

24 August 2022

## Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay

### Submission: Blackwattle Bay State Significant Project Response to Submissions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide genuine feedback.

We acknowledge planning scale at this level is significant for a Site, Particular Area of Interest, Local Government Area, District, Region, State, Nationally and Globally. We ask that the Department of Planning reject this latest version, our objections are a call to Do Better!

Objections, considered feedback, concerns, proposals, and support for a number of features below with an evidence-based approach.

**Blackwattle Bay outdoor publicly accessible space must become greener. At present, the project offers up a deplorable minimum to protect the successful existing trees canopies of the area, on and abutting the particular area of interest/site.**

We are strongly opposed to the clearing/removal of the current successful mature tree canopy vegetation on the development site and adjacent to the study area. The current large canopy trees, native or not, are filled with a plethora of species, bats, flying fox and birds.

My daily morning pre-dawn/during dawn walk, includes being audience to the remarkable assembly of generations of small birds all singing as loud and well as they are able in the Ficus, Hills Weeping Fig trees which only have a 'Retention Value' of 'Consider for Retention'. These trees numbered 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 run in a geographic straight line, at the rear of the current fish market, close to Anzac Bridge on ramp/Western Distributor. They are established despite the heavy pollution and are in good health, mature, high, and a genuine majestic thick canopy of Figs. Pre-dawn/during dawn and pre-sunset/during sunset literally schools of many small birds are competing in these trees.

Just on one day, at three different times during a space of 12 hours. I witnesses Ravens and Magpies perched and not moving any time soon, on the branches (all three visits) of the amazing, in good health, large Eucalyptus trees numbered 19, 21 & 22. These three Eucalyptus trees should not have a 'Retention Value' of 'Consider for Retention'. We ask that State Government retain these successful, majestic large Native trees. They are prime examples of Australian trees and obviously are magnets for Australian large birds.

The current mature canopy trees surrounding the new Sydney Fish market, are an intrinsic part of the City of Sydney's public green space. Under this project there are palm tree offsets, where the State Government or Developers have suggested they will replace mature trees with X amount of new palm trees is flooded with obvious issues:

- Australian white Ibis birds
- Fast moving umbrella sized amount of ground sun relief (shade)
- Zero wind mitigation

The trees are to be planted singularly in a line or in little patches, even in between sky touching buildings in narrow alleyway wind tunnels, and beneath a major arterial road.

Why fix what is not broken instead protect the current mature canopy trees at the back side (perking and loading) of the current Fish market. They are healthy and thrive with a lack of sunlight required for good tree growth. These trees are not home to Ibis birds. they are home to hundreds (perhaps over a thousand) small and medium sized singing birds.

State, City wide and literally around this particular area of interest/site, we are losing trees at an alarming rate and the wildlife that live in them are competing for rapidly diminishing trees that are left. Once the wildlife is gone they won't return.

Australian magpies declined by 31 per cent in the East Coast region — including Sydney and Brisbane — between 1998 and 2013. Kookaburra's are declining faster.

These Magpies, Kookaburra's and Currawong to name some are excellent gatekeepers of our environment. They keep pests like mice and rats under control - Ultimo and Pyrmont has had ongoing issues with mice and rats for decades. Without these large birds we will upset the balance. Wildlife and trees are proven to improve mental health and that of children in their formation years.

We are fast heading toward leaving a legacy to our children and grandchildren void of wildlife.

