



The Bronte RSL overdevelopment was a stupid idea from the beginning and deserved to be torpedoed.

Community Celebrates Bronte RSL Victory

Words Sarah Healey Picture Save Bronte

The epic saga of the Bronte RSL site has finally reached its denouement, with victory awarded to a community that staunchly opposed the developer Winston Langley Burlington's (WLB) proposed planning controls for the site, lodged back in March 2013. The Department of Planning and Environment (DoPE) dismissed WLB's application, highlighting the successful campaigning between residents, Council and local politicians to stop the overdevelopment occurring.

Among the reasons for the State Government's decision to knock back the proposal are the fact that Bronte "is not identified as a priority for urban renewal", and that WLB's proposal "was found to be inconsistent with current controls and the area's neighbourhood centre zoning". Although the developer amended the proposal in response to community objection, it still failed to garner support from residents or the Council.

Waverley Mayor Sally Betts was elated that the DoPE had rejected the proposal.

"The State Government has upheld our decision to refuse this gross overdevelopment because it's not suited to the scale and objective of the neighbourhood centre," she said.

Cr Betts expressed her appreciation for the support of the Save Bronte group - in particular its spokesman Dr Stephen Lightfoot - along with Member for Coogee Bruce Notley-Smith.

"Stephen and his team of volunteers never gave up their fight," she said. "They joined us to meet with ministers and the department time and time again, held rallies and sent out news bulletins.

"Bruce never stopped knocking on the Minister

for Planning's door to insist that this planning proposal was not state significant and should be decided at a local level, because Waverley Council has followed the State Government's guidelines to a T."

The cohesion and persistence of the Bronte community was what Dr Lightfoot was most proud of.

"Save Bronte had to call on the community to stand up and fight for Bronte during five separate periods over the two and a half years of this process. That is hard work for us and for our community. Contrast that with the situation of the developers. For developers it is their day job. They don't have to give up anything to get what they want, whilst we have to give up everything," he said.

The Bronte RSL Club Limited also embraced the State Government's decision.

"The reputation of the RSL has suffered a lot through this process. We at the club are hoping now to work with the RSL sub-branch to help repair that reputation through a development of the site that complies with the law and is supported by the Bronte community," Club President Brian O'Neill said.

Despite the victory, former president Simon Paterson holds grave concerns about the future of the club.

"It is now up to the developer to regroup after the knock back and work out the best outcome for the sub-branch and the development. The sub-branch will stay in existence no matter the outcome and continue its service, memorial and welfare duties to its members and the community," he said.