

Ken Samuels

27 March, 2019

## Address to Public Meeting of the Independent Planning Commission re: Crown Cemetery Development Wallacia

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with the Commission today.

I wish to express my strong objection to this development for the following reasons: -

1. Wallacia is a wonderful community with a rural village landscape and feel - precisely why I and many others are attracted to live there rather than in more heavily developed areas.

Construction of a cemetery and crematorium immediately adjacent to the Wallacia village (within 600m initially and eventually within 100m) is inappropriate and a grossly unfair imposition on those who have invested heavily in their homes and currently enjoy living in the area. The proximity of the cemetery to the village centre, its location on one of the two main arterial roads and the scale of the development will overshadow the entire community. I do not consider this an exaggeration to embellish my point. Should the development proceed, then I share the real concern of many residents of the community that Wallacia will become infamous as the regions graveyard or "dead centre" - a truly appalling thing for residents of the village to have forced upon us.

To illustrate this point I would like to refer the Panel to an aerial image of the site which gives one an appreciation of the scale and proximity of the proposed development to the village (Attach. 1).

2. Cemetery's are necessary but nobody in their right mind would choose to live in proximity to or worse still in view of one. The sight of a graveyard leaves one feeling empty. The sight of smoke or steam during winter and perhaps the smell of a crematorium furnace in operation would surely be a sickening thing to all. Both should be located well away from established residential properties.
3. The development will substantially devalue property in the village. My property is within 120m of the site and, I believe from my research, it is likely that the development will devalue its worth by 10% to 20%. I do not accept that I and others should personally suffer a very substantial financial loss while CMCT gain massively as a result of the development.

Empirical evidence to support this claim in Australia is not readily available, however research from the UK proved property prices in close proximity to cemeteries in 13 towns were on average 23% lower than the surrounding postcode average [Attach. 2 reference: - <http://www.propertyreporter.co.uk/finance/can-living-next-door-to-a-cemetery-affect-the-value-of-your-property.html> ].

4. A portion of the site drains south through a natural watercourse and chain of ponds including one on my property (see Attach. 1). The large pond on my property (around 40% of our 1.5 acre land area) is dependent on rainwater runoff from the site for filling and flushing which occurs 1 to 3 times per year during heavy downfalls. A large area of land catchment from the site feeding this waterway has severe down hydraulic gradients and I have a major concern that leachates from decomposing bodies, the chemicals used to hasten the process, formaldehyde, heavy metals, etc., or perhaps pathogenic bacteria **will** (not might) enter the waterway. Sewer from the development, if not connected to the village sewer treatment system, will massively add to the problem of nutrient overload with resultant weed and algae blooms in downstream waterways including on my property, Jerry's Creek and the Nepean River. *(see also attach. 3)*.

5. CMCT have highlighted that a 9 golf course will remain for 70 years, though as I understand it, there is no binding and irrevocable undertaking that this will happen. I am a golfer and from my experience I know serious golfers will not want to play on a short course (less than 18 holes) and that it will therefore likely become unviable in the shorter term. As for visitors being welcome to enjoy the parkland – seriously who would want to picnic in a graveyard?
6. CMCT through their very expensive consultants have marketed the development as a ‘Memorial Garden’ intentionally giving one the impression of a rolling landscape with mown green lawns not unlike a golf course. This impression was further embellished in an on-air interview with a prominent Sydney radio broadcaster and CMCT’s CEO where it was repeatedly stated that there would be no head stones. This is untrue. I refer the Commission to page 18 of the DA document “Plan of Management” which clearly shows that around half of the site will have head stones up to 1.5m. The development will therefore in fact look like a modern day graveyard on a monumental scale.
7. Increased traffic congestion and frequent funeral processions, etc., etc.

Why is it that we are here today? This DA thing by CMCT has been passed around from pillar to post in pursuit of their achieving a green light for their proposed cemetery and crematoriums.

