



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

RE: THE STAR MOD 18 - CHANGES TO MUEF (MP08_0098-MOD-18)

COMMUNITY GROUP MEETING

COMMISSION PANEL: DIANNE LEESON (Panel Chair)
 ADRIAN PILTON
 DR PETER WILLIAMS

OFFICE OF THE IPC: JANE ANDERSON
 OLIVER COPE
 HEATHER WARTON

PYRMONT ACTION ZENA VAASSEN
REPRESENTATIVE:

LOCATION: VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

DATE: 1.15PM, WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2023

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MS LEESON: Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Ngarigo land and I acknowledge the traditional owners of all the country from which we virtually meet today and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. Welcome to the meeting today to discuss The Star Casino Complex Mod 18 Changes to MUEF case currently before the Commission for determination. The applicant, Foundation Theatres Pty Limited, is seeking consent for alterations and additions to the multiuse entertainment facility in the northern part of The Star Casino complex. These include conversion of the MUEF into a two-theatre complex, construction of a new fly tower, construction of new dressing room and plant and equipment areas and internal alterations to foyer and pre-event spaces.

My name is Dianne Leeson, I'm the Chair of this Commission Panel and I'm joined by my fellow Commissioners Adrian Pilton and Dr Peter Williams. We are also joined by Jane Anderson and Oliver Cope from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission and Heather Warton who is assisting the Commission. In the interests of openness and transparency and ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website. This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination.

It is important for the Commissioners to ask questions of attendees and to clarify issues whenever it is considered appropriate. If you are asked a question and not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing which we will then put up on our website. I request that all members here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure that they do not speak over the top of each other to ensure accuracy of the transcript. We will now begin.

Zena, thank you very much for giving us some of your time today. We understand you're one of the representatives of the Pymont Action Group along with Elizabeth Elenius and Elizabeth attended the site visit with us last week but was unable to attend this stakeholder meeting today. Given the very few public submissions that were made on this application we didn't hold a public meeting but we've reached out and offered some individual stakeholder meetings and Pymont Action Group's taken up on that offer. So what we'd like to do is garner any comments from Pymont Action Group, particularly related to the Department's assessment report and their recommended conditions of consent and then any other comments that you might have. So we're very much in listening mode today, we may have some questions depending what you have to tell us but we'll hand across to you, if we may, to get your commentary on the assessment report and recommended conditions.

MS VAASSEN: Thank you, everyone, for this opportunity. If you don't mind I will read from the slide that I've got in front of me with all of the notes.

MS LEESON: By all means.

MS VAASSEN: Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the proposed development and assessment with you and for reviewing all the details and feedback for Mod 18, the new Foundation Theatre at The Star in Pymont. My name is Zena Vaassen and today, as you know, I'm representing Pymont Action, a local Pymont community group of which I'm a member. Pymont Action on behalf of the community is grateful for being invited to be an observer at the Commission Panel site inspection 17th January, '23 and also to be invited to speak with designers and theatre staff at the site inspection on the 23rd of May, '22.

The process of showing us the spaces and proposed material samples prior to close of the initial submission stage was a genuine help and step forward by The Star to engage in two-way community conversations. We strongly recommend future site visits with samples for Star modifications. Pymont Action has indicated in submissions our support for the theatre providing additional entertainment and cultural opportunities. We support the following decision since the exhibition, reduced building bulk and scale, the building height dropped, a reduced size of the shell enclosing services, the outside terrace of Jones Bay Road being deleted, the integrated measure to optimise privacy and mitigate view sharing by including frosting to glazing facing the Watermark Apartment building and the addition of the shadow gap clad in darker material to help downplay the scale and prominence of the new build at night for neighbours.

Our concerns remain for the proposed built form and the adverse impacts, view loss, decreased privacy and increased noise this would have on our neighbouring properties plus the public domain. Reflectivity, building materials, lights and signs during construction and permanently should not cause glare for neighbouring residents. We found the reconsidered design does not support the use of exterior cladding materials that soften the exterior noise impacts of a new building opposite residents. Despite the endeavour of this proposal it is to increase patrons to the area by foot or vehicle, thus increasing traffic. Therefore, the design responsibility and excellence of Mod 18 needs to passively soften noise impacts on neighbouring residents 24/7 while still being durable, the lifespan of the theatres.

We understand it is currently proposed that patrons to the theatre will be exiting at both Pirrama Road and Jones Bay Road, Pymont Street exits. Given that The Star if

endeavouring to direct patrons to the Darling Hotel exit and away from residential areas Pyrmont Action would like to recommend that the operators of the theatres work with The Star to do the same and lessen impacts of noise on residential neighbours. Also while the proposed site is across the road from the Watermark Apartment building and this is not within close proximity to any state heritage registered items the site is in close proximity to local heritage buildings, warehouse, terraces, church rectory and the remaining building from the Pyrmont Power Station cells.