#### **Actions:**

- Call for the Blackwattle Bay project to seize this once in our lifetime opportunity to show significant leadership on a National and International scale for the betterment of Mental Health and wellbeing for Sydney's current residents, workers, tourists and future generations. Increasing biodiversity / green spaces with tree canopy supports better mental health. Rising temperatures in cities have documented the links between heat exhaustion and mental health impacts
- The amazing, strong, large Eucalyptus trees numbered 19, 21 & 22 should not have a 'Retention Value' of 'Consider for Retention'. We ask that State Government retain these successful, in good health, majestic, large Native trees. They are prime examples of Australian trees and obviously are magnets for Australian large birds.
- The Ficus, Hills Weeping Fig trees numbered 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 only have a 'Retention Value' of 'Consider for Retention'. These trees on the Blackwattle Bay site are host to a District or Diocese School Spectacular or Eisteddfod and Battle of the Bands all at once - It is an amazing twice daily bird singing festival! We ask that State Government to retain these Fig trees. As once wildlife from removed mature trees is long gone/lost they won't return.
- Blackwattle Bay outdoor publicly accessible space must become greener and improve air quality. These current tree canopy habitats need strong conservation to mitigate uncomfortable traffic pollution, urban heat (land & water), air pollution, destruction of animal viaducts/passageways and support foraging, breeding opportunities and the biodiversity of plant and animal species
- The City of Sydney needs to be the steward of Blackwattle Bay open park land. As our urban council is already using vegetation to help fight extreme heat in susceptible areas.
- Council does have excellent, highly educated staff, many with years of experience in open space and street tree planting. Some City of Sydney Council Staff are significantly expert in local ecology and commercial species: knowing which trees are available, when and where to plant them, and how much of council's budget needs to be stretched towards establishment watering (one to two summers in most areas). They are also strategic. They see that investment in trees now will bring big returns later and consider each park upgrade an opportunity to include more trees.
- In the first instance these mentioned trees should be retained. The worst case scenario should not be removal for these mentioned trees. Rather the City of Sydney Council in consultation with State Government work together to transplant the Eucalyptus trees numbered 19, 21 & 22 plus the Ficus, Hills Weeping Fig trees numbered 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 that about the Western Distributor. As successfully occurred previously in Pyrmont's construction of the Jacksons Landing area. Where a number of mature Fig trees were relocated into new public spaces, Waterfront Park and Refinery Square. It can be done, it has been done in Pyrmont before, it should if need be happen again for the trees previously mentioned on the proposed Bank Lane area.
- We support the maximum number of habitat boxes to be included in the design code for terrestrial biodiversity. And low-spill lighting choices, near habitat vegetation to reduce disturbance to nocturnal animals.

## **Step up State Government and stop limiting and diminishing the City of Sydney's residents and workers resilience against climate change, health and wellbeing.**

We need to have a resilient City that at ground level plants thousands if not tens of thousands of diverse canopy trees and thousands of shrubs plus perennials belonging to hundreds of species. Types of native plants that are salt and sun resilient plus in places offer visual appeal as seasons change.

Currently Blackwattle Bay's planting plan lacks substance and is an embarrassment on a domestic level, let alone at a City, State, National or International attraction standard.

State Government we call for you to mandate state sites architects and designers to plan with vertical forest block buildings, buildings that incorporate garden terraces throughout and have plants cascading down all building sides.

### **Actions:**

- 'Tiny Urban forests could be a secret weapon against climate change and can be squeezed into new developments or alongside roads. Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki realised Japans woodland was largely non-native so he planted 1,700 pocket forests throughout Asia and the world. Europe is catching on with mini-forests being created by planting native species very close together. They grow 10 times faster than convention forests, generate 100 times more biodiversity and also store 40 times more carbon. The Netherlands has planted 85 Miyawaki forests, and 40 in Belgium and France. Density is the key, with a wide variety of native species required, which recreates the layers of a local natural forest. The young, open structure means sunlight can reach smaller plants. Which attracts local pollinators, butterflies, snails and amphibians and it is hoped the forests will form wildlife corridors, providing snacks for songbirds. Our city is facing a biodiversity crisis, with many species will be extinct within decades. Researchers have identified mass tree planting as a cheap and green way to lock carbon into the soil.'
- We have an expectation of urban renewal of tourist and local attracting parkland to include Australian bush foods and herbal medicine gardens, with community education available with ongoing funding. Medicine and Food is a way to take people through time to get an idea of how important the Sydney basin area is. "Australian Bush foods have high nutrient level when compared to global standouts."  
(2) Blackwattle Bay with the new Sydney Fish Market and terrific Sydney restaurants need a neighbourhood Australian Bush food and herbal medicine garden. Evoke memories and return economy.
- For building design to actually promote health and wellbeing with natural ventilation when significant sources of noise and air pollution are a stones through away from heavy vehicles roads and batching plant in uncomfortable wind environments and overshadowing. State Government needs to look at Cairo's new administrative capital area which shows exemplary planning, is future smart, focuses funds devoted to trees and plants as they will ensure air to be cleaner around the vertical forest, the buildings will provide their own energy and greenery will add insulating features. The Egyptian property developer MISR Italia Properties has previously designed building forests in Albania, the Netherlands and conceptual models for Mars.

