

Submission of an Objection to approval of DA for 'The 'High Technology Industry Williamtown'

The NSW government has earmarked Williamtown and Newcastle as key sites for their unconscionable drive to militarise Australia. They are investing heavily to develop these sites as a centralised hub for the manufacture of defence systems. Already Williamtown houses the largest companies directly supplying weapons and are therefore complicit in war crimes.

Already the largest of these companies, Lockheed Martin, has firmly embedded itself in our region. Lockheed Martin directly supplies F-35 jets and weapons to Israel. These armaments have been used to inflict massive casualties and deaths of civilians in Gaza.

Lockheed Martin is directly and knowingly profiting from war crimes and human rights abuses and are therefore complicit in these crimes. They have infiltrated our universities and our schools to influence research priorities and to manipulate resources, including our children, to hannel them to the study, development and production of weaponry.

Lockheed Martin seeks to normalise weapons development and to sanitise their culpability by cloaking their activities in 'science challenges' for primary school children (complete with cheap, free tat) and in what appears to be philanthropic funding for our universities. The company, in turn, is able to legitimise and profit from manipulating our community for its own benefit.

This leads me to the next shocking chapter of this drive by our state and federal governments to bow to pressure from powerful Western powers to increase our militarisation to benefit their global aims. Now the depth of this activity becomes ever more apparent and disturbing with the direct involvement of local government!

Local councils are expected to behave ethically and with transparency. However, we now find that Newcastle City Council and Port Stephens Council are establishing a precinct specifically for the lease of land to weapons manufacturers. This will then be used as a revenue stream for Council.

Newcastle City Council has a policy ruling out any investment with weapons manufacturers. It is not only in breach of their policy to profit from this activity, but it is unethical for them to profit from companies which trade on human right abuse and misery. It is also particularly egregious in the context of current global events.

I therefore strongly object to this development of 'High Technology Industry Williamtown' and appeal to the planning authority to reject and refuse this application.

I base this objection the following points.

1. This development is not in the Public Interest

The development for defence-related manufacturing and software development is patently not in the public interest.

It perpetuates normalisation of aggression and undermines peaceful and just solutions to global issues. Everything our

federal government is focusing on encourages the arms race between nations. It is a fallacy that arming ourselves to the extreme will improve health and security in Australia and globally. Weaponry destroys the lives of innocent civilians. We are all currently witnessing this in its most extreme and unopposed form.

Investing in this facility diverts skilled workers and resources away from the very critical transition to low carbon industries and renewable energy generation. Climate change is most urgent priority.

2. Ties between weapons manufacturers and our universities is unethical

Increasing cooperation between the University of Newcastle a weapons manufacturers are raising grave concerns among students, academics and the wider community. Our educational institutions should never be used as research facilities for inflicting harm to any life on earth. Highlighting the fostering of these connections with our university as some sort of positive is extremely abhorrent to all right-minded people.

3. This Project will be on PFAS contaminated land

There must be an independent review into PFAS contamination before this DA is finalised. The information available to date is insufficient to be able to manage these contaminants and to protect Tomago Sandbeds.

4. Councils are obliged to act ethically

The Local Government Act states councils MUST act ethically in the interests of their local communities. In the case of Astra Aerolab the council directly breaches its own policies in that council is to specifically identify investment in 'production or supply of armaments' to be avoided as it is a socially harmful activity. Newcastle City Council should be doing everything to distance itself completely from weapons manufacturers.

5. Councils are obliged to be accountable and transparent

Newcastle City Council has placed their DA on public exhibition without full disclosure. They have not named and have only referred to their client as the 'intended' occupant for this proposed facility. This is deliberately deceptive and can only be assumed it is designed to avoid scrutiny and objection by the community.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Chaston