

**ST LEONARDS SOUTH RESIDENTIAL PLANNING PROPOSAL  
INDEPENDENT PLANNING COMMISSION**

**20<sup>TH</sup> May 2019**

My name is Bruce Donald. I am a 45 year resident of North Sydney municipality, closely involved over those years with community effort to enhance the amenity of the Lower North Shore as an appropriately developing region in which to live and work. My family own property in Waverton and Wollstonecraft.

I am a commercial, media and environment lawyer. I have been engaged with the processes of proper public decision making as partner in two major city law firms, as chief lawyer to the ABC, during ten years on the board of the Environmental Defenders Office, 5 as its Chair, serving a term as Australian Heritage Commissioner and filling roles in North Sydney planning committees. I am a foundation member of the Committee for North Sydney (based on the Committees for Melbourne and Sydney) a group of senior North Sydney planners, architects, engineers and lawyers seeking to improve planning across the Lower North Shore.

I address the Commission today, as one of a community group, a number of whom will be addressing you, formed last year in the midst of what we describe as a developer led tsunami of overdevelopment which capitalises on the facilitation by government and Councils of spot rezoning outside the proper planning process. We consider this is destroying the amenity of St Leonards and Wollstonecraft with the potential to roll over Crows Nest with the Metro proposal for 30 storeys over the Crows Nest Station.

While the Commission's reference is directed to the St Leonards South proposal, it must be seen in the context of the area in the Draft 2036 Plan, an area which has already seen the overwhelming impact of spot rezoning by Lane Cove Council in its unusual enclave parcel east of the railway adjacent to St Leonards South; here a great wall of towers from 30 to 50 storeys is already arising along Pacific Highway, towering over and we say destroying the residential amenity of suburban East Wollstonecraft below them in North Sydney Municipality, removing the northern sky from that valued neighbourhood, sky which in this country is the very definition of suburban amenity.

The foundation submission I wish to make on behalf of our group is that the St Leonards South proposal is proceeding under a process we see as the very opposite of planning.

- Selecting such a limited area for spot rezoning is a flawed process; proper planning involves careful assessment across appropriately defined regions or local government areas of all elements of land use and impacts.
- Well before the land is rezoned, it appears that the Council became involved in a dubious process purportedly ensuring that residents selling to the speculating developers achieved equivalent value. This was before one of the most essential parameters of value for an informed and proper market based negotiation, the very zoning of the land itself, had been determined.
- The initial consultations do not appear to have been community wide but were first limited to potentially affected residents.
- Infrastructure and transport requirements are not yet defined; indeed I understand RMS has indicated further traffic study is required.
- Educational impacts are undefined and any 'open space' provision remains speculative at best because of the processes yet to be followed to determine whether Council can provide this.
- Yet already there is a design to be assessed against possible criteria in a Draft Plan, a Draft on which the Department of Planning has not yet published its initial comments and which is far from complete in terms of community review and consultation.

Not only is this the antithesis of planning, it means that community groups are flying blind in trying to respond to the St Leonards South proposal.

We therefore contend that the IPC should recommend to the Minister that any assessment you may make under the current reference be the subject of a reconsideration and review including assessment of further community input following the completion of the Draft 2036 Plan and the determination of fully articulated and achievable infrastructure, traffic, transport, educational and open space requirements .

Bruce Donald AM