

Madam Chair and Commissioners, my name is Meshlin Khouri, and I live at [REDACTED] a street which connects through to Artarmon Rd where the Channel 9 development site is located. I have been involved with this matter since 2013, when the community came together to respond to the issues associated with the Channel 9 development.

The points I'd like to make today are:

1. The Community of Willoughby has supported the development of the Channel 9 site for medium density residential as incorporated in the approved development plan;
2. The site is isolated, located in a suburban area with little commercial amenity and mass transport within walking distance;
3. The Proposed Channel 9 development is too high and too dense for its location

The Department of Planning's recommendation to approve the proposed modifications should not be followed.

Prolonged One-Sided Engagement

The proposed Channel 9 site development has been drawn out over a number of years, commencing in 2010 with a process which has been intentionally prolonged and complex to disadvantage the local community.

As a community, we have consistently engaged and consulted with the Developers, Willoughby Council and our local Member, Gladys Berejiklian on the needs of the community, and understanding the commercial reality of the site. We supported the development of the site to a higher density than the surrounding dwellings, and spoke with one voice so that our concerns were well understood. We did not protest about the development per se, but identified specific issues involved.

The high level of community engagement and concerns remains, despite the protracted and complex submissions process – with six submissions called for over a four year period, including one which was snuck in on 15 December 2017, when most people were winding down for the holiday period. This modification which is represented here today received the highest number of written submissions, with 452 submissions in the week before Christmas

Throughout this protracted period, the community has remained committed to balancing the ongoing reality of an expanding Sydney with the reality of infrastructure to support a growing and healthy community.

The engagement for this modification has been one-sided, with the community continuing to negotiate through this protracted process. The Developers however have continued to put profits before community interest, and have ignored the opinion of people who live and work here, with Community Consultation reduced to perfunctory requirements only. Their only concern was that they maximise the number of apartments and return on their investment.

Substantive Issues

Our community in the vicinity of Channel 9 is a quiet, suburban area. It is not within walking distance of any retail, mass medical, mass transport and other commercial amenities. Residents in this area are

dependant upon car transport, with most households relying on private transport to manage their day to day business.

Unlike other developments which are located alongside major railway stations and main highways, the Channel 9 site only has local roads to support the increased burden of traffic and population which will result from this development. Most roads are reduced to a single lane once there are cars parked on either side, resulting in a cars dipping in and out of driveways as we navigate our way through streets.

The PAC noted in its 2014 report that it is an area that is not suited for higher density residential housing.

Nothing has changed at this location to now justify the proposed increase in apartment numbers, and number of stories. Our streets remain the same size. We cannot easily drive through them, and the public transport, retail, medical and community ammenities remain the same, albeit even more crowded than when we first started these discussions in 2013.

The Developers have not been able to justify the request to increase in the number of dwellings or the number of stories in their modification of a plan which has repeatedly been approved by the two highest independent bodies in our State.

Conclusion

The real issue here is the size of the development both the number of storeys and apartment numbers which are being squeezed onto one small site in a suburban area.

I request that the Independent Planning Commission:

- reject the increase in unit numbers, and maintain the limit set by PAC and the Land & Environment Court;
- And it reduces the height and storey levels of the buildings to that set by PAC & the L&E Court.

Thank you for allowing me to present this to you today.