



Professor Mary O'Kane AC, Chair,
Ms Dianne Leeson, Panel Chair
Mr Adrian Pilton, Panel Member
Mr Ross Carter, Panel Member
Independent Planning Commission NSW
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Madams/ Sirs

A084-18 CROWN CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT, WALLACIA

I make this written comment in relation to the above important matter and ask that the Commission direct the Sydney Western City Planning Panel to refuse/ not approve the Application. It is not in the Public Interest.

Firstly, I ask the Panel to offer an evening Public Meeting to listen to the Community's views on this Development Application. There is the set down daytime Meeting which provides no opportunity for those persons who cannot attend to speak for or against this Development. Most organisations nowadays wanting to genuinely hear from a Community provide both a day and night opportunity.

My name is Steve Hackett and I have lived in Wallacia for over 40 years.

My wife and I consciously chose to raise our 4 children here because we felt that a small town offered us a close-knit community that we could feel part of, which in turn was another way to promote our wellbeing as a family.

I was part of the Wallacia Rural Fire Service for 30 years. Past Brigade Captain and now Life Member.

I was a Crown appointed Trustee for the Blaxland Crossing Reserve Recreation Trust and Caravan Park for 33 years, also a Justice of the Peace ongoing for 46 years.

I am a Member and Representative Player of the Wallacia Golf Club and have played there for over 40 years.

I do feel comfortable in speaking about my Community – Wallacia.

It is a fact of life in small rural areas that when a big change happens (and this proposal qualifies as a big change) the community is tested. Social change from such a development as is proposed can have the ability to make or break a village like Wallacia.

Be it Bushfire, Flood and/ or Government Policy and Planning decisions, social change does have the ability to seriously impact a small town.

I have seen up close, Wallacia impacted by Bushfire and Floods (in fact in the worst flood in my experience the town was marooned for 3 days, isolated from everything. Bread, milk, papers and the like were rowed across a submerged Park Rd where this proposed Cemetery would be. Also, disastrously at that time, the Hotel ran out of Beer). Of course, there is current comment about raising the Warragamba Dam wall by some 14 metres. Regardless of that, expert opinion suggests that even now, or in the future, if the Dam wall was breached the impact on Wallacia would be catastrophic with significant harm the result. Such an event would bring terrible damage to any new development such as this proposal.

However, given those natural events (Fires and Floods) I mentioned this Community rallied and moved on successfully.

This Cemetery proposal is different to those natural impacts I raise. If approved, no one, certainly not the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT), have addressed how this community could be supported in reacting and adapting to this major change. How are

people going to be affected at a practical level ? I don't know the answer to that vitally important question.

Wallacia (and others) have in recent times been significantly impacted by the lead up to, and then the announcement of Nancy Bird Walton Airport, major arterial road upgrades and the possible Dam Wall being raised. Neighbours, Families and Friends are becoming divided in their attitudes to these impacts. It is crucial that Wallacia's way of life, its' culture along with peoples' personal and property rights and their fears and aspirations (for themselves and their children) are not negatively impacted by change. I feel strongly that this proposal would bring a negative change to Wallacia and that the proponents are ignoring this impact.

I do know however that people in the Wallacia community, not outside the community, are questioning the need for another large Cemetery development in Western Sydney, given the existing approved projects in the area, including but not limited to, a 136,000 plot CMCT project at Campbelltown and a 65,000 plot project at Luddenham. It would seem the immediate area is well placed to serve future need. Why should Wallacia receive a large Cemetery ?

People are strongly questioning the integrity and honesty of CMCT and empathy for the Wallacia community shown by CMCT in bringing forward this major proposal. My understanding is that CMCT acquired the property mid-August 2017 and despite waxing lyrical from September 2017 about holding community consultations and intending to work with Wallacia Golf Club Members, CMCT held 2 Community Information and Feedback Sessions (182 days and 189 days after acquiring the property) and importantly 7 days and 3 days before submissions around the proposal closed. How any one could attend the sessions, digest the information presented and make a meaningful submission before closing date is beyond me. There were no meetings with Wallacia Golf Club Members before submissions closed, but rather 22 days after submissions closed. I do not

understand or appreciate why Community Consultation Sessions (not the Briefing Sessions that were held) could not have taken place earlier than they did to enable prudent community feedback of the proposal to occur. Perhaps I am naively missing something ?