10 This proposed development needs to manage protecting these fit-for-purpose buildings and the public benefit of local heritage as safeguarding these buildings keeps the tapestry of Pyrmont intact. Protecting the current street trees and urban tree canopy needs to be emphasised as the current Jones Bay Road street trees between the proposed site and the Watermark Apartments are in good health. They should be retained and protected during and after the development for their public domain greening attributes, liveability for neighbours and a canopy for visitors. Jones Bay Road can be bumper to bumper Friday and Saturdays. The City of Sydney constructed the Jones Bay Road pedestrian crossing and approved pedestrian safety with additional lighting, planted road blisters, a red zebra crossing plus extended the median strip and
20 added trees. These traffic treatments took years to achieve and have made a significant traffic calming improvement to Jones Bay Road. Pyrmont Action expects these vital vehicle-slowng items to remain during and post works for continued safety.

The taxi zone queuing management issue on Jones Bay Road are yet to be resolved. We understand the taxi zone will operate out of construction times as Jones Bay Road taxi driver behaving badly is a longstanding issue for neighbouring residents, we strongly suggest that during construction and afterwards The Star follows through and installs and uses a purpose-built taxi call-up signage system located at The Star entrance driveway on Jones Bay Road.

30 Additionally, permanent way-finding signage to the closest bathrooms needs to be installed at entry, exit points on Jones Bay Road façade of The Star for taxi drivers, construction workers and visitors to the area. This will lessen the known public urination issue on Jones Bay Road. Our response to submissions proposed a reduction of the existing theatre capacity will not lead to any further impacts on public transport crowding as the site is well-served by light rail, buses, the future Pyrmont Metro station, ferry services and taxi ranks. Actually one of the well-discussed Pyrmont transport issues is that the 389 bus service is cancelled on a regular basis, late or full
40 after the fourth stop.

Pyrmont businesses regularly experience staff arriving late to work and Pyrmont residents are not able to trust a bus will get them out of Pyrmont to work on time. A working Pyrmont Metro is years away. Finally, we continue to request the installation of permanent data-collecting equipment, noise pollution trackers and CCTV on Jones Bay Road. All said, Pyrmont Action is reasonably satisfied with the revised modifications and we respectfully request that the Independent Planning Commission considers all the issues and remaining concerns raised so a high standard is set now at a design stage which leads the way forward for shared built areas, residential, entertainment and commercial. Thank you for your consideration.

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MS LEESON: Thank you very much, Zena. We might have a couple of quick questions from what you've taken us through there. I might start first with the issue you raised about the cladding of the new building and noise and a concern, I think, about passive noise control through the material selection and that that's, in your view, not addressing noise issues from the new development, is that correct? Did I misunderstand?

MS VAASSEN: Let's have a look.

20 MS LEESON: The question of material selection and noise control.

MS VAASSEN: Yes. As the foot, vehicle and patron traffic is going to be increased the materials are still hard surfaces that will bounce the noise as opposed to the design responsibility and excellence of Mod 18 that needs to soften the noise by choosing softer materials. So from understanding and speaking to everyone that could mean timber. In this case it is going to be an aluminium cladding, I understand, but that's an improvement on glass because that's reflectivity so - - -

30 MS LEESON: Okay. Thank you. I think I understand that one better now unless anyone else has a follow-up question on the noise and materials issue. Adrian.

MR PILTON: Zena, is there any problem at the moment with noise from the exit on Jones Bay Road from patrons coming out or taxi drivers or when there's nose to tail traffic, there's a lot of horn-blowing and all that kind of stuff?

40 MS VAASSEN: Adrian, you're absolutely right. There's been a longstanding - longstanding issue for neighbours with taxi horns, cars hooting horns, people management along Jones Bay Road. The taxi zone was started when the casino was built. That's how longstanding this issue has been. With this new - with new patrons coming out at different times it will only increase that issue; hence, CCTV, noise

monitoring and the proposed built - proposed built taxi call-up signage system which has been discussed with The Star and Pymont Action. Just yet to happen.

MS LEESON: And just on that, do you know if Star is actively considering that sort of system, taxi call-up?

MS VAASSEN: Sorry. I understand that they have spoken with designers and it will need to be a purpose-built system. So they have begun looking into it and also they've begun looking into the way-finding signage, they tell us at Pymont Action, so that
10 drivers of taxis and other people to the area might know where the closest bathrooms are rather than using Jones Bay Road as a toilet.