The facts are that the strategically located site was swooped upon by CMCT at a bargain price once they realised the oversight error of Council in not having carried over the previous long standing prohibition of cemeteries in the Mulgoa/Wallacia valley areas. Their argument is that the golf course was financially not viable – unlike cemeteries (this one for CMCT would have an NPV of around \$1.5 billion (88,000 plots x 2 deep at \$9,000 avg each less \$25m capex.)

The site became available to CMCT through Panthers having broken a clear commitment given to Wallacia Golf Club members and the greedy profit opportunity they placed in the lap of an associated property developer. Rightly so Panthers hang your heads in shame!

Open space in Wallacia and surrounding villages seems abundant now but that will soon change in a monumental way with the massive explosion of looming airport, commercial, industrial, retail and residential development in and around it. Not long from now open and recreational space will then be a scarce and very precious asset.

The site is the only sporting/recreational space of consequence in Wallacia. It has been that way since the Fowlers practically gifted the land last century. It should be that way into the next century and beyond for the enjoyment of current residents and visitors and for following generations.

I understand that this development is a highly attractive financial proposition for CMCT but I see it as having a very negative impact upon me and others as neighbouring residents of Wallacia and our surrounding communities. There are other sites available for the benefit of burying the dead.

Astonishingly the Executive Summary of the Assessment Report (DA 17/1092) by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment dated 21 December, 2018 signs off that “... the development is in the public interest and is approvable ...”.

Impartial common sense by those of authority must surely agree that the Wallacia golf course/recreational club site should remain as it is for the continued enjoyment and pleasure of the living rather than be turned permanently into a graveyard for the benefit of the dead.

Commissioners, please hear our objections and prevent this development proceeding.

Thank you.

Ken Samuels

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**Attach. 2** Extract from: -

<http://www.propertyreporter.co.uk/finance/can-living-next-door-to-a-cemetery-affect-the-value-of-your-property.html>

## Can living next door to a cemetery affect the value of your property?



[Warren Lewis](#)

31st October 2016



A new report from online estate agents HouseSimple.com, has revealed that there are around 14,000 cemeteries in the UK which means hundreds of thousands of homeowners live next to or near a cemetery.

Despite having incredibly quiet neighbours, it might not all be good news as the data shows that living next door to a cemetery could potentially knock almost 25% off the value of your property.

HouseSimple.com looked at property prices on streets in 13 UK towns and cities which are next to cemeteries, and compared those prices to the average price for the postcode area. The figures revealed that house prices on these streets are on average 23% lower than the postcode average.

For example, the average property price overlooking St Patrick's Cemetery in Leytonstone is £258,400, compared to the postcode average of £511,311. That's half the average property price in the E11 postcode. Property prices next to Linthorpe Cemetery in Middlesbrough are 43.8% below the postcode average.

However, living next to a cemetery doesn't appear to chill prices everywhere. Property prices next to Harehills Cemetery in Leeds are actually 7.4% higher than the postcode average, and

prices next to Hollybrook Cemetery in Southampton are more than £17,000 higher on average than the average for the postcode.

