

24 September 2018

Dr Liz Develin
A/ Secretary
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Dr Develin,

Attn: Matthew Rosel

Re: MP08_0098 Mod 13 – Construction of a new hotel and residential tower and alterations to existing building

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on *MP08_0098 Mod 13 – Construction of a new hotel and residential tower and alterations to existing building*. We understand this is an application for a Section 75W modification of the project approval for The Star City Casino, Pyrmont, comprising:

- Partial demolition of existing building / structures
- Construction of a 237 metre tower including podium and basement to provide for 220 hotel rooms, 204 residential apartments, 204 basement car parking spaces, and a neighbourhood centre within podium
- Construction of an extension above The Star, Pirrama Road frontage to provide for a multiuse landscaped event-space and amenities for The Star, hotel and residential uses
- An overall increase in gross floor area from 48,840 m² (to 189,040m²);
- Internal and external amendments to the existing buildings, including façade works, amendments to tenancies, roofs, awnings and associated works
- Amended operational hours and patron capacities for food and beverage tenancies;
- Pirrama Road transport interchange, loading dock and local road infrastructure upgrades;
- Lighting strategy including special events lighting;
- Stormwater, public domain and landscaping upgrades;
- Building and business identification signage and road signage upgrades, and
- Consolidate/ surrender existing development consents and signage approvals.

We would like to provide the comments below for the Department's consideration.

The Urban Taskforce supports the modification as outlined above. Our reasons are provided below.

1. The project complies with the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) issued by the NSW Department of Planning & Environment in May 2016

The proposed modification application clearly complies with the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements issued under section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* on 9 May 2018.

2. The proposed tower reinforces the Pyrmont Peninsula as a ridge similar to the Sydney CBD

From an urban design perspective, the proposed 237 metre tower will form a vital component of the emerging City West skyline. The tall building ridgeline of the CBD will always be the iconic skyline form of the city. However, recent and proposed developments in Darling Harbour, as well as the future redevelopment of the Bays Precinct as a seamless expansion of the CBD, will continue to contribute to the overall evolution of a much more significant Central Sydney skyline, featuring distinctive ridgelines of tall towers.

The contribution of the tower to the identity of Pyrmont as both a singular marker and later, part of a future cluster or ridgeline is essential. The tower provides a landmark that marks the western extent of the emerging 'global waterfront' precinct and provides balance symmetry to the visual experience of building massing as viewed from Darling Harbour.

3. The final building design is the result of a thorough design excellence competition process

The proponents, the Star Entertainment Group has ensured that design excellence was a key principle guiding the development of the development. The final scheme was decided by a five-person Design Review Panel (DRP), comprised of highly respected government and industry representatives (Peter Poulet, NSW Government Architect at the time of the competition & Executive Director, Office of State Architect), Lisa-Maree Carrigan (Director, Group GSA), Craig Allchin (Adjunct Professor of Architecture, University of Technology, Sydney and Director Six Degrees Urban Planning Pty Ltd), James Doolan (Regional Vice - President Hotel Development, Asia Pacific, Marriott International) and Greg Hawkins (Managing Director, The Star Sydney).

Three leading architectural firms contested the right to create the tower design, with the preferred design decided by the DRP. After considerable community consultation, internationally acclaimed architects, fjmt were eventually selected to design the proposed hotel and residential tower.

The rigorous design excellence competition process has successfully elevated design quality and ensured buildings located on key sites, such as The Star's tower, are of an exceptional standard and the community can have confidence that the final result will be a beautiful, iconic landmark.

4. The Star has engaged in a thorough and collaborative community consultation process

The Star has always sought to involve the local community in the design process at an early stage, including holding panel sessions for representatives of local community groups as well

as other stakeholders. This ongoing consultation commenced as early as October 2016 and has been continuing ever since.

The chosen design of the proposed tower and podium included substantial input from the community. As part of their deliberations, the Design Review Panel were provided with community and stakeholder feedback gathered via community and stakeholder information sessions. Local community groups and key residential neighbours were also invited to a daytime session, where architects presented their designs and answered questions. The community groups could review the design options and provided input into the Design Excellence process through a facilitated feedback session after each presentation as well as through an online survey.

A broad range of engagement has been undertaken to ensure the community was appropriately informed and consulted throughout the planning process. Various engagement methods and tools were used to gather feedback for the Design Excellence process and pre-lodgement period.

As clearly demonstrated in the Community Consultation Report (*The Star – Community Consultation Report, prepared by KJA, 23 January 2018*) the proponent has proactively engaged with the community to address concerns raised regarding the proposed development where possible. The end result is a well-informed design which reflects the community's input and values.

5. The modification to The Star will attract additional local and international tourists to Sydney and provide significant economic benefit

As outlined in PWC's report, *Economic Impact Assessment of The Star – Modification 13, December 2017, PWC* the Australian Government is striving for an ambitious growth target to double overnight domestic and international visitor expenditure by 2020 (Tourism 2020). To facilitate this growth, the development pipeline needs to meet a target of 6,000 to 20,000 new rooms by 2020. The then Federal Tourism minister, Andrew Robb, suggested a push towards the development of new five- or six-star hotels, to promote Australia as a premium brand (PWC, 2017).

With these targets for tourism, and the focus on high-end accommodation, the contribution of The Star (including modification 13) is critical for success.

The Star is a fundamental driver of economic growth through tourism in Sydney, with benefits flowing through to the rest of NSW. PWC's report the following estimates of economic value to the State.

'The incremental benefits generated by the Modification 13 investments are estimated to make the following economic contributions to the NSW economy:

- *an additional \$800 million in GSP to the NSW economy from FY2017 to FY2030 (in real, present value terms) and will create an extra 754 jobs on average every year (from FY2017 to FY2030)*
- *an increase in household consumption in the NSW economy by \$329 million from FY2017-FY2030 (in real, present value terms).*

An industry breakdown of the economic impacts of Modification 13 shows that the most strongly impacted industries (measured in output, in real, present value terms) are:

- Construction: \$447 million
- Retail and Wholesale Trade: \$237 million
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services & Administrative and Support Services: \$232 million
- Accommodation and Food Services: \$217 million
- Manufacturing: \$163 million

Taking these incremental benefits into account, following the completion of Modification 13, The Star's total economic contribution to the NSW economy is expected to include:

- the creation of an additional 7,800 jobs each year (on average from FY2017 to FY2030)
- a \$7.8 billion increase in GSP from FY2017 to FY2030 (in real, present value terms)
- an additional \$4.3 billion in NSW exports from FY2017 to FY2030 (in real, present value terms)
- a \$2.4 billion increase in direct nominal tax revenue for the NSW Government from FY2017 to FY2030 in present value terms
- a \$2.3 billion increase in direct nominal tax revenue for the Commonwealth Government from FY2017 to FY2030 in present value terms.'

These significant economic impacts are hugely beneficial to the state of NSW as well as to Sydney, and are particularly critical at a time when the property market is beginning to decline.

6. Local community facilities are included as part of the development, including a 4 level Neighbourhood Centre

The modification includes substantial benefits to the local community, including the 4 level Pyrmont Neighbourhood Centre, which was identified by the community through part of the consultation process. The Neighbourhood Centre will provide a significant social benefit on the site and Pyrmont locality by providing a diverse range of social spaces for use by the local community.

The Urban Taskforce is always willing to work closely with the Department to provide a development industry perspective on these issues. Please feel free to contact me on telephone number 9238 3927 to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

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Chris Johnson AM

Chief Executive Officer

Urban Taskforce Australia