

# Ultimo Village Voice

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Chair - Yimmy Seifert; Vice Chair - Bill d'Anthes; Treasurer – Charlie Crone; Minutes Secretary – Kris Leveson; Communications & Publicity Officer - Patricia Johnson; DA Officer – Zena Vaassen

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Department of Planning and Environment  
Attn: Director – Key Site Assessments  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sirs

## Cockle Bay Wharf Redevelopment (Concept Proposal)

Ultimo Village Voice is a community group of Ultimo residents. We have numerous concerns about this development which will result in overdevelopment on Darling Harbour's waterfront, creating impacts on the public domain and adjacent areas. Details of our concerns are listed below.

First and foremost, we remind the Government that Darling Harbour is a gift to the people of New South Wales and that in 1984 the then premier of NSW, Neville Wran, announced the Government's decision to redevelop Darling Harbour and "return it to the people of Sydney" in time for Australia's 1988 bicentennial celebrations. Accordingly, public access and interests should be at the forefront of all planning decisions that affect this area.

## Scale Impacts

The proposal for a 235 metre commercial tower on the existing Cockle Bay Wharf marks a massive change in scale. The tower is excessively high, and would dominate Cockle Bay and surrounds, and add to cumulative impacts from other high rise plans and proposals in the precinct.

The fact that there have been replacements of low rise buildings with taller and denser buildings like the CBA office blocks is not a justification to build more high rise in Darling Harbour. Two wrongs do not make one right! We need to stop this inappropriate "change in character" which will make Darling Harbour no longer a pleasant place to visit with easy open access to the waterfront for all.

## View Impacts

The tower would significantly impact on views within Darling Harbour, and from Pyrmont Bridge and Ultimo/Pyrmont. The tower would devastate city skyline views from Pier 26 and dominate them from the Harbourside promenade; the promenade at Cockle Bay Wharf would have most

city views blocked. The tranquillity and pleasantness of these waterfront public spaces would be eroded. Skyline views from Tumbalong Park, vital to its amenity, would be interrupted.

Of great concern are view impacts from heritage significant Pyrmont Bridge, with most city skyline views blocked. The heavy presence of the tower directly adjacent to the bridge would dominate the experience of walking on this important bridge and substantially detract from its heritage values and views.

As mentioned above, Darling Harbour is dedicated public land and one of its vital roles is providing public access to the harbour, blue skies and a varied skyline. No particular development should dominate outlooks.

### Traffic & Transport Impacts

The proposal for up to 200 car parking spaces should be rejected outright; it is excessive and unacceptable given the proximity to other transport options and the already serious traffic congestion in the central business district road network. Any additional traffic generated by this development will only exacerbate this congestion.

### Pedestrian Access

Despite the close proximity to the city, there is lack of direct pedestrian access between Ultimo and Pyrmont to and from the city, especially after part of the previous walkway attached to the Western Distributor was removed for new lanes as part of the 2004 Cross City Tunnel changes.

Residents who want to go to the city are now forced to go via indirect routes into Darling Harbour and make their way to the city, despite promises that the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Centre Precinct redevelopment would improve access.

With the redevelopment of Darling Harbour including this development and the Harbourside redevelopment, it is an ideal opportunity to reinstate direct pedestrian access from Ultimo/Pyrmont to the city and extend the Harris/Fig Street walkway to provide direct access to the CBD.

### Community Benefit

There does not appear to be any provision of social infrastructure to support the development's new workers, and the existing CBD and nearby Ultimo and Pyrmont community. The developer contributions from this development should incorporate facilities such as childcare, aged care, sporting facilities (which were removed from Darling Harbour some years ago) on consultation with the local community.

### Conclusion

We submit that the proposed development, in its current form, will result in a development that is overbearing in size and does not appear to offer any public benefits that might help justify such a substantial redevelopment. We request that the building bulk be reduced and recessed from the waterfront, and the height of the podium level be reduced to that of the existing development to reduce the scale and overshadowing impacts. We submit that it's important to

retain the current open low-rise environment to ensure that Darling Harbour remains an attractive tourist and entertainment attraction. The government must act as custodian of the harbor and refuse this damaging proposal.

Regards

Yimmy Seifert  
Chair, Ultimo Village Voice