

We,

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of

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Director-General

having made no political donations,

and agreeing to the Department's Privacy Statement,

wish to make the following submission relating to the proposed Darling Harbour redevelopment, to which we both object.

We strongly support the Group Submission relating to application SSD 5878; we wish to express our **very strong opposition** to this proposed redevelopment, particularly for the following reasons:

1. There are many very immediate infrastructure deficiencies in Sydney City, particularly in roads and transportation, which need to be addressed with alacrity. The proposed redevelopment of Darling Harbour does nothing to resolve any of these deficiencies: instead it intensifies those relating to traffic congestion and parking, and to the overpopulation within the City area, by the construction of high-rise apartment blocks on land which is a part of a tourist, pleasure and recreational park.

The whole of the area in front of Paddy's Market and adjacent to Chinatown is part of the Darling Harbour recreation area. It is totally inappropriate to use any part of Darling Harbour for the construction of residential areas, particularly of high-rise blocks of flats.

2. The cost of this proposed redevelopment is exorbitant and totally unreasonable. The raison d'être of the entire project, we have been told, is based upon the contention that Sydney is missing out to Melbourne on major national and international conferences being held in Australia because we do not have a venue large enough to accommodate them. The proposed project is being undertaken with the expressed objective of providing a replacement of larger capacity for the existing Convention Centre: yet even this is not planned to accommodate really large conventions. Conversely, we are to destroy the present Entertainment Centre because it is too big, building a new, smaller Entertainment Centre to accommodate conventions that will be too big for the new Convention Centre!

Why on earth can we not retain and extend the present Entertainment Centre's very large meeting room with additional breakout and dining areas, and hold the large conventions there! The present deficiency could thus be overcome for a comparatively minor expenditure.

3. There is little merit in the architectural quality or originality in the designs demonstrated in the Destination Sydney consortium's drawings and models. These



were most disappointing, exhibiting a paucity of architectural imagination - commonplace, unexciting and undistinguished, messy, deficient in architectural freshness and ingenuity. There has been no demonstration of the style of architecture for the proposed tower blocks of flats to be erected on the site of the present Entertainment Centre.

The Sydney Morning Herald gave some prominence to architect Philip Cox's condemnation of the destruction of the Exhibition Centre as "an act of vandalism". This building is of distinctive design that merits heritage protection.



When the Sydney Opera House was in its planning stage a competition invited architects worldwide to provide design concepts for the proposed building: this resulted in the exalting originality of the new theatre. Surely, if we were to tear down the Darling Harbour bicentennial buildings, this could only be justified by our constructing replacements that are architecturally original and exciting - elating! Therefore, should not the consortium have been in the very first place promoting a means whereby our most creative, innovative and distinguished architects be invited to propose designs that are comparable in originality and architectural ingenuity to those of the Sydney Opera House and of the most celebrated contemporary buildings erected in major international cities?

4. Darling Harbour is Sydney City's tourist, pleasure and recreational area. The proposed redevelopment injects a gross and totally unacceptable invasion of our City's regenerative park by a high-density warren of tenements, threatening to compromise the predominant purpose, cogency and efficacy of the entire Darling Harbour.

Are we prepared to allow this commercially oriented, profit-seeking Consortium to throw up mercenary monstrosities immediately adjacent to, and blocking, the whole of the South-Eastern end of Darling Harbour, overshadowing the heritage-listed, height-controlled area of Chinatown, and creating a precedent for the further destruction of this pleasant environment with the possibilities of a multitude of future high-rise blocks of flats? Has an Environmental Impact Statement been prepared in relation to these 1,400 units, plus 1,000 student rooms, hotel, shops etc?

These proposed blocks are designed to absorb totally the Entertainment Centre Forecourt that currently separates Paddy's Market from the present Entertainment Centre, constructing solid walls and shopfronts right up to the tramline alignment and Harbour Street. We strongly suspect that the profits to be derived from these flats is the overriding - if not the sole - purpose of the planned and almost total destruction of this area of Darling Harbour including the monorail facility, as it was created only twenty-five years ago to celebrate the Australian Bicentenary.



5. A 'European Style' courtyard is to be built for the benefit of the new apartment blocks, no doubt enhancing their sale value, but at the expense of the present forecourt paved area, which will reduce Hay Street and the adjoining public space to a narrow street with the loss of the present willow trees, the proposed new apartment blocks being thrown immediately against Paddy's Market and The Peak.

It is understood that the sale of the new flats is intended to offset the extravagant 2.5 billion dollar cost of demolishing and reconstructing the Exhibition/Entertainment/Convention buildings. Is this the unstated, but underlying reason for demolishing the

present Entertainment Centre - to make way for a concentration of profitable high-rise apartment blocks?

6. The Monorail? As it exists the Monorail is an attractive feature of Darling Harbour that evokes the interest and delight of most visitors. In the City it runs above traffic jams! It is a delightful 'toy railway' for the children; for everyone else it conveniently serves the whole of Darling Harbour, linking Glebe, Pyrmont and the City. Why must it be dismantled - is this purely to make space for the proposed blocks of apartments having regard to the profits these will generate to offset the costs of this entire extravagant project?

Would it not be sensible to extend the monorail to continue above George Street, forming the proposed new public transport system instead of closing George Street to all traffic except the predicted tramway (which proposal is considered insane by anyone familiar with the infuriating traffic congestion caused by Melbourne's tramways. It is not without very convincing reason that both Brisbane and Sydney disposed of their trams decades ago!)

At present Sydney has a Free Bus facility that is enthusiastically utilised and greatly appreciated by both residents and visitors. Would not a free Monorail extended to serve both Darling Harbour and the City provide a unique experience for visitors and residents alike, giving them a vibrant view of Sydney? This would keep George Street open for normal traffic while dispensing with the crazy notion of trams.

7. ***Is no sane critical assessment to be made of the colossal 2.5 billion dollar public expense of this whole ill considered, extravagant and unnecessary exercise!***

