

Karen Somervaille  
84 Newbridge Road  
BLAYNEY NSW 2799

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25 May 2015

Planning Services,  
Department of Planning & Environment,  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Manager – Industry Assessments

Dear Sir

**Proposed Blayney Abattoir – SSD 6594**

I am writing in relation to the above proposal to build a new feral goat abattoir. I know the site well as I live only 350 metres from the proposal in a heritage listed home.

I have been a full time resident of Blayney for 13 years but have regularly been visiting the Shire for over 20 years. Since moving to Blayney I have set up a small and very successful business, Athol Gardens. Once I found my feet in a new community and with my new business I applied to join the Tourism Committee and the Heritage Committee both of which are sub committees of Blayney Shire Council. I joined these two committees for obvious reasons, they reflected my business interests and my home and I wanted to help build a stronger more authentic community in the Shire.

As Hugh Mackay AO has said we are social creatures and to reach our potential we must engage with each other, with our community, and we need to work for a society that sustains and nurtures the many, not just the fortunate few. I have personally contributed my time and money to the community by hosting many charity events, attending community meetings and just generally being a part of our community. I love living in Blayney, we have a caring community and a strong sense of community.

Newbridge Road where the development proposal is being considered is mostly rural. I live on about 350 acres, 8 acres of which have manicured gardens. The protection of my homes' visual and historical qualities is extremely important to me.

I vigorously oppose the development on the grounds contained in the following documents, lodged separately with the Department:

- (a) a report from SJB Planning dated 25 May 2015 responding on the merits of the proposal, with accompanying expert reports;
- (b) a letter from Maddocks dated 25 July 2015 setting out serious issues going to the legality of any consent issued in response to the EIS ; and
- (c) my letter dated 25 May 2015 describing the nature of my business, Athol Gardens, and the impact on the business of the proposed development.

There are two further aspects that need to be mentioned:

## **1 Community consultation**

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The Department of planning in a letter dated 14 August 2014 and addressed to the Principal Consultant to Metziya emphasised the importance of “comprehensive, detailed and genuine community consultation” during the preparation of the EIS for the proposed abattoir. This process must ensure that the community is both informed of the proposal and is actively engaged in issues of concern to them. Sufficient information must be provided to the community so that it has a good understanding of what is being proposed and of the potential impacts. So far this has not happened.

The proponent though implies in the EIS that there was extensive community consultation. This is simply not the case. The Department should not be satisfied that this explicit and fundamental requirement of the SEARs has been anywhere near met. The communications plan clearly was to provide as little information as possible to the community. This is not surprising as the consultant knew, from his former time as general manager of the Shire at a time when Blayney had an abattoir, that the proposal would be extremely unpopular given its proposed location.

On 18 September 2014 at 7.00pm there was a public meeting for which there was a notice in the classified section of the Blayney Chronicle on 11 September 2014. The heading did not refer to an abattoir. There was no notice in the paper on 18 September 2014, the actual date of the meeting. At this meeting the few residents who attended were told that the new abattoir would have very low impact on surrounding landholders. Ray Hornery, a former General Manager of Blayney Council and now consultant to Metziya Pty Limited addressed the residents on behalf of his employer but most questions could not be answered in full or truthfully as the EIS had not been completed. The standard answer was that people could read the EIS when it is released for exhibition.

The proponent has refused to hold a public meeting to explain and justify this location and allay very legitimate fears. There can only be one reason for this: it has its best chance of approval if residents are kept in the dark. The proponent has not been consultative and when invited by Blayney Shire Council to attend a Community Information Night refused to attend to answer any questions of the 140 concerned residents (see attachment).

Even in this last week there were community members who did not know of the proposal, others have been told that “it is a done deal”, that Athol Gardens has been sold to George Tanos. All simply lies planted in the community to create confusion.

There is only one reason why this site was chosen: it is adjacent to the existing cold store complex. So the profit from the abattoir is therefore maximised, but there is a cost. But the scandalous fact is that cost is not paid by the developer, but by the local residents and the wider community of Blayney.

## **2 Alternative sites were not genuinely considered**

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The EPA Guidelines on new abattoirs state:

“Site selection is the critical environmental issue for abattoirs. Careful site selection can greatly reduce the environmental nuisance. Relevant site information should include ... the closeness to existing and

future housing developments, and to land zoned to permit housing or other land uses not compatible with the proposed development.”

