THE FUTURE OF BANK STREET, PYRMONT PUBLIC RECREATION AREA
July 2017

Blackwattle Bay Action Campaign
Enquiries: Neville Monk 0408 104 037, Elizabeth Elenius 0409 552 117, Mary Mortimer 0410 679 204

The community has been promised a park and access to the water for passive recreation on the area of Bank Street under the approach to the Anzac Bridge since 2006.

Background
• 2006 – Bank Street Master Plan is approved and land zoned Public Recreation for foreshore park and passive (non-motorised) boating facilities.
• 2009 – NSW Maritime announces the relocation of Sydney Heritage Fleet (SHF) to Bank Street Foreshore Park
• 2010 – On the basis that the SHF development would be under $5M and modest in scale, most representatives and stakeholders agree to the allocation of land and water space for the SHF, the public parkland (on NSW Maritime site) and the Community Water Sports Centre (dragon boat facility) on 1 Bank Street.
• 14 November, 2013 – RMS makes Conditional Offer of land transfer at Bank Street to the City of Sydney for open space use subject to the site being free of all tenants
• 2014 – 2017 – SHF site remains undeveloped
• November, 2014 – 20 high-level Principles adopted by Urban Growth: Principle 4 – Allow the time to invest in genuine and early engagement with, and broad acceptance of our plans from, all categories of the public, government and industry.
• 2015 – Urban Growth announces that the Bank Street Public Recreation Area will form part of the Bays Waterfront Promenade Destination, with Immediate Priority.
• May, 2015 The Call for Great Ideas announced at Bays Precinct Sydneysider Summit
• 2 December, 2016 – Urban Growth advises Dept of Planning and Environment of the proposed MOD3 Application
• 2017 – SHF announces that it has reached agreement with the Australian National Maritime Museum to locate its museum and other facilities at Pyrmont Bay.
• March 2017 – Department of Planning approves a Modification (MOD 2) to separate the Water based component of the approved DA from the land-based component.
• May 2017 - SHF agrees a “Bank Street Deed of Release” with RMS to enable Urban Growth to apply to revise the DA to accommodate Blackwattle Bay Marina.
• 26 June, 2017 – Department of Planning advises receipt of Modification (MOD 3) submitted by Urban Growth for the land-based component of the site (formerly of SHF) to accommodate “temporary” facilities of Blackwattle Bay Marina

THERE HAS BEEN NO CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS OF THE BAYS PRECINCT COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP ON THIS COMMERCIAL MARINA PROPOSAL.
BAYS WATERFRONT PROMENADE – The Promises and the Reality

Promise: The Bays Waterfront Promenade will provide the opportunity to safely walk or cycle along the Sydney Harbour waterfront, all the way from Balmain through to the Sydney CBD and Woolloomooloo – a trip that follows the beautiful Sydney Harbour, with opportunities to sit by the foreshore with a coffee, enjoy a long lunch as a waterside café, access the Harbour for water-based activities, admire locally-produced sculptures or art, gaze at amazing views and even pop in to see the busy activity of a local community garden.

…it will be more than just a pathway that links people between great places – it will be planned as a new must see Destination for every visitor to Sydney; a waterfront playground to bring communities together. It will be designed to seamlessly connect the urban coastal and marine context with both green shorelines and living sea walls. (NSW Government’s Transformation Plan, The Bays Precinct Sydney, October, 2015)

Reality: A 22-vessel commercial party boat facility located in 22 shipping containers and demountable office, on a site zoned Public Recreation, for approximately 10 years, operating from 7am to 1am, 7 days per week.

MOD3 IS AN ENTIRELY NEW PROPOSAL – NOT A MODIFICATION
• The Sydney Heritage Fleet’s approved DA proposed a community use for the site which incorporated educational facilities and provided for the long term conservation of historic vessels, consistent with the site’s Public Recreation Zoning.
• The original DA was for the mooring of a maximum of 12 vessels which would rarely leave their moorings, with most trips finishing before dusk and provided storage space and facilities for dragon boaters
• Whilst marinas are allowed under this zoning, they are defined as for the mooring of pleasure craft and small boats
• Clause H9 of the original consent conditions restrict the SHF marina’s use to “vessels of the Sydney Heritage Fleet or other affiliated maritime heritage organisations… Private vessels/boats must not be moored at the maritime facility at any time”.
• Sydney Heritage Fleet is a not-for-profit organisation
• Joe Elias’ Marina is a commercial enterprise involving the use of 22 party boats operating at the potential frequency of 22 trips an hour up to 1.00am, 7 days per week.
• In contrast with the unsightly location of 22 shipping containers and demountable office building, the SHF proposed an attractive architect-designed permanent building.
• Party boat employees will be discouraged from driving to work and exhorted to catch public transport or ride a bike – at 1am? – to mitigate against creating traffic and parking problems.
URBAN GROWTH HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING THIS DEAL WITH BLACKWATTLE BAY MARINA FOR MANY MONTHS, WITHOUT INFORMING THE COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP OR CONSULTING THE COMMUNITY

IS THIS A TYPICAL NSW “DEAL”?

- Joe Tripodi and former NSW Maritime chief Steve Dunn awarded the tender for a lease on its current site to Joe Elias’s $2 company All Occasion Cruises.
- Benny Elias’s past property dealings with a friend of Joe Tripodi have been questioned.
- Benny Elias was intimate involved in the early stages of the bid, and Eddie Obeid’s son helped Joe Elias form his winning consortium.
- Urban Growth has apparently failed in its attempt to have the lease overturned in court, and is seeking an alternative location for Joe Elias’s business.
- Urban Growth has decided to sacrifice its promise for a community park and passive water recreation facilities, in order to proceed with building a new fish market and selling the existing site to developers for highrise apartments.
- A deal has been done between Sydney Heritage Fleet and RMS to trade its DA for a rumoured $480K “Bank Street Deed of Release”.

Sources

Plan to remake neglected Blackwattle Bay is in tatters, Anne Davies, Linton Besser, SMH 19 June 2011

ICAC takes evidence of marine project linked to corrupt former minister Joe Tripodi, Kate McClymont and Leesha McKenny, SMH 12 June 2014

Obeid family associate Joe Elias in line for Sydney Fish Market windfall, Sean Nicholls and Kate McClymont, SMH 7 November 2016

WHAT OF THE GOVERNMENT’S BAYS PRECINCT TRANSFORMATION PLAN?

So far, we will have:

- A new, enlarged fish market on Pyrmont Bridge Road, eliminating the possibility of extending Wentworth Park open space to the water, and increasing traffic on an already massively congested road and intersection;
- More upmarket apartments on the water, with no plans for affordable housing, schools for the children, or medical facilities for an aging population;
- Displacement of existing passive recreation on the water (dragon boats, outriggers, sailing boats, heritage boat restoration) with no space to relocate them to;
- No grass or open space for residents, workers and visitors to enjoy;
- No room for representing Sydney’s indigenous or maritime heritage.