I attended one Community Information Session and the Golf Club Session and I felt strongly (as did others at both sessions) that CMCT had been dragged kicking and screaming to tokenly hold them and were not seriously interested in receiving any feedback contrary to their views on the proposal. It seemed clear that CMCT had ridden into town on a high horse and were there merely to tell the little community of Wallacia what they would be getting, whether they wanted it or not. It was not a very embracing, inclusive or even Christian approach to me. My own straw poll of community members indicates loudly and strongly that they would say to CMCT don't get down off your high horse but rather turn around and ride back where you came from – Wallacia does not need or want your proposal.

I have attached to this letter for the Commission to view, a submission I made against this proposal to Penrith City Council in February 2018.

I thank the Commission for the opportunity to comment on this important proposal and would be pleased to discuss further if appropriate

[REDACTED]
Steve Hackett

[REDACTED] Wallacia NSW 2745

Mob. [REDACTED] Email. [REDACTED]

21 February 2019

Subject: Wallacia Memorial Park
DA17/1092

From: Steve Hackett

Date: 21/02/2018 4:44 PM

To: council@penrith.city

Wallacia Memorial Park DA17/1092

We write with reference to the above DA submitted by the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT). We ask that Council note our strong objection to the Application and our request that the proposal be refused/ not approved. We provide comment below to demonstrate how the proposal will negatively impact us and many others. We ask that our submission be

considered by Council and then forwarded to the Sydney Western City Planning Panel (Panel) for consideration in their determination.

Point 1. Wallacia Golf Club has a long (some 86 years now), rich and proud history and not just within the Nepean/ Penrith Region. This small, some may say backwater Club has valuably assisted the growth and development of this lifetime sport across Metropolitan Sydney and even NSW. People know Wallacia Golf Club !

Wallacia is a small community based rural village. The Golf Course and Club is very much a de-facto Community Centre and builder of Social Capital and has been for those mentioned 86 years. It

is a nerve centre and important hub of this special community. To have all that richness evaporate, which will clearly happen if this proposal is approved will be an immensely retrograde and irreplaceable step. That can be avoided by the Panel refusing this application.

Wallacia Golf Club is a large sporting facility that provides a low cost opportunity for present and future generations to enjoy. Such Clubs are becoming expensive and out of reach for “the common person”. That is why this land was gifted to the people of Wallacia to develop, promote and instill a love of Golf. The Panel can support the younger generation by insisting it’s gifted purpose is maintained. Reverse the land use back to it’s prior status –

Recreational.

Point 2. We have genuine concerns about potential negative impacts (short and long term) from emissions following the operation of the proposed 2 Cremators, each with a stack height of 8 meters (Northstar Air Quality Report 6/11/2017 p39. If there was a malfunction with the Cremators, Mercury levels in the air would increase. These facilities would be adjacent to residences on Park Rd, Wallacia. They would also be in very close proximity to residences along Mulgoa Rd, Wallacia, students at Wallacia Primary School on Mulgoa Rd, patrons of Wallacia Hotel on Mulgoa Rd, the many residents of Regal Oaks Retirement Village on Park Rd and the wider Village of Wallacia. Not to

mention those many Golfers who would be playing on the proposed 9 hole Golf Course.

The recent Fernhill Proposal (Mulgoa Rd, Mulgoa) by Rookwood General Cemeteries Reserve Trust that did not proceed did not plan to build Cremators. This aspect should not be considered further for Wallacia Memorial Park, the air quality at Wallacia is no less as important as anywhere else.

It is understood there are adequate numbers of providers that meet current demand for cremation services. As (if) demand for these services increased, presumably the market would respond appropriately.

We do not accept the need for a Cremator(s) on the site and are strongly opposed to such a facility being approved.

Point 3. We refer to the Western Sydney Cemetery Demand Assessment prepared for CMCT by URBIS (October 2015). This Study states “Based on available information of proposed cemeteries, it is estimated that there is approximately 306,000 future burial spaces within the five proposed cemeteries in the Western Sydney Catchment.” (p.13). This figure does not include the proposed Wallacia Memorial Park.

One of the mentioned five proposed cemeteries is located on Elizabeth Drive, Luddenham in close proximity to the

proposed Wallacia Memorial Park and is approved for 65,025 Burial Plots (near to $\frac{3}{4}$ the size of the proposed Wallacia Memorial Park).

We feel, given the above figures of 306,000 future Burial Plots within the Western Sydney Catchment, that Western Sydney's future needs for such spaces are adequately catered for and that the proposed 88,000 Burial Plots suggested for Wallacia Memorial Park appear to be superfluous to need.

We do not support the establishment of Wallacia Memorial Park as proposed.

Point 4. The Wallacia Golf Course and Memorial Park Masterplan with 9 Hole Golf Course – 2013 to 2095.

