

# **Redfern North Eveleigh Strategic Vision: RTBU RMA Submission**

## **Executive Summary:**

The Association makes the following recommendations for incorporation into *The Redfern North Eveleigh Strategic Vision Next Steps- Future Work Section*

- 1. An overarching Conservation Management Plan for the entire Eveleigh Railway Workshop (ERW) Precinct.**
- 2. A holistic Heritage Strategic and Interpretation Plan for the North Eveleigh precinct which includes buildings, machinery collections/s and intangible cultural history. A specific panel with widespread representation should be established to develop and implement the Strategy and Plan. It should include a historian familiar with the ERW precinct.**
- 3. That the social connection between the workers of North Eveleigh and their surrounding communities needs to be presented in a multi layered approach in the Strategic Vision and included in a Heritage Interpretation Plan**
- 4. That the thirty key storylines produced by a heritage workshop in 2018 for South Eveleigh be used as the reference point for the development of story lines for North Eveleigh.**
- 5. Include a provision for the engagement of a railway heritage machinery collection expert to report and advise on potential display of machinery and assemblages, their restoration and placement within the precinct.**
- 6. Technical advice should be sought urgently to report and recommend a priority list of repair and maintenance that needs to be undertaken for listed heritage items.**
- 7. That the Strategic Vision document is amended to include cultural tourism, heritage tours and school education kits as components of a North Eveleigh Heritage Interpretation Strategy and Plan.**
- 8. The strengthening of the commitment and inclusion within the Strategic Vision document of: a. building a bridge for walking and cycling across the railway corridor. the transport integration of North and South Eveleigh with specific attention to bus connectivity between Waterloo metro and North Eveleigh c. an expansion of walking and cycling options beyond the Wilson Street cycleway and d. the adoption of public transport travel management demand targets of 80% for precinct employers.**
- 9. North Eveleigh comprises 10 acres of public land which will be privatised. Based on the sale of ATP a rough sale price value will be some \$200m which should be used for the full range of u [grades proposed for North Eveleigh.**

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union Retired Members Association represent retired workers from the rail, tram and bus industries. The RTBU and its predecessor organisations represented rail workers in the Eveleigh Railway Precinct from the opening of the workshops in the 1880s to their closure in the 1980s.

RTBU RMA members are active in various railway industry volunteer organisations including heritage rail organisations. The RTBU RMA has been active in advocating heritage issues particularly intangible cultural heritage in the period leading up to and since the privatisation of the Australian Technology Park in 2015.

The Associations primary focus in responding to the Strategic Vision paper will be to focus on heritage strategy and heritage implementations plans. The Association in its submission has made a series of recommendations for incorporation into the Strategic Vision.

The Eveleigh Railway Precinct <sup>1</sup>has been the subject of many years of diligent work by variety of government bodies, heritage professionals, former railworkers and rail industry associations including unions, and the community over a period of 30 years.

North Eveleigh is not a Greenfields site. The Associations submission refers to the substantial body of previous work as it relates to heritage interpretation. The submission argues this work should act as a baseline for the Strategic Vision which unfortunately fails to incorporate previous and current heritage interpretation work in the ERW precinct.

The ERW Precinct has both national and international heritage significance. The criteria for the NSW State Heritage Register include the following criteria-historical, aesthetic, social, research potential and rarity. Concerning the latter it said of the ERW *“the largest surviving intact railway workshops, dating from the steam area in Australia and possibly the world”*. A consistent thread throughout the period has been the community support for the history of the whole ERW precinct, both North and South Eveleigh to be represented in heritage interpretation.

The importance of the ERW precinct has been well documented in respect of Australian and NSW historical themes and their application to the ERW precinct. They include: the connection between the ERW and their surrounding communities, the role of the aboriginal community, the workshops as a site of technological innovation, developing Australia’s cultural life, the development of institutions such as trade unions, the contribution to working life, the significance of workers struggles to improve wages and conditions including equal pay for aboriginal workers, the 1917 Great Strike, women and migrant workers.

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<sup>1</sup> The Association has used the curtilage framework adopted in 7.7 of the ATP CMP which says “includes the whole fo the ATP site as well as North Eveleigh, the former Macdonaldtown Gasworks, RailCorp property to the west of the ATP and a section of the Great Western Railway between the two sides of Eveleigh”.

## **The Strategic Vision and Heritage Strategy and Implementation.**

The Association argues there is not a coherent direction set out in the document.

The dominant focus is on existing heritage buildings with over twenty references to adaptive reuse. The industrial machinery of the precinct is treated in a haphazard way with a reference to the paint shop and the existing traversers. Similarly, there are few references to intangible cultural elements. The lack of an integrated strategy combining buildings, machinery collections and intangible cultural heritage<sup>2 3</sup> needs to be addressed in the Strategic Vision.

There are fragments of heritage interpreting included in the document and general statements but no cohesive or binding narrative. This is compounded by the terminology used and the imprecise suggestions within the documents Next Steps-Future Work Section.

The Strategic Vision document is divided into six parts. The first part is "*About the strategic Vision*". The document notes and sets the tone for the document overall i.e. "*revitalising historic transport buildings can create some of the most desirable spaces in a city*". The Association suggests a holistic approach to heritage strategy and implantation needs to be included in the Strategic Vision document.

The Strategic vision refers to opportunities in the Paint Shop Sub- Precinct in the following terms: "*tell the industrial heritage stories of the production process undertaken by the railway by providing a heritage interpretation of the Paint Shop, Telecommunications and former CMEs buildings as part of a considered development outcome.*"

The RTBU RMA argues that whilst it is important to understand production processes it is crucial that the workers involved in the processes, their skills, training, OHS hazards faced, gender, ethnicity and political, industrial and social struggles be investigated, documented through a Heritage Interpretation Plan and then brought to life simultaneously addressing

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<sup>2</sup>Professor Lucy Taksa: Issues pertaining to absence of attention to the intangible cultural heritage associated with the NSW Eveleigh Railway Workshops, October 2008. The article points to the adoption by UNESCO in 2003 of a Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, manifested in oral traditions, social practices and traditional craftsmanship. The article argues that successive owners and managers of the site have only paid lip service to its heritage and that the record of the lives of ordinary men and women has not been preserved in situ. Overarching concern for tangible industrial remains has been at the expense of their "intangible" social and cultural associations.

<sup>3</sup>Professor Lucy Taksa: Machines and Ghosts: Politics, Industrial and History of Working life and the Eveleigh Workshops. Labour History, 2003 Extract: "It highlights the process by which industrial heritage is reduced to a narrow association with factory buildings, mechanical relics and technological history. At Eveleigh this process is evident in the adoption of conservation strategies for its "tangible" heritage and the failure to formulate and implement a comprehensive strategy, which could embrace popular understanding of the context in which Eveleigh's material culture was created and used, and also its rich history of working life. Eveleigh's material culture has been disassociated from its social and labour history."

both history and providing an educative function for residents and visitors as desired by the community in the consultative sessions which informed the Strategic Vision.

The Association notes that a key ingredient of the ATP Heritage Interpretation Plan was telling key stories associated with the Locomotive Workshops. A seminar of key heritage stakeholders held in early 2018 suggested over thirty key storylines, many of which were subsequently incorporated into plans adopted and supported as part of the ATP Heritage Interpretation Plan. They were endorsed by the Department, Heritage Council and the IPC in its Conditions of Consent for Mirvac DAs. An analysis of these key storylines reveals that the overwhelming majority have equal application to the North Eveleigh Precinct.

