

ADI Residents Action Group  
PO Box 4134  
WERRINGTON NSW 2747  
0402 705940

REPRESENTATIONS TO DIANNE BEAMER, MINISTER FOR WESTERN SYDNEY, AND  
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING,  
FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST, 2003

#### INTRODUCTION

The ADI Residents Action Group (ADI RAG), which has opposed development of the ADI Site for over ten years, has serious concerns with the State Governments development plan for the former ADI Site St Marys.

We ask that the State Government address the matters raised in this submission before allowing any development to proceed. We urge that the lodging of Precinct Plans with Blacktown City Council be deferred until these matters are addressed.

#### MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

Amending the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan 30 and St Marys Environmental Planning Strategy

It is unreasonable for the Government to proceed with this development until a fundamental flaw in the planning process is resolved.

Due to the Federal Governments 2001 election commitment to save all the National Estate listed areas from development the SREP 30 and the St Marys Environmental Planning Strategy (EPS) no longer apply to or accurately represent the current zoning areas of the site.

The Government cannot expect Precinct Plans to be assessed by Council or the community when the aims and objectives guiding the Precinct Plans are based on zonings that do not accurately represent the area proposed to be developed.

No Precinct Plans based on the aims and objectives of the redundant SREP 30 and EPS 2000 plan should be submitted to Council until new plans with revised aims and objectives are drafted and available for public comment.

SREP 30 and the EPS apply to the development of the whole of the ADI Site including the Eastern Precinct. The argument used by Planning NSW that SREP 30 and the EPS do not need to be amended to allow development of the Eastern Precinct is biased in favour of development and lacks transparency.

#### Plan of Management for the proposed Regional Park

It is unreasonable of the Government to proceed to a Precinct Planning stage until a Plan of Management for the proposed Regional Park has been drafted and lodged with Council.

A Regional Park, managed by NPWS, is proposed for the ADI Site. The developers and the State Government have announced it in order to; arguably, protect the biodiversity of the site.

It appears unreasonable of the Government to expect the public or decision makers to understand how the sites biodiversity is to be adequately protected in a Regional Park when there are no formal plans or documents available to the public of which to base a comment on.

The Government must defer the submission of Precinct Plans to Council until NPWS completes a Plan of Management for the Regional Park.

#### Protection of the ADI Sites Biodiversity

The ADI RAG believes that the biodiversity of the ADI Site will be severely threatened by this urban development. The proposed Regional Park is an inadequate conservation measure and does not contain all of the lands on the site with conservation value.

A Regional Park, by its own definition, does little to conserve biodiversity. The Government should be aware that this is National Estate listed bushland and should therefore be offered a higher level of protection than a Regional Park.

It is the sites biodiversity that is most threatened by this urban development. The Government therefore owes an absolute duty of care to ensure that the urban development does not impact on the conservation values of the site. SREP 30 states, "development adjacent to the Regional Park will not have a negative impact on the biodiversity or conservation values of the park." This is ambiguous and should not just apply to development adjacent to the Regional Park but the whole development.

The St Marys EPS aims to, "guide the creation of a model urban development which achieves environmental outcomes which are superior to past urban release areas in Western Sydney..."

The Government must now demonstrate how this is to be achieved.

ADI RAG believes that the only way to minimise impacts on the biodiversity of the site is to have a range of early intervention strategies in place to minimise the potential threats of the development. It is clear that cats, dogs, weeds, non-endemic plants, fire, rubbish, urban run-off etc are threats to the sites biodiversity.

The Government must be serious in its commitment to the biodiversity of the ADI Site and move to put in place strict development controls aimed to minimise the threats to biodiversity. Development controls banning residents from owning certain animals should be seriously considered. It is not good enough to rely on the good will of residents to protect the sites biodiversity.

The issue of protecting the sites biodiversity is a Government responsibility and must be addressed before Precinct Plans are lodged with Council. The simplistic argument that a Regional Park protects the sites biodiversity does not address this specific concern.

