

From: no-reply@planning.nsw.gov.au on behalf of [Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment](#)
To: [DPE PS ePlanning Exhibitions Mailbox](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy
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Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

Submission Type

I am making a personal submission

Name

First name

[REDACTED]

Last name

[REDACTED]

Council name

{Empty}

Council email

{Empty}

I would like my submission to remain confidential

Yes

Info

Email

[REDACTED]

Suburb/Town & Postcode

Glebe 2037

Submission file

[pyrmont-peninsula-plan.pdf](#)

Submission

Please see attached document

I agree to the above statement

Yes

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A Response to some elements of the Draft Peninsula Place Strategy 2020

Thankyou for this opportunity to provide a response.

It will not cover the extensive detail referred to in the plan but it expresses some of the concern about the erosion of community in favour of 'development' and 'growth' as being universally desirable and 'a good thing.' Instead we risk living in barren wastelands of concrete canyons, with even our skyline blocked by large towers built in honour of an activity with some dangerous consequences (the gambling industry) while our great natural resource, Sydney Harbour is built over. We feel the Government sees us as merely objects to move around like markers in a game of monopoly rather than living people with relationships with place and community. They themselves would not accept the same being done in streets near them. The actuality of the achievement, in consultation with the community, of the more community friendly parts of the Draft Plan will be crucially important. The fortitude and strength of the planners to contain the more unmeritorious and insensitive commercial proposals will be needed.

This submission is being written in Glebe on a Sunday afternoon while I listen to the chatter of children across the back lane at what seems to be a get together of adults and children. We have spoken with an elderly neighbour with whom we have actively renewed and strengthened contact during lockdown. We have checked on the tadpoles in our backyard pond and watered the seedlings. Glebe has long had a sense of a community and village, a sense of place and it has been valued by those who live here. It feels threatened by enthusiastic plans, usually justified on alleged economic benefits of growth, perceptions that bigger is better, large infrastructure projects will make things better and all this in a time of climate change, limits of resources including water, and reports of the danger of urban pollution to our health. I have things I would prefer to do than be writing this on this afternoon.

General Comments

If nothing else Covid lockdown and quasi lockdown has shown us the importance of having indoor and private space that allows for a creative and supportive life as well as a neighbourhood and open space that is more than asphalted canyons between towering structures. It has shown us the desirability of neighbours who check in on neighbours to see if they are all right or may need support. It has been impossible to walk, let alone exercise, in local parks, even the foreshore ones with foreshore walks, and maintain social distance during the height of the lockdown. The paths were too narrow and there were many bottle necks. People are working from home where possible and office space is standing underutilised. Hospitality and performance venues are struggling. What happens next is yet to be seen but there is nothing, in this Plan, which appear to address the issues revealed.

Nearby work on the Rozelle interchange indicates how little commitment there is to pedestrian and bicycle movement as accessing adjoining suburbs requires a desert of heavily trafficked roads to be crossed. A promised linking pedestrian crossing joining the Glebe foreshore disappeared at the first hint of the convenience of vehicles going and coming from the north. The Draft Plan says, of the Pyrmont Peninsula, *'the escarpment created by former industrial activity, the Western Distributor, and large impermeable buildings frustrate people's ability to move around.'* This continues to

happen with development in Sydney and it is likely to continue to happen in the area covered by this Draft Plan unless the blind enthusiasm for progress and development is kept in check.

Meanwhile, we will have increased traffic through Glebe it appears from the northern connections through the interchange. Until electric vehicles are the norm, increased vehicle emissions will make the air problematic for those living and working in the area.

Comments on the Draft Plan

The following comments start with some more specific comments relating to the areas which impact most directly on the Glebe end of the area covered by the Plan.

It is understood the proposal of green space associated with the moving of the Fish Markets is the patch under the overpass while the public land the current Fish Market is on would have a narrow public access strip but otherwise be multi-storey buildings dominating an otherwise low rise and heritage area. It is good that there will be public waterfront access. The width and quality of landscaping of that will be important. The area, under the overpass, is proposed to include provision for the Dragon Boats, which is welcomed. However even the patch under the Sydney Harbour Bridge seems rarely actually enjoyed as usable space by the public with the exception being for viewing of large Harbour activities. That is not to say that it is not appreciated and that it is not important to the aesthetic of the city and harbour but it is not open space that families use. In fact there are few areas under overpasses that are enjoyed by people. Most become dingy, grass doesn't grow and pigeons poop. And yet this plan assumes large increases in people living and working in the area.