Cairo's administrative capital area (3)

- Sydney's Blackwattle Bay could be the face of Australia's challenge on climate change and our Nations ecological reconversion. A minimum of 50% open space needs to be mandated.

**Call for Blackwattle Bay project to seize this once in our lifetime opportunity to show significant leadership on a National and International scale for the betterment of Mental Health and wellbeing for Sydney's current residents, workers, tourists and future generations.**

- Increasing biodiversity / green spaces with tree canopy's supports better mental health.
- Rising temperatures in cities have documented the links between heat exhaustion and mental health impacts.
- Trees make it cool to walk, run or ride, and sit beneath, all of which are good for mental health.
- Feeling restored and alert. As the vibrant colours, natural shapes and textures, fresh aromas, and rustling of leaves in the breeze all provide you with effortless distraction and relief from whatever it was you might have been thinking about, or even stressing over.
- Studies back this up, demonstrating 'walks through green space have been shown to reduce blood pressure' (4), improve mental acuity, boost memory recall, and reduce feelings of anxiety. The Japanese have a name for this type of experience, shinrin-yoku.
- Some research has found that tree cover, rather than green space more generally, is a predictor of social capital. Social capital, refers to the social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that may have important influences on our life chances and health.
- Green spaces with tree canopy are settings where communities can come together to watch birds and other animals, which can also be catalysts for new conversations and developing feelings of community belonging in the neighbourhoods where we live ... just ask dog owners.
- The preference is for green spaces with more complex/biodiverse more complex vegetation (not monoculture planting), such as parks that mix grass, undergrowth planting with tree canopy.
- Without tree canopy to shield from the midday sun, this may increase the likelihood of people using cars for short trips instead of walking through a park or along a footpath. The result is missed opportunities for physical activity, mental restoration, and impromptu chats with neighbours

**Actions:**

- Urban designer have a significant role to play in lowering the rates of mental illness and the data on how nature affects our brains are central to changing the way this Blackwattle Bay Project can to better!
- We acknowledge strict compliance regimes for roads, powerlines and underground utilities are needed. However, a recent report by the Greater Sydney Commission singles out urban heat as one of the four priority areas given our coming climate. Shade can be a lifesaver in heatwaves and all urban authorities plus all levels of Government, Council and Private owners, need to use vegetation and tree canopy's to help fight extreme heat. And urban forests can mitigate the urban heat island effect and significantly lower surface soil, water and ambient air temperatures.
- 'In our latest study, we asked if more of any green space will do? Or does the type of green space matter for our mental health? Our results suggest the type of green space *does* matter. Adults with 30% or more of their neighbourhood covered in some form of tree canopy had 31% lower odds of developing psychological distress. The same amount of tree cover was linked to 33% lower odds of developing fair to poor general health. We also found poorer mental and general health among adults in areas with higher percentages of bare grass nearby' (5)
- 'Engagement with nature is an important part of many people's lives, and the health and wellbeing benefits of nature-based activities are becoming increasingly recognised across disciplines from city planning to medicine. Despite this, urbanisation, challenges of modern life and environmental degradation are leading to a reduction in both the quantity and the quality of nature experiences. Nature-based health interventions (NBIs) can facilitate behavioural change through a somewhat structured promotion of nature-based experiences and, in doing so, promote improved physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.' (6)
- 'Since October 5, doctors in Shetland, Scotland have been authorized to [prescribe nature](#) to their patients. It's thought to be the first program of its kind in the U.K., and seeks to reduce blood pressure, anxiety, and increase happiness for those with diabetes, a mental illness, stress, heart disease, and more.' (7)

