

The Chair
Independent Planning Commission NSW
Level 3 201 Elizabeth Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Email: ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

24 March 2019

Dear Madam Chair,

Subject : A085-18 Crown Cemetery Development, Varroville

I lodged a SUBMISSION IN OBJECTION to the Development Application received from the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT) for the construction and use of a new 136,000 plot cemetery and parklands at 166-176 St Andrews Road, Varroville.

I drew attention to the Minister's failure to make a decision regarding curtilage expansion within 14 days as required under the Heritage Act, 1977 (NSW) and that the Minister's decision needed to be known before there could be any meaningful public comment.

Plainly the Minister was in breach of the Heritage Act when we were invited to make submissions so why hasn't the Consent Authority acted to reject this DA on the grounds of non-compliance with that Act? Why are we even here today, having this discussion?

I commented on the inappropriate siting of this Cemetery in my submission, but wish to make further comment.

In my submission I drew attention to Varroville's hilly site being known to be subject to slip. That is where a hill, or part of a hill, can slump or fall away without warning, taking everything with it. It could happen due to flooding rain conditions or for no obvious reason at all.

My submission detailed the gruesome case, in the 1974 flood in Queanbeyan, where coffins and bodies were washed out of the ground at Queanbeyan's Riverside Cemetery and had to be recovered from a creek before they entered Lake Burley Griffin.

I would like to know now what steps the CMCT proposes for preventing bodies washing out of the Scenic Hills and into the creeks and gullies that feed into the Sturt ponds? Has the CMCT given any thought to this matter, especially as the Scenic Hills are subject to slip?

In my submission I drew attention to an error in the Fauna and Flora Assessment of the site. It appears that 2 critically endangered ecological communities, of more than .5ha of moderate quality, will be impacted by this proposal and under the federal EPBC Act 1999, a significance assessment and potential referral to the federal Dept of Energy and Environment may be required.

My questions are: Has the Fauna and Flora Assessment Report for the site been reviewed since submissions were received? Have the threatened ecological communities involved been subjected to a significance assessment and has the CMCT referred this action to the federal Department of Energy and Environment?

Finally I raise the question: Where is the water coming from for this proposal? How will this parkland cemetery be kept that 'green and pleasant place' shown in CMCT brochures?

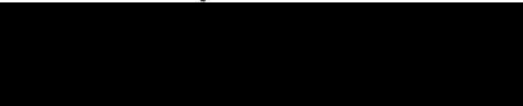
Lawns and parkland take copious watering to set up and to maintain and the water supply in Macarthur depends on just 4 dams- Nepean, Avon, Cordeaux and Cataract. The last dams rely completely on their catchments, which have been compromised by long wall mining. The Nepean and Avon can be replenished from the Tallowa Dam in the Shoalhaven, providing water is available. However prior to recent rains, Tallowa's replenishing water was frequently empty and Cordeaux and Cataract dams were at or below 30% full.

There are no other water sources available to the Macarthur region.. There is no infrastructure for transferring water from, for example, Sydney's desalination plant, Warragamba dam or any other source.

Water supply for existing homes in Macarthur is far from secure and this is set to become worse with the tens of thousands of new homes expected to be built in the area under the Greater Macarthur 2040 Plan.

And rest assured, when water restrictions are applied, Macarthur residents will not support their tenuous water supply being squandered on keeping this cemetery green and alive.

Yours faithfully



Katrina Hobhouse

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Post:

