

2.0 BACKGROUND

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Channel Seven has been operating at the Epping site for nearly 50 years. Broadcasting facilities opened at the site in December 1946 under the banner of Amalgamated Television (ATN) Sydney. At the time of opening, the site was ideal for broadcasting purposes. The site had an elevated position, 270 degree views across Sydney and the surrounding development was predominately low scale. Furthermore, the site was large and vacant, all of which made for the ideal site for the development of a television station.

The site has an area of approximately 8.9ha and is entirely zoned Special Uses 5(a) (Television Station) under the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2001 (Parramatta LEP). The site is currently occupied by television studios, office and production space, car parking for 790 vehicles, and seven satellite dishes. Currently, the site is not publicly accessible.

The surrounding area is dominated by residential development. Directly adjacent the site to the west lies the Mobbs Lane Reserve, the North Sydney TAFE abuts the site to the north-east, and the former Eastwood Brickworks site, which is currently being redeveloped for low scale residential purposes is located to the south.

Sydney Broadcast Property Pty. Ltd (the proponent) claims that to meet Channel Seven's future needs, the existing broadcast facilities on-site need to be replaced. Furthermore, technology advancements mean that the present hill top location is no longer required. The proponent is therefore seeking to vacate from the site and entirely relocate to alternative premises elsewhere in the Sydney CBD.

In July 2005, the Department was briefed on the Channel Seven redevelopment by the proponent. The proponent advised that a \$160 million residential and open space development was required to facilitate the relocation of the broadcaster's current on-site operations and secure its future commercial viability in the State.

Whilst the proposed land uses were prohibited under the zoning regime that existed at the time, the Department undertook a joint assessment of the concept plan and rezoning request (which was concurrently lodged with the Concept Plan) pursuant to Section 721 of the EP & A Act.

In August 2006, the Channel Seven site was listed in Schedule 3 of the Major Projects SEPP along with the new land use provisions, enabling the Minister to approve any residential development on the site.

The purpose of this submission is for the Director General to provide a report on the project to the Minister for the purposes of deciding whether or not to grant approval of *The Parklands Concept Plan* pursuant to Section 75O of the EP & A Act.

2.2 Site Description

The Channel Seven site, identified in Figure 1 – Locality Map (overleaf), is located at 61 Mobbs Lane Epping in the Parramatta LGA. Both Epping and Eastwood town centres (and their rail stations) are located approximately 1.4 km east from the site. Carlingford town centre (and its respective rail station) is located approximately 1.5 km west of the site.

The 89,190 m² (8.9 ha) site, with a 500m primary frontage to Mobbs Lane, is comprised of several allotments and is legally described as Lots 1 & 2 DP732070, Lot 2 DP582172, Lots 1 & 2 DP570891, and Lot 4 DP219907.

Marsden Road, Pennant Hills Road (a.k.a Cumberland Highway) and Stewart Street, major collector roads and heavily patronised, are located to the west and south west of the site. Carlingford and Midson Roads are located to the north and east.

Access to the site is currently only available via one entry point, being on Mobbs Lane. The site is predominately surrounded by low density detached residential development. The character of the surrounding residential development is mainly made up of California Bungalow and Federation style dwellings. There are some examples of higher density residential development on the periphery of the site. In recent years, development has been characterised by the construction of townhouse style dwellings with high site coverage.

The western side of the Channel Seven site is bounded by Mobbs Lane Reserve, a publicly accessible open space area of approximately 4ha. Located within Mobbs Lane Reserve is Terry's Creek which flows south through Mobbs Lane Reserve under Mobbs Lane itself to the Fred Spurway Reserve. A drainage swale located in the north western portion of the Channel Seven site flows into Terry's Creek.



Source: *The Parklands Environmental Assessment*

Figure 1 – Locality Map

The topography of the site is undulating. The site falls approximately 30m from the upper eastern side (where the studios are currently located) to the western corner of the site (near the satellite dishes). The western side of the site has substantial tree cover. The site's context is depicted graphically in Figure 2 – Aerial Photo.



Source: *The Parklands Environmental Assessment*

Figure – 2 – Aerial Photograph

2.3 Existing services.

Over the past 50 years the Channel Seven site has been progressively developed to accommodate changing technologies and station requirements. The existing development found on-site comprises:

- five (5) Channel Seven television studios and ancillary buildings;
- transmission tower;
- satellite receiving station including three major satellite dishes;
- 790 onsite car parking spaces; and
- a helipad.

The existing studios and ancillary buildings comprise 22, 000m² gross floor space and are equivalent to six storey structures. The three largest satellite dishes are in the order of 15m high (i.e. equivalent to five storeys). The remainder of the site, particularly to the west, is dominated by vegetated open space.

The site operates 24 hours a day, employing 700 staff. Approximately 2,000 vehicle movements per day are generated by the current operations which include staff, heavy vehicles and audience-participation vehicle movements.