

Presentation to Sydney North Planning Panel – Development Application LDA2021/0095, 307 Lane Cove Road (Eden Gardens) 16.12.22

Good morning, my name is Julian Ledger, President of the 416 Group. Thank you for this opportunity to address the Panel on the development application for Eden Gardens at 307 Lane Cove Road.

The 416 group aims to represent the 750 households in Killara and Lindfield west of Lady Game Drive. It has been active for more than 20 years. Because the interests of residents and the values of the National Park generally coincide it has become one of the guardians of the Lane Cove Park.

Our submission made seven main points:

1. excessive height
2. impact on values of the Lane Cove National Park
3. addressing the bushfire hazard
4. inconsistent with investment in public transport
5. addition to congestion
6. pedestrian unfriendly location
7. viability of nursery businesses.

We thank the City of Ryde for its report and for its recommendation that the application be refused. The report however could have given more weight to the protection of the National Park and the impact of the proposed development on Ku-ring-gai residents. I would now like to make the following additional points.

The proposal is inconsistent with the recommendation that development near national parks be stepped back from boundaries. The proposed 18 storey tower would dominate the ridgeline as viewed from our area. The planners report underestimates the impact. His photo from St Crispens Green, Killara is from behind a tree. At present night noise from the site is contained by the Tunks Farm knoll. With a tower it will spill across the valley.

If development must occur on this site which sits between the M2 and the national park we believe it should be within the tree canopy. The site is sufficiently large to accommodate a campus style development That doesn't mean a compromise of 12 storeys or 8 storeys but buildings within the tree canopy.

The Lane Cove National Park is long, narrow, precious and fragile. The river's catchment being largely bordered by commercial and residential development. The park provides habitat for the powerful owl and there is currently a nesting pair we can hear at night near the Riverside Drive bridge over Porters Creek. That's approximately 400 metres from the site. Under the New South Wales [Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995](#), the powerful owl is scheduled as "vulnerable". One of the features of the park is that light pollution is limited because there is no high rise adjacent.

With respect to the bushfire risk, historically fires have come down the valley from the northwest. In 1994 the fire crossed Lane Cove Road at De Burghs bridge near the Eden Gardens site and then reached our homes in Albert Drive Killara only 11 minutes later. Four homes were destroyed. In a bushfire in catastrophic or severe conditions the Eden Gardens site would have to be evacuated very quickly. In each fire over the years (both controlled and

uncontrolled) helicopters have been used for water bombing including using the airspace around Eden Gardens.

The previous state government invested heavily in the rail link from Chatswood to Epping including undergrounding the route to lessen the impact on the National Park. The current government has further invested in extending the route to the north-west and converting to the Metro with new driverless technology. In 2024 the line will be opened from Chatswood for a fast service to the CBD and beyond. A connecting line will in future be built from Epping to Parramatta. The Macquarie Park master plan envisages substantial growth. But due to traffic congestion this can only be viable if new development is consistent with the use of the public transport corridor by new residents and workers. If this city is to preserve its livability, we have to rely on public transport as do other large successful cities. That starts developing around public transport hubs.

Our precinct in the west part of Killara and Lindfield is serviced by Lady Game Drive linking to Lane Cove Road in the north and Delhi Road/Fullers Road in the south. Congestion on Lady Game Drive used to be during a narrow peak. Now it's peak hours morning and evening. There is an increasing wait time on traffic light rotations to exit Lady Game Drive onto Lane Cove Road. The worst congestion on Lane Cove Road is caused by the three traffic lights close together at Fountainoy Rd (Eden Gardens), the M2 and Talavera Rd. Then at the other end of Lady Game Drive onto Delhi Road and Fullers Road due to the heavy developments in North Ryde and Chatswood. Each development adds incrementally to the problem which cannot be solved by additional roads. Development in Macquarie Park must be clustered around the rail stations so that more people leave cars behind and take public transport.

The 565 bus route runs from Chatswood and Macquarie Park through our precinct and servicing workers, students and shoppers. The congestion on Lane Cove Road has made it unreliable in peak hours.

I can recommend making the walk from the site to the nearest Metro station just on a kilometre away. Because the site is effectively an island with natural bush on two sides and freeway and major arterial road on the other sides it is isolated. The area is dominated by heavy traffic and the walk is particularly unpleasant. The route lacks street activation, there are many lanes of traffic to cross and traffic lights. There is little shade or shelter. Similarly, the walk from the site to the nearest shops which involves crossing Lane Cove Road twice is also time-consuming and unpleasant. A pedestrian bridge on one of these crossings would only make a marginal improvement.

The site is in fact particularly well suited to its present purpose of garden centre where traffic activity is mainly outside peak hours and visitors don't attempt to walk but use their car to transport their purchases home. When the 416 group met the DA's proponent they heard an argument that garden centres were no longer a good use of land and it was suggested no longer viable. We find it strange therefore that garden centres in locations like Terrey Hills and Dural with much smaller population catchments within say 10 km have full carparks, and four checkouts and tills ringing. In our submission we referred to bullish forecasts and research regarding the nursery sector. Eden Gardens has an excellent location with a much bigger population in its catchment than Dural or Terrey Hills and we believe could be a highly successful garden centre.

I would like to conclude with a comment on the planning process. This application was made 20 months ago. Residents on the north side of the Lane Cove River were not initially notified of the

application and we had to argue for an extension to submissions. Since lodging our submission we have received little information being limited to the very concise reports of meetings on the Departmental website. We have not had the opportunity to read the submissions of others. Residents have had the possible development of this tower hanging over them for all that time. This includes for those thinking of selling, buying or rebuilding. I'm sure this long delay and lack of information was not how the planning process was envisaged when it was designed. In our view it is not how planning should occur in a democracy. We would urge the panel and through you the state government to consider how the process can be improved because the status quo is highly unsatisfactory.

Thank you for your attention today