

Sydney North Planning Panel

Ref 2018SNH014

DA Number DA/201/2018

Good afternoon Chairman and members of the panel,

My name is Carole Ford, I represent a volunteer group called "Friends of Berowra Valley.

Our members are concerned that this development will have a profound effects on the natural landscape, biodiversity and amenity to the public of the Berowra Valley National Park and will establish precedents for future development.

1. Location of the Development.

- The site is on top of a ridge directly above a steep valley forming part of Berowra Valley National Park.
- It is adjacent to Hornsby Park which joins Old Man's Valley and then our National Park. This creates a green corridor from the National Park directly up to the development site.
- The Office of Environment and Heritage publish "Guidelines for Developments Adjoining Land Managed by the OEH."

The introduction of this document states

"These guidelines have been prepared for use by councils and other planning authorities when they assess development applications that may impact on land and water bodies managed by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)."

- The Executive Summary makes no mention of this in the list of relevant s4.15 matters.
- **Will the panel demonstrate compliance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act by consulting with the NSW Department of Planning Industry and Development who are the successors of the OEH?**

Referring to s4.15 matters

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/Development-guidelines/guidelines-for-developments-adjoining-land-managed-by-OEH-130122.pdf>

2. Views of The Development (re Sec 4.3.1 and 4.3.5 of the Assessment report)

- Views of existing urban development on the ridge top are currently obscured by trees on the slopes of the valley. High rise developments may become visible from many areas of the park. This would be out of character and impact the natural amenity of the Bushland Shire.
- To make matters worse the proposed development exceeds the maximum height permitted by recent zoning.
- **Have the panel assessed views of this development from Berowra Valley National Park as they are not mentioned in the assessment report?**

3. Risks to birds posed by High Rise buildings.

- Studies show that billions of birds perish from collisions with glass every year, making it the second largest human-made hazard to birds after habitat loss.
- Berowra Valley is home to many native Australian birds including threatened species such as the Powerful Owl and the Glossy Black Cockatoo. The funnel effect of the local topography along with prevailing winds from the North West encourages birds to travel along the green corridor that exists from the Berowra Valley to the proposed development. A massive vertical structure with windows, lights and other attractions blocking their route will be a serious threat.
- Clear reflective glass kills birds because they perceive those hard reflective surfaces as unobstructed passageways to the sky and nearby vegetation and fly straight into them.
- At night, birds use stars and the moon for orientation, and illuminated windows often confuse them. Attracted by artificial lights on and around tall buildings, birds collide into them with usually fatal consequences.
- Other nocturnal fauna are attracted by bright lights at the edge of bushland areas and may be lured into dangerous urban areas.
- Blocking a major aerial route into the park will be a risk to Micro-Bats which depend on green corridors.
- Earlier this week it was reported by the ABC that the University of Queensland has modified its structure as a result of pressure from occupants who were distressed by the large number of dead or injured birds that had collided with the building.
- **Will the panel make development approvals conditional on the use of non reflective glazing and other proven methods to minimise bird strike?**

4. Bushfire and Transport Infrastructure

- The proposed development shares already limited main road access with residential areas in high fire risk zones.
- We are concerned that the plans do not provide sufficient capacity for fire fighters, rescue services and evacuees to go in and out of the area simultaneously in case of a major bush fire emergency.
- Peats Ferry Road currently carries about 1,200 vehicles per hour in the peak periods and the RMS has informed Council that it will not support the signalisation of Peats Ferry Road and High Street.
- **Does the panel have an amended traffic plan that has been approved by all relevant authorities?**

5. Sewerage Infrastructure

- Council monitoring of Berowra Creek at Fishponds and Crosslands reveals that faecal coliform reaches dangerously high levels every couple of weeks. This is obviously a danger to visitors to The Berowra Valley National Park and native wildlife such as the already threatened Giant Burrowing Frog and Red Crowned Toadlet. Impacts are also felt along the waterways with oyster health threatened nearer the coast.
- We understand that this is partly the result of leakage from existing residential and commercial lots that are damaged or underperforming.
- **Will the panel require effective remediation of existing problems before a major planned increase in population?**

6. Hornsby Town Centre Review

- Page 2 of the Background section in the Assessment Report states that "Council has commenced the Hornsby Town Centre Review" and "..are currently developing Visioning and Guiding Principles for the review for consultation with detailed technical studies scheduled to commence in late-2019."
- **Can the panel responsibly assess the suitability of this development prior to the conclusion of such a review?**

In closing, Mr. Chairman and members of the panel,

Developers and planners have a responsibility to preserve the heritage of our shire.

Surely Hornsby's oldest and greatest heritage item is the Berowra Valley National Park itself.

Buildings go up, and buildings come down, all the time,

But our natural heritage is, and should remain, for all of time.

We respectfully ask that the points we have made are given full consideration by Developers, Council and the Panel...

...before we have passed the point of no return.

Thank You.