

## ATP submission

As the EIS for the Australian Technology Park implies, this location holds unparalleled cultural, historical and heritage value. It is a landsite that holds significant importance for the community at large. Since the sale for the ATP has been finalised, there has been significant concern that the value of the site would be compromised. The reports released actualise these concerns. The Mirvac-held consortium, as stated in the EIS, is looking to uphold its investment (this site) as a “major employment generating centre” (p 62). However, while focusing on its developments for big businesses, it remains a sorely undeveloped model for the community. In its focus to transform the space, it is putting the heritage value of the area in jeopardy, which stands as a nationally significant stronghold of our industrial history. The Mirvac Group must do more to assure the community that this site will remain largely accessible, and the heritage value will not be compromised in any way. I outline the major issues with the current proposal, and urge you to reconsider these aspects of your project.

### Heritage impacts

The Sydney Morning Herald quotes Wendie McCaffey, Manager of the Eveleigh Locomotive Workshop for 30 years, as saying “They’re some of the best steam powered machines of the Victorian era. It’s an important historical site that needs to be protected”

(<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/eveleigh-locomotive-workshop-collection-at-australian-technology-park-to-be-sold-20150105-12ihyh.html>).

It is incontestable that this site has primary heritage significance, in capturing the blacksmith work of Australian history. This is not a site to be compromised, either directly or for that matter, tampering with its surroundings. Mirvac Group is looking to do exactly that, with minimal compensation for the community. The site stands as the most important link we have to this period of heavy machinery operations, whilst architecturally, offering a strong and appealing aesthetic backdrop that captures the area’s industrial history. The social and cultural links that the community has to this site are unique, and extend beyond the buildings themselves. This places the site and its surroundings in jeopardy, and threatens to change the relationship that the public has with this heritage site.

The management of the site must understand the value that this land has, of which Mirvac currently seem unaware. The “heritage interpretation” in the EIS for example, states that the public domain improvements will “compliment and amplify” the heritage; a dubious claim considering the 9 storey monstrosity proposed across the road from the locomotive workshop. All that will be amplified, it seems, is the Commonwealth Bank building, a verifiable investment that will dwarf the heritage architecture around the ATP site.

As a result of being sold to private hands, this has always been the fear. This must be counteracted with the implementation of an independent body to oversee the heritage for the area as a whole. If Mirvac are genuinely interested in preserving this land’s heritage value, this would be the most obvious solution. The areas to be overseen by such a heritage body would include not just the ATP, but its surroundings, including Eveleigh, the Chief Mechanical Engineers Office and any other areas or buildings deemed by independent historians as connected to this area’s heritage. Collaboration with such stakeholders would demonstrate Mirvac’s appreciation for the heritage value and increase community trust in its preservation.

By creating a Living Heritage Centre, Mirvac would be signifying further understanding of the community’s strong ties to the area. This is an imperative step, to not only ensure that the history of the area is not lost, but to open up its connection to new generations. This is what heritage

preservation must strive to do, to encourage these community connections. There must be more than fragmented organs that remain to show the beat of history, but a holistic enlivening of what the area was. A Living Heritage Centre will capture this with documentary, education, photographs, and audio-visual presentations that ensure the area's history is not lost, and remains appreciated. This will also ensure the area draws a positive interaction with the public, and will give a feeling of ownership back to the community.

The EIS is inadequate in its summation of Aboriginal involvement with the site, which demonstrates a lack of research. The EIS says itself "The report includes an assessment of the potential for the site to impact on Aboriginal archaeological objects and/or places but does not include an assessment of the potential Cultural Heritage Significance (intangible values) of the site". This is another inadequately researched facet of the importance that this site holds.

A report prepared by the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority in 2012, provides some detail of the importance of the site to Aboriginal people. It states, "it is known that the site (Eveleigh Railway Workshop) was an important focus for employment for Aboriginal people"

The report goes on to speak of the importance of the area to Aboriginal activism, another fact omitted in the report:

*The general strike of 1917, in which the Eveleigh Railway Workshop employees were involved, was one of the factors that influenced Aboriginal peoples' growing participation in political movements and their calls for recognition. That strike occurred at a time when there was a growing awareness of, and concern by unions and Aboriginal peoples' organisations about the poor wages and conditions experienced by Aboriginal workers. The Eveleigh Railway workshops were one of the focal points for meetings and rallies in support of workers' rights, supported by the railway union shop committees.*

Assessing the site purely in regards to Aboriginal archaeological remains, and dismissing the site as place of historical significance for the Aboriginal population since colonisation, is an inadequate summation of heritage value. It is for this reason, that a Living Heritage Centre, as well as consultation with a broad range of independent historians and community representatives, must take place before this development can progress any further.

### **Community services and consultation**

There seems to be an inadequate assessment of what constitutes as 'for the community' in the EIS. Whilst Mirvac upholds their Community Centre as their masterstroke of public benefit, it remains an inadequate and underwhelming addition for the community.