**The Association recommends that the thirty key storylines produced by a heritage workshop in 2018 for South Eveleigh be used as the reference point for the development of story lines for North Eveleigh.<sup>4</sup>**

The Strategic Vision in *Part 3 Understanding Redfern North Eveleigh* includes a section; *Site Context: Industrial Heritage*. Reference is made to the ERW being amongst the finest historic railway workshops in the world and the systems and processes underpinning them together with collections rather than individual items. This comment certainly applies to Eveleigh Locomotive Workshops but further work needs to be done on what machines, assemblages, systems such as the traversers and individual items of passenger rolling stock can form part of the North Eveleigh machinery collection heritage interpretation.

**The Association recommends the Strategic Vision include a provision for the engagement of a machinery collection expert who has knowledge of the railway machinery collection. This occurred at South Eveleigh and was a Condition of Consent established by the IPC.**

Importantly this section refers to Carriageworks as the first enterprise where aboriginal people were employed under equal pay and conditions in NSW. This was the result of union industrial campaigns, one of many industrial advances pioneered in the ERW. These stories need to be told.

The section also refers to the technological innovation of Carriageworks. These stories need to be told. It also refers to the existence of a series of important heritage view lines from

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<sup>4</sup> Key Storylines: included –Aboriginal connections, Aboriginal workers at ERW, Carriageworks and Locomotive Workshops connections, Chisholm Estate, Communists of ERW, Comradery and family networks, Eveleigh at War, Goods Yard, Immigrants of ERW, Managers Office and timekeeping-disputes and surveillance, Music, societies and recreation at ERW, Pubs, unions an heritage fabric-how ERW shaped the neighbourhood, Railway expansion and resumption, Significant figures of ERW, Skilled workers for world class production-the proud workers of ERW, Steam, Diesel, Electricity: power supply and the passage of time, the architecture of ERW-functionality and high technology, The buildings of ERW, The Ghosts of 1917-how the strike reshaped relationships at ERW, The Great Strike of 1917, ,The rail expansion under our feet, The relics on site, Unions – from ERW to Australia, What was produced at Eveleigh, Women of ERW, Workers Rights and dignity, Working at ERW: Blood , sweat and tears.

North Eveleigh and these will need to be taken into account in designing new buildings, reusing existing building and landscaping.

The references to industrial heritage are important but once again the comment needs to be made there is a need for the Strategic Vision to adopt a coherent and integrated approach not a grab bag of examples.

### **Eveleigh railway workshops workers and connection to local communities**

North Eveleigh railworkers formed the backbone of local communities. Their involvement in local social clubs, pubs, sporting activities, political parties and churches is an essential part of industrial heritage stories for all sub-precincts. Several references are made in the Strategic Vision paper to the role of place and community, the history of the precinct and the continuity between the past, present and future. The links between ERW workers and their connection to local communities is cogently captured in the comments of social and labour author Peter O'Connor.<sup>5</sup>

**The Association recommends that the social connection between the workers of North Eveleigh and its surrounding communities needs to be presented in a multi layered approach in the Strategic Vision and included in a Heritage Interpretation Plan.**

### **The Strategic Vision and Precinct Renewal Principles**

These principles are included in an Appendix. Principle 5 is *Culture and history*. Under the heading Revitalising Heritage it says *“the renewal will adopt a heritage strategy to ensure a holistic approach. This will include consideration of activating heritage buildings along their edge... and the celebration of often intangible cultural and peoples stories associated with place. This would be supported through mechanisms that encourage opportunities for educating the community and visitors... (It continues under the heading: A merging of cultures and history)...this will be achieved through appropriate heritage interpretation of the precinct as a whole and revitalising the historic buildings and other heritage elements within the area. Under the heading Expert heritage advice” in order to fully appreciate the heritage significance expert heritage advice will be sought on how new development can respectfully integrate with existing heritage items.”*

Thus Principle 5 embodies a direction taken throughout the paper i.e. that the default position is adaptive reuse of heritage listed buildings, new development and action items such as expert heritage advice which is aimed at integrating old development with heritage buildings.