MS LEESON: Okay. Thank you.

MR PILTON: Can I - sorry, can I understand from that that you're reasonably happy with the complaint system, if you like, that if there is bad noise or anything you can talk to The Star people and you get some action?

MS VAASSEN: We do get action when it is a Star matter and on the side of the
20 footpath that The Star owns and can have security guards patrol passively. If it is on the road it is not a Star matter, it is the point-to-point or the Taxi Commission or it could be the police or it could be the city rangers and often by the time you call any of those four the incident has long since passed.

MR PILTON: Thank you.

MS LEESON: Thank you. Can I ask you a question around - that's been helpful, thank you, and we did have a conversation earlier with The Star - with the applicant
30 Foundation Theatres around their operational management system and also with the Department so that's added a little bit of flavour to it for us, if you like. The other issue I wanted to raise with you was around local heritage items where - which has not been raised by Council in their submission, I don't believe and you talked about this development needing to protect them. I'd like to understand what you see the issues as and whether you have any suggestions for how this development could be amended to protect them?

MS VAASSEN: As you would know - thank you for that question - as you would know, Pymont is predominantly sitting on sandstone rock. The peninsula and its sandstone beneath, although as you say, there is no state heritage registered items
40 close by but there are local heritage items, the warehouse, terrace, church rectory and the remaining cells building. It would simply be a case of in the plan of management

and the construction firm that wins this contract to speak to, email, phone, document, letterbox drop, poster, whatever it takes to give locals a heads-up when there is going to be significant vibration which will cause building damage. It would also mean ensuring a dilapidation report would be done prior, during if need be, and any works that might need to be done to be accounted for by that construction firm made good and that's really the gist of why Pyrmont is Pyrmont with that tapestry of diverse buildings. So maintaining them.

10 MS LEESON: So it's effectively a construction vibration issue that you're concerned about. Okay.

MS VAASSEN: For that element of conversation, yes.

MS LEESON: Okay. Thank you.

MS VAASSEN: Conversation, in fact, two-way conversation with them.

20 MS LEESON: Yes. And we understand that by the nature of the building there's really no excavations and major earthworks associated with that so the prospects intuitively would be quite - quite small of any vibration but thank you for that, we'll have a look at the vibration and noise assessment report again.

MS VAASSEN: I suppose even the haulage route might factor into that if there is tremendously large equipment.

30 MS LEESON: Okay. Thank you. That's explained that nicely. I had no other questions. The rest of your presentation to me was quite clear and nothing arose for me. You've talked about external issues but I'd like to make sure that the other Commissioners don't have follow-up questions for you, Zena, is that's all right. Peter or Adrian?

MR PILTON: I'm good, thank you.

DR WILLIAMS: Di, if I may, just one question. Thanks very much, Zena, for that presentation, that was really helpful. Just to clarify for me please just a little bit. You mentioned concerns about the exit point for patrons and I understand there might be at least two exit points. What do you think should be done in terms of exit points for patrons, I suppose particularly to mitigate noise impacts on residents?

40 MS VAASSEN: Certainly. At present The Star has been trying to direct any patrons to exit via the Darling Hotel method as opposed to come back towards Jones Bay

Road into the residential area when there are large groups of people exiting at the same time. There has been a flood of people that has come straight out into residential Jones Bay Road to which all sorts of things have occurred. So it's been an action plan and a positive one from The Star to redirect everyone to go out the Darling Hotel exit all down to the light rail. The taxi rank pick-up point is within the building, often misunderstood by people who want to skip the taxi rank queue and jump in the one closest to them when they've lined up for maybe an hour after the airport has been closed to follow the chain of other taxis through to the casino. This causes problems. So ensuring that signage directs people when they're leaving in vast numbers, the correct routes would be helpful.

DR WILLIAMS: Right.

MS VAASSEN: Passive leave signage is terrific. Having security people stand there and, I believe, The Star hires police officers, that passive presence having them seen is also helpful.

DR WILLIAMS: Thank you. Great. Thanks, Zena.

20 MS VAASSEN: Thank you. Thanks, Peter.

DR WILLIAMS: Thank you very much, Zena.

MS LEESON: Thank you. Thank you. Zena, are there any other comments that you would like to make to the Commission while you have this opportunity?

MS VAASSEN: Thank you for doing what you're doing.

30 MS LEESON: That's fine. I think that's probably covered all the questions and issues from our perspective so we'd like to thank you again for participating in the process, it is very helpful to the Commission in its deliberations. So thank you and we will bid you farewell and close the meeting.

MEETING CONCLUDED

[1.35pm]