Wentworth Park cannot answer all the active green space needs. The redevelopment of the former social housing site in Glebe has meant more unit dwellers. The Blackwattle Bay end of the park is often occupied by team sports practice, usually football. Personal trainers, Ultimo Public School and the children's playground occupy most of what is left. With increased numbers of people expected to the Fish Markets, 43 level residential buildings and projected numbers of jobs and residents elsewhere in the Plan area, Wentworth Park will be unable to cope. The wider area including Glebe is already short of playing fields for weekend sport and pressure on school numbers have seen them having to give up sports space and use the public parks. Our Covid lock-down experience has shown how tight the space is. There is public land already owned where the Fish Market now stands. This should become part of the extended parkland rather than out of place high rises.

There needs to be adequately wide paths to separate walking and cycling. Cyclists (and for that matter joggers) seem to have little patience for the sharing of space with walkers who are not necessarily as agile or fast as them. This was again particularly noticeable recently as one was huffed and puffed on as they pushed through any space so as to keep moving. This means that there needs to be generous setbacks for any buildings allowed along the waterfront. The path areas should also allow for some sense of bush to provide a link to how the waterfront would have looked pre-white settlement as well as provide habitat for birds and other fauna.

Greened rooftops are certainly worthwhile but do not provide for large trees or multi layer storeys of vegetation and are not public. At best they are available to residents of a particular building (and may only be accessible to penthouse owner/tenants) or be attached to a commercial activity such as a restaurant. They are not public in the sense of hanging out with the family or kicking a ball around. An increase in tree canopy generally is to be commended but it is understood the plan falls far short of that

planned by the Inner West Council. It should be noted that tree canopy does not equate to green space however as it is often along heavily trafficked streets.

The Fish Markets will be built partially over the water thereby effectively reclaiming yet more of the harbour. (Darling Harbour has reclaimed more and more of the Harbour in this way over the years.) Sydney Harbour is key to Sydney's image and yet we continue to keep selling it off, building over it and otherwise diminishing its unique qualities. Blackwattle Bay area is reclaimed land and was originally marshy so habitat has already been lost. It is not sustainable to keep on destroying yet more. It is not consistent with any aesthetic, environmental, heritage or cultural value nor 'a waterfront destination showcasing the best of Sydney', to have 43 storey buildings on the foreshore. It is not sensible economically either as such development will destroy the very maritime authenticity necessary to the Fish Market being an attractive destination. And yet this draft plan provides:

Support appropriate and sustainable developments that increase and re-purpose the supply of commercial floorspace to accommodate projected employment in the area (for example, via the new development proposals in Blackwattle Bay and Ultimo).

There is already inadequate public transport for normal operations (pre-Covid). The light rail reduced seating so more people could be accommodated standing. That of course assumes that one can stand for the journey, if one can squeeze in at all. Covid of course has required people to revert more to using their vehicles as safe distancing on public transport has reduced the number of people who can be accommodated.

There has been a lack of adequate planning around who will be living and accessing the area and the needs for public facilities such as schools. Planning must include social housing as well as 'affordable housing.'

Other comments

This whole process began with a proposal to allow an out-of-keeping height tower by a casino. Like all development discussions in NSW, the arguments are economic about jobs, tourists, bringing in overseas high spenders and so on. Where are the questions about big spenders and associated money laundering and about ongoing problem gambling and the ensuing costs to the individuals and families. Where are the discussions about sustainability and keeping things to human scale. One wonders instead if there is a level of edifice envy, of big boys wanting to play with their blocks to build big towers without concern for picking up all the pieces.

The Draft Plan says:

Pymont's future growth builds on the work of those that came before us and the abundance of charm, its diversity and the wonderful natural attributes that make it such an attractive place to live, learn, connect, play and work. A place loved by both locals and visitors alike for its world-class cultural and entertainment offerings, the green open spaces that wind along the harbour, its stunning waterfront location and cherished heritage, with sandstone cliffs, tree-filled streets and heritage wharves.

However the Executive Summary talks of the area reaching its potential but sees that in a very transactional terms of economic exchanges of being a commercial destination (albeit including creative and performing arts) 24 hours a day and that integration is about making it an adjunct to the city foreshore.

The lists of 'Directions' and 'Moves' read more like people living in the area will be warehoused until they work or go out and spend money. There is very little here about how people will live and meet neighbours, get medical attention, take their children to school, have barbeques with extended family and organise community activities generally.

Those key directions for Pyrmont are:

1. *Jobs and industries of the future*
2. *Development that complements or enhances that area*
3. *Centres for residents, workers and visitors*
4. *A unified planning framework*
5. *A tapestry of greener public spaces and experiences*
6. *Creativity, culture and heritage*
7. *Making it easier to move around*
8. *Building now for a sustainable future*
9. *Great homes that can suit the needs of more people*
10. *A collaborative voice*

The Five Big Moves were listed as

1. *Build and link a world class foreshore*
2. *Enhance the opportunity to provide a vibrant 24-hour cultural and entertainment destination, with small bars, performance spaces, museums and other entertainment*
3. *Realise the benefits of a new Metro station by making Pyrmont a destination, rather than the point where journeys start*
4. *Create a low carbon and high-performance precinct, maintaining the shift to a place where people walk and use public transport to connect to other places*
5. *More, better and activated public spaces across the Peninsula*