Due to severely inadequate community consultation of what is in fact needed or wanted in this area, Mirvac have pushed forward with generic and expensive retail options. However these are there to cater for workers rather than the community. Most of the new proposals are not aimed at servicing the community at all, but instead, aimed at gaining profits. This is seen through the addition of a gym, supermarket and retail tenancy. These should not be considered as servicing the community, but should be considered part of the economic development of the area. Community services of the area have been turned into profit-driven schemes that focus on conveniences for the workers.

Whilst there is a need for childcare centres, two of which are proposed, there is no indication as to whether this will be an affordable service which the community will be able to use. Childcare centres

are notoriously unaffordable, and if there are no concessions, than this will be another service that fails to meet the needs of the community. A 24 hour open a day gym does not reflect the needs of the community, and instead, is another money grab, serving to gentrify the area further rather than facilitate the needs of the area. The proposal to enhance multi-use sports courts is of potential benefit, however like the childcare proposal, there is no mention of the costs that the community may face.

I do commend the provision of free wi-fi for the public, and implore you to further develop a model that benefits and serves the public in such a way.

The South Sydney Herald consulted with members of REDWatch, the local community group. Members have shared their concerns with the proposals, stating “We don’t need another supermarket... we should be building up our local businesses, not bringing in more to compete with what the existing ones are already doing”, Ms Haas was quoted in this article further, observing “It came across that any services they say are being put in there are not for the existing community, but for the extra 10,000 employees they are bringing in”

This is admitted in the Retail Needs Analysis 5.21.1 (p 88) of the EIS Report, stating

“the primary intention of the proposed retail and supermarket facilities is to cater for the new workforce to occupy the proposed buildings, the project will provide a high level of convenience for existing employees of ATP and will cater for surrounding residents”

Under this conclusion, it seems that there has been given no consideration to the wider community whatsoever. The document ricochets the benefits for the community off those for the working population, and claims those as ‘community benefits’.

In catering for this burgeoning work population, it has completely overtaken the promises made for community spaces. The Community Building, which as previously mentioned is a pithy representation for community needs to begin with, is allocated only 3,911 m<sup>2</sup>, where Building 1 (commercial office building) is granted 46,832 m<sup>2</sup>, and Building 2 (also a commercial office space is granted a massive 56,688 m<sup>2</sup>. Further, the Community Building is shared with a commercial office space, taking away a further 1,082 m<sup>2</sup> from the dedicated 3,911 m<sup>2</sup> space. This is barely a beneficial space for the community, and importantly, it does not use the comparatively small space provided in ways that will optimise community involvement.

There must be more community consultation to focus on needed and affordable services for the community.

### **The need for transport**

It seems one of the biggest issues to come will be the impacts of flooding in an extra 10,000 people, without proper funding or infrastructure given to the increased demands on public transport.

The report states that most of the car spaces provided by the new ATP model will be exhausted. This will mean that traffic both in and around the ATP will lift significantly. This will impact neighbouring communities that already live in a traffic jam, with all the associated health issues of particulate matters from cars and trucks. This development will only increase significantly this poor traffic area, and further damage the environment and the air quality for locals. The traffic will also further threaten cyclists, who are not given any measure of priority through this development. Redfern

Station will be inundated with the new workers introduced to the area who opt out of driving. This will create a further burden on the already deficient public transport of the area.

The \$19.9 million dollars that the EIS states will be contributed to the “Road, Public Transport and Access” should be dedicated solely to public transport, to ensuring that Redfern will be able to cope with the huge influx of people using the station. The money dedicated to public transport should be its own funding source, rather than the high possibility of diverting great sums of money to private parking on-site.

Further, there needs to be dedicated funds to a cycle route, which will ease the burden of traffic and create a safe route for cyclists amidst increased traffic.

### **The need for focus on true technology hub**

The area has been heralded as an emerging technology hub, a place for start-ups to pivot from and emerge with a supported and better facilitated vantage point. However, with the focus on the new Commonwealth Bank building, it is hardly a space that fosters a start-up entrepreneurial spirit. Rather, from this initial phase, the development has sold out to a financial stronghold that will be able to dominate and claim the technology spaces as their own. This threatens the premise of the development, and will surely lose its goal for creativity and innovation when merely a conduit for Commonwealth Bank economics.

### **Affordable housing plan**

The Affordable Housing plan details a predictably low bar, of 2% of the total cost of the development to be granted to the Redfern-Waterloo Affordable Housing Contributions Plan. With this development likely pricing more and more people out of the area, 2% will likely still create a minus effect for the community, in terms of benefitting housing. With this area becoming increasingly pricey, 17 affordable housing units on offer is a perfunctory attempt to ameliorate the impacts that this development will have on housing prices.

I implore you to take a more serious view of this issue, and drastically increase your commitment to 30% of the total cost of the development, to be granted to the Affordable Housing Contribution Plan. Only with such numbers would this development have a beneficial impact for the community.

Whilst I have outlined some major causes for concern, many in the community have their own concerns regarding this development. I ask you to please adopt a more sympathetic development, with all of these issues in mind, to better meet the needs of the community.