

13 August 2008

The Director, Urban Assessments
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Modification of Concept Plan for Barangaroo (MP 06_0162 MOD 2)

Barangaroo should be a living example of the kind of compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighbourhood essential to the future of our city. That's why the Urban Taskforce is strongly supportive of moves to increase the amount of floor space at Barangaroo.

An increase in the potential floor space in the southern part of Barangaroo from 400,000 to 520,000 square metres is widely welcomed by industry. We have felt for some time that the existing Barangaroo plans do not make the best of the East Darling Harbour site. This change will help ensure Sydney retains its pre-eminent role as the Southern Hemisphere's greatest city.

Importantly, the increase in floor space will help make significant public transport improvements for this part of the city more viable. The North West Metro will run underground from the CBD, with stations at St James, Martin Place and Wynyard, and then via Epping to Castle Hill, Norwest and Rouse Hill. Key features of the North West Metro will be the development of a station close to Barangaroo as well as interchanges with CityRail and bus routes. As such, it will provide significant transport benefits to Barangaroo not previously factored into options for the commercial aspects of the development.

The Taskforce has previously argued that the NSW Government should review all existing zoning plans near proposed Metro rail stations, to ensure that the best possible use is made of this transport infrastructure by the wider community. In our submission *Making MetroLink A Success* (attached) we argued that patronage of the metro system will also be influenced by the type of urban development that is encouraged in the vicinity of metro stations. This submission cites the best available research showing that density has a significant impact on the use of public transport. For instance, it was found that every 10-percent increase in population density was associated with about a 6-percent increase in boardings at transit stations.

We are of the firm belief that compact, mixed-use development encouraged and supported by flexible statutory State and local environment plans will be critical to the success of this transport project.

We congratulate the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority for following the recommendations set out in our policy paper, that is:

As locations for new metro stations are identified, the existing local planning regulations need to be reviewed and amended to ensure that future local development:

- will provide the necessary population necessities to make the metro line viable; and

- broaden metropolitan objectives for active, compact and mixed -use centres.

Other possible transport initiatives which will be made more feasible by the amended Barangaroo development include a light rail system down Hickson Road and a ferry hub or wharf at Barangaroo. We understand both are currently under consideration by the NSW Government and we urge the government to proceed with these initiatives.

The additional floorspace and associated increased employment will help meet the objectives of the NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy. The Strategy sets out to encourage employment in centres with good transport access. It identifies the Sydney CBD as anchoring the "Global Economic Corridor" (also known as the Global Arc), which is a corridor with a concentration of jobs and activities in centres from North Sydney to Macquarie Park and from the Sydney CBD to Sydney Airport and Port Botany.

The Global Economic Corridor contains approximately 40 per cent of Sydney's jobs and 75 per cent of Sydney's information technology and telecommunications jobs. The strategy says that approximately 30 per cent of Sydney's new jobs will be located in this corridor.

We have previously commented that the proposed 11 hectare parkland is to be at the northern end of the site, while the highest buildings are clumped together at the southern end. The design of the site would be improved by more evenly distributing the parkland and new homes and workplaces. This would allow office workers, residents and visitors to move easily between buildings and the public open space. It will also create more potential for a more dynamic urban environment featuring cafes, restaurants and wine bars. Open space should be safe and active and not just wasteland and unusable. However we note that this issue is unlikely to be addressed as part of this current exhibition process.

We also note the limitations requiring the increased floor space to be put to commercial use only. Higher density residential buildings will inject life into the area, locate more people close to their work and ease the strain on Sydney's transport system. Nonetheless, we support the increased floor space, even with the restrictions proposed by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority.

Yours sincerely

Urban Taskforce Australia



Aaron Gadiel
Chief Executive Officer