

Objection to SSD-94006708: 60-Storey Towers at 15–21 Cottonwood Crescent, Macquarie Park: Unacceptable Overdevelopment with Irreversible Impacts on Liveability, Environment and Public Health

Dear NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure / City of Ryde Council / Sydney North Planning Panel,

I formally object to State Significant Development Application (SSD-94006708) for the proposed mixed-use development at 15–21 Cottonwood Crescent, Macquarie Park.

This proposal, comprising two 60-storey towers (205.5m) and 858 apartments, represents a fundamental and unjustified departure from the established planning framework, with impacts that are permanent, cumulative, and inconsistent with the long-term interests of the community.

While increased housing supply near transport is appropriate in principle, this application is not an example of good planning. It is overdevelopment at an extreme scale, driven by density uplift rather than place-making, infrastructure capacity, or community outcomes.

1. Planning Controls Are Being Overridden Without Justification

The proposal seeks to override the City of Ryde LEP 2014 controls:

- Height: from 65m (around 20 storeys) to 205.5m
- FSR: from 4.5:1 to 14.5:1

This is not a minor variation. It is a tripling of scale.

Variations of this magnitude require clear strategic justification and a demonstrated public benefit. That threshold has not been met. There is no precinct-wide planning basis, no infrastructure-led rationale, and no compelling reason why this site should carry this level of intensity.

The State Significant pathway should not be used to achieve outcomes that are inconsistent with the LEP. In this case, it has the effect of bypassing local planning intent and limiting meaningful community input.

2. Community Engagement Has Been Inadequate and Reactive

A petition of 478 local residents has already raised concerns around:

- Traffic congestion
- Overshadowing
- Infrastructure strain

Yet engagement has been post hoc rather than formative. There has been no meaningful, early-stage consultation consistent with NSW planning principles.

For a project of this magnitude, the absence of genuine community participation is not a procedural gap. It is a fundamental failure in the process.

3. Absence of Independent, Credible Impact Assessment

There is no clear evidence of robust, independent studies addressing:

- Wind impacts at pedestrian level
- Overshadowing of public open space and waterways
- Urban heat and microclimate effects
- Long-term health and liveability outcomes

Given the site's proximity to a creek corridor and public reserve, this is a critical omission.

The scale of uplift, from previously approved approximately 155 units to 858, represents a fourfold increase in density without corresponding, independently verified infrastructure or environmental capacity.

Assessments appear to rely heavily on developer-commissioned modelling, which does not meet the standard required for a project of this scale and sensitivity.

4. Irreversible Damage to Local Character and Landscape

Macquarie Park is not a high-rise CBD precinct. Its prevailing built form is predominantly under 20 storeys.

Introducing two 60-storey towers will:

- Dominate the skyline disproportionately
- Create significant and permanent overshadowing
- Visually overwhelm surrounding residential and natural areas
- Erode the human scale of the precinct

Nearby developments such as Meriton's Trilogy have already pushed the upper limits of acceptable height. This proposal does not integrate. It escalates the issue.

Once approved, this level of overdevelopment becomes the new precedent, making further erosion of planning controls inevitable.

5. Established Global Evidence Warns Against This Model

High-density vertical development of this form is not without consequence. Comparable international examples highlight systemic risks.

In Hong Kong, areas such as Tseung Kwan O demonstrate the "wall effect" created by tall, closely spaced towers, reducing airflow and trapping heat and pollutants. The Amoy Gardens SARS outbreak remains a clear example of how building form and ventilation can directly affect public health.

Singapore has had to tighten planning controls in response to similar issues, including introducing requirements for building separation and limiting podium structures to improve airflow and reduce heat build-up.

Across parts of mainland China, superblock developments with towers set within wide roads have reduced walkability, increased reliance on transport, and created poor street-level environments despite high density.

These are well-documented outcomes. **Sydney does not face the same land constraints and should not replicate these planning failures.**

6. This Is Not About Density, It Is About Poor Density

The issue is not whether Macquarie Park should accommodate growth. It should.

The issue is how that growth is delivered.

This proposal prioritises:

- Maximum yield
- Vertical intensity
- Developer efficiency

Over:

- Human-scale design
- Environmental performance
- Long-term liveability

Well-planned density can enhance a precinct. This proposal undermines it.

7. Clear Grounds for Rejection

Given the scale of non-compliance, inadequate assessment, and irreversible impacts, this application should be rejected in its current form.

If Considered, Fundamental Redesign Is Required

At a minimum, any revised proposal must:

- Align with the established height envelope, generally under 20 storeys
- Provide fully independent wind, visual, and environmental impact assessments
- Demonstrate genuine infrastructure capacity
- Undertake meaningful, pre-lodgement community consultation

Community Position

The level of concern in the community is clear. If these issues are not addressed, residents are prepared to actively pursue all available avenues, including formal objections, appeals and legal review.

This will inevitably prolong the process and create ongoing uncertainty for the project.

This is not a step the community takes lightly. It reflects the seriousness of the impacts. Once built, they cannot be undone.

Conclusion

This proposal is not a refinement of Macquarie Park's future. It is a step change that permanently alters it for the worse.

Growth should be planned, justified and integrated. **This proposal fails on all three counts.**

I respectfully request that the application be rejected.

Best regards,

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