



NSW PLANNING ASSESSMENT COMMISSION

20 August 2009

Review of Recommendation of the Director-General's Report Proposed reconfiguration and redevelopment of Cronulla Marina

On 12 August 2009, the Hon Kristina Keneally, MP, Minister for Planning wrote to the Chairman of the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) requesting the PAC to assess the reasonableness of the recommendation of the Director General's Report to grant project approval to the proposed reconfiguration and redevelopment of the Cronulla Marina.

The Commission consisted of Mr Garry Payne and Mr Richard Thorp (members of the PAC). Mr Payne chaired the review. The Commission has reviewed the Direction General's report, the recommended conditions of consent and relevant documents. Mr Thorp visited the site and its surrounds on 12 August to understand the existing environment and the proposed changes so as to appreciate concerns raised in submissions.

The proposed development includes extending the existing marina to accommodate 79 vessels, relinquishing 42 swing moorings, relocating 4 houseboat moorings as Fore and Aft moorings, and upgrading the slipways and associated infrastructure.

The Department received a total of 37 submissions when the application was exhibited. Seven of which were from public authorities. Departmental assessment focused on the key issues raised in submissions. These include:

- Marina design;
- Navigation, safety and public access;
- Visual impacts;
- Noise;
- Soils, sediments and water;
- Traffic;
- Flora and fauna;
- Waste management;
- Heritage; and
- Air quality.

The Director General's report indicated the Department has engaged an independent maritime engineer to assist its assessment of marina design and issues concerning navigation, safety and public access. Issues raised by the independent advisor and in the submissions to the environmental assessment (EA) have been addressed through amendments to the design of the marina, the proponent's preferred project report and Statement of Commitments and the Department's recommended conditions of approval.

Commission's Comment

The Commission considers the assessment of the project application in the Director General's report is comprehensive and thorough, particularly on marina design; navigational issues particularly safety and access, and environmental issues.

However, three of the issues raised in public submissions have not been explicitly addressed in the Director General's report. They are: over-development of Gunnamatta Bay; loss of public open space; and lack of community consultation. The Commission sought further information from the Department on these issues.

The Commission met with Departmental staff, Mr Chris Ritchie and Ms Deana Burn and the Department's independent maritime engineer Mr Joshua Parsons on 19 August 2009. Mr Parsons provided a thorough briefing on the issues relating to marina design, navigation issues particularly in relation to the operation of the ferry, the public boat ramps and the slipway.

In response to the Commission's questions concerning issues relating to over-development, loss of public open space and lack of community consultation, the Department advised that:

Over-development of Gunnamatta Bay

- The proposal will remove 42 existing swing moorings currently spreading along both sides of the Bay.
- The consolidation of moorings into the marina, a more confined area, will open up a significant part of the water for other water users. For example, the Cronulla Sailing club would have a larger pond area for members to sail in.
- The net increase is 9 berthing spaces.

Loss of public open space

- Existing public access to the marina is on private land and will be replicated in the new development.
- Current application deals with water based facilities only. Sutherland Shire Council approved the land side redevelopment of the marina. The issue of loss of public open space was addressed by the Council when considering that application.

Community consultation

- The Department, in consultation with Sutherland Shire Council, notified about 400 residents of the proposed development as well as advertised in the local newspaper. The Environmental Assessment (EA) was exhibited in the information centres of the Department and Sutherland Council and the Nature Conservation Council. The documents are also available on the Department's website.
- The Department received a total 37 submissions, 7 from public authorities, 5 from special interest and community groups and 25 from the general public, mostly residents in the local area.

The Commission agrees that the net increase of 9 berthing spaces is not a significant increase in development density. The consolidation of boat moorings into the marina will result in more open water for other active water users. The Commission notes the concern of some submitters that there is no guarantee that the relinquished swing moors will not be reintroduced in future, thus removing the benefits arising out of the current proposal. In this regard, the Commission notes the NSW Maritime has provided recommended conditions of approval indicating its endorsement of the proposal.

The Commission is satisfied that the notification process was extensive and due process has been followed. In terms of concerns raised by Sutherland Shire Council, particularly in relation to the slipway and environmental matters, the Commission notes the issues have been addressed in the recommended conditions of consent.

Conclusion

The Commission considers the Department has carried out a thorough assessment of key issues raised in submissions and the recommendation in the Director General's report is reasonable.



Garry Payne
PAC member



Richard Thorp
PAC member