



Catholic Cemeteries
& Crematoria
Care, Compassion, Choice

6 June 2019

Professor Mary O'Kane AC Chair
Independent Planning Commission
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Professor O'Kane

Crown Cemetery Development Applications - Varroville (A085/18) and Wallacia (A084/18)

I am writing to you in relation to the above matters that has been before the Commission now for close to 6 months.

Whilst I fully appreciate the need for the IPC to form its own views acting in the shoes of the Minister, I want to express The Trust's growing frustration over our perceived lack of progress in the Commission's finalisation of its assessment. Specifically I wish to record my deep concern over verbal feedback that I received from the Commission's case officer Denis Lee yesterday that the final determination may still be "months away". This seems astounding and at odds with the Statements issued by the Commission in respect of both proposals on the 23rd of April 2019 that state that "the Commission will soon finalise its assessment of this development application"

As you are aware and as we made known through our various submissions to the IPC, both projects have been the subject of protracted assessment. The Varroville project dates back to 2013 and is urgently needed to meet the needs of various religious communities. Our projects have been subject to significant technical scrutiny initially by both respective Council's, then by the former Department of Planning and Environment, followed by the Commission. Technical issues raised during the assessment by the Department were addressed in detail that led to their conclusion that both projects could be conditionally approved. Likewise and following the IPC public hearing/meeting phase we have responded to all requests from the IPC concerning clarification of technical issues. Separate to this, we have also met with the Greater Sydney Commission as part of the Premier's instruction to them "regarding strategic planning considerations for the provision of new cemeteries". In the Department's letter to the IPC dated 13-3-19, that it is their understanding that "this review will be completed mid-year". The Department also expressed the opinion that "it will be up to the IPC to determine if it has sufficient information to finalise its recommendation of these proposals". It is our understanding that the GSC focus is on strategic locational criteria for cemeteries having regard to metropolitan context, not the merits of specific development proposals.

I will send you a letter confirming that shortly.



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Having regard to all these factors I can see no reason why the IPC cannot at least provide some guidance on its timetable for determination. This uncertainty is not only frustrating to The Trust, but I'm sure also to the wider community who, and irrespective of their views, also would want to see these matters finalised.

I welcome your prompt feedback and can be contacted on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Peter O'Meara
Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Cemeteries Board

cc. Dianne Leeson, Adrian Pilton, Ross Carter and Minister Rob Stokes