

OBJECTION TO TARONGA ZOO PROPOSED SKY SAFARI

I, the undersigned, object to the proposed Sky Safari at Taronga Zoo.

It should be refused or substantially reduced in height.

PREFACE

The forested headlands of Bradleys Head, Chowder Head, Georges Head and Middle Head are the most significant feature of the landscape and beauty of Sydney Harbour.

As such, they are of both National and State significance.

The trees and bushland are a tribute to the legacy of previous generations who made wise decisions not to fell the trees and develop the land on these headlands.

The land of these headlands is managed in the public interest by NSW National Parks, the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, and Taronga Zoo.

Unfortunately, whilst Taronga Zoo is a good custodian of animals, they are the worst custodian of the flora of Bradleys Head.

For more than 30 years I have been a regular user of the ferry between Mosman Bay and Circular Quay. Thirty years ago, hardly a building at the zoo could be seen from the Harbour. The tree canopy was thick and the presence of the zoo could hardly be distinguished from other parts of Bradleys Head.

However, over the years, Taronga Zoo has gradually developed higher buildings and has subsequently removed trees in order to provide views from these buildings. For example, the Convention/Events Centre is promoted as having spectacular views of Sydney Harbour.

As a result, some buildings of Taronga Zoo are now plainly visible from ferries and from foreshores around Sydney Harbour, to the detriment of the State Significant landscape of Sydney Harbour.

This effect of creeping commercialization of Taronga Zoo must be resisted by the NSW Planning Department, and any development at Taronga Zoo must be subservient to the higher priority of preserving the bushland and landscape of Sydney Harbour.

OBJECTION

My primary objection is to the proposed height of the Sky Safari and its pylons.

The existing cablecar pylons are not highly visible from Sydney Harbour.

Whilst I acknowledge that a replacement facility should have larger cablecars, in order to transport a greater number of visitors from the ferry wharf to the top of the zoo, there is absolutely no transport reason why the pylons should be substantially higher than the existing.

I can only assume that Taronga Zoo intends the Sky Safari to be a commercial tourist attraction in its own right, with "spectacular Harbour views". Hence the proposal for pylons 3, 4 and 5 to be up to 36 metres high. Pylons of this extraordinary height, together with the moving cablecars, will create an unacceptable intrusion into views of and from Sydney Harbour.

Pylons of such extreme height will also require much wider footings than lower pylons, with more construction impact on the terrain and loss of trees.

In the interest of protecting the State Significant Sydney Harbour, I beseech the Department to refuse the Development Application, or to impose two conditions:

1. All pylons are to be less than 12 metres in height
2. All pylons, structures and cablecars are to painted bush green, with no advertising permitted.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "B. Watters". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script.

Brian Watters

6 Mistral Avenue, Mosman 2088