- ‘A growing body of empirical evidence is revealing the value of nature experience for mental health. With rapid urbanization and declines in human contact with nature globally, crucial decisions must be made about how to preserve and enhance opportunities for nature experience.’ (8)
- ‘Engagement with nature is an important part of many people’s lives, and the health and wellbeing benefits of nature-based activities are becoming increasingly recognised across disciplines from city planning to medicine. Despite this, urbanisation, challenges of modern life and environmental degradation are leading to a reduction in both the quantity and the quality of nature experiences.’ (9)
- ‘Growing urbanisation is a threat to both mental health and biodiversity. Street trees are an important biodiversity component of urban green space, but little is known about their effects on mental health. Here, we analysed the association of street tree density and species richness with antidepressant prescribing for 9751 inhabitants of Leipzig, Germany. The study suggests that unintentional daily contact to nature through street trees close to the home may reduce the risk of depression, especially for individuals in deprived groups. This has important implications for urban planning and nature-based health interventions in cities.’ (10)
- ‘The United Nations General Assembly created the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) to improve the quality of life for people. These broad goals outline the greatest challenges of our time. An effective strategy to assist in meeting these goals is to plant and protect trees, especially in cities where the majority of people live. This paper serves as a critical review of the benefits of trees. Trees promote health and social well-being by removing air pollution, reducing stress, encouraging physical activity, and promoting social ties and community. Children with views of trees are more likely to succeed in school. Trees promote a strong economy and can provide numerous resources to the people that need them. While cities are getting hotter, trees can reduce urban temperatures. They provide habitat and food for animals. Finally, trees are valuable green infrastructure to manage stormwater. Money spent on urban forestry has a high return on investment. The overwhelming evidence from the scientific literature suggests that investing in trees is an investment in meeting the UN SDG, and ultimately an investment for a better world.’ (11)
- ‘The most promising environmental and health impacts of urban trees are those that can be realized with well-stewarded tree planting and localized design interventions at site to municipal scales. Tree planting at these scales has documented benefits on local climate and health, which can be maximized through targeted site design followed by monitoring, adaptive management, and studies of long-term evolutionary dynamics.’(12)
- A study of Residential proximity to major roads and term low birth weight: the roles of air pollution, heat, noise, and road-adjacent trees concluded: ‘An increased risk of term LBW associated with proximity to major roads was partly mediated by air pollution and heat exposures.’ (13)
- Under this project the Government working with the City of Sydney and Community, must prioritise the expansion of public green space diversity. Large canopy trees are a welcomed relief against hard surfaces, glass structures and large advertisements all competing for attention in the public domain. People looking up to majestic tree canopies exploding an array of vivid greens and birds in a world class Australian city waterfront walkway on a summer's day. Trees make it cool to walk, run or ride plus sit beneath, all of which are good for mental health. ‘Those who do not find time every day for health must sacrifice a lot of time one day for illness’ Father Sebastian Kneipp.

**NSW Government's Blackwattle Bay project's infrastructure contributions are anti-community and anti-local residents next-door to major developments.**

The infrastructure contributions as they currently stand, ensures developers can continue to carve up the spoils of growth while minimising their obligations to the communities they disrupt. Leaving council trying to tackle and pay for the flow-on impacts of huge new developments. Rate-pegging should cease as it sets an arbitrary limit to raising funds and is a barrier to investment in local services and allows developers to forgo investing into the community and residents are negatively impacted by massive developments.

