

MP 09_0162 Warriewood Valley Redevelopment (14-18 Boondah Road, Warriewood)

Attachment to Online Submission

The Northern Beaches area has been subject to a number of scare campaigns from objectors to local development, such as the proposed supermarkets at Newport and Warriewood. Unfortunately, the more serious concerns tend to get somewhat buried under the weight of spurious and unreasonable NIMBYisms. I am personally in favour of responsible development, and recognise the value of medium to high density housing where appropriate. The shortage of housing is a very real problem for our society, and I welcome sensible developments that contribute workable solutions. Further, I support the direction of the planning changes that at one end reduced the number of smaller items that required DAs and at the other end resulted in important large-scale developments being decided by regional or state authorities.

However, the Meriton proposal does cause me some serious concerns:

- Supporting Infrastructure:

The density is more than 3 times that envisioned in the Pittwater Council Warriewood Valley plan. The problem I see with this is that the local infrastructure (especially Macpherson Street, Garden Street and Ponderosa Parade) appears unable to adequately handle the extra traffic. The single lane roads and roundabouts of the area do not cope with other than light traffic well. The sector 8 development on Macpherson Street already has problems at its one and only exit from its garages and streets (at Casuarina Drive), as the traffic from the right on Macpherson Street on its way to Mona Vale Road charges into the roundabout at speed, causing delays for Stage 8 vehicles attempting to get onto this roundabout.

On May 12th. The Manly Daily reported that “Developer levies for the valley were agreed at \$62,100 per dwelling after Pittwater Council gained an exemption from the State Government’s cap of \$20,000 per dwelling” and “Meriton believes it should have to pay only \$12.7 million for its proposed 600 units, equal to \$21,218 per dwelling” and “Meriton justified paying a lower Section 94 levy by including landscaping, a private pool and a gym within its development, and because it partly funded the cap on the nearby sewage treatment plant as well as credit for streetlights, underground wires and roadworks” and “Because the proposal is being determined by the Planning Department - not the council - the department will set the levy”. I do not see why a developer should be allowed to avoid fees that were agreed between Pittwater Council and the State Government for the Warriewood valley and that other developers have paid. Since Pittwater Council has a policy of not subsidising the Warriewood valley from rates paid by ratepayers from other parts of Pittwater, it is vital that Valley developers continue to contribute at the previously agreed rate to the local infrastructure that is funded from these levies. Landscaping has been provided by other developers in the Valley who also paid the levy, and inclusion of a **private** pool and gym within the complex hardly justifies a reduction in a levy used to fund community facilities. Sector 8 residents have had to endure a walk through long grass for over 3 years to get to and from the City bus service, because the footpath has not been continued. It is developer levies that enable basic infrastructure such as this to be implemented.

- Anti-Social Behaviour:

On a Meriton website (<http://www.meritonwarriewood.com.au/po.html>) it states:

"The Pittwater LGA is currently dominated by detached residential housing. The provision of residential flat buildings with variety of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units will assist in retaining the young and older population of Pittwater LGA from leaving the area in search of affordable housing, which now can be provided in Warriewood Valley."

Whilst the Pittwater LGA might well be dominated by detached residential housing, the Warriewood Valley is not. There are considerable numbers of commercial sites and medium density developments. The sector 8 development where I live has only 8 free-standing houses. Even where there are detached houses being built, the block sizes are only about 350 to 500 square metres in size.

Providing housing that is attractive to a younger population is not in itself a bad thing. However, Macpherson Street already has more than its fair share of speeding hooners and night-time drunken behaviour. Graffiti has also become a significant problem in the Warriewood Valley, with commercial premises and bus shelters particularly targeted. Whilst higher density living should attract higher density policing, this has not happened in the Warriewood Valley. In the 2.5 years I have lived in the sector 8 development, I have only seen 2 marked police vehicles passing by.

- Ghetto Creation:

A cyclist recently cycling along Macpherson Street was overheard by my wife to say to her companion "it's such a ghetto here" to which her companion cyclist replied "yes, they're really packing them in". Whilst I personally do not believe that the Warriewood valley development has created what I would call a ghetto, the term is being used at an increasing rate in the local media and does seem to reflect the general attitude to the Warriewood Valley held by the broader Pittwater LGA residents. It is important not to make planning decisions that could encourage further stigmatisation of the Warriewood Valley. High-density developments such as this proposal have the capacity to significantly negatively impact the desirability of the Warriewood area, since they are so out-of-keeping with the broader developing landscape. If this is allowed to occur, then attitudes towards future area developments of the scale of the Warriewood Valley are likely to be damaged.

Whilst I agree that compromises should be entertained, I urge the decision makers to reject outright any outrageous ambit claims from developers on the one hand and NIMBY extremist views on the other. A fair result should retain the broader original planning intent for the Warriewood Valley, whilst allowing for new ideas that do not significantly compromise these plans. This was the expectation of many of those who previously moved into the newer developments. If major components of published planning strategies for areas such as those for the Warriewood Valley are found to be easily circumvented by developers, then this will undermine confidence in government promises and make purchasers less likely to invest at the earlier stages of such new developments.

In summary, I ask that the broader original planning intent for the Warriewood Valley be maintained and that any compromises ensure that adequate infrastructure changes are also implemented to protect the amenity of the residents in the existing developments.