



Submission on the proposed Sydney Metro Quarter Development

Counterpoint Community Services

January 2019

About Counterpoint Community Services INC

Counterpoint Community Services Inc. provides a wide range of community support services in the Inner City and South East Sydney LGAs. We have operated in the heart of Waterloo since 1977, with a particular focus on working with social housing tenants and diverse communities.

We operate The Factory Community Centre in Waterloo, Counterpoint Multicultural Centre in Alexandria, Poet's Corner pre-school in Redfern and act as lead agency for many local grass root groups and services including the Redfern and Waterloo Social Housing Neighbourhood Advisory Boards.

We also are hosting the independent community development worker, and bilingual educators funded by FACS Land and Housing Cooperation to support the community during the redevelopment of the Waterloo Estate.

Our comments

We are writing to express our comments and views informed by our work with the community we serve, in relation to the Sydney Metro Quarter Development.

1) Whilst Counterpoint is generally supportive of the concept of the metro quarter concept, we have to object the proposal as we feel the community has not been afforded the opportunity to view the project in the context of the wider redevelopment of the Waterloo Estate as originally promised.

2) The decoupling of the planning process consultation for the metro quarter has made it challenging for us and/or those we support to provide accurate commentary on the suitability of the project within its full context. Therefore we would argue that it should have been exhibited at the same time as the Waterloo masterplan process.

3) The planners might have developed the concept within the full context of that development however the community have not been able to analyse the proposal in the same context.

4) In addition, whilst there is a lot to commend in relation to the community consultation, there was also a fair part of it that would be considered inadequate. For example, only one option was presented to the community for their consideration, however for the rest of Waterloo estate we were presented with three options.

- 5) Would a more retail and commercial focus development be more suitable and received greater support?
- 6) The community should be involved in the development of the concept from the start not just merely asked to endorse a predetermined plan made behind closed doors that would receive minor tweaks following a rushed consultation.
- 7) The technical studies not been released until the formal exhibition period during the Christmas break also made it difficult for us to understand the studies that informed the final proposal. For many, the reports were also not translated in a way no planning expert could understand easily.
- 8) Under the high pressured time frame of 8 weeks to review those studies, during a major holiday and following extensive consultation on Waterloo Estate options, we weren't able to analyse the comprehensively nor were we able to secure independent academic review of those documents.
- 9) Still, we found a number of inaccuracies, inconsistent or out of date data, and analysis:
 - a. There was heavy reliance on desktop reviews which generated a vast amount of information however lacked local knowledge and local input.
 - b. We are also disappointed that there was no health impact study completed, nor was there any community safety strategy or poverty strategy embedded into the project.
 - c. We are concerned about the size of apartments being small, particularly in relation to the studio, and that no study of the long term social and health impacts of studio living.
 - d. The social sustainability strategy, for example, talked about the high level of connection and social cohesion in the area. However, it failed to analyse why this was or take in to account that the two placed based community development projects within Waterloo where recently defunded due to a shift in other government department priorities.
 - e. The proposal promises an increase in employment. However, there is no local employment strategy developed to ensure or guarantee that the increase in employment will benefit the existing local community, nor does it specify what the employment might be. Whether it will be low-skilled employment with lower salaries or higher skilled employment.

- f. We welcome the consideration of health and community facilities on site and believe this will be beneficial to the community during the entirety of the redevelopment. However, the proposal lacks detail and any guarantees. It is also difficult to express the type and need of community facilities without knowing what is being proposed across the entire Waterloo redevelopment. The Community facilities study was woefully inadequate and inaccurate. See attached document detailing this.
- g. We are disappointed that the Traffic study only focused on the proposal and not the large context of the wider impact of transport across the whole of Waterloo and its surrounds. We have argued for a full traffic study for the entirety of our community taking into account the surrounding development such as ATP, Green Square, West Connex. We have been promised that such a study will be undertaken for the last 10 years but this has failed to materialise by successive government departments.
- h. Whilst we admire the commitment to Cycle parking, the target seems excessive and overly ambitious.
- i. In relation to car parking spaces, we are aware the community has opposing views on this sensitive subject. However, social housing residents have advised us strongly that inadequate parking provision would lead to greater challenges than the existing one they face today in the surrounding estate. Therefore we argue that parking in the metro quarter should incorporate the City of Sydney's maximum allowance of 427 spaces. It is also noted that there is no guarantee that any proportion of this parking will be dedicated to social/affordable housing.
- j. We are also of the view that the concept should have considered a park and ride free scheme similar to that concept in the UK.
- k. The commitment to 70 new Social housing units whilst appreciated, is a relatively low and disappointing target when compared to the social housing waiting list and the rising number of people facing homelessness. Hence, we believe this number should be much higher, consisting of 30% of dwellings as a minimum.
- l. There has also been no consultation with the community if they prefer to be housed within public housing or with a community housing provider. Our

understanding is that many would like to remain within public housing or at least have that as a choice.

- m. The ten-year commitment to affordable housing is also in our view welcomed however should have been a permanent ongoing commitment.
- n. The lack of guarantee to dedicate a set reasonable % of the stock to Aboriginal housing is also a disappointment. It is our opinion that at least 5% of dwellings should be dedicated to Aboriginal affordable housing in addition to the 5-10% affordable housing proposed.
- o. The proposal is not clear on how the social mix will be achieved, within the development i.e. will the individual building be pepper mixed or will the social and affordable housing be within separate block? There is mixed views with the community in relation to this and it is worthy of further consultation prior to any final decision being made.
- Will all the financial government gain through this selloff of the public land be guaranteed to be returned to the existing Waterloo community? Previously locally the sale of ATP was promised to deliver an upgraded accessible Redfern Train station and this promise was not delivered. The Economic return in real terms for the Government and Waterloo is not clearly detailed.
- In addition we ask what the governments fall back plan is if the market fails to deliver. We know for example another sites local which have been sold off, and housing stock or community facilities demolished and have laid vacant for over a decade.
- The proposal also does not show what safe guards or reassurances for the community are in place to ensure the building defects of the recent Opal Tower collapsing will not happen on any of these developments.

THANK YOU

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