

Proposed State Significant Development: – St Francis Xavier Church, Mackenzie Street, Lavender Bay SSD-88702457

1. Objector: Emeritus Professor Laurence Mather OAM, DMedSc.

2. Capacity: I write as an individual local resident of 35 years, as honorary Secretary of SP32515 (102-108 Alfred Street South, Milsons Point, built in the late 1980s), as a member of the Lavender Bay Precinct, North Sydney Council, and as a now-retired academic scientist with concerns about environmental issues.

3. Declarations: I have donated to the St Vincent de Paul Society and to the community group known as ROLBO (Residents Opposing Lavender Bay Overdevelopment).

4. Executive Summary: Overall, the proposed design is modern and its proximity to public transport aligns with the high-density housing objectives of the NSW Government, and partially addresses the issue of affordable housing, as would be expected of the proponents. However, it also creates various adverse effects on the existent proximate community as mentioned below. While I personally recognize and support the urgent need to expand high-density housing supply and endorse the principles of the Transport Oriented Development (TOD) programs, the resultant housing growth must not come at the cost of public amenity and local infrastructure, nor by creating further degradation of the environment at large, notably by adding to the global warming burden. On these grounds, I believe that consent should not be approved for the proposal as presented.

5. Strategic Context: Failing to "Create a Better Sydney"¹ The Environmental Impact Statement prepared by *planning&co* is, unsurprisingly, very generous to the proponent. It records that the "...proposed development will deliver 165 dwellings, representing a major uplift from the 43 residential dwellings currently on the Site. This results in a net increase of 122 dwellings and a substantial contribution to local housing supply. The proposal includes a mix of market housing, affordable housing and co-living accommodation...". Of the 165 new dwellings, there will be 88 residential units, 19 affordable housing units and 58 affordable co-living units.

While this proposal is superficially attractive, the negating issues of the proposal are several.

(a) The **affordable housing** units are proposed to be for "a minimum of 15 years" but, regrettably, not in perpetuity. In this area of Sydney where "luxury apartments with Harbour views, etc.", proliferate, the need for affordable housing is essential, and it is disappointing that this proponent cannot do better.

(b) The **western tower** will have a "maximum building height of RL 120m". Although this is less than North Sydney CBD buildings, and while the "upper levels of the building have been strategically chamfered to reflect the change in topography [to the north], etc.", it is incompatible with surrounding buildings and homes of the heritage conservation areas, and would lead to issues of dominating overshadowing of buildings to the south.

(c) Although the **noise and vibration impact** assessment concludes that it "...is expected to comply with the applicable regulations with regards to noise and vibration...", the impacts of the demolition and construction on nearby residents are typically awful.

(d) While the **waste impact** estimates suggest that "...>80% of demolition waste and >90% of construction waste will be diverted from landfill...", the contributions to global warming through the demolition, construction and transport processed should not be dismissed or underestimated. Cement manufacture, alone, contributes around 8% of the carbon dioxide global burden, and that is apart from everything else.

6. Conclusions. The presented proposal creates potentially negative changes to the local heritage character, with additional construction impacts including noise, vibration, dust, heavy vehicle movements, traffic and access, on top of undesirable contributions to global warming.

As quoted in recent public discourse regarding the state's planning vision (*Sunday Herald*, 14 June 2026), Premier Chris Minns stated: "*We can show the people of Sydney that in solving this housing crisis we can create a better Sydney.*" However, assessment of the actual impacts reveals that this proposal fails this benchmark. It does not "deliver a better Sydney"; it delivers overdevelopment at the direct expense of the community.

I strongly urge the Department of Planning to refuse development consent to the proposal as presented.

¹ As quoted in recent public discourse regarding the state's planning vision (*Sunday Herald*, 14 June 2026), Premier Chris Minns stated: "*We can show the people of Sydney that in solving this housing crisis we can create a better Sydney.*"