

# PYRMONTACTION

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Director-General

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Mr Sam Haddad,  
Director-General,  
Department of Planning and Infrastructure,  
PO Box 39,  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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Attention Matthew Rosal

Dear Mr Haddad,

Darling Harbour Redevelopment

Pyrmont Action members have attended a number of consultations with the Darling Harbour Live team and representatives from Infrastructure NSW which provided the brief for this redevelopment. In principle, we do not oppose the redevelopment, and, indeed, we can see opportunities for the Haymarket Precinct development, in particular, to provide much needed facilities that have not been provided elsewhere, including at Barangaroo, Central Park, Pyrmont, and Harold Park. We do, however, have a number of concerns about the redevelopment as a whole, and would like to see the DA for the Haymarket Precinct address more of the community's concerns regarding social, educational and sporting infrastructure.

Exhibition, Entertainment, Convention and Hotel Precincts – From the briefing sessions we have attended, we support the increased and improved linkages between Darling Harbour and Pyrmont and Ultimo, but would like to see the following concerns addressed:

- 1.0 Parking – There will be a reduction in parking across the whole Darling Harbour precinct, noting that 600 public parking spaces were transferred from the existing parking station at Haymarket to the Darling Quarter development. In total there are currently 2,200 parking spaces to serve the whole precinct to be reduced to 1932 spaces (including the Darling Quarter spaces). The Darling Quarter, plus the enlarged exhibition/entertainment/hotel/convention – and the Haymarket commercial/residential precinct – will see a huge increase in demand for parking. We are advised that on occasions up to 27,000 could be expected in and around Tumbalong Park alone. It is certain that Darling Harbour parking will overflow into adjacent suburbs, especially Pyrmont and Ultimo, exacerbating existing parking problems. In the absence of any public transport from the CBD to Darling Harbour when the monorail is



removed, many people will have no option but to drive to the new facilities.

*Recommendation: That measures be introduced that ensure that patrons of Darling Harbour who bring cars to the precinct are directed away from streets in adjoining suburbs during big events; that new public transport measures be introduced, including water transport and shuttle light rail from the CBD, Central and Eastern and Western suburbs, with parking stations available at the outer stations.*

- 2.0 Traffic – We support in principle measures which will reduce the amount of traffic coming into the CBD one of which is the reduction in the number of parking spaces. However, in the absence of additional public transport across the metropolitan area, inevitably there will be a significant traffic impact on local streets and intersections, not only during construction, but thereafter. The Sydney Morning Herald's report (15/4/2013 pp 12-13) highlights the growing prevalence of "rat runs", one of which involves traffic leaving the CBD via Ultimo Road/Darling Drive, around Pyrmont Point to Bank Street in order to access the Western Distributor. Pyrmont residents are increasingly reporting that it can take up to an hour to travel around 400 metres along Bank Street in peak hours. In addition, poor configuration of traffic lights in and around Pyrmont result in long delays for pedestrians and cyclists.

Large-scale developments in the Bays Precinct are already adding substantial traffic to the Western Distributor and Anzac Bridge, with more in the pipeline. The failure to assess the CUMULATIVE traffic impact of all large-scale developments results in yet more poor, piecemeal planning decisions, which can only be addressed by investment in new public transport infrastructure.

*Recommendation: The Government should convene a Working Group of representatives of RMS, the City of Sydney, DHL and local community groups, to look at the CUMULATIVE impact of Barangaroo, Darling Harbour, Central Park, CPT at White Bay and devise measures that must be taken to ensure that surrounding suburbs do not become further gridlocked; that pedestrians are given priority in the phasing of traffic lights; that parking stations are provided at transport nodes at perimeter locations served by more frequent public transport.*

Public Transport - Contrary to assertions made at both the information forums and in the documentation, there is very poor public transport serving Darling Harbour. The only service which actually takes people into





the CBD is to be removed and the Government is still very vague on both the details and timetable associated with the extensions to the light rail into the CBD. There is currently no bus service along Darling Drive, and only one notoriously unreliable and infrequent bus service down Harris Street (501) which terminates at Town Hall. It will be necessary to provide for shuttle tram services, in addition to the regular service, on event days. We have been advised that Darling Harbour Live is not responsible for decisions relating to public transport and Infrastructure NSW has referred the matter to the Department of Transport. It is noted that in peak hours the light rail service to Lilyfield is packed with passengers travelling to Central. A new ferry service is badly needed to serve the Bays Precinct, especially the Cruise Passenger Terminal, the Sydney Fish Markets, Pyrmont, Walsh Bay and Darling Harbour