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<sup>5</sup> Peter O'Connor: On Wooden Rails – Celebrating 150 years of Work on the NSW Railways, 2005. At P129: At the centre of community life: Eveleigh Railway Workshops also provided a clear illustration of the distinctive role of the railways in their communities, industrial and political activity. Their position as major employer provided growth of the working class suburbs around them, and the life within those communities...the neighbourhood, sporting and religious engagements all went to the shaping of the neighbourhoods

## **Recognising and building upon previous Heritage Interpretation Work**

The Strategic Vision states under the heading Listening and Engaging “*we will recognise the investment of time and ideas over the two past decades” and .....to continue to regularly meet and actively listen to the ideas and concerns of the community.*”

The Association notes the Strategic Vision will build upon the work done in producing the earlier 2008 and 2016 concept plans. The Association argues this principle should be extended to heritage strategy and interpretation where a considerable body of work already exists and provides a solid foundation to build upon. Unfortunately an examination of the Strategic Vision paper reveals no reference to previous work and the sections provide no coherence or consistent approach to heritage strategy and its implementation.

**The Association recommends the Strategic Vision document include reference to and build upon:**

- **The 2013 ATP CMP**
- **The Eveleigh Railway Workshops Heritage Interpretation Plan 2012 which made a series of recommendations for the whole ERW precinct , a number of which have been taken up in the heritage implementation plans for the South Eveleigh ATP re-development and a number of which remain relevant to heritage interpretation for North Eveleigh**
- **The need to update the 2013 ATP CMP and the condition of consent made by the Independent Planning Commission which said in condition B48 “an updated CMP reflecting the approved redevelopment, must be prepared and endorsed by the Heritage Council prior to the issue of any Occupation Certificate. The updated CMP must align with the overarching Eveleigh Railway Workshops CMP currently being prepared by Urban Growth for Heritage Councils endorsement. “**
- **The failure of the then Urban Growth or its successor to complete and /or publish the 2017 policy paper for an Overarching CMP for the Eveleigh Railway Precinct. This work should be finalised and released.**

## **Eveleigh North and Heritage Interpretation – a substantial base to build on**

The Association recommends that a holistic approach to heritage interpretation should take into account previous actions and reports undertaken by the Redfern- Waterloo Authority<sup>6</sup>, the ATP CMP, the ERW HI Plan 2012 and the Heritage Interpretation Plans(Stages 1 and 2) that form part of the re-development of the ATP site and associated DAs..

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<sup>6</sup> In response to issues raised by Sydney City Council RWA stated “The Statement of Commitments and Concept Plan now require a Conservation Management Plan and Heritage Interpretation Strategy... in accordance with Interpretation Strategy Guidelines specifically developed for the site. This will ensure an integrated heritage interpretation which best reflects the sites history. “

The Association recommends that the Strategic Vision include the following suite of practical measures which should be included in the section Next Steps –Future Work

- An overarching Conservation Management Plan for the entire ERW Precinct
- A holistic Heritage Interpretation Plan for the North Eveleigh precinct which includes buildings, machinery collections/s and intangible cultural history. A specific panel with widespread representation should be established to develop and implement the Plan and should include a historian familiar with the ERW precinct and its history’.
- Consideration of various IPC recommendations concerning Mirvac DA conditions of consent e.g engagement of a machinery collections expert and heritage expert who is experienced in adaptive reuse.
- Technical advice should be sought urgently to report and recommend a priority list of repair and maintenance that needs to be undertaken for listed heritage items.

#### Heritage and community views

The Strategic Vision statement noted *“heritage is very important to the community”*. This was reinforced in the on line community survey, place design forums and on line community workshops which emphasised that *“the rich history of the area needs to be told, preserved and shared with the community “*. This sentiment is also captured in the ATP CMP 2013.

