

12 October 2018

The General Manager  
Georges River Council  
Civic Centre  
Cnr MacMahon & Dora Streets  
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

**Attention: Ms Gail Connolly**

Dear Ms Connolly

**OPERATION OF THE GEORGES RIVER LOCAL PLANNING PANEL**

At its meeting held on 5 October 2018 the Georges River Local Planning Panel (**Panel**) considered report No. LPP048-18 (**Report**) relating to the following parts of Council Resolution NM037-18:

*“(b) That the General Manager provide the Georges River Local Planning Panel with a copy of Council’s resolution of 18 December 2017 regarding the Operational Procedures of the Panel and request the Panel to formally consider and respond to Council on the matters in that resolution including (amongst others):*

- i. the requested commencement times for meetings of 6pm;*
- ii. the request for the Panel to undertake its deliberations in open session;*
- iii. functions of the Panel that demonstrate transparency in development decisions and accountability to the community; and*
- iv. access to the Panel’s determinations by the applicant and the public on the same day the determination is made.*

*(c) That the General Manager request the Panel to Webcast its meetings.”*

At the Panel meeting held on 5 October 2018, the Panel resolved as follows:

*"that the Chairperson and Alternate Chairpersons write to the General Manager of the Council responding to the items contained in parts (b) and (c) of Council Resolution NM037-18 dated 4 April 2018."*

In accordance with the resolution of the Panel, the Chairpersons of the Panel provide the following response to the items contained in parts (b) and (c) of Council Resolution NM037-18:

1. The Chairpersons consider that the current 4.00pm start time for Panel public meetings provides a reasonable opportunity for those persons who wish to attend the meetings to make appropriate arrangements to do so. The 4.00pm start time also ensures that there is sufficient time to hear from registered submitters and for the Panel's hearing and deliberation process to take place and be concluded at a reasonable hour in the evening;
2. The operational procedures for the Panel as set out in the Direction of the Minister for Planning under section 9.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) specifically permit the Panel to close the public meeting for deliberation and/or voting and determination. This enables the Panel to consider all oral submissions made during the public meeting and to discharge its responsibilities, including drafting the statement of reasons for any decision as well as any revised or additional conditions that the