#### Community Consultation

Delfin Lend Lease, the joint developers with the Commonwealth, will be submitting a Precinct Plan to Blacktown City Council in early August 2003. At the same time a Macro Fauna Management Plan, to be implemented by NPWS, will be submitted to Council.

We are asking that the Community Consultation period be a minimum of 90 days to adequately respond to these plans.

This will allow the community the time to understand the plan and make an informed comment. It will allow time for the Government and Council to meet with the community to discuss identified issues with the plan.

We consider this to be a reasonable request and it mirrors the timeframe given by former Planning Minister Refshauge when the draft Sydney Regional Environment Plan 30 was publicly exhibited.

### Macro Fauna Management Plan

The fate of nearly 3000 Kangaroos and 50 Emus on the ADI Site is to be decided by a Macro Fauna Management Plan developed by the joint developers.

It appears that the macro fauna on the ADI Site is to make way for the urban development. The open grassland areas of the site, needed by the macro fauna for grazing, are those same areas to be developed. The limited options include moving them off the site, sterilisation or shooting them.

It appears that the Eastern Precinct will be fenced off from the rest of the site and the Kangaroos remaining will be shot. It is not clear what will happen to the Emus.

ADI RAG feel this will be very embarrassing to the Government if their plan results in the icons of the ADI Site, the last free roaming mobs of Kangaroos and Emus in the Sydney Basin, being destroyed for what is arguably an unnecessary urban development.

The fate of the Kangaroos and Emus has been one of the most emotive side issues of this development saga. The Government will now need to explain to the families of western Sydney why their beloved Kangaroos and Emus need to be killed.

The potential political ramifications for the Government are obvious and will severely damage the environmental credibility of the Premier, Bob Carr.

The Government should defer the development process until a suitable and more humane method of managing the macro fauna on the site is found.

### Contamination

Precinct Plans should not be considered for areas of the ADI Site that are contaminated.

A 1999 decontamination audit of the site has found the whole eastern portion of the ADI Site to be contaminated and unfit for human habitation. The Government cannot ignore the fact that large areas of the site, areas accessible by the public, are unsafe to humans.

Some Blacktown Councillors are opposed to the development of the Eastern Precinct whilst areas within it are contaminated. The problem is that the contaminated areas are within the Regional Park and that some of the most diverse vegetation found on the site would have to be destroyed to expose the soil for remediation.

Again the ambiguities exist. The area the subject of the contamination is zoned as Regional Park, which means that public access is allowed, the decontamination audit however calls for this land to be fenced off and that unauthorised entry is restricted. This clearly contradicts the aims of a Regional Park. The developers do not intend to fence the area off and appear to be down playing the risks identified in the official decontamination audit.

The Government must not support a development that puts the safety of its citizens at stake. It also cannot allow the destruction of rare and threatened vegetation to facilitate decontamination. This also highlights the need for a draft Plan of Management for the Regional Park to be lodged with the Precinct Plans

The reality is that this scenario demonstrates the unsuitability of the ADI Site for urban development.

#### CONCLUSION

The Government has for many years advocated that this urban development would set new benchmarks. If this is to be the case the government must address the mistakes of all previous developments and make some brave planning decisions.

The Regional Park is not a conservation measure and cannot be seen as such until a Plan of Management is developed. The threats that cats and dogs pose to biodiversity must be addressed by this development. The government must take the brave step of enforcing covenants banning future residents from owning cats and dogs.

The fate of the Kangaroos and Emus on the site are in the hands of the State Government. The public will react angrily to the unnecessary slaughter of these western Sydney icons.

The fact that the site is still contaminated must be properly addressed. This fact highlights that parts of the site are unsuitable for urban development

The massive urban release areas proposed for the South Creek Valley and the North West of Sydney now casts doubt on the importance of developing the ADI Site.

ADI RAG request that the Government note the concerns identified in this submission and move quickly to publicly address them before development proceeds.