



Around Hermitage Association Incorporated

(Association No: Y2479303) ABN 81411892559

Pokolbin, Hunter Valley Wine Country

C/- 763 Hermitage Road Pokolbin, NSW. 2320

19th August, 2024

NSW Government - Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Chris Eldred

State Significant Development

4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy St, Parramatta NSW 2150

Ref: Huntlee New Town - Stage 2 - SSD-70748466

Dear Chris,

I am writing on behalf of the membership of Around Hermitage Association, many of whom live on Old North Road, to formally object to the proposed development project Huntlee Stage 2, Residential large lots located at Old North Road, South of Huntlee Village.

Our members and the General Committee of our Association believe this project will have significant impacts on our community, businesses and the environment, which must be thoroughly addressed before proceeding. Our representative on the General Committee, Mr Jean Brochut has already submitted our joint concerns, but we wish to make sure that all members are represented through our Association's submission.

We are raising 5 main objections to the large lots Old North Road development concept documents:

1. Inadequate Traffic and Infrastructure proposal

The Old North Road Large Lots documentation states that Old North Road will be sealed (Doc J5 Indicative Old North Road Concept Area page 10), but there is no mention of improving the Black Creek Causeway to access Wine Country Drive.

The current state of the ONR dirt road (4.9km unsealed) and Black Creek causeway present several challenges and hazards to residents and motorists alike. During periods of rain (not even heavy rain), the causeway becomes submerged, posing major risks to the safety of residents, commuters and visitors in the area.

In addition the Black Creek causeway has already become inadequate for the level of traffic going through this road and is not safe for any increased traffic generated by new residential large lots development on Old North Road.

To mitigate the above concerns, we request the careful review of the project ONR large lots development in regards of Traffic and Infrastructure with considerations of:



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- a) the upgrade of the intersection between Wine Country Drive and Old North Road
- b) the sealing of Old North Road
- c) the upgrade of Black Creek causeway infrastructure to enable a safe access even in case of at least 20mm to 100mm rain. For instance, 2 to 3 meters elevation of Black Creek causeway should address most of the recurring small flooding events and ensure access to Wine Country Drive

2. Impact on Storm Water management and Ground Water Pollution

In the current documentation there is no mention of the impact of the residential large lots development on the management of Storm Water in the area.

Our concern is where will the rain/storm waters be directed as this will have a major impact on the rural/vineyard properties downstream, changing the way rain and storm waters are currently available and managed.

In addition, during the construction phase with mining materials possibly exposed and storm waters run-off, there will be a need to minimise ground water pollution that could impact all the agricultural production in this area.

To mitigate the above concerns, we request the careful review of the project ONR large lots development in regards of Storm Water Management with considerations of:

1. Preventing reduction or excess of water on the rural/vineyard properties downstream.
2. Preventing ground water pollution during the construction phase

3. Important Community Impacts

The development of residential lots is squeezed between 2 vineyards, olive orchards, cattle fields, and a large conservation, disconnected from the Huntlee villages and town centre.

Old North Road is part of the Food and Trail precinct defined by the Around Hermitage Association and supported by the local Wine and Tourism association. The inclusion of residential lots in this area is not compatible with the promotion of the Food and Trail precinct and the Wine and Tourism industry.

We want to bring to your attention that a large lots development in this area is not compatible with agricultural operations.

Existing vineyard operations include:

- spraying of chemicals such as Copper and Sulphur,



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- tractors running at night and early morning depending on weather conditions, therefore without hardly pre-planning.
- Gas gun running to manage the bird attacks on grapes and fruits from 7:00 am to 7:00pm

To mitigate the above concerns, we request the careful review of the project ONR large lots development in regards of its Community Impacts with considerations of:

1. Keeping a mandatory safety and sanitary distance of 100m required between new residential dwellings and the existing vineyards/orchards areas and 50 m to the fence of neighbouring properties
2. the formal understanding and agreement of the constraints the residential lots might be under by being close to agricultural operations
3. Preventing direct looking of existing habitable area - Private open space must be protected through adequate new large lot layout, additions of hedge screening devices including landscaping financed by the developer

4. Business impacts during the development phase

The development works will generate a lot of dust, noise and large trucks traffic that will impact the agricultural production (vines, grapes, olives, cattle), the wine sales and tasting business organised outdoors from Friday to Monday and the tourist accommodation and wedding venues established along Old North Road.

There is no mention of the impact of the rural residential development on the management of dust and heavy vehicles to mitigate these impacts, especially during weekends.

To mitigate the above concerns, we request the careful review of the project ONR large lots development in regards of Business Impacts with considerations of:

1. Ensuring that no construction works will occur on Saturdays and Sundays and that no trucks will be travelling on Old North Road during the weekend from Friday to Monday to ensure Hunter Visitors safety
2. Minimising the noise impact from new road access built that are very close to existing residences on both side of the Large Lot area

5. Hight risk of non compliance with Conservation Area Regulations

By creating new roads and dwellings near Old North Road, the development of residential lots will undermine further the control and management of accesses to the Conservation area to unauthorised persons and vehicles.



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This will increase the risk of a breach of the obligations to fully comply with the Conservation area management requirements. This is what can be observed already with the development of the Huntlee villages at the north of the Conservation area and near North Rothbury. Currently, none of the northern accesses to the conservation area are being efficiently controlled. As a result, a lot of unauthorised bikes and 4x4 vehicles are entering and trespassing the conservation area.

The Huntlee Development must comply with the Conservation area compliance requirements at all times.

To mitigate the above concern, we request the careful review of the project ONR large lots development with considerations of:

1. Protecting the Conservation area by implementing a proper control and management of unauthorised vehicles and persons at every access to the Conservation area; adequate gates, fencing and patrols.

We appreciate your attention to our objections and thank you for considering our recommendations to resolve the issues linked with the large lots development on Old North Road.

We look forward to your response. We are willing to participate in further discussions or provide additional information as needed.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Neely
President