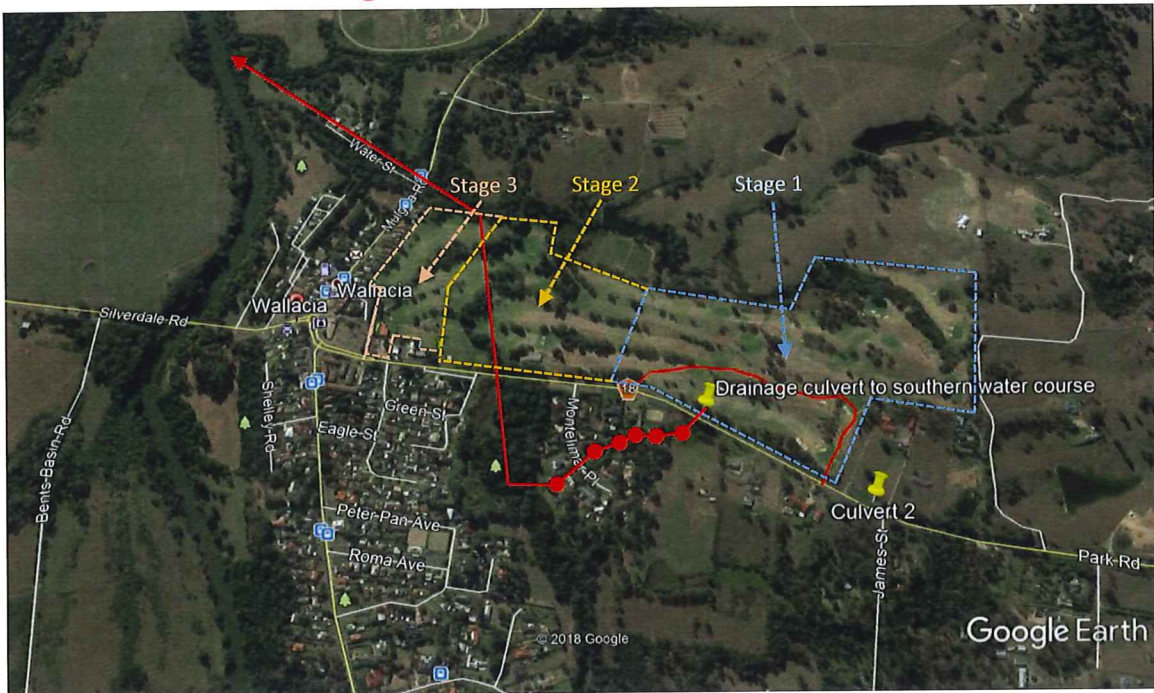
The following table show average property prices on streets next to cemeteries compared to the average price of property in the postcode area:

Town/City	Name of Cemetery	Postcode	Average price - Postcode	Average price - Road next to cemetery	% Difference between Road vs Postcode average price
London	St Patrick's	E11 4HL	£511,311	£258,400	-49.9%
Middlesbrough	Linthorpe	TS5 5AN	£138,793	£78,000	-43.8%
Manchester	Southern	M21 7GL	£288,801	£186,600	-35.4%
Birmingham	Lodge Hill	B29 5AA	£196,127	£131,000	-33.2%
Bradford	Undercliffe	BD3 0QD	£80,796	£58,400	-27.7%
Newcastle	All Saint's	NE2 1NL	£305,904	£239,800	-21.6%
Bournemouth	East	BH7 6JB	£315,187	£255,600	-18.9%
Stoke-on-Trent	Hanley	ST4 2DL	£125,561	£109,400	-12.9%
Liverpool	Anfield	L4 2SL	£76,714	£70,400	-8.2%
Sheffield	City Road	S2 1GD	£112,777	£114,600	1.6%
Bolton	Heaton	BL1 4LH	£152,844	£162,800	6.5%
Southampton	Hollybrook	S016 6HW	£253,143	£270,600	6.9%
Leeds	Harehills	LS9 6LZ	£102,772	£110,400	7.4%
<b>Average</b>			<b>£204,979</b>	<b>£157,385</b>	<b>-23.22%</b>

**Alex Gosling**, CEO of online estate agents HouseSimple.com comments: "For many of us, living next to a cemetery would cause us sleepless nights. But for buyers who aren't easily spooked, they could pick up a bargain. And if you can get past the fact there are gravestones a few yards from your front door, what you're actually overlooking is a serene and quiet space, that is unlikely to ever be developed."



