



Submission - The Department of Planning and Environment  
State Significant Development  
**Taronga Zoo - Australian Habitat and Taronga Wildlife Retreat**

23rd May, 2016

The Mosman Parks & Bushland appreciated meeting with zoo staff to talk about the proposal and to tour the site of the proposed development.

The Mosman Parks & Bushland was founded in 1964 when bushland at Bradleys Head was threatened with destruction. Our objectives remain the same today - the protection and preservation of parks, bushland and open space in Mosman for the benefit of present and future generations of residents and visitors.

The Association admires and appreciates the conservation and educational achievements of the zoo and we understand that this facility is intended to promote both those aims.

However, there are a number of problems raised by the proposed development.

**1. Public Access:** The zoo is public land and access is intended to be for the public as a whole. This development benefits a portion of the public only - those with the ability to pay. The proposal separates out a portion of the zoo land to create an exclusive area containing accommodation and dining facilities which will not be open to the general public.

**2. The buildings:** This is a large and permanent development and a departure from the previous tented accommodation of Roar and Snore. The buildings themselves, no matter how sensitively designed, occupy a significant portion of the Taronga site and detract from the park like character of a zoological garden.

**3. Loss of trees** - apparently for the sake of views from the accommodation - is also regrettable and probably unnecessary. If native trees are to replace ornamental trees, then the replacement trees should achieve the same size as those to be removed, before the removal occurs.

**4. The purpose of conservation and education:** We understand that the purpose of providing a "high end" tourist facility is to benefit the education and conservation objectives of the zoo. The tourists will

2.

receive education about nocturnal Australian animals by being on site at night, and the money raised will support conservation.

Two questions arise:

1. Education: If users of the accommodation package are there for a purpose other than education, does this fulfil the requirements of the Zoological Parks Board Act? The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association is of the view that the development, if it proceeds, should be for the use of educational visitors only.

2. Conservation: Is there a guarantee that the funds raised will always be used for the purposes intended today?

**5. The public interest:** The compensation to the general public for the loss of access and green space is a walkway and viewing areas along the perimeter of the proposed development area from which Australian animals can be observed during the day. The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association considers this to be inadequate. If the development proceeds, we think the same educational privilege of nocturnal viewings should be provided on a regular basis without the accommodation and dining experience.

In conclusion: There is loss as well as benefit to be derived from this proposal. For the loss to the public of access and green space, the benefits of education and the benefit to conservation should be absolutely certain.

- The use of the accommodation and dining facility should be limited to those there for the educational purpose of learning about and experiencing the Australian environment.
- The funds raised should be used strictly for purposes of conservation.
- The general public as opposed to the "exclusive" users of the facility, should be compensated with the same nocturnal experience on a regular basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Kate Eccles  
President