

**ITEM                    MAYORAL MINUTE - 27 LEEDS STREET, RHODES**

**Department        Mayoral Office**

**Author Initials: AT**

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**REPORT**

The owner of 27 Leeds Street, Rhodes has requested that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure ‘call-in’ a new 450 unit application as – *State significant development* under Section 89C(3) of the EP&A Act. If accepted this would mean that Council would have no role in the assessment of the new application. This would be very disappointing and a total back flip by the Government as it promised to hand back planning powers to councils and local committee.

27 Leeds Street, Rhodes is currently zoned industrial under the Canada Bay Local Environmental Plan where residential development is not permitted. In 2011 the then Department of Planning issued a ‘Site Compatibility Certificate’ to BH Australia Leeds 1 Pty Ltd under the provisions of State Environmental Planning Policy – Affordable Housing, for 501 units, 50% of which were intended for affordable rental housing, for a period of 10 years. Subsequently, an application was lodged with Council and given the cost of the development (\$120m), the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) was the consent authority. On 6 June 2012, the JRPP unanimously refused the application accepting Council’s assessment of the proposal.

The issue is not the provision of affordable rental housing. Indeed Council owns 24 affordable rental units for key workers in the City. Over the past few years Council has entered into voluntary planning agreements with developers to deliver this public benefit to the City. Council’s units will be held in perpetuity unlike the affordable units proposed at 27 Leeds Street which only need to be made available for 10 years.

I am firmly of the view that affordable housing should not be provided at the expense of good planning outcomes for the community as a whole. The government should not circumvent the planning system in order to deliver affordable housing.

The Leeds Street industrial precinct is located on a prominent peninsula on the Parramatta River and 27 Leeds Street is part of an identified Strategic Foreshore area under the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan – Sydney Harbour Catchment 2005. If this application is allowed to proceed it will have a domino effect on other industrial sites in Leeds Street and result in cumulative impacts. These impacts will include poor urban design, a lack of view corridors, inadequate public open space and uncoordinated foreshore access.

27 Leeds Street, Rhodes should not be developed in isolation but rather a Master Plan developed for the entire strategic foreshore site which could well include affordable housing. It is important for Council and the community to articulate its vision for the area and a Master Plan is an appropriate next step.

I seek Council's support in standing against this inappropriate application to the Minister and support for the following recommendations:

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. THAT a submission to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure be prepared outlining Council's objection to the application being made State Significant.
2. THAT a letter be sent to the local member, John Sidoti MP, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the Honourable Brad Hazzard MP, the Opposition Leader, the Honourable John Robertson MP and the Shadow Planning Minister, the Honourable Luke Foley MLC seeking their support against this proposal.