## Attach 1: Wallacia golf course/cemetery drainage to south



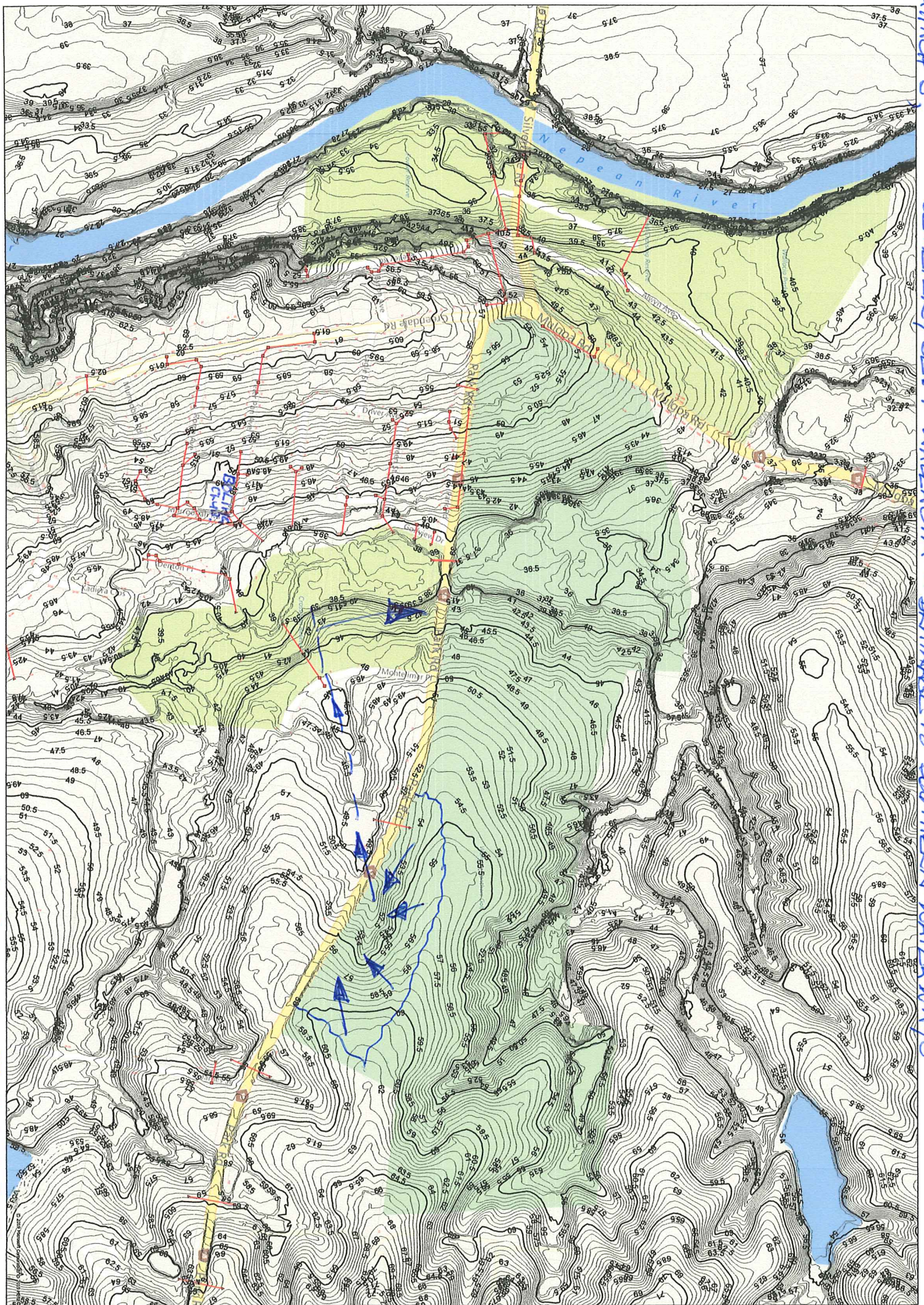
—●— Drainage to southern water course and dams on private properties prior flowing into Jerrys Creek and Nepean River



**Dam filling/flooding at 2 Montelimar Place, Wallacia**



ATTACH 3.0  
CONVEYER SENT WALLACIA - DRAINAGE TO SOUTHERN WATERWAYS



K. SAMUELS, 27 MARCH, 2019