*Recommendation: Introduce shuttle light rail services for large event days; run the light rail at five minute intervals during peak hours; introduce new ferry services to serve the Bays Precinct.*

- 3.0 Cycling Network – We are pleased that DHL will restrict cyclists to the perimeter of the Darling Harbour site and provide a cycle hub within the Haymarket development, keeping the entertainment/convention/exhibition centres and Harbourside area free for pedestrians to walk in safety. We further recommend that a separate cycleway be provided on Pyrmont Bridge. We oppose shared pathways on the grounds that our experience with the shared use of the Pyrmont Bridge has seen speeding, accidents (at least one severe injury resulting in broken bones, smashed glasses and cut eye) and near misses.

*Recommendation: Ensure cyclists are not permitted in the redeveloped Darling Harbour precinct.*

- 4.0 Linkage to Pyrmont and Ultimo – Whilst the pedestrian access through to Pyrmont and Ultimo has been improved, the buildings themselves still turn their back on the neighbouring suburbs, and, indeed, create a wall between them and the City. It is noted that neither Pyrmont nor Ultimo are mentioned in the EA section on the Regional Context of the Haymarket development. More effort should be made to integrate the redevelopment with its neighbours, noting that the commercial viability of the Harbourside complex would have been greatly enhanced if it had been designed to serve neighbouring suburbs. Better integration should be seen as an opportunity to share this valuable public domain, rather than put up further barriers. The best way to link to the nearby



communities is to provide much-needed amenities which can be used by local residents.

*Recommendation: Provide amenities which can be shared with the communities in neighbouring suburbs.*

- 5.0 Signage – The current signage in Darling Harbour is woeful and this issue does not appear to have been addressed in the DA or Concept Plan. Not only is it difficult to find venues within the precinct (eg there are no signs to Darling Quarter) but Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority has consistently refused to install signs pointing to popular destinations outside of Darling Harbour including the Sydney Fish Markets, Pyrmont, Pirrama Park, Darling Island, Sydney and Jones Bay Wharf, the ABC, UTS and SIT. It is essential that such signage be provided as part of the redevelopment. Local residents are continually being asked to direct visitors and tourists to these landmark destinations. In particular, it would be great to see a sign at the end of the Pyrmont Bridge welcoming visitors to Pyrmont, instead of the usual signs scattered around the suburb directing people to "Parking".

*Recommendation: Representatives of Pyrmont and Ultimo to work with DH Live, City of Sydney and SHFA to develop a signage strategy for Darling Harbour and the Haymarket precinct to include directional signage outside the site, and badging of Pyrmont and Ultimo at strategic access points.*

- 6.0 Chinese Gardens – Whilst we understand that this is not part of the redevelopment, we understand that there is a proposal to open the gardens to the public free of charge. It is unclear whether this means the removal of the walls around the Garden. We are supportive of making entry free, but strongly oppose the removal of the wall around the gardens which are a peaceful haven of great beauty free from the hurly-burly of the public domain of Darling Harbour outside.

*Recommendation: Retain the walls around the Chinese Gardens and, at the same time, make entry free of charge.*

Haymarket Precinct – We see this development as possibly the last chance for the NSW Government to address the drastic shortfall in social, educational, health and sporting facilities in the CBD and adjoining suburbs. With the piecemeal approval of major residential developments at Barangaroo, Central Park, Pyrmont and Ultimo, and Harold Park, planners have failed to recognize the very real needs of the communities which will live in these, mainly high rise buildings. We support urban consolidation in principle, but the Government has





a responsibility to provide the necessary social infrastructure to support the people who will live in these developments.

