

To whom it may concern,

I strongly support the proposed mixed-use development at 47 Darby Street, Cooks Hill (SSD-82276964). In my view, the project is a sensible response to Newcastle's housing needs and fits well within the broader context of the area.

The site sits at the base of one of Newcastle's steeper streets, which helps reduce the perceived scale from many vantage points. The stepped design — with the taller 13-storey element fronting Darby Street transitioning down to the 8-storey building on Tyrrell Street — appears to respect the surrounding streetscape while delivering meaningful density. Ground-floor retail and activation along Darby Street should help connect the Civic Precinct more effectively to the vibrant Darby Street strip.

We are facing a serious housing shortage across NSW, and projects like this are essential to increasing supply in well-located, transit-friendly areas. Construction costs have risen dramatically since COVID, making it challenging for developments to proceed at lower heights or densities without becoming unviable. Allowing the proposed height (which exceeds the current local controls but is justified under the Housing Delivery Authority process) enables around 113 additional homes that would otherwise be unlikely to eventuate. The existing building on the site is dated and underutilised and redeveloping it for modern apartments represents a clear upgrade for the neighbourhood.

Beyond housing, the project will deliver significant short-term economic benefits through construction jobs. Estimates suggest 270–300 workers on-site during peak periods, plus flow-on employment for suppliers, consultants, and related trades — a real boost for the local economy.

I understand there are concerns from some residents about scale and heritage impacts near the Art Gallery and Civic Park. However, the proposal includes thoughtful elements like underground parking, communal open space, and a design that steps away from sensitive interfaces. In a city centre location like this, with excellent access to amenities and transport, higher-density housing is appropriate and aligns with state priorities.

Darby Street would benefit from the additional residents and activity this development would bring, helping to revitalise the area further.

I wish the proponents every success and urge that this application be approved so we can see much-needed housing delivered.

Regards,

Lachlan Stronach

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