

10 CONCLUSION

The site has been used as a hospital for over 100 years. While this has resulted in the creation of some high quality buildings and medical assets, and some buildings and landscapes of heritage significance, it has also resulted in a complex pastiche of a large number of poorly co-ordinated buildings of varied quality and condition.

The project will retain significant built and landscape elements, and consolidate hospital functions into a co-ordinated modern hospital concentrated in the western end of the site. This will release a large area of land to create new public roads, open spaces and development that is complementary to the hospital, and which will generate revenue to assist in funding of the hospital works.

The project involves the creation of a high quality, publicly accessible environment that better integrates the Hospital, TAFE and Artarmon industrial area with the strategically significant St Leonards Town Centre and Railway Station. The proposed dense, mixed use non-hospital development will capitalise upon the transit oriented location of the site, creating a vibrant and active precinct with low reliance on private car usage and the consumption of fossil fuels.

The project has been prepared following consultation with a wide range of government agencies and other stakeholders. The following is our summary of the key environmental issues identified by the Director General following that consultation.

HOSPITAL OPERATIONS

While the size, medical function and region served by the existing hospital will remain unchanged, the facilities currently scattered amongst some 50 buildings of varying age and condition will be consolidated into an integrated high quality modern hospital facility.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Department of Planning and Willoughby City Council have recently undertaken comprehensive strategic planning exercises for both the Greater Metropolitan Area and the St Leonards Town Centre. The resulting strategies have both identified the intensification of hospital, housing, employment and related retail and community uses on the site as central to the consolidation of the identified role of St Leonards as a 'specialised centre' of employment focused upon medical industries. The proposed amount of employment and housing development is directly consistent with the targets set in these strategies

TRANSPORT

Being located directly adjacent to a major railway station, and with excellent access to local buses and the arterial road network, the site has excellent transport access from throughout the region. It is intended to improve pedestrian access to the railway station and to enhance bus services to the hospital and through the site. The significant intensification of development on a site with such strategic public transport accessibility creates an opportunity to significantly shift 'modal split' in favour of public transport, and all the associated social, economic, transport efficiency and resource/emissions efficiency benefits. Implementation of the proposed 'TMAP' will ensure that this potential is optimised.

HERITAGE

Godden Mackay Logan Heritage Consultants and Dominic Steele Consulting Archaeology have undertaken an analysis of the archaeological and heritage potential of the site, and Taylor Brammer has examined the heritage significance of various trees and landscapes. Numerous significant trees and buildings have been identified for retention (and statutory listing) as feature elements within the project. A Conservation Management Plan will be developed and implemented to ensure that the heritage significance of these items is conserved and appropriately managed in the future.

URBAN DESIGN AND BUILT FORM

The proposed building envelopes and land use mix will create a dense and vibrant new mixed use precinct focused around a low scale, open heritage precinct. The site will be highly permeable to cars, pedestrians and cyclists, with a street and subdivision pattern that is logical, contextual and efficient. Built forms will be modulated by the street pattern and the interspersing of a variety of publicly accessible landscaped open spaces, and heights have been set to preserve solar access to existing and proposed public open spaces and residents along the eastern side of Herbert Street.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Given the variable working hours of hospital staff and the advantages of increasing use of the railway station, particular care has been taken to create a simple, direct, well lit and active route between the hospital and the station. Ground floor active uses have been distributed throughout the site to optimise passive surveillance. Poor surveyed, obscured pockets have been successfully avoided.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

The proposed hospital is of itself a community facility of the highest order, and its improvement will provide significant social benefits for the region. The incorporation of at least 10,000m² of student and/or hospital staff accommodation will alleviate identified housing issues arising for lower income health workers employed at hospitals in areas of high housing cost, such as the lower North Shore.

Furthermore, the creation of four new parks, a new retail precinct, a 250m² community centre and 180 child care spaces will cater for the social demands of incoming workers and residents.

In economic terms, the project will help deliver the strategic housing and employment growth targeted for the St Leonards Town Centre in both the Metro and Draft St Leonards Strategies. Retailing has been incorporated to the extent required to activate the precinct and serve the existing and incoming worker and resident population, without adversely impacting upon any existing retail centre in the locality.

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UTILITIES AND SERVICES

While significant existing electrical supply cables will need to be tunneled across the site, and a large new electrical substation will be required In the vicinity of the hospital, the proponent is aware of these requirements and has made provision for the funding of them. All other services are available and can be augmented to accommodate the project.

CONTAMINATION AND GEOTECHNICAL CONDITIONS

Geotechnical investigations have been undertaken. While some minor contamination potential has been identified, provision has been made for its remediation, and no other significant geotechnical constraints have been identified. While further testing may identify additional contamination, such testing cannot occur until axisting buildings have been demolished.

STATUTORY PLANNING

The Minister has declared the project a 'Major Project' for which he is the approval authority under Part 3A of the EP&A Act. He has also advised that he is willing to consider the site for listing as a State Significant Site under Schedule 3 of SEPP Major Projects. He has also authorised the submission of a Concept Plan.

The project is of clear significance to the State in terms of its significance for public health delivery and the implementation of the objectives of the Metro Strategy.

The Concept Plan establishes suitable broad parameters for development in accordance with relevant strategic planning objectives for the site. Subject to approval of these parameters it will be feasible to call for tenders for the private sector to commence the extensive design and documentation work in relation to delivery of built outcomes. Separate approval will be required for the detailed design for every building proposed.

SUMMARY

While the project will displace primary hospital uses from parts of the site, it will result in significant net benefits for the delivery of health services to the region. It will provide social, economic and environmental benefits in that it will:

- Release the economic value of land surplus to hospital needs and permit that value to be reinvested into new health facilities on the site.
- Retain all elements of significant heritage or landscape value.
- Create opportunities for a range of health related and complementary uses to locate adjacent to the hospital.
- Reinforce the strategic transport significance of the St Leonards town centre through the provision of a significant supply of transit oriented retail, commercial, residential and other development.
- Open significant areas of the site for general public use, including several strategically positioned open spaces and pedestrian and vehicular access routes through the site.
- Create an extensive and activated public domain network throughout the site.

Design and environmental investigations to date demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts of the project can be sustainably managed, resulting in significant net social, economic and environmental benefits.

We therefore seek approval of the Concept Plan, subject to consideration of any issues raised in public exhibition of the application and relevant provisions of Part 3A of the EP&A Act. Separate project applications can then be made for the detailed design of individual buildings and spaces.

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