It is surprising to note in the section on Regional Context (p13 EA) no mention of Pyrmont and Ultimo as communities that can have any influence on Darling Harbour, thus reinforcing the impression that, once again, we can be ignored. Even the list of amenities in close proximity to the site (p21) omits such tourist icons as the Sydney Fish Markets and the regional Pirrama Park at Pyrmont Point.

In consultation sessions we have raised the experience of Pyrmont and Ultimo residents who have moved their families to these near-city suburbs in order to be close to their workplace. This trend has been encouraged by Governments and developers, but the infrastructure has not been provided. We note the following:

- The sporting facilities formerly located on what is now the Darling Quarter precinct were removed some years ago and not replaced elsewhere as promised
- Youth services and facilities in the City are contracting, eg the youth worker at Maybank Youth Centre is part-time and now allocated to Glebe, Pyrmont and Ultimo.
- The long-promised City skateboard facility has not been provided
- The only public school in Pyrmont/Ultime is full and cannot cope with the current, let alone predicted, needs of families with young children. No schools, either primary or secondary are planned to cater for the certain influx of young children to the City
- Whilst a childcare centre and library are promised verbally, they have not been included in the Concept Plan
- No provision has been made in the City for aged care facilities

We address these issues, and others, in more detail below:

- 1.0 Sporting/Active Recreation Facilities – It is absurd to propose the introduction of student housing, as well as residential development in an area completely devoid of public sporting facilities and fail to provide active recreational opportunities for the people who will live there. It's all very well to point to the proliferation of bars, cafes and restaurants but do we really want to exacerbate the already alarming incidence of drunken youths in the CBD? Far better that they have recreational opportunities which promote their physical and social well-being. Again, the CUMULATIVE impact of all the new residential development either under way or planned in the immediate vicinity, with regard to active sporting recreation, has been completely overlooked by Infrastructure NSW which set the brief for the redevelopment tender.



At a recent meeting with DHL and NSW representatives we were advised that there are no plans to incorporate full-sized all-purpose courts to replace those removed. The outdoor half-sized court between the student housing buildings, suggested as a solution by DHL, is totally unacceptable. Our preferred option is provision of internal, all-weather courts, but if that is not possible, the public open space between the theatre and the exhibition centre could be marked out for multi-purposes with a demountable fencing arrangement for when this area is being used for large functions, noting that it is proposed that removable artificial grass would be installed on those occasions. It has also been proposed that areas of the exhibition hall may be able to have a multi-purpose sporting function when not being used for exhibitions. We further recommend that hard surfaces be kept away from Tumbalong Park to enable people to engage in games such as volley ball or soccer, and support the provision of a skateboard facility within the Darling Harbour or Haymarket precincts.

*Recommendation: That DHL, SHFA and the City of Sydney work together with community representatives to ensure provision of public sporting facilities to serve the Haymarket residents and those of nearby residential developments, as well as City workers; that a skateboard facility be provided within the Darling Harbour precinct.*

- 2.0 Childcare Centre – We welcome the verbal commitment to provide space for a childcare Centre. With only two full daycare centres in Pyrmont to serve a residential population of 12,000 and a worker population of ~15,000, we well know the stress experienced by the increasing number of families with young children moving to inner city apartments unable to find appropriate childcare to enable them to work. We understand that up to 70 children may be accommodated (not all full-time) in the proposed centre and that it will provide pre-school education. We eagerly await confirmation of its location, capacity and the nature of its facilities.

*Recommendation: That DHL confirm details of the promised childcare/pre-school facility to be located in the Haymarket precinct and confirmation that it will meet the current standards set by local and state government requirements.*

- 3.0 Library/Community Facility – We also welcome the verbal commitment to provide a library which includes an after-hours study area, resource centre and meeting rooms but again note that this facility is not shown in the





documentation on exhibition. We further note that discussions are being held with the ABC and Museums to develop a strategy to integrate cultural spaces and activities into the Haymarket/Darling Harbour development. We support this initiative and ask that the local communities be invited to participate in planning for the cultural opportunities that the development can provide.

