



GREENWICH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING

Our next public meeting will be held on **Wednesday 21 August, in the Greenwich Community Centre, 46 Greenwich Road, at 7.30 pm**. There will be lots to talk about and light refreshments will be available throughout the evening. All welcome.

DAMNING REPORT CARD FOR ST LEONARDS SOUTH. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE PLAN MUST BE CANCELLED SO WHY IS COUNCIL STALLING?

THANK YOU to you, our community, for supporting us so tirelessly and so thoroughly in our campaign against inappropriate, unsympathetic and alienating over development in St Leonards South and our intention to force a re-think of this proposal.

You will have heard through media reports or through our emails that the Independent Planning Commission's (IPC) advice to the Minister on the St Leonards South Planning Proposal was damning – more on this later.

<https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/resources/pac/media/files/pac/projects/2018/11/planning-proposal-for-the-st-leonards-south-residential-precinct/report-to-minister/advice.pdf>

This was a massive win for the community. And surely a clear signal to Lane Cove Council that it must cancel the plan.

However, we are getting very unclear signals from Council. Its language has been more ambiguous rhetoric than concrete proposals, talking about the need for the Planning Minister to "endorse the IPC report" (he doesn't need to), and for "housing targets to be met" (the only target is to 2021 and that has been met), and the IPC report as not having "status" (what does this mean?).

Media releases from Council say that the Department of Planning's approval for SLS to go to exhibition in late 2017 and its inclusion in the draft 2036 Plan for St Leonards and Crows Nest are evidence of the Department's endorsement of the SLS plan. There has been no such "endorsement" by the Department.

The Department has been clear from the start that SLS had to be consistent with the 2036 strategic plan for St Leonards and Crows Nest.

On 2 September 2016, Council received Gateway Determination for its SLS high-density development. Council knew then that ultimate power to approve the SLS plan rested with the Department of Planning, not with Council. And it knew that the plan had to be amended to be consistent with the strategic plan for the St Leonards and Crows Nest area. The Department's conditions were explicit.

The Department's authorisation for Council to exhibit SLS in 2017 was simply that – **it was not an endorsement of the plan.**

Since 2016 Council officers have been meeting with Department officers to develop the St Leonards/Crows Nest strategic plan. Council's officers should have sensed that the SLS proposal was becoming increasingly out of step with the Department's plans for St Leonards and Crows Nest. Departmental community workshops, surveys, street walks, interim statements, not to mention the more than 350 submissions

objecting to the plan in 2017-2018, should have set off warning bells to Council that the SLS plan needed to change. But it seems it didn't, so the plan was not changed.

It should have come as no surprise to Council that, when the 2036 Plan was released last October, it included a recommendation that the IPC be asked to advise on the consistency of SLS with the 2036 Plan. The Minister adopted the 2036 advice and referred SLS to the IPC. The IPC was the appropriate body to provide this advice as it "operates independently of other government departments, including the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, and has an important role to play in building community confidence in the decision-making processes for major development and land-use planning state-wide".

So what did the IPC say about SLS consistency with the 2036 Plan?

The IPC advice, released on 23 July 2019, was a damning assessment of the SLS plan's consistency with the key principles of the 2036 Plan. The IPC advice says that SLS was inconsistent with 14 principles of the 2036 Plan, not wholly consistent with 4 principles and consistent with five.

How could Council have been so out of touch with Department thinking on the 2036 Plan that **SLS was found to be consistent on only 5 out of 23 principles?**

And the IPC's other conclusions?

That **"the scale of residential development contained in the planning proposal would represent an overdevelopment of the site and no rezoning of the site is required to meet the housing targets identified by the GSC (Greater Sydney Commission)".**

The GCA has been saying for two years that SLS is not required to meet current housing targets as they have been met, but Council has pushed on showing no sign of cancelling the plan.

Why?

- It can't be because developers paid excessive prices for their sites – they are the ones who speculated on an unapproved re-zoning.
- It can't be because the Department may come up with a plan worse than SLS – we have now seen the 2036 Plan and know it is preferable.
- It can't be because developers could push for their individual sites to be re-zoned – they will be up against the same test of consistency with the 2036 Plan that SLS faced.

But we do have one explanation that became very clear in Council's presentation to the IPC.

Council wants SLS to be the dumping ground for all its future housing stock.

As the Council's General Manager said in Council's presentation to the IPC: "We're not planning to rezone any other R4 in our LGA in order to achieve our housing target", and slide 26 of Council's presentation to the IPC said "The St Leonards South Planning Proposal is Council's Housing Strategy required by the EP&A Act."

So, there we have it. The 2400 units in SLS were to be Council's housing strategy.

SO NOW THAT THE IPC ADVICE IS IN, WHERE IS COUNCIL UP TO WITH ITS HOUSING STRATEGY?

All metropolitan councils have known for two years that they must develop housing strategies that will be used to set future mandated housing targets. These strategies are to be developed through engagement with communities and infrastructure agencies and require a mix of housing types. They are comprehensive documents – North Sydney Council's strategy was released on 24 June 2019 and is on exhibition for 42 days. It runs to 94 pages and contains detailed analysis.

The clock must be ticking for Lane Cove to get its housing strategy on exhibition. We wonder how much work Council has done on its strategy – given that it has been relying on SLS, perhaps very little.

It comes as no surprise that we now hear that Council's August meeting will focus on housing strategy.

How can Council develop a new housing strategy while being so committed to SLS?

It is time to accept the IPC's advice, to listen to the community and to put an end to the uncertainty and distress that SLS continues to cause.

SLS should be cancelled to allow a transparent discussion around Council's housing strategy to begin. Councillors need to hear from you, so come along to the meeting at 7pm on 19 August.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL UPDATE

The Concept Plan submission period has now closed; however, the Department of Planning has asked for many key matters of the Concept Plan to be re-conceived and resolved, such as: clarification as to how seniors housing will operate in combination with the hospital and what services will be offered; whether bus stops and pathways comply with location and access requirements; how to resolve the removal of extensive area of trees, yet maintain the area as an Inner Protection Area for bush fire protection and be compatible with the surrounding land uses and character of the area; the bulk and scale of the Seniors Living Apartments on the western side are inconsistent with the generally low-density residential character of the area, and the height of these buildings would result in significant visual impact across the valley (chiefly from Northwood).

Generally, the Department considered the extent of Seniors Living on the site should be decreased, with the consequent reduction of vegetation removal, visual impacts, height, space and heritage value to be reconsidered. This is all very positive for us, as many of our chief objections have been singled out by the Department to be

re-worked or re-thought. It also shows the intention of the Department to push HammondCare for a development that is strongly compliant and very much in line with the existing residential nature of the area and of community expectations.

COUNCIL'S DRAFT BIKE PLAN GETS A GENERAL THUMBS UP

Submissions have now closed on Council's draft Bike Plan. The plan has been developed with a view to getting more people on bikes on a regular basis.

The GCA submission supports most of the initiatives in the plan, but the plan is worth little without the funds to make it work. The major Greenwich specific items on the GCA wish list are: widening of the footpath near the River Road cliff face, pedestrian and bike overpass across River Road to link the St Leonards area and Greenwich, bike access to the Crows Nest Metro south of the highway and complete and continuous shared user pathways along Greenwich Road from the highway to the infants' school/shops.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON COUNCIL'S 'DRAFT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY'

Submissions due by 5 September.
<http://www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au/CouncilConsultations/Pages/Customer-Service-Strategy.aspx>

STAY IN TOUCH

We encourage all residents to regularly visit our website and sign up to be kept up to date with what is happening. This is especially important now as there will be urgent updates, new information and often calls for immediate action.

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