



Bushfire Planning Australia

Costata Crescent
ADAMSTOWN NSW 2289

Date: 16 February 2026

LETTER OF SUPPORT
SSD-82276964 – 47 DARBY STREET, COOKS HILL

I write to express my support for the proposed mixed-use development at 47 Darby Street, Cooks Hill (SSD-82276964).

As a resident of Newcastle and a professional working in the built environment, I recognise the importance of delivering well-located housing that aligns with strategic planning principles. This project represents sound urban consolidation in an inner-city location with excellent access to services, employment, and public transport.

I support this development for the following reasons:

As a professional who regularly works on greenfield development projects, I am acutely aware of the challenges associated with removing vegetation and developing on the urban fringe. A common and recurring theme in objections to greenfield subdivisions is that developers should instead utilise brownfield sites in established urban areas to increase density. This development is exactly that—a brownfield redevelopment that increases housing density in a highly accessible inner-city location.

Yet I observe a profound contradiction in community responses to development proposals. If the public objects to greenfield subdivisions on environmental grounds, and simultaneously objects to higher-density urban development on brownfield sites, then there exists no realistic pathway to improve housing supply or affordability. Such opposition effectively sterilises or underutilises both greenfield and brownfield development opportunities, making any meaningful progress on housing supply impossible.

This contradiction is particularly troubling given widespread calls for government action on housing affordability. It is fundamentally hypocritical to demand that all levels of government provide affordable housing while objecting to the development projects required to deliver that supply. Governments cannot conjure housing from thin air—new supply requires actual development to proceed.

Furthermore, when projects are characterised as "over-development," this fails to engage with the economics of development feasibility. Projects must generate sufficient revenue to offset land costs, construction costs, and financing while providing acceptable returns. If a site cannot be developed to its appropriate density, the economics require either reduced land values or increased per-dwelling prices—neither advances affordability. More critically, constraining development density makes it economically impossible to deliver affordable housing contributions or community facilities that benefit the broader public. These outcomes require projects to capitalise on a site's development potential—its highest and best use.

Strategic Location and Planning

The site is ideally positioned within the Civic Precinct, providing future residents with immediate access to Civic Park, cultural facilities including Newcastle Art Gallery, and the Darby Street dining and retail precinct. Concentrating residential density in established urban centres is fundamental to sustainable planning practice and reduces pressure for urban expansion into greenfield sites on Newcastle's fringe. The proposal aligns with both state and local strategic planning objectives for urban consolidation.



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Housing Supply Contribution

Newcastle, like much of NSW, is experiencing significant housing supply constraints. This project will contribute 113 dwellings toward meeting National Housing Accord targets and will provide diverse housing options for downsizers, key workers, and smaller households. Delivering housing in highly accessible inner-city locations is critical to addressing affordability pressures and providing genuine housing choice.

Urban Renewal and Streetscape Enhancement

The existing commercial building and at-grade car park represent an underutilised site in a prominent location. The proposed development will deliver significant urban design improvements through modern architecture, ground-floor activation with retail uses, and enhanced landscaping. The integration of retail uses will strengthen the connection between Darby Street and the Civic Precinct, complementing recent public investment in the area. Improving natural surveillance of Civic Park through residential development will also contribute to creating safer, more activated public spaces.

Economic and Community Benefits

New residents and ground-floor retail will generate increased foot traffic supporting local businesses, many of which have experienced challenging trading conditions in recent years. The project will create construction employment and ongoing economic activity while strengthening the vibrancy and sustainability of the Darby Street precinct.

Built Form and Amenity

Modern residential development provides dwellings that meet current safety, acoustic, and sustainability standards. The proposal replaces extensive at-grade parking with basement parking, freeing street frontage for landscaping and pedestrian-oriented uses. This represents a considerable improvement to the public realm and pedestrian experience.

I believe any potential impacts regarding traffic, heritage, and amenity can be appropriately managed through the assessment process and development consent conditions. The rigorous State Significant Development process, including early public consultation prior to lodgement, provides confidence in the thoroughness of the assessment.

If we cannot support well-located, transit-accessible brownfield redevelopment in our inner cities, then we have no credible basis to complain about housing affordability or to demand government action. I encourage approval of this development as it will deliver substantial benefits for housing supply, urban amenity, local business viability, and sustainable planning outcomes for Newcastle.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Greville
Director
Accredited Practitioner
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