

Mr Robert Domm  
Chief Executive Officer  
Redfern Waterloo Authority  
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Redfern NSW 2016  
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20 April 2006

Dear Mr Domm

Re: Draft Built Environment Plan

I write on behalf of the NSW Ecumenical Council to express concern that the Draft Built Environment Plan for Redfern Waterloo imposes height and other restrictions on the Everleigh Street precinct.

I apologise that this letter comes after the deadline for submissions, but I have been on leave for three weeks and have only just returned to the office.

Earlier this year representatives of the NSW Ecumenical Council met with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, The Hon. Milton Orkopoulos. He described the NSW Government's "Two Ways Together" policy for dealing with Aboriginal Affairs in NSW.

This is a very fine policy, which seeks to move away from bureaucrats imposing their views on Aboriginal communities, instead focusing on consultation and capacity building so that policy and practice reflect the aspirations of Aboriginal people rather than the past paternalism of bureaucrats and politicians.

It seems to us that the imposition of height restrictions on the Everleigh Street Precinct in a way that limits the uses to which the Block can be used by Aboriginal people is inconsistent with the "Two Ways Together" policy. It is also inconsistent with commitment to Reconciliation.

The use of The Block and nearby land needs to be determined through consultation with all Aboriginal stakeholders, in accordance with the NSW Government's "Two Ways Together" policy.

We are concerned that one effect of the height restrictions is to rule out the project being proposed by the Aboriginal Housing Company, although this has won awards and is consistent with the historic use of The Block. Whether or not this is the best plan for the Block, ruling it and other possibilities out through land use restrictions is not appropriate – it gives the impression of non-Aboriginal bureaucratic control of Aboriginal land, continuing invasion and colonization.

We therefore urge you to reconsider this part of the Draft Built Environment Plan, to ensure that the uses to which Aboriginal land can be put reflects their aspirations rather than thwarting them, and reflects the Two Ways Together policy and principles of Reconciliation.

Yours sincerely

Rev. Dr Ray Williamson

Executive Secretary

The Hon Frank Sartor MP  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

20 April 2006

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Executive Secretary

Copy:

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

The Premier

The Leader of the Opposition

Arthur Chesterfield Evans

Lee Rhiannon

Clover Moore