

## **Objection to the proposed development of the Forensic Pathology and Coroners Court, Main Avenue Lidcombe, 2141 DP: 1/850697**

---

I am writing to raise my objection to the proposed development of the Forensic Pathology and Coroners Court ('the facility') on the corner of Main Avenue and Joseph St in Lidcombe, NSW 2141 (DP: 1/850697) based on the following points that I believe are key issues that need to be acknowledged and addressed both by NSW Health and the NSW Department of Justice, as they affect public safety in the local adjoining community (Botanica):

1. The 24/7 nature of a facility of this type bordering on a major residential area
2. Placement of the entry/exit to the public carpark of the facility in Main Avenue
3. Risking the safety of all Botanica residents
4. Disregard for heritage listing of Main Avenue.

Addressing each of these points in turn:

### **1. The 24/7 nature of a facility of this type bordering on a major residential area**

The location of other coroner's courts around Australia, for example 65 Kavanagh Street, Southbank in Victoria and 302 King William Street, Adelaide in South Australia, are all in central city locations, not beside a major residential area of more than 700 families (Botanica) as is the case for the proposed NSW Coroners Court and Forensic Pathology facility. As one of the families in Botanica, I am extremely concerned not only by the nature of the proposed facility, but also its 24/7 operation that will potentially subject residents to:

- Unwanted media attention (for high profile cases) and emergency vehicles in our quiet suburban streets at any time of the day or night
- Any toxic chemical spills if Main Avenue is used for the delivery of chemicals for the mortuary and forensic pathology labs
- Disorientated, distressed families trying to navigate their way around Botanica trying to find how to gain entry or exit from the proposed public carpark in Main Avenue.

Not only distressed families, but also friends and relatives of a deceased person whose behaviour may be menacing or aggressive will be visiting the proposed facility 24/7. I have had personal experience of this type of behaviour from families of young criminals who physically assaulted my husband and who we were unfortunate to meet at their court appearance at the Bidura Children's Court in Glebe. These types of unsavoury characters have no place in a residential neighbourhood where their unsociable behaviour may pose a threat to all residents.

### **5. Placement of the entry/exit to the public carpark of the facility in Main Avenue**

One of the most compelling and concerning issues with the proposed facility is the design of the entry/exit point from Main Avenue within Botanica, one of the two main entry and exit points for local residents.

This design is completely inappropriate because only south-bound visitors from Joseph Street will be able to enter into, and exit from, the proposed public carpark in Main Avenue. All other visitors will only be able to gain access to the proposed public carpark if they enter into Botanica Drive, the main entrance into the Botanica, from Joseph Street. While the

development plans show that traffic should travel along Botanica Drive around Central Park into Main Avenue, a quick look at a map, or a GPS system, will quickly direct a driver down Betty Cuthbert Drive as the fastest route onto Main Avenue. Most people new to an area will be using some sort of navigational device and Betty Cuthbert Drive will take full brunt of this increase in traffic flow.

Betty Cuthbert Drive, like all other streets within the Botanica Estate, is a narrow residential street that has been designed for local traffic, not to catering for the increased traffic that such a significant government 24/7 facility will bring into the area. It is common practice for residents to park their cars on both sides of the road, narrowing our suburban streets even further. It is therefore clear that a public/entry via Main Avenue would be a huge compromise to road and therefore the safety of residents throughout Botanica.

## **2. Risking the safety of all Botanica residents**

The Botanica Estate is a quiet and safe area for more than 700 families, with Central Park at the heart of the community – a park where young and old walk, cycle and enjoy their leisure time. Significantly, Botanica is also the temporary (for respite) and permanent home for people with spinal cord injuries (Ferguson Lodge is the only facility of its kind in NSW) who enjoy the freedom and ease of being able to move around Botanica in their wheelchairs. There is also a childcare facility very close to Ferguson Lodge.

Creating the public carpark entry and exit via Main Avenue will bring increased traffic to Botanica placing everyone at risk, and particularly the most vulnerable – the young, old and disabled within our community.

## **3. Disregard for heritage listing of Main Avenue**

Botanica Estate has a rich history from its days of being a hospital when Rookwood Asylum was established in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. When the current developers, Australand (now Frasers) created the Botanica Estate, they had to ensure they complied with and conserved those parts of the area that had been graded as being of historical significance. This included Main Avenue, which was officially graded in the 2002 Lidcombe Hospital Site Conservation Management Plan (CMP) by Godden MacKay Logan, as an element of exceptional significance.

The proposed development of the public carpark on Main Avenue will necessitate the demolition of historic brickwork, verges and plantings, which have been so carefully conserved by Australand to date. The Gatehouse at the Main Avenue entrance shows the historical main entrance into the hospital and is also heritage listed. With an increased traffic flow into Main Avenue, the whole historical integrity will be put at risk and expose the Gatehouse in particular to damage.

## **An Alternative Solution**

While I understand the proposed facility is a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) and as such will most likely go ahead despite community opposition, I believe a compromise should be made to respect and safeguard the adjoining community of Botanica.

While I also understand NSW Health's and NSW Department of Justice's wish to protect the safety of their staff, funeral directors, police and other service workers who need to access the facility, by having a separate entrance to the public carpark from Main Avenue within a residential community, the safety of the public, i.e. our Botanica community, is then compromised in more ways than one, as I've previously discussed.

To reduce the impact of this proposed facility on our existing community and roadways, I would propose a separate entrance be created for the public carpark from Weeroona Road. While I acknowledge this is the proposed entry for the services carpark, it would be possible to create a separation between the two areas, securing one from the other. Considering the significance of the facility and its 24/7 operation, it would seem pertinent to have a permanently staffed gatehouse at the services entrance to increase security and safety for services staff.