

**Laura Gabriel**S0042/S0050  
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**From:** Stephen Grieve [sgrieve@tmims.com.au]  
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**To:** 2030 Project  
**Subject:** Darling Harbour Business Association Response to Sydney 2030

**DARLING HARBOUR BUSINESS ASSOCIATION  
RESPONSE  
TO  
SYDNEY 2030**

We wish to take this opportunity to formally respond to Sydney 2030 in terms of the content that specifically refers to Darling Harbour.

#### Vision

We commend all concerned for the vision and the breadth and depth of ideas which are explored in the plan. The primary elements around revitalisation, the inner city transport network, environment, liveability and sustainability are all big ideas that we as a community need to get right.

In particular we applaud this excellent initiative on the part of Council because of the debate that it has generated and the ongoing debate that it will continue to generate.

Such debate will be of significant benefit to the health, prosperity and future wellbeing of our City.

#### Returning Darling Harbour to a Greenfield Park

At a time when there is increasing pressure to improve the attractiveness of Sydney to visitors, it is hard to understand why a precinct that attracts over 25m visitations a year should be converted into parkland. We acknowledge the importance of green space in a city, but it would be reckless to abandon a successful leisure precinct due to the faddish idea of a few individuals that there should be parks within so many metres of every resident and worker. The associated idea that residencies should be constructed where Darling Drive and the Exhibition Centre is located is, in our view, quite odd, and does not sit at all well with the idea of a vibrant City providing employment, enterprise and connectivity in a mixed economy.

It is also an impractical idea - the built structure of the Darling Harbour precinct involves a whole series of buildings which are held under head leases. The duration of these head leases is 99 years and we are only two decades into those terms. Accordingly the conversion of this precinct to parkland would cost many, many billions of dollars. It would also involve legalities and complexities which by themselves would, no doubt, drag on for many decades.

The disruption to Darling Harbour businesses – small, medium and large and their employees and their customers would be monumental.

This is a completely unworkable proposition which is vastly out of the reach of the City of Sydney and its rate payers. As such it is difficult to understand why it was ever included in a plan which otherwise has much to commend it. Such a project would never attract funding at a time in our history when all levels of government are under such budgetary pressure as is currently the case.

#### Removing the Monorail

In suggesting the removal of the Monorail the authors of the report are descending into parochial observations based on their prejudices. We note there was no consultation with the owner of the Monorail or Darling Harbour bodies on this matter, and we suspect that the authors have no idea of the role, function or dimensions of the monorail, nor the satisfaction it generates amongst its users. It is hard to understand why Council would support the removal of a public transport system that provides 3m trips every year, is non-polluting, causes no congestion and requires no financial support from Government. It is also not clear what objective of the Plan is achieved by removal of the Monorail.

#### Relocating the Western Distributor underneath the Darling Harbour Precinct

The land underneath the precinct is crisscrossed by an extensive myriad of tunnels providing a whole range of services to the city. Some of these tunnels are currently being utilised and a number of others are no longer in use. The reality is that any such tunnel underneath the Darling Harbour precinct would therefore need to be of such a depth that the costs would seem to completely outweigh the benefits. Again our earlier comments on affordability apply.

#### Conclusion

3/06/2008

Many senior people from throughout Darling Harbour gave their valuable time to participate in the series of public consultations that the City of Sydney conducted to develop the draft plan. It is unacceptable that none of the matters canvassed above were raised with any one from the precinct. Accordingly none of them were tested in the public arena. This leads to the worrying conclusion that these matters relating to Darling Harbour have come from within council itself.

Accordingly we have invited the Lord Mayor to meet with our association to work towards building up a better mutual understanding of our respective roles and aspirations.

In short, we are obliged to record our disappointment and concern that a plan which otherwise has so much to recommend it has been allowed to be tainted with recommendations relative to Darling Harbour which seem to have been very poorly researched and seem to be completely impractical from a broad range of perspectives.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. We wish you every success with the other elements of Sydney 2030 and we look forward to opening a constructive and productive dialogue with the Lord Mayor.

Yours sincerely  
Stephen Grieve  
CEO  
Darling Harbour Business Association