The IPC in its decision of December 2016 concerning an ATP Mirvac DA noted *“concerns about the impact of the proposed development on the heritage values of the site were the most frequently raised issues in the public submissions received...”*

The Strategic Vision indicated in the Appendix under the heading Precinct Renewal Principles

- *Actively involve the community throughout the process*
- *Precinct Governance model is needed for long term sustainability of the site “*

It is noted that a number of other government actions will impinge on decisions to be taken for the implementation of the North Redfern Strategic Vision. Amendments to planning controls can have a significant influence on many important aspects of the Strategic Vision and the paper notes *“amendments to the planning controls will be investigated through the preparation of a State Significant Precincts Study and ...the requirements to be fast tracked through the Planning system Acceleration program...community and stakeholder engagement will continue concurrently with the investigation and planning processes”*.

Other bodies whose decisions will impact on the Strategic Vision include the State Design Review Panel and the review of the NSW Heritage Act recently announced by the Minister and to be undertaken by a Committee of the NSW Legislative Council.

In addition to these wider developments the Strategic Vision under the heading **Next Steps** indicated that project options would be *“informed by technical studies, a state design review*

*panel and feedback from the community and stakeholders.”* A list of focused investigations is outlined which includes *“developing long term governance arrangements including mechanisms for Aboriginal inclusion and engagement”*. This submission strongly supports the proposal for Aboriginal inclusion and engagement but as always the devil is in the details.

The strategic vision notes at p40 under consultation *“Redfern North Eveleigh has a long history of plans made with the community and stakeholder engagement undertaken at varying intervals and degrees during these processes.”*

The Association notes that the community has had direct representation on earlier governance arrangements including the Redfern –Waterloo Authority and the Eveleigh Steering Committee and significant input into the ATP CMP and ERW Heritage Implementation Plan. The Association recommends that the community must be directly represented on the Governance structures for the redevelopment of the North Eveleigh precinct. In addition the proposed technical studies, Heritage Interpretation Plans, overarching CMPs and focussed investigations to be undertaken must include mechanisms to ensure community engagement and information sharing at all stages.

In relation to governance structures the Association in its 2017 submission to Urban Growth concerning an overarching CMP for the ERW Precinct analysed the various structures adopted in the redevelopment of the various ex- railway precincts across Australia and favoured the Western Australian example of the Midland Redevelopment Authority.

The Association argues there is an urgent need for a new governance model. The privatisation of the ATP, the establishment of public and private ownership arrangements for the precinct combined with the North Eveleigh Strategic Vision highlights the need for a new governance model. The land is owned by a range of stakeholders and occupied by a range of users. There is ample evidence that the historic arrangements are not fit for purpose.

### **Overarching Conservation Management Plan for the Eveleigh Railway Workshops.**

The Strategic Vision in the Precinct Renewal Principles noted the community *said “heritage should be considered holistically across the site and connect areas and be guided by an overarching plan that includes South Eveleigh. The interpretation of the area should inform the renewal rather than being an afterthought and incorporate information through public art and wayfinding.”?*

The Association notes the Strategic Vision document did not adopt the community’s views for an overarching plan that that highlights the binary nature of the Eveleigh Railway Workshops nor heritage interpretation beyond heritage buildings with other interpretation elements as an afterthought.



A condition of consent for the Mirvac DA development included B48 *“an updated conservation management plan (CMP) must be prepared and endorsed ... It must align with the Eveleigh Railway Workshops CMP currently being prepared by Urban Growth...”*

The Eveleigh Railway Workshops overarching CMP has not seen the light of day, perhaps a victim of Departmental reorganisation and/or new unpublicised strategic directions. The Association argues there is a need for a continued commitment to an overarching ERW approach with a governance review providing the opportunity to establish governance structures which will deliver a Conservation Management Plan for the whole Precinct. It should include community representatives and a public consultation process. The Association argues an overarching CMP should include a business plan and timeframe for the implementation of the overarching CMP. A governance review. The attempt by the Department, whilst suffering a number of flaws, especially the lack of community involvement, does need to be revived and implemented.

