

**Address to Waverley Council by Stephen Lightfoot on behalf of Save Bronte Village
and the over 1600 petitioners, 19-02-2013, Waverley Council Chambers**

Madam Mayor, Mr Deputy-Mayor, Councillors.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you in the Council chambers tonight.

This evening we present to you, our elected representatives, a petition now signed by over 1600 community members consisting largely of residents from all over the suburbs of Bronte, Clovelly and Waverley. The petitioners are calling on you to ensure that any future development at the Bronte RSL site on Macpherson St is limited to residential-use only and that the height limit on the site is returned to the 9 metre limit that was in place until October 25th 2012.

Our petition was prompted by the WLB-RSL proposal to build, on the RSL site, a multi-storey mixed shopping mall/residential building that is totally inappropriate for the site and out of character with the surrounding residential neighbourhood. At the same time, we saw the opportunity to contribute to the Council's review of the planning controls at the RSL site.

Our community has comprehensively rejected the development proposal presented to us by WLB and wants the Council to amend the planning controls to ensure that any development that does occur on the RSL site is appropriate for that site and in keeping with our residential neighbourhood.

Why residential? Well the Macpherson St Bronte RSL site is surrounded on all sides by residential dwellings. It is situated in a part of the Waverley council area full of families with young children. It is located in close proximity to the Clovelly Public School, the Clovelly Scout Hall and the council run Bronte Child Care Centre. The community is concerned that any large retail development on the site will increase the danger to our children who are using these buildings, buildings that are a central part of their lives. This is not something we have dreamed up. It is well known that children, trucks and traffic do not mix. There are reduced speed limits around all NSW schools in recognition of this and we have seen tragic accidents near child care centres and schools in the recent past. An increase in trucks and traffic that would accompany any large retail development at the RSL site would inevitably lead to accidents involving our kids.

Macpherson St itself is an extremely busy street, one of only two roads down to the popular and beautiful Bronte Beach. There are already significant traffic jams in the morning and afternoon peaks on this road and in the summer beach season. The traffic associated with any high-rise retail development at the RSL site will cause traffic gridlock on Macpherson St and in the surrounding streets such as Arden st, St Thomas St and

Evans St. Rat runs will develop through our residential streets. Commuters on our one bus, the 378, will see their trips times increase. Needless to say, we do not want any of this to happen.

It is for the same reasons that we call for the height limit to be returned to 9 metres. This is an important way to limit the size and scale of any future development at the RSL site, thereby reducing its negative impacts on the community. Most local residents were surprised to learn that the height limit was increased last year and want that decision reversed. We do not want a cluster of high-rise buildings to be built in the neighbourhood centre. We want the existing 1 to 2 storey streetscape to be maintained.

Many of the Councillors sitting round this chamber were elected on a platform of elevating the importance of community consultation in Waverley Council decisions. And, indeed, Waverley Council has been listening to the residents on this issue with its community meeting, its survey and in meetings with resident groups and we thank the Planning and Environmental Services department for that.

But, to us, community consultation is more than just listening to the community's views. Yes, IT IS listening to the community's views but, importantly, it is also **acting** on those views, incorporating them into planning decisions. And community consultation is giving the community's views priority over the views of outside interests whose sole motivation is profit.

You are about to decide the future of the planning controls at the Bronte RSL site. You have consulted the community and our voice has been loudly heard across Bronte, Clovelly and Waverley. In addition to our petition, you have had hundreds of emails from residents opposed to any retail high-rise development at the site. You have the results of the Council's own community survey and the survey supplied by the developer. Both these survey's show that 70 to 80% of respondents reject retail development at the site. Any objective reading of the community's response to future development at the Bronte RSL site shows that the community does not want more shops and does not want a high-rise building at the RSL site.

The question I ask you tonight is this, will you heed the voices you have heard from our community, from the locals, from your constituents, from those who elected you? If not then you must ask yourselves whom do you truly represent.

So on behalf of the petitioners I call on you, our elected representatives, to make the necessary changes to the planning controls at the Bronte RSL site in Macpherson St to ensure that any future development in the neighbourhood centre is consistent with the views and wishes of the community as expressed in our petition. Thank you.