

13/04/2006

Mr Robert Domm
Chief Executive Officer
Redfern-Waterloo Authority
PO Box 3332
Redfern NSW 2016

Dear Mr Domm

Submission on Draft Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) is an independent, national network of mainly non-Indigenous organisations and individuals working in support of justice for Indigenous peoples in Australia. ANTaR (NSW) is part of this network.

For some time, the NSW branch of ANTaR has been working with Aboriginal people in Redfern-Waterloo. In 2005, we organised one community forum and assisted the NSW Reconciliation Council with another. One of the main issues of concern raised at these events was the future of the Aboriginal Housing Company's Pemulwuy Project for The Block and adjacent land in Redfern. It is because of this engagement with the area that ANTaR (NSW) is making a submission to the Redfern-Waterloo Authority (RWA) on the draft Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan.

The Draft Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan (BE Plan) and The Block

1.0 The proposal

ANTaR (NSW) understands that:

- The Block is situated within Area D of the Eveleigh Street site
- The Block currently has a floor space ratio (FSR) of 1:1 with no restriction on the proportion of floor space that can be used for residential purposes (BE Plan, Table 4.1, p 33 and p 46)
- the BE Plan proposes to increase the FSR for The Block to 1.5:1 (BE Plan, Table 4.1, p 33), while also restricting the residential component of that FSR to 0.5:1 (BE Plan, Diagram 3.4, p 27)
- compared with the current FSR, this reduces by half the amount of residential floor space that the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) can achieve within the Pemulwuy Project as planned.

ANTaR (NSW) further understands that the RWA has:

- advised the AHC that this would allow only 30 homes to be built on the site for which the Pemulwuy Project was developed
- offered to provide the balance of the homes from the Pemulwuy Project within 400 to 500 metres of the Block.

2.0 The ANTaR (NSW) Position on the Proposal

ANTaR (NSW) opposes the proposals in the Plan on the grounds that they appear to discriminate against the Indigenous people of the area in their current efforts to develop their community on a non-dependency basis. Particular points are:

- the differential treatment of the residential component of the FSR for The Block compared with the treatment of other comparable land
- the need for a critical mass of homes within the Pemulwuy Project.

2.1 Differential Treatment

ANTaR (NSW) fails to understand the logic governing the treatment of the residential component of Area D of the Eveleigh Street site compared with the treatment of government owned land in Area C (eastern section of North Eveleigh site), or even with the treatment of the town centre site (Area F).

The details here are that:

- only one third of the proposed floor space for Area D of the Eveleigh Street site can be used for residential purposes
- the government-owned Area C (eastern section of North Eveleigh site), which is a similar distance from Redfern Station, has a proposed FSR of 2:1, half of which may be residential floor space (BE Plan, Table 4.1, p 33, and Diagram 3.4, p 27, respectively)
- the town centre site immediately adjacent to Redfern Railway Station (Area F) has a proposed FSR of 7:1, **without any restriction** on the proportion of residential floor space (BE Plan, Table 4.1, p 33, and Diagram 3.4, p 27, respectively)

(ANTaR (NSW) is aware of comments on p 51 of the BE Plan, which could be taken to imply that residential uses in the town centre will be restricted to those associated with education or business; however Diagram 3.4, in which the residential restrictions are outlined, shows a proposed FSR of 7:1 for that site without any restriction on residential use of any kind.)

2.2 Critical Mass for the Pemulwuy Project

Substantially reducing the amount of housing that can be built as part of the Pemulwuy Project, and replacing it with housing within 400 to 500 metres of The Block, is not acceptable as:

- this still leaves The Block itself with only 30 homes, and thus without the critical mass of housing that is required to ensure that the Project's social planning principles can be implemented
- these social planning principles are critical as they underpin both the Project's physical design and the overall Project outcomes of social cohesion, community safety and local economic development.

In ANTaR (NSW)' view, this approach threatens the Project's aim of ensuring that past cycles of dependency are not re-established on The Block, an aim to which the Minister for Redfern-Waterloo states he is also committed.

3.0 Recommendations

ANTaR (NSW) recommends that the FSR for Area D of the Eveleigh Street site within the draft Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan be changed to:

- either 1.5:1, with no restriction on the proportion of residential floor space allowed (similar treatment to Area F (the town centre site))
- or 1.5:1, of which up to 1:1 may be residential floor space (similar treatment to Area C (eastern section of North Eveleigh site)).

Yours faithfully

Anne Byrne
President
 ANTaR (NSW)