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Your Ref: SSD-31179510

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Stephen Dobbs
Department of Planning and Environment
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Dear Stephen,

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for 2A Gregory Place Harris Park “Build-to-Rent”
State Significant Development (SSD)**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for 2A Gregory Place Harris Park “Build-to-Rent” State Significant Development (SSD). It is understood that the proposed development includes 483 “build to rent” dwellings, in three 4-8 storey buildings. The current zoning is IN General Industrial, however as the proposal consists of a large number of affordable housing it is prepared under the provisions of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021*. It is noted that the application is currently seeking consent for a concept approval and not yet development consent.

The NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) is the agency responsible for dealing with floods, storms and tsunami in NSW. This role includes, planning for, responding to and coordinating the initial recovery from floods. As such, the NSW SES has an interest in the public safety aspects of the development of flood prone land, particularly the potential for changes to land use to either exacerbate existing flood risk or create new flood risk for communities in NSW.

NSW SES reviewed the provided documents and notes that the consent authority will need to ensure that the assessment is considered against the relevant Ministerial Section 9.1 Directions, including 4.3 – Flood Prone Land and is consistent with the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy as set out in the NSW Floodplain Development Manual, 2005 (the Manual). Attention is drawn to the following principles outlined in the Manual which are of importance to the NSW SES role as described above:

- **Development should not result in an increase in risk to life, health or property of people living on the floodplain.** The proposed development is within the 1% AEP flood (Lower Parramatta River Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan, 2005) from Parramatta River and is adjacent to Clay Cliff Creek (a local stormwater channel). Depths in the 1% AEP riverine flood may be up to 1 metre, which is unsafe for vehicles children and the elderly. This is also below the Council’s Flood Planning Level

(Parramatta Local Environmental Plan). It is estimated to be several metres deep in the PMF (9.3m AHD), which means all building types are considered vulnerable to failure. The proposal would therefore see several hundred people placed at significant risk of flooding.

- **Risk assessment should consider the full range of flooding, including events up to the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) and not focus only on the 1% AEP flood.** The current flooding information considered with the proposal (in the Scoping Report and EIS) is inadequate and must consider the impacts of the full range of flooding, both riverine and local, and when potential evacuation routes may be cut.
- **Risk assessment should have regard to flood warning and evacuation demand on existing and future access/egress routes. Consideration should also be given to the impacts of localised flooding on evacuation routes.**
- **In the context of future development, self-evacuation of the community should be achievable in a manner which is consistent with the NSW SES's principles for evacuation. Evacuation must not require people to drive or walk through flood water.**
- **Development strategies relying on deliberate isolation or sheltering in buildings surrounded by flood water are not equivalent, in risk management terms, to evacuation.** 'Shelter in place' strategy is not an endorsed flood management strategy by the NSW SES for future development (as contradicted on page 29 and 32 of the Scoping Report and page 88 of the EIS). Such an approach is only considered suitable to allow existing dwellings that are currently at risk to reduce their risk, without increasing the number of people subject to such risk. The flood evacuation constraints in an area should not be used as a reason to justify new development by requiring the new development to have a suitable refuge above the PMF. Allowing such development will increase the number of people exposed to the effects of flooding. Other secondary emergencies such as fires and medical emergencies may occur in buildings isolated by floodwater. During flooding it is likely that there will be a reduced capacity for the relevant emergency service agency to respond in these times. Even relatively brief periods of isolation, in the order of a few hours, can lead to personal medical emergencies that have to be responded to. As identified on page 88 of the EIS, evacuation from the site is dangerous in a PMF due to the depth of floodwater. In addition, this particular proposal includes communications and power infrastructure in the basement. This is likely to be subject to flooding, resulting in outages and thereby increase the flood and secondary risks of the building occupants.
- **The NSW SES is opposed to the imposition of development consent conditions requiring private flood evacuation plans rather than the application of sound land use planning and flood risk management.** We note that a flood emergency response plan is included in the Flood Risk Management Report.

- **Development strategies relying on an assumption that mass rescue may be possible where evacuation either fails or is not implemented are not acceptable to the NSW SES.** This may occur as a result of failed evacuation at this site, due to the potential depth of floodwater.

In summary, NSW SES does not support residential development below the Council's flood planning level.

You may also find the following Guidelines, originally developed for the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley and available on the NSW SES website useful:

- [Reducing Vulnerability of Buildings to Flood Damage](#)
- [Designing Safer Subdivisions](#)
- [Managing Flood Risk Through Planning Opportunities](#)

Please feel free to contact Elspeth O'Shannessy via email at rra@ses.nsw.gov.au should you wish to discuss any of the matters raised in this correspondence. The NSW SES would also be interested in receiving future correspondence regarding the outcome of this referral via this email address.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'P. Cinque'.

Peter Cinque
Senior Manager, Emergency Risk Management
NSW State Emergency Service