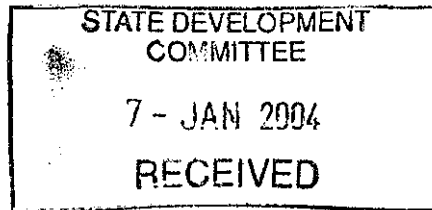


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23 December 2003

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Standing Committee on State Development
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
ATT: Robert Stefanic

Dear Mr Stefanic

INQUIRY INTO PORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSW

I refer to the above-mentioned Inquiry and am pleased to advise that at its meeting on 16 December 2003, Leichhardt Council resolved to forward the attached submission.

I thank the Committee for its consideration of Council's submission.

Yours sincerely,


Alison McCabe
DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

**LEICHHARDT COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
STATE DEVELOPMENT INQUIRY INTO PORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Leichhardt Council requests that the Inquiry give consideration to the following issues concerning the future of public land at Glebe Island and White Bay on which shipping freight operations are currently located.

Decision-making and Strategic Planning Framework

Over the last decade, urban consolidation and increasing residential densities has clearly dominated decision-making on the disposal of surplus State Government sites. The reasons for this have been identified in the November 2003 Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report on the Disposal of Sydney Harbour Foreshore Land. The Report notes that government policies promoting development for "highest and best" use and Treasury rules permitting State budget dependant agencies to retain significant proportions of funds realised from the disposal of surplus sites encourage their residential development. This framework conflicts with that of a 'working Harbour' which is a priority project under the Sharing Sydney Harbour Regional Action Plan released in 2000. The Action Plan describes working Harbour as ensuring 'there is sufficient waterfront land to cater for the existing and future needs of maritime businesses'.

In terms of the soon to be surplus maritime commercial precincts at Glebe Island and White Bay, the implications are clear. In the absence of an overall strategy for Sydney Harbour that balances competing policy objectives, the existing decision-making processes for State agencies such as the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) and Sydney Ports will promote development of these sites for the land use that will

generate the highest commercial return. This will inevitably be for predominantly residential development with a minimal foreshore access route (6-10 metres in accordance with SHFA's draft Foreshore Promenade Policy).

An outcome along the lines of that envisaged above would fail to consider broader strategic questions such as those subject to the current Inquiry. These include the employment implications for Sydney, the additional impact on Port Botany and environs and the current and future maritime needs of Sydney Harbour. In this respect, the alienation of this land from the public domain would permanently exclude future maritime use. Even limited residential development at White Bay or Glebe Island would seriously denigrate from the potential for future maritime uses. This likelihood was acknowledged by SHFA as part of the commercial redevelopment of Jones Bay Wharf where it did not pursue residential development due its incompatibility with charter vessel activity. The current problems with port activities in close proximity to recent residential development at White Bay are well documented.

Working Harbour and Future Needs

It is possible that existing maritime sites may be required in the future for water based public transport or deep-water wharf facilities with associated land based facilities. This contention is supported by the findings of the *Rolls Report* commissioned by the Waterways Authority in 1999. The Report concluded that there was likely to be growth in industries serving recreational boating; marine contractors servicing waterfront structures; commercial port activities and the charter boat industry.

In the absence of a holistic strategy for Sydney Harbour, the use of these maritime precincts for any land use that alienates it from public control should be opposed.

Appropriate Land Uses for Maritime Industrial Precincts

The above mentioned position would not preclude the use of existing maritime precincts as public open space or its lease for commercial activities. This approach would be consistent with the recommendations of the Auditor General's Performance Report and enable the findings of the current inquiry to be considered in an holistic strategic plan for Sydney Harbour.

Conclusion

Leichhardt Council submits that the future use of these sites should retain the potential for future maritime activities in accordance with government working harbour policies. In addition, residential development and/or alienation of these publicly owned lands should not be permitted. The continued lease of the land to the private sector for purposes compatible with Sydney Harbour and/or the creation of significant public open space would be supported.