. What's your response to those requests – what could be done to mitigate those impacts on neighbours? I've mentioned that the site has been zoned for a tall tower, so it's about the shape of the tower, the bulkier it is, the more the impact is on neighbours. Could

45

you take us through why you think what you've got is the best possible, or what could be done?

5 **MR MAXWELL:** Yes. I might start by setting the stage in terms of the strategic planning and what was the form of controls today. The Chatswood CBD Strategy which was the overarching document that has now informed the Council LEP and DCP controls, is something that was developed over a pretty substantial period of time – I believe it was six to seven years. That CBD Strategy included a range of recommendations for all different areas within the Chatswood CBD.

10 On this particular site, it effectively consolidated commercial tower form across all of the buildings from 410 Victoria Avenue all the way up to 430 Victoria Avenue, which is the neighbouring building to the Metro towers.

15 What this proposal does is respond to those controls by providing a portion of what was always envisaged to be a consolidated built form. So, we're providing, in isolation, what is a very slender tower envelope, and assigned a tower envelope which can then work not prejudice the development outcomes for the neighbouring block and make sure that Council controls are ultimately realised at a future point in time.

20 **MR MILLS:** Just to jump in on that one. I understood that perhaps that strategy, it envisaged that the consolidated site would have two towers. Is that not the right understanding – after what you just said, it seemed like you had a different view, that there would be one large consolidated bulk form.

25 **MR MAXWELL:** Yes, there's potentially – without pre-empting what the outcome could be, there's potentially multiple different options there. But if you look at the practicalities of the size of that site and the size of a viable commercial floor plate. For reference, the DCP controls and it will be DCP set amount of 2,000 square metres for a commercial plate.

30 The size that could be achieved along what is a relatively narrow site, mean that for a viable commercial building, you would need to provide a single consolidated built form to do that. Otherwise, you end up with two relatively tall slender tower forms which would be mostly lift core and very little GFA. So, it's not a viable development outcome for there to be two separate tower forms on that consolidated block.

35 **MS SCHANDEL FORTU:** I'd just like to add a couple of other things to consider, is that the proposal went through quite a rigorous design excellence competition process. So, there were quite a number of alternative schemes that were considered, informed by design excellence strategy are referenced in – as well as an independent urban design reviewer, that's really informed the building envelope that you now see on the site. So, there were quite a number of alternative strategies that have been thoroughly tested and analysed, and this is the optimal outcome for the development proposal.

40 **MR SMITH:** Council's submission says they want more articulation. I interpret that to mean than rather than a single model, you've got a sort of stacked set of buildings that are part of one but look like they're different. So, it is articulated in its current form,



because you've got the podium which is about the same height as the current buildings are on site, and then you've got the tower on top.

5 So, can you illuminate what further articulation the Council might be seeking, or have you talked about that with them?

10 **MR MAXWELL:** So, the articulation comments I would say are more recent in this planning process. But as Schandel was saying, this project has since 2023 been the subject of a very rigorous design excellence process. Council has been involved in that the whole way through, from setting the urban design study that was done by AJC Architects through to the design excellence strategy, the design competition brief. At the competition itself, Council had observers in the room, and they nominated one of the three jurors on the panel that selected the design.

15 The design for the DA was then developed in accordance with that process, which was around a year all up before we even got to the point of preparing the DA documentation. So, there's been a very significant and a long-term process that has happened. Throughout that whole process, there's been plenty of opportunity for Council and the other authorities to be involved to influence the design. And this is  
20 ultimately where we're landed, which is informed by all of that process.

25 **MS FORTU:** But yes, so the design excellence jury has agreed that this achieves design excellence on the site, and that very much includes façades, articulation, materiality, all of those components.

**MR SMITH:** Basement connectivity. So, have you had any discussions with your adjoining landowner about this?

30 **MR MAXWELL:** Not particularly – not specifically on this issue. We have approached the adjoining landowner previously to understand if there was appetite to consolidate and add that to our design. There was no interest there [unintelligible 01:24:04] to us, so that's the boundary to the west.

35 What we have put forward, and there's a section on this in the Design Report that was lodged with the DA, is that there are provisions within the basement for future breakthrough if the site to the south of ours is ever redeveloped. That would effectively enable basement entry to that southern site via Victor Street across from there and a basement connection underneath the lane which would enable ways to loading, move in/move outs, those sorts of vehicular activities to occur in an area under the laneway  
40 through that connected basement.

45 So, we have demonstrated in the Design Report in the architectural drawings how that can be achieved. But I would note that there's currently no proposal on the sites to the west, there's no proposal on the sites to the south. So, while we can try and provision as best as we can, it's very hard to plan around what's going to be needed in the future.

**MR SMITH:** So, does the design, I guess, because Post Office Lane is clearly very busy for pedestrians, so if there was development to the west of your site, you

wouldn't want vehicular access seeking to use Post Office Lane there. So, I had assumed that Council was interested in you having some connection potential to the west of your site. But there's no plan. I guess, you know, it's all hypothetical, but it would be good to know that the design of the basements wouldn't preclude that being considered in the future.

**MR MAXWELL:** Yes, so we are dealing with quite a constrained site. The lift core of our building is on the west of the site. There's also a lot of structure, and I will note there's a lot of complicated transfers that are happening at the moment to enable the current vehicular access arrangement off Victor Street, which was requested by Council.

There's a lot happening within the building in that zone, so there won't – there isn't currently an opportunity for a connection at ground floor. I would also say that there is no vehicular access to our basement levels, because we have no car parking, it's restricted to building services and storage cages and those sorts of uses.