**Action:**

- Review NSW Infrastructure contributions looking to implement a levy to share land-value windfalls that are created by new development decisions.

**Shiny new overly tall and wide buildings do nothing to address the problem of increased pressure on the City of Sydney residents. The Blackwattle Bay area needs to do better! As there is an increased and desperate need for more open spaces and tree canopy spaces to better support the people that are the glue for our City - nurses, police, paramedics and teachers, all overworked and underpaid.**

We reject the rezoning proposed towers of up to 45 stories, more than double the height of existing apartment buildings in Pyrmont and is inappropriate for the revitalisation. The 12 building envelopes will create adverse wind tunnels and overshadowing for people and planting.

The city and Country relies on its core workers, many of which reside in the Pyrmont Peninsula and work in adjacent employment centres, in Sydney's CBD core as well as close by health and education institutions. The overwork and underpaid army of our City's carers, do not need Blackwattle Bay to become a Harbourside version of Pitt Street Mall or Barangaroo where semi-private space is overwhelmed by adjacent retail and hospitality precincts. Wentworth Park is already pushed for space to share with Ultimo, Pyrmont, Glebe residents plus the Ultimo School, a pop up school and the Greyhound race track. The Blackwattle Bay project does not address the provision for more or better activated public spaces, liveability, productivity, good public transport connections or sustainability in the area.

**Actions:**

- The upper height building limits must align with the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy, in particular Direction 2 which states "Any changes in building forms and public domain must be sympathetic to, or enhance, that character."
- Affordable Housing developer contributions should be used to provide such accommodation and more, better activated public spaces, within the Pyrmont Peninsula not elsewhere in Sydney or NSW.

**This Blackwattle Bay project mandates over development, overwhelming traffic, poor amenity and lack of public spaces, it does not support the realisation or health and well-being of an Emerging Technology and Harbour City Innovation Corridor.**

More imposing high-rise development and the majority of allocated public space on an enormous waterfront site is staged to be underneath a highway overpass, bombarded by traffic noise, smacked by high winds due to wind tunnels, permanently in shade and beneath air pollution drop. This is not the way to attract and deliver connected and prosperous business to what is to be a Harbour City Innovation Corridor.

**Actions:**

- Public access to great quality green open spaces and blue open spaces, access to morning and afternoon sunlight, a peninsula of mature tree lined streets and plentiful biodiverse green pockets of tree canopies will support high value knowledge-based jobs, generate a successful neighbourhood of long-term corporate stayers, economic growth, tourism and mentally healthier residents.
- Add improved walking and cycling connectivity to a cohort of great public water services, metro, light rail and EV charged public mini busses to ensure the peninsula is entirely accessible by public transport will be an exemplar to other Australian cities. And be honey for global corporate technology and innovation giants plus tourists to be drawn to.

**We feel that the proponent has ignored our/communities previous sincere and genuine concerns. And ask that authentic engagement commences. Blackwattle Bay Project Management Actions should:**