It is also hard to see how there is enough space to fit the outlined increase in people. The economic context is said to include:

- strong growth in jobs: an increase of 20,000 – 23,000 jobs to 2041
- a local economy that is approximately 60% larger by 2041 with \$4.2 - \$4.9 billion more economic output per year compared to current levels
- an increase in productivity by 7 per cent due to the growth in jobs in knowledge intensive industries
- greater supply of commercial buildings: an additional 600,000 – 800,000 square metres of floor space will be required across the Peninsula by 2041
- increased retail and residential development density associated with the provision of a Metro station, as well as more commuters coming in and out of the area
- an industry mix geared towards knowledge industries, with growth in many of the associated industries for which the Peninsula is recognised: tourism and entertainment, media and information technology

It is hard to see how a sense of community and neighbourhood, an 'authentic sense of place' when so much additional commercial building will be required with an additional 20,000 to 30,000 jobs accommodated, transport needs of those travelling into and out of the area provided and the ancillary services those persons will need such as food and beverage services. The Plan optimistically touts '*integrated and decentralised parking options*' which one assumes will end up being part of the vertical nature of building and

increasing height of such buildings, given the degree of crowding already existing in the area. Alternatively they may be parking stations on the outskirts of the area creating a highly trafficked but dead space.

Numbers such as this are not inevitable unless planned to occur. This Draft Plan presumably is enthusiastic to do so. It cannot be assumed all those jobs will be filled by local residents which mean large movement of people. The Plan must be structured so as to avoid the mistakes of North Sydney, which is a wind blown soulless place even to drive through.

Large developments such as the ICC do little to make the local environment human scale and usable. They have large footprint and create large expanses of unfriendly deserts with forecourts, entrances, parking, on and off ramps for events and so on. While they provide venues for the large events for the city, they do not have a sense of casual venues for local residents. They are not the sort of space the community might use for a sewing bee, an art class, a community meeting to discuss an issue such as this Plan. Nor do they usually add much value to local businesses as people come to the venue for the event, get beverages and snacks there and leave. In many ways the large developments along the western edge of Darling Harbour create a wall rather than integrate. The local is sacrificed to the wider interest with little return amenity or benefit, rather a loss. The Powerhouse Museum on the other hand is much more user friendly for family, friend and school activities and faces into the community.

It is hard to see how the built environment can address the 'the envisaged future role' of the Innovation Corridor by *fostering 'a collaborative/networking environment for companies and educational institutions'* except by bending ordinary planning rules to allow such activities to co-establish as they want, regardless of community friendly interfaces and relationship with the local community, its amenity and already built environment. This is of concern about what will be allowed to happen, despite the worthiness of the aim.

The Draft Plan also notes,

'consideration should also be given to encourage affordable business accommodation such as voluntary planning agreements attached to planning proposals. Ensuring ongoing affordable business premises as tenants change over time will require targeted intervention or specialised management approaches, such as those which have been developed to deal with the provision and management of affordable housing.'

The need to provide this indicates that the Plan, and/or unrestricted development, is heading in a direction, which will lead to the loss of affordable space for start-ups and small businesses. Affordable housing schemes however have not been without problems for tenants who need such services and lessons should be learnt.

'Pyrmont will be a place buzzing with activity, attractions, restaurants, cafes, bars and retail – all contributing to a vibrant 24-hour economy within walking distance of the CBD that attracts new residents, workers and investors. This means investigating opportunities to:

- provide new space for entertainment, events and cultural attractions as part of catalyst site redevelopment, including diversifying night-time experiences*
- enable better connections through key sites to promote wayfinding and activate the public domain*
- deliver streets as shared spaces that encourage outdoor dining*
- enable cultural and creative uses, such as maker spaces, live music and child-friendly experiences supported by better public transport and connectivity'*

There are some good points in this but are '24 hour' activities sustainable? After all, there have been history about late night Sydney, alcohol fuelled conduct and violence leading to action, reaction and changing policies. And in which parts of the Peninsula will this occur, as '24 hour' venues do not sit well with nearby residential areas. Neighbours of galleries in nearby Surry Hills complained bitterly about exhibition openings spilling onto streets as attendees sipped drinks and ate canapés for example.

And to some extent, these things are hard to implement and often develop more strongly and vibrantly when organic. Watching the inner city and inner west over a number of years now, one has seen active restaurant/gallery/music venue strips come and go in areas as they begin and then develop along with gentrification and becoming more expensive. Certainly, if the Planners are committed to a vibrant community then they are going to have to plan to retain the old, the quirky, the awkward, the affordable and the intimate to allow space.

Thankyou for taking these matters into consideration.

Name withheld.