

ADI RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP SYDNEY BUSHLAND ACTION GROUP

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10 December 2001

Dr Andrew Refshauge
Minister for Planning

Dear Minister

We attach a copy of a letter from the Prime Minister which commits his Government to the preservation of all of the Australian Heritage Commission listed land on the ADI Site at St Marys, some 828 hectares out of a total site area of 1538 hectares.

It is our view that the current State planning instrument covering the ADI Site, State Regional Environmental Plan 30 (SREP 30), is now obsolete. The Prime Minister's commitment makes it clear that his Government, as the owner of the land, is not prepared to develop nearly 250 hectares of the Site which is currently proposed for urban or industrial development under SREP 30.

It is also our view that the adequate buffer areas needed to effectively protect the heritage values of the AHC listed land will significantly further reduce the development potential of the Site as proposed under SREP 30.

We believe that you should repeal SREP 30 in its entirety and reinstate the previous 'Special Uses Commonwealth Defence' zoning on the Site, pending further negotiations between the Federal Government and community groups on protection of the whole of the site as a new Regional Park and Nature Reserve.

We believe that proposed development under SREP 30 on the site by the Federal Government cannot proceed without major amendment of SREP 30 to fully protect the AHC listed land. Also, we think that any further work to amend SREP 30 before the Federal Government has formally assessed all the ramifications of its decision to protect the AHC listed areas may well be rendered abortive.

If you choose to amend the SREP rather than repeal it then we call on you to require that a thorough and adequate environmental study of the Site be carried out before any amended SREP is approved. We do not believe that such a study was genuinely carried out prior to SREP 30 being enacted and this is evidenced by the substantial unresolved environmental concerns of both Penrith and Blacktown Councils as well as the piecemeal nature of the flora and fauna surveys.

We seek your urgent advice whether you will repeal SREP 30 as requested, reinstating the previous Special Uses zoning, or whether you intend to amend SREP 30. If the latter, we seek your assurance that a new, comprehensive environmental study will be carried out and that the formal public exhibition and submission process for the making of SREPs will be followed.

However, you will appreciate that the community has little confidence in your Department or its public consultation processes given the effective complete disregard of some 800 objections to the draft SREP 30 for development of the site, an unprecedented community reaction in western Sydney, and the Department's clear preference to work with the developers rather than the community.

We believe that the only way to restore public confidence in the Carr State Government and its role in the protection of the ADI Site is the immediate repeal of SREP 30. This is necessary to provide an appropriate background for the Federal Government and community groups to reach an agreed outcome on the future of the Site, the same planning background that applied to the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Defence sites while their future was decided.

Yours sincerely

Noel Plumb
Sydney Bushland Action Group

Hugh Todd
ADI Residents Action Group