- This project is to be held accountable for respecting the peninsular community of Pyrmont, by way of educating locals and visitors to its past, present with meaningful signage. As well as signage pointing only to parking stations, The Star, the Fish Markets and Darling Harbour.
- City of Sydney should be the authority and management of Sydney Public Spaces. The community must be consulted before any plan for the distribution of contributions is finalized and the agreed with the City of Sydney and the Pyrmont, Glebe & Ultimo communities.
- For this project to deliver a high amenity, highly walkable and safe space, open space development needs the installation of CCTV cameras as a deterrent. Ensuring the safety and security of resident's workers and visitors to the area and enable improved investigation of bad behaviour. Additionally, Pyrmont needs the reinstatement of a Police station, preferred location, being at the Pyrmont Metro station.
- Trees make our city more beautiful and liveable by providing cleaner air, reducing heat and creating habitat for wildlife. Retain the Eucalyptus trees numbered 19, 21 & 22 plus the Ficus, Hills Weeping Fig trees numbered 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 that abut the Western Distributor.
- We recommend the inclusion of Welcome to Pyrmont signs, with knowledge sharing signs: Historical maps with European buildings and changes in waterline, creeks and uses, Industrial Heritage, Community Centre, Parklands, local Maritime information, local Aboriginal culture, story and history, stories of Country, Fire Station, Flora and Fauna of the Area. By working with local Aboriginal groups and community groups.
- Support for the area to be renamed, Tjerruing Blackwattle Bay.
- We request the Government ensure a minimum of 50% open space is mandated.
- We propose the Blackwattle Bay site installs Australian bush foods and herbal medicine gardens, with community education available with ongoing funding from Tourism. Medicine and Food is a way to take people through time to get an idea of how important the Sydney basin area is. Australian Bush foods have high nutrient levels when compared to global standouts. Blackwattle Bay with the new Sydney Fish Market and terrific Sydney restaurants need a neighbourhood Australian Bush food and herbal medicine garden.
- What this Community, Sydney City, the East coast of Australia needs is a visionary approach to foreshore management that priorities public access to the bay (land and water) and replicates the success of the four Glebe Foreshore Parks and not another Chatswood by the sea. Additionally, a foreshore walk that is predominantly 30m wide compared to the 10m proposed.
- Safety by Trees, a lesson for Blackwattle Bay safety for our Urban developers, Government and Council needs to include: 'Urban green spaces have been shown to benefit residents' physical and mental health as well as strengthen social ties. Some studies have found that presence of vegetation also might reduce crime. We examined whether an association exists between two forms of green space—(1) tree canopy and (2) public parks—and crime rates in the city of Chicago. Using publicly available data, we calculated percent tree canopy, percent acreage parks, and crime rate for assault, battery, burglary, homicide, narcotics, and robbery between years 2009–2013 for each of Chicago's 801 census tracts.' Results showed 'An inverse association was found between percent tree canopy and crime rates for assault, battery, robbery, and narcotics.' (14) Which highlights Highlights, a 10% increase percent tree canopy was associated with 10.3% decrease in battery rate. And 10% more tree canopy was associated with 11.3% less assault, robbery, narcotics.

- We propose the Blackwattle Bay site and adjoining New Sydney Fish Market shared a Publicly Visible Tree Removal Register for this area. Such a register will mitigate oversight and so avoid corruption, so agencies cannot hide behind each other when it comes to tree removal. We see the register maintained by City of Sydney. This register would show: The location, type and size/maturity of the tree. Accountability, by naming who, be it corporate or one of the many government sub agencies/departments and contractors is requesting the tree removal. Do Note: There are a plethora of sub contractors doing this work. The chain of approvals. City council tree removals, currently needs to place a notice on a tree 14 days prior to removal. They already have their own internal database which has all these details of the 32,000 trees in Sydney. Since they already attach the 14 day notice to trees we are not asking for anything that is not already done. We simply want this data online. This way we increase transparency and due diligence to the process. Some may argue that attaching removal notices to trees gives local residence proper notice. In the current times of lockdowns this is not always the case. Residence could be locked down and some may not feel comfortable venturing outside or as per health advice, they stay at home. In any case being able to see the details online is very important and a logical progression. Just like watching City Council meetings online and not going into Town Hall House. If an objection is lodged or a request for further information the tree removal should be delayed until the issues have been addressed. There should also be an option for residence to seek a second opinion from an independent arborist. The process would be online is very easy to track and transparent.

We genuinely hope you and your team find the time for a pre-dawn to visit the current Fig trees along Bank Lane /Western Distributor area, previously mentioned and enjoy the symphony of diverse birds in this tree canopy green space to support better mental health.

Regards

We do not give permission for our names or any personal details to be disclosed.

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