They set out the factors to be considered in selecting the site<sup>1</sup>. Absolutely none of the factors recommended by the EPA was considered in the selection of the Newbridge Rd site. It was selected purely because of its proximity to the cold storage facility and not for any other reason. Economic and financial advantage to the applicant was the sole driver. The putting forward of this development on this site in disregard of these clear guideline. It is an opportunistic attempt to maximize personal advantage and profit at the expense of adjoining landholders and the wider community. It is probably fortified by the success to date in having a massive warehouse complex erected on rural zoned land without proper analysis of environmental effects and the ease of getting away with non-compliance with conditions of consent.

On 14 April 2015 Ray Hornery and Nicole Armit visited Athol to deliver a copy of the EIS documentation. My husband and I had a discussion in which we said that the conversation was to be on the record. After some hesitation Nicole responded that “what we are discussing is a matter of public record”.

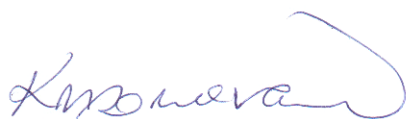
During the conversation David asked whether any alternatives sites had been looked at. Ray Hornery replied “None”. Nicole Armit sought to qualify this response by referring to the positives of the location and Ray Hornery then referred to the proximity of the freezers which are expensive to build and run, and the impossibility of tapping into the CVO pipeline except at the beginning of the line. I think this conversation sums it all up.

Having set out the above I ask you respectfully to reject the development proposal. I am astounded at our Council for not taking a more proactive stand in this matter and, given the community reaction, recommending relocation in their submission. I am astounded that our elected members are not actually listening to their constituents. I note there are so many people, leaders in the community, in opposition to this proposal and hope that they have taken the trouble to write

Please take notice of the people, as Hugh Mackay, AM espouses “A good life is lived at the heart of a thriving community among people we trust and within an environment of mutual respect.”

I confirm that I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous two years.

Yours sincerely,



Karen Somerville

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<sup>1</sup> These include closeness to existing housing and incompatible land uses, site hydrology, flood liability, closeness to watercourses, prevailing wind conditions, direction of drift of odour, effects of noise and local road network.

**From:** Rebecca Ryan (<mailto:RRyan@blayney.nsw.gov.au>)

**Sent:** Wednesday, 22 April 2015 10:39 AM

**To:** [atholgardens@bigpond.com](mailto:atholgardens@bigpond.com)

**Cc:** Sonia Hibbert

**Subject:** Community Meeting

Karen

Thankyou for your request that Council convene a public meeting in regards to the proposed Smallstock Abattoir in Blayney, the EIS of which is currently on Public Exhibition.

Council has offered to facilitate such a meeting to Metzzyia Pty Limited, however to date both Mr Hornery and Mr Tanos have declined the offer stating 'all questions and concerns from the last public meeting have been addressed in the EIS and these are available at Council as required'. Please note that there is a link to the EIS on NSW Planning and Environment website from Council's website, as well as a couple of hard copies which are available at the Council office front counter and Blayney Library.

NSW Planning and Environment as Consent Authority for this development, has invited Council to comment on the proposal including providing advice on the recommended Conditions of Consent. Council will be seeking to negotiate a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA), the basis of which needs to have a nexus with any positive or negative impacts of the proposed development.

In order to meet this timeframe for submitting comments to NSW Planning and Environment, by Monday 25 May 2015, Council will be convening an Extraordinary Council Meeting on Monday 18 May commencing at 6pm to formally consider this matter.

Council will conduct a Public Information session on Thursday 14 May at the Blayney Shire Community Centre commencing at 6pm. Please note that the objective of this community consultation is for Council to present the Draft recommended Conditions of Consent and proposed structure of a VPA, which will be included in the Extraordinary Meeting Business Paper. Council staff do not have the scientific, engineering or Abattoir operations knowledge to address any questions relating specifically to the proposed development and our information source will be the EIS.

It is neither a meeting in support or in opposition to the proposal, rather an opportunity to engage and inform the community about Council's submission to the NSW Government for consideration. Council will be encouraging anyone with comments to make their own submission directly to NSW Planning and Environment.

I will ensure adequate notification time and promotion is given to allow the Blayney Shire community and businesses an opportunity to attend and whilst I will be inviting Metzzyia Pty Limited to attend this meeting, I cannot guarantee their participation.

Regards

Rebecca

Rebecca Ryan

General Manager

Blayney Shire Council

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