This Plan shows an indicative layout for a 9 hole golf course. This indicative layout would require a medium/major program of earthworks to achieve the proposed outcome. The amended DA appears to be deficient in that there is no accompanying detail (unless we have overlooked that).

Further, there is no comment in either of the DA's as to the ongoing operation of the Golf Club. We are not clear as to whether this important matter forms part of the DA or not.

Point 5. Member for Mulgoa, Tanya Davies MP together with the Member for Penrith, Stuart Ayres MP issued the following joint statement (September

11, 2017):

“We wish to make clear our opposition to both the Fernhill Estate and the Wallacia Golf Club being used as future sites for cemetery developments.

It is important that the amenity of Wallacia and the Mulgoa Valley be maintained. It was never envisioned by the local community that large scale cemeteries would be developed on either of these sites.

Whilst we recognise the need for future work in relation to identifying appropriate cemetery sites under the planning framework, developments such as these do not meet community expectations.

We will continue to advocate within the New South Wales Government for no cemetery developments to take place within the Wallacia and Mulgoa Valley communities.

Further, The Australian Newspaper (September 1 2017) reported that Penrith City Council unanimously opposed the plan to turn Panthers Wallacia into a cemetery, saying it would “irreparably damage the unique landscape and heritage qualities and values of Wallacia”.

These 3 statements clearly demonstrate strong State and Local Government opposition to the proposed Wallacia Memorial Park and as such merit

particular notation by the Panel.

Point 6. CMCT have owned the property for a period of not less than 173 days prior to holding the first Wallacia Community Information Session on February 20 2018 (1 of only 2 such sessions). These Community Information Sessions occurred some time after lodging both the initial and amended DA's. These Community Information Sessions were held 7 and 3 days respectively before submissions closed. This does not seem to us to be a reasonable time frame for persons to attend, ask questions, receive information and make an informed submission.

CMCT advised us by email (September

1, 2017) following our request for information that, in part “Rest assured that community consultations will be made available, once more information comes to hand.”and “Catholic Cemeteries intends to work with the Wallacia Golf Club Members to look at options for retaining the club facilities at Wallacia.”

We are at a loss to understand or appreciate why it has taken so long for CMCT to conduct any Community Information Session around this important proposal (given the above email to us and the fact that the reports and documents lodged with the initial DA were completed quite some time ago). Further, there has been no contact with the Wallacia Golf Club Members

(the great majority of which are not local residents) to “look at options”. This is puzzling given the major impact this proposal would have for all Wallacia Golf Club Members.

The CMCT 2017 Annual Report states (in part) in Performance against Objectives”build relationships amongst and Community Groups” and in Our Values “we are empathetic and sensitive to all”

We feel that CMCT’s actions and behaviour around this project clearly demonstrate they have not achieved their own 2 performance criteria by a long shot ! and further have demonstrated they have little or no empathy for the community of Wallacia

by their aloof and distant behaviour. We also feel strongly that CMCT's secretive actions (to us) viz, obtaining NSW Government consent for the purchase of the land, meetings with Penrith City Council and most importantly no meetings with the Community (prior to February 20 2018) or Golf Club Members at all, clearly question their integrity and honesty.

Point 7. We ask the Panel to consider this point. A 140 year lifespan for the proposed Memorial Park is a death sentence for the community of Wallacia. 88,000 Burial Plots, finite capacity, finite numbers, finite purpose. As opposed to – the next 140 years of Wallacia Golf Club. 1000 Members per annum (lose 100, gain 100 each year) means that

140,000 dedicated Members (most likely playing 2 rounds per week) experience and enjoy the Course and support the local community over that time (this is a modest estimate given likely population growth and the Second Airport). Then include local patrons and visitors that would play the Course (conservatively 50 rounds per week). So all this would see something like 500,000 uses over the next 140 years versus 88,000 exhausted Burial Plots. If this Application is refused then Wallacia Golf Club would stand as a 230 year symbol of humanities greatest aspect – generosity and community.

Conclusion. Given the above Points 1-7 and after lengthy consideration we feel strongly that this proposal will

negatively affect us and the village of Wallacia. We ask the Sydney Western City Planning Panel Members Mr Justin Doyle (Chair), Mr Bruce McDonald, Ms Nicole Gurrán, Cllr Ross Fowler OAM and Mr Glenn McCarthy to refuse this application (Panel Reference 2017 SWT016DA).

There is an apt quote attributed to John 4:23 "Cometh the Hour, Cometh the Man".

We wish the Panel well in their deliberations on this application.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important proposal. We would be happy to discuss further if appropriate.

Mrs Shona Hackett and Mr Stephen
Hackett

Mobile. [REDACTED] email.

[REDACTED]

