

I object to the Powerhouse Parramatta Project SSD-10416.

This proposed development threatens to destroy the surrounding environment and Parramatta's esteemed heritage buildings. The Environmental Impact Statement fails to detail the historical and environment importance of the site.

Changes to zoning and loss of open spaces and vegetation have contributed to the continual overdevelopment of densely populated areas. Green areas and canopy cover are continuously targeted to make way for heavily populated lots, contributing to increased pressure on infrastructure and environmental devastation.

In the 2014 Australian study, *Benchmarking Australia's Urban Tree Canopy: An i-Tree Assessment* by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (University of Technology Sydney (UTS)), provided 139 Local Governments in urban and semi-urban environments an estimate of land surface cover. This study was part of the *2020 Vision* funded by Horticulture Australia Limited, in an effort to work towards a 20% increase in the level of green space in Local Government Areas across the country. The continual removal of trees in the City of Parramatta is especially alarming given the devastating impact that the Sydney Light Rail project has had on the environment and community, as this study was completed before rail construction began.

The study outlines the benefits of vegetation in urban landscapes including the biophysical, economic and social attributes. Mature trees are imperative in reducing the 'urban heat island effect' by regulating the temperature of surrounding dwellings, which in turn reduces the need to power air conditioners in the summer. This is an important climate change adaptation strategy. Furthermore, trees also prevent stormwater from carrying pollutants to the ocean by reducing the extent of hard impervious surfaces. They provide habitat for native fauna and improve air quality, which is especially desirable in metropolitan areas. (*Benchmarking Australia's Urban Tree Canopy: An i-Tree Assessment, Final Report 2014*, p.4, paragraph 2).

According to the study, The City of Parramatta has only 23% of canopy cover compared to Pittwater Council's 59% cover rate. Parramatta must continue to uphold the *Greening Sydney Plan* to "improve the diversity and abundance of locally-indigenous plants and animals in the City". This includes creating "corridors that link larger areas of habitat, facilitating dispersal of flora and fauna species throughout the LGA and thereby improving the ecological health of the City. (*Greening Sydney Plan*, p.18, point 4.2, paragraph 3).

The findings of the i-Tree study also reveal that, "in the Sydney region there is a band of relatively low tree canopy stretching from the city's eastern suburbs to Parramatta in the west. Within this band lie older, established LGAs with relatively high population densities that developed along the Parramatta Road corridor with Sydney's expansion. Clearly, a strategic approach to managing urban heat in Sydney should focus on improving tree cover throughout this corridor." (*Benchmarking Australia's Urban Tree Canopy: An i-Tree Assessment, Final Report 2014*, p.37, paragraph 2).

According to the City of Parramatta's *Bushland and Fauna Surveys October 2016 – April 2017*, over 130 native species were identified in the region. Twelve of these are threatened by

extinction. Some of these species include Dural Land Snail, Green and Golden Bell Frog, Powerful Owl, Red-Crowned Toadlet and the Varied Sitella. "This project illustrates that the City of Parramatta Local Government Area provides habitat for threatened species and more common sedentary species and is important temporary habitat for seasonal migrants and locally nomadic species." (p.2, point 1). The proposed development of Parramatta will undo the work that the City of Parramatta has undergone to conserve its local wildlife.

What is now known about the ecological services that trees and green spaces provide is staggering. New South Wales gave permission to clear over 7,000 hectares of native vegetation in 2015-16. This is an increase of 800% in three years. Australia is the only nation in the developed world to make the World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) global list of deforestation hotspots. (Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), 31 October 2018).

Furthermore, in the UK, the statutory basis establishing the status of trees is set out in the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*. Section 197 places a statutory duty on councils to ensure that when granting planning permission, they make adequate provision for the "preservation and planting of trees" which is "necessary in connection with the grant of such permission". This gives trees significant status and results in better planning that benefits the community. New South Wales needs better environmental protection laws, and this is only one example of how we can prevent the unnecessary removal of trees. Author and historian Jill Jones states that trees should no longer be considered as "expensive ornaments" in cities.

The loss and modification of habitat due to land clearing and urbanisation is an ongoing threat to our environment and critically endangered species. These threats will intensify with projected increases in human population and usage of open space and Parramatta's heritage and environment must be preserved and protected.

We risk losing the history, character and species native to Parramatta. We have a responsibility to protect the landscape and it is evident that we need to implement change in order to ensure that the environment CAN co-exist *within* urban developments.

Please find attached the sources that have been cited in this letter.

Thank you for your time and looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,  
Mik Way