Significant work has already been completed with the NSW Heritage Council endorsed 2013 Conservation Management Plan for the ATP and the Eveleigh Railway Workshops Heritage Implementation Plan 2012.

The redevelopment of the ATP site under Mirvac ownership has seen a concerted effort to develop and implement a Heritage Implementation Plan<sup>7</sup>.

### **Learning from the ATP Heritage Experience.**

The redevelopment of the ATP site since 2015 has seen extensive work undertaken concerning Heritage Interpretation. Some lessons of the experience include:

- An initial Interpretation Strategy for ATP. This included a mix of interpretative signage, events, exhibition proposals and digital interpretative journeys throughout the site, both within and external to the Locomotive Workshops.
- It included plans to attract cultural heritage tourists to the site.
- The Stage 2 Heritage Interpretation Plan. Its key objectives were to identify and select stories and identify interpretative themes and messages that tie into the wider precinct
- The Heritage Interpretation Plan-Stage 2 was a requirement to meet IPC determined conditions of consent requirements for Mirvac's DA applications. A range of the conditions of consent have applications to the North Eveleigh redevelopment and the need to reinvent the wheel must be avoided.

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<sup>7</sup> See Interpretation Strategy for Australian Technology Park, prepared by Curio Projects, dated November 2016 and Addendum to the Interpretation Strategy for Australian Technology Park, Curio Projects: Final Report April, 2019. See also Buildings 1, 2 and 3 and Public Domain.

## **Tourism and Education.**

The North Eveleigh Strategic Vision does not contain a cultural tourism strategy. As Carriageworks is an internationally recognised cultural institution. The absence of a cultural tourism strategy in the Strategic Vision is a major shortcoming that must be addressed.

The Association notes that the ATP Heritage Strategy and Implementation Plan include the development of a plan for cultural tourism, cultural heritage tours and school education kits as key components.

**The Association recommends that the Strategic Vision document be amended to include cultural tourism, heritage tours and school education kits as components of a North Eveleigh heritage interpretation strategy and plan.**

## **Precinct Connectivity**

The transport and mobility barriers created by the railway lines and two arterial roads between North and South Eveleigh have been a long standing community issue. The Association notes that improvements to precinct connectivity have recently occurred such as the redevelopment of Redfern station which the union and community groups have campaigned for over a number of decades.

However, the Association argues major transport connectivity shortcomings have not been adequately addressed in the Strategic Vision.

- It suggests a feasibility study of a pedestrian crossing over the railway corridor. This needs to be strengthened to address this long standing community demand. The Vision does not refer to earlier Urban Growth Central to Eveleigh transformation strategy and previous studies which, for example included, **Key Move 3**: to create walking and cycling connections across the railway corridor.
- It does not seek to integrate North Eveleigh with South Eveleigh in terms of immediate connectivity between the two or leveraging movements from the proposed Waterloo metro to Sydney University and the RPA hospital. This submission argues the issue of bus connections between the Waterloo metro and North Eveleigh precinct needs substantial further work to be undertaken.
- The commitment to practical options for walking and cycling needs to be considerably expanded. The focus of the document is on the Wilson Street Cycleway. This fails to address cycling connectivity between North and South Eveleigh.
- The implementation of the Strategic Vision will result in many thousands of new residents and workers to the precinct. Existing and future businesses should be required to adopt travel management plans whereby 80% of employees travel to and from work by public transport.

**The Association recommends the strengthening of the commitments within the Strategic Vision document to : the creation of walking and cycling connections across the railway corridor, the transport integration of North and South Eveleigh with specific attention for bus connectivity between the proposed Waterloo metro and North Eveleigh, an expansion of walking and cycling options beyond the Wilson Street cycleway and the adoption of travel demand management targets for public transport usage of 80% for travel to and from work for employees.**

**26<sup>nd</sup> April 2021.**