So, if we're talking about a subterranean connection, that wouldn't be possible.

**MR SMITH:** I just have two more, Andrew, or do you want to ...

**MR MILLS:** No, you go.

**MR SMITH:** Okay. So, one of the ... Can you just tell me, do you think build-to-rent has more or fewer move-in/move-outs than a traditional building?

**MR MAXWELL:** It's very hard to say. In a conventional building, you could have any mix of owner-occupiers versus renters. Sometimes renters stay for six months, sometimes they stay for five years. So, our lease terms are typically 12 months, that's because people value flexibility. We offer much longer lease terms, but people know that in a build-to-rent building, they're not going to get evicted, if they're a good tenant who pays their rent and treats the building well, it's not in our interest or in their interest for them to be evicted. So, they can sign a 12-month lease and stay for much longer if they wish.

I would say that it's likely to be similar except for if you exclude the owner-occupier aspect to it, obviously, they're going to stay for longer than a typical long-term rental.

**MR SMITH:** But your conditions would preclude the use of apartments for short-stay accommodation?

**MS FORTU:** That's right, yes. Yes. The other thing is that in terms of the movement of furniture and so forth, the benefit that we have is that we've got an on-site manager to organise that and manage that appropriately. You don't normally have that in a build-to-sell development where you have people coming and going, and strata managers not necessarily there at the weekends. So, we have the ability to carefully manage that to ensure that it has minimal disruption.

5 **MR MAXWELL:** Yes. And that's also – it's very important to us because it's a core part of our offering to our residents, is move in and move out is a large part of the lease, and we need to make sure that we coordinate that well, so that people are able to move in and out as they need to within the on-site loading area. If it's not managed correctly by us, then that is a bad reflection on the resident experience lived wide.

10 **MR SMITH:** Just a final question from me. So, there's only one parking space in this building and the proposition is that because of its such central location that residents would not require a vehicle. But some of the submitters have said it's unrealistic – people would still buy a car and then they'll park it as close as they can to the building, blocking up or taking space for residents or others. Like, on what basis do you think you'll be able to attract tenants who don't want to own a car?

15 **MR MAXWELL:** The proposal we're putting forward – it will be specific to certain occupants. There may well be people who are looking to rent an apartment who have a car, and this building may not be suitable to them. What we're seeking here is because of the location, close to the Metro, the Chatswood Transport Interchange, retail precincts, employment precincts, there is a much less need for reliance on private vehicles in this location.

20 We strongly believe that the number of apartments in this location will have tenants who find that that is appropriate for their lifestyle. And there are other options as well – we will provide a car-share within that space within our building. There's also other car-share options throughout the Chatswood CBD.

25 So, I mean, we can't categorically say that some people will not own cars, that may be the case, but there are plenty of other options which we see as viable for people to live in this location.

30 **MR MILLS:** So can I ask a follow up in relation to that. Given in thinking in your answer you spoke about the nature or the location perhaps as much as anything else being one that would suggest people without a car are more attracted to it. And yet Novus on Albert, and that was referred to by one submitter this morning, which, and they quoted 150 car spaces there. Why the difference?

35 **MR MAXWELL:** I would like to take the opportunity to correct that statement. There are 53 car spaces at Novus on Albert; there are 198 apartments. The build-to-rent offering is all about providing flexibility to our residents. If there was an opportunity on Novus on Victoria to provide a small amount of parking, that may be something that we would have looked to do. But we understand the constraints of this location, we understand the issues that people have raised in terms of concerns around traffic and transport. And we know that it's not the right location to be digging a huge basement filled with car parking spots. But we certainly believe that Chatswood is the right location to support a building with reduced car parking. So, we have provided a small component of car parking at our other project at Novus on Albert – it works out at about 0.2 or something like that for cars per apartment. But at Novus on Victoria, we acknowledge that that same approach is not the right outcome here, so we're happy to accept that reduced allocation. But in general, the flexibility is there at other projects

should people wish to rent a car spot. But they're not included in the base lease, that's something that people choose to take up.

5 **MR MILLS:** The logic that you actually have two offerings in Chatswood.

**MR MAXWELL:** Yes.

10 **MS FORTU:** Exactly. If people want to own their vehicle, park their vehicle at the site, then they've got another option which happened to be in the same suburb. So, it's about having the diversity and those options available to people.

**MR MAXWELL:** While they are geographically relatively close, they are very much two different sites (Novus on Albert and Novus on Victoria).

15 **MR MILLS:** No more questions? Okay. No more questions from me, either. So, thank you very much for that.

20 Well, thank you, everyone. That brings us to the end of this public meeting into the Novus on Victoria, Chatswood – Build-to-Rent proposal. Thank you to everyone who has participated in this important process. Commissioner Simon Smith and I have appreciated your input.

25 Just a reminder, it's not too late to have your say on this application. Simply click on the 'Make a submission' portal on our website or send us a submission to us via email or post. The deadline for written comments is 5 p.m. next Tuesday, 10 February 2026.

30 In the interests of openness and transparency, we'll be making a full transcript of this public meeting available on our website in the next few days. At the time of the determination, the Commission will publish its statement of reasons for its decision which will outline how the Panel took the community's views into consideration as part of its decision-making process.

35 I want to give a quick thank you to my fellow commissioner, Simon Smith, and thank you all for watching. From here of us all at the Commission, please enjoy the rest of your day. Thank you.

**>THE MEETING CONCLUDED**