

Manly Community Position Statement on The Royal Far West Proposed Development. July 2013

Background

The Royal Far West (RFW) proposal is for an 8 storey development on Manly's beachfront. Only 25% of the proposed development will be for the charity's own use, the remainder being dominated by a huge 8 storey commercial and residential tower.

The RFW obtained its land through donations from the State Government and private individuals. The RFW has also benefitted from 80 years of fundraising and thousands of hours of volunteerism from the people of Manly. Not surprisingly, the people of Manly are dismayed with how the RFW is now treating the community.

Due to home-based internet communication, the RFW traditional model of service delivery to country children has changed dramatically in recent years, Therefore there are far fewer children staying at the Manly site for extended periods of time. The RFW has not been forthcoming on its plans for service delivery in the future, and whilst there is talk of a so called 'centre of excellence', there has been no clear explanation of exactly what that would entail.

The Board of the RFW has dramatically changed in recent years, no longer being controlled by health and charity professionals, it is now largely controlled by identities associated with financial corporations and property developers.

The large block, of which the RFW land is part, is encompassed by Victoria Avenue, South Steyne, Wentworth Street and Darley Road. It is one of the busiest blocks in Manly. It currently hosts the Manly Village Public School, the Manly Community Centre, the Elsie Hill Low Cost Housing block, Australian Doctors International, Before and After School Care, two medical practices, the RFW and RFW School and some residential dwellings. Given that most of Manly town centre is used for commercial purposes, this block stands out as being a health, community and education precinct. This great community benefit will be lost if the RFW site is developed without careful thought and visionary planning.

Manly Town Centre has a unique character which the community has fought hard to preserve. Height limits and good urban design are crucial elements to

retaining Manly's character and amenity. The people of Manly would like to see the RFW site redeveloped, but it must be driven by good planning principles, not simply developer interests.

The following document outlines particular issues of concern to our community.

Issues and Community Positions

Issue 1

The current controversy surrounding the RFW site is due to a lack of consultation, poor planning, and lack of a wider visionary thinking.

Community Position

It is critical that all the relevant players: Manly Council, Department of Health (which funds RFW), Department of Education, Department of Housing, the RFW and the community all come together to see if a beneficial solution can be found, that provides a real benefit to the community, as well as an income stream for the RFW. The State Government must ensure all these groups are engaged in a consensus based approach.

Issue 2

The State Government is the owner of strategic parcels of land within the RFW development site. This means the State Government has the power to ensure any development on the site is in the community interest and not driven by developer interests. There are concerns that the State Government may sell its land parcels to RFW. This would be a disaster, as the community would lose any influence over any future development.

Community Position

The State Government should not sell any of their land to the RFW, unless there is clear benefit to the Manly community in doing so and the Manly community and Manly Council agrees to such a sale.

Issue 3

The RFW site sits within the block bordered by Darley Road, South Steyne, Wentworth, and Victoria streets. This block also contains Manly Village Public School which is 3 storeys. The RFW site is also surrounded by very recently built residential blocks that are 4 storeys. The State Government's Planning and Assessment Commission has given the RFW a preliminary approval for an 8 storey development. A tower of this height will have highly detrimental visual impacts and cast shadows over Manly Beach, the promenade and over Manly Village Public School playground. There is no legitimate urban planning justification for this height and it has been strongly rejected by the Manly community. If the RFW site had been rezoned residential, which it should have

been given the neighbouring properties are residential and educational, it would most likely have been given a maximum height of 15m or 5 storeys.

Community Position

- a) We call upon the State Government to publicly commit to only allowing a maximum height of 5 storeys for the site. This height limit is of fundamental importance in getting an appropriate development and receiving community support.
- b) Any impacts on view corridors from surrounding precincts (Ivanhoe Park, Little Manly, Fairy Bower) must be properly analysed and effected residents informed and consulted.

Issue 4

Any Development Application for this property will be, in effect, a joint submission by the RFW and the State Government as the government is part-owner of the site.

Community Position

The State Government should make a public commitment that it will refuse to allow the RFW to submit a development application until there is an agreement reached with the Manly community on ensuring a visionary integrated development.

Issue 5

There will be a serious loss of low cost accommodation due to the demolition of the Elsie Hill building. Manly struggles to provide enough low cost accommodation to meet the community needs. The Elsie Hill is an essential facility with no proposed replacement in the RFW development plans.

Community Position:

The Department of Housing should provide low cost accommodation on the site to replace that which will be lost.

Issue 6

There is strong community concern about the future of the Manly Village Public School, which has grown to serve over 680 children and current government modelling shows this will soon grow to 800. This is indicative of the changing demographic profile³ of our community, which will have flow-on effects on many aspects of Manly's educational infrastructure and services.

Community Position

- a) The Department of Education should commit to keeping Manly Village Public School as a Kindergarten to Year 6 School on its current site.
- b) If any development of the RFW site goes ahead, then a land parcel equivalent in value to the strategic DEC land parcels should be attached to the school for future expansion of the school.

Issue 7

There is strong community concern about the future of the much loved Manly Community Centre, which is an essential community service.

Community Position

We call upon the Minister for Education to provide security for the Manly Community Centre to remain in its current building for a further 10+10 year lease period.

Issue 8

There is a widespread community view that traffic and parking impacts have been inadequately considered.

Community Position

The surrounding intersections and streets cannot handle the amount of traffic that the current RFW proposal will generate. Therefore a proper traffic impact study must be prepared for any future proposal. Any development application which includes underground parking must include visitor parking.

Issue 9

Manly already has an abundant excess of licensed premises that continue to cause very negative social impacts. There is strong community objection to any licensed premises to be approved near the Manly Village Public school.

Community Position

Any development proposal should not include any licensed premises. Any liquor licences, including 'small bar' licences applied for as part of the development or in the future must complete a 'Community Impact Statement' and be considered by the Manly Council Safety Committee.

Endorsement by Community Groups

This Position Statement is endorsed by:

at the meeting held on:

Signature of Chairperson