*Recommendation: Incorporate community cultural spaces and activities within the Darling Harbour/Haymarket precincts, in consultation with local communities and the City of Sydney.*

- 4.0 Educational Facilities – As noted above, the Government is looking at sites for the relocation and expansion of Ultimo Public School as the number of children in the 0-9 age bracket in Pyrmont has risen dramatically since the redevelopment of Pyrmont/Ultimo began 15-20 years ago. There are now around 900 children in Pyrmont alone, and the catchment of the Ultimo School has shrunk progressively such that few Ultimo children can now enroll, let alone children from Haymarket. Twenty years ago, the planners got it wrong in that they assumed there would be no children living in apartment blocks. It is now a well-known fact that families are moving to be close to work in the CBD – and staying there – and they need accessible local public schools for their children. No provision has been made for families who will move to Barangaroo, Central Park, Haymarket or Harold Park, plus the many new residential (including Affordable Housing) developments planned nearby for construction over the next few years. In discussions with DHL and INSW, we have been advised that provision of educational facilities is not in their brief and has been referred to the Department of Education which, in turn has advised that no new schools are planned in the foreseeable future.

The proposed Haymarket development is yet another example of both this and the previous governments' piecemeal approach to planning. This proposal is where these planning failures must start to be addressed and not fobbed off into the never-never land of government silos. Infrastructure is not just roads, transport or education. It is a PLANNING issue and those assessing this Concept Plan must look at the cumulative impact of bringing more and more residents to the inner city. What the Government does about school provision for the residents in these growth areas will clearly demonstrate whether the commitments to provide infrastructure to serve its growth trajectory are real or simply political spin.

*Recommendation: The NSW Government take immediate steps to redress the public school shortfall in the inner City to meet current demand, and*



*plan for provision of primary and secondary public schools to meet the future needs of planned residential developments.*

- 5.0 Health and Aged Care – We note that there are few aged care facilities in the inner city, including Pyrmont. Our experience in Pyrmont is that there has been a significant increase in the number of people aged 60 to 85+ moving from large suburban homes to the convenience and accessibility of apartments near the City. There is an increasing need to provide not only facilities, but services to assist the elderly to stay active in their homes for as long as possible; and for additional aged care facilities close to the City to enable people to visit their spouses when they are no longer able to care for them at home. Cross-suburban transport is also vital. The Government needs to take into account the needs of the elderly in considering the cumulative impact of the Haymarket development in an area already deficient in facilities, programs and services for the over 60's demographic within the City.

The Darling Harbour development, combined with the Central Park and Bay Street residential developments, represents an increase in demand for health services equivalent to a substantial regional centre. But there are no plans for the health infrastructure such as hospital beds, clinics or community nursing that should be expected for an increase in population on this scale.

*Recommendation: The Government and the City of Sydney to consider whether the Haymarket development can include facilities to support the over 60's demographic moving to the inner City; both State and Federal Governments to commence planning for the health infrastructure required to support the anticipated increase in population in the inner city.*

- 6.0 Access: We have noted that the concept plan does not address the concerns raised at a consultation session regarding the linkage between the Powerhouse Museum at MacArthur Street and the Haymarket Precinct. We have been advised that the Powerhouse Museum needs to agree to a more direct route over or across the light rail, directly into the student housing area to replace the indirect zigzagging route proposed in 5.3 of the Design Report. This is an important accessway to the only bus service (501) currently available to serve the precinct, with a stop just outside the Museum. It should also provide a convenient, and direct link to UTS and SIT, but, as currently configured, doesn't.





*Recommendation: That a direct pedestrian/cycle link be provided from Harris Street into the student housing precinct in place of the circuitous link outlined in the EA. This link must also provide for the disabled and people with strollers.*

- 7.0 Accommodation Mix – We note that there are only 26 x 3-bedroom apartments planned for the development, with nearly 800 x 2 bedroom units proposed, and with around 600 studio/1 bedroom apartments. There needs to be a more balanced approach by increasing the number of 3-bedroom units and decreasing the number of both the 1-bedroom and studio units to cater for families.

*Recommendation: The housing mix in the residential component of the Haymarket development should be more balanced, with additional 3-bedroom units provided and a decrease in 1 bedroom/studio units.*

- 8.0 Landscaping – We note that there is a preponderance of exotic trees proposed for the landscaping of the Darling Harbour and Haymarket precincts. We further note that the stand of mature ironbark eucalypts will be removed. This development should celebrate Sydney harbour's indigenous flora and not try to emulate European cities by planting exotic species. We are supportive of the installation of community gardens in the precinct.

*Recommendation: The landscaping for Darling Harbour and the Haymarket precinct should celebrate the local indigenous flora and not include exotic species. Opportunities should be provided for residents to participate in community gardens.*

We note the NSW Government supports community participation "in the preparation of plans and the vision for their local areas.... at the start of the planning process and on an ongoing basis" (Planning White Paper, p6). Whilst we had no say in the decision to redevelop Darling Harbour and the Haymarket, we have spent an inordinate amount of time and effort in participating in the consultation which is taking place (at top speed). We do not oppose the development but look to the Government to ensure that our concerns are addressed. They are reasonable and constructive and failure to address them will lead to cynicism about the Government's commitments to community consultation in its proposed new planning system for NSW.

Yours sincerely,

  
Elizabeth Elenius, Convenor



## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

*Recommendation 1: That measures be introduced that ensure that patrons of Darling Harbour who bring cars to the precinct are directed away from streets in adjoining suburbs during big events; that new public transport measures be introduced, including water transport and shuttle light rail from the CBD, Central and Eastern and Western suburbs, with parking stations available at the outer stations.*

*Recommendation 2: The Government should convene a Working Group of representatives of RMS, the City of Sydney, DHL and local community groups, to look at the CUMULATIVE impact of Barangaroo, Darling Harbour, Central Park, CPT at White Bay and devise measures that must be taken to ensure that surrounding suburbs do not become further gridlocked; that pedestrians are given priority in the phasing of traffic lights; that parking stations are provided at transport nodes at perimeter locations served by more frequent public transport.*

*Recommendation 3: Introduce shuttle light rail services for large event days; run the light rail at five minute intervals during peak hours; introduce new ferry services to serve the Bays Precinct.*

*Recommendation 4: Ensure cyclists are not permitted in the redeveloped Darling Harbour precinct.*

*Recommendation 5: Provide amenities which can be shared with the communities in neighbouring suburbs.*

*Recommendation 6: Representatives of Pyrmont and Ultimo to work with DH Live, City of Sydney and SHFA to develop a signage strategy for Darling Harbour and the Haymarket precinct to include directional signage outside the site, and badging of Pyrmont and Ultimo at strategic access points.*

*Recommendation 7: Retain the walls around the Chinese Gardens and, at the same time, make entry free of charge.*

*Recommendation 8: That DHL, SHFA and the City of Sydney work together with community representatives to ensure provision of public sporting facilities to serve the Haymarket residents and those of nearby residential developments, as well as City workers; that a skateboard facility be provided within the Darling Harbour precinct.*





*Recommendation 9: That DHL confirm details of the promised childcare/pre-school facility to be located in the Haymarket precinct and confirmation that it will meet the current standards set by local and state government requirements.*

*Recommendation 10: Incorporate community cultural spaces and activities within the Darling Harbour/Haymarket precincts, in consultation with local communities and the City of Sydney.*

*Recommendation 11: The NSW Government take immediate steps to redress the public school shortfall in the inner City to meet current demand, and plan for provision of primary and secondary public schools to meet the future needs of planned residential developments.*

*Recommendation 12: The Government and the City of Sydney to consider whether the Haymarket development can include facilities to support the over 60's demographic moving to the inner City; both State and Federal Governments to commence planning for the health infrastructure required to support the anticipated increase in population in the inner city.*

*Recommendation 13: That a direct pedestrian/cycle link be provided from Harris Street into the student housing precinct in place of the circuitous link outlined in the EA. This link must also provide for the disabled and people with strollers.*

*Recommendation 14: The housing mix in the residential component of the Haymarket development should be more balanced, with additional 3-bedroom units provided and a decrease in 1 bedroom/studio units.*

*Recommendation 15: The landscaping for Darling Harbour and the Haymarket precinct should celebrate the local indigenous flora and not include exotic species. Opportunities should be provided for residents to participate in community gardens.*

