

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed St Leonards South (SLS) development, for the public meeting in Crows Nest on May 20 with the Independent Planning Commission (IPC), and for the comprehensive transcript of presentations to the IPC panel at that meeting.

I live in Wollstonecraft, a block away from River Road which constitutes one of the borders the proposed development.

I would like to preface my comments by expressing my appreciation of the excellent existing and forthcoming public transport provision *and* the need for higher density residential development that meets the highest design standards in the 2065 post code area.

However, I strongly object to the proposed SLS development for a great many reasons, which were lucidly and powerfully articulated by many the members of the community who attended the May 20 public meeting with IPC. In the interests of brevity, in this submission I refer to only 5 of the many reasons that greatly concern me.

**1) There has been inadequate - and lack of transparent - consultation by Lane Cove Council with the wider community that will be affected by the proposed SLS development.**

As noted above, I live within close proximity of the site. Like thousands of other people who will be directly affected by the SLS development, at no stage have I been invited by Lane Cove Council to provide feedback. From what I can glean, the proposed development has been negotiated between the developers, Council, and the former property owners. This lack of transparency fuels perceptions that the proposed development is driven by developer interests and undermines public trust in planning processes. It is the antithesis of the Greater Sydney Commission's "directions to collaborate to create great spaces" (St Leonards and Crows Nest 2036 Draft Plan, p. 7). Genuine consultation and collaboration that explore a much wider range of options beyond high rise apartment towers are crucial and will achieve far superior outcomes.

**2) The proposed development does not "ensure new development contributes to a range of dwelling types in the area to cater for all [stages of] life cycles" (2036 Draft Plan, p. 11)**

91.3% of St Leonards' residents already live in apartments (2016 Census). The 2400 apartments proposed in the SLS plan do not provide diversity, just more of the same! In this, and many other respects, the SLS plan is manifestly inadequate. It does not cater for large sections of the population (e.g., young families, aged people, people with mobility impairments) – particularly in its disregard for 'liveability', 'walkability', and access to open, active unstructured and sunlit space, which is already in exceedingly short supply.

**3) The proposed development does not meet the place design guidelines in the 2036 Plan.**

The concentration of high-rise towers in the SLS will not create vibrancy and a sense of community. Instead, in conjunction with the cumulative effect of other nearby ultra-high-rise towers already completed, construction or approved, it will create overshadowed wind tunnels and hard-paved,

uninviting spaces and thoroughways that, because of the steep topography, will in any case be inaccessible to many people and lack connectivity to the existing scarce green open space in the 2065 postcode area. Far from meeting the place design guidelines, the proposed development is much more likely lead to isolation and alienation.

**4) There is no need for more high-rise towers of the scale proposed in such a concentrated area.**

Lane Cove LGA has already far exceeded its 2021 population increase targets. Numerous real estate reports refer to high vacancy rates and steeply falling prices of new, high-rise, apartments in St Leonards. Supply already considerably exceeds demand. This site presents outstanding opportunities instead for innovative, medium- to higher-density housing that includes social and affordable housing, and which truly meets the intent and principles of the 2036 Plan. The current proposal represents a gross waste of a rare opportunity for outstanding urban design.

**5) Existing social and road infrastructure cannot support the increased population density proposed in the SLS plan, especially given other nearby, ultra-high-rise, residential towers (completed, under construction and approved)**

Local schools and Royal North Shore Hospital are already overcrowded. There is a severe lack of active recreational space. River Road and the Pacific Highway are already congested (not to mention the 'main streets' that operate as rat runs across St Leonards, Crows Nest and Wollstonecraft). It is unrealistic to assume the approximately 4,800 residents of the proposed SLS development will present no new burden on already stretched schools and medical services, or rely solely on public and active transport. The proposed density will exacerbate pressures of social infrastructure and the already heavy traffic congestion, making access to Royal North Shore Hospital Emergency Department even more difficult. It is crucial that existing vitally important infrastructure needs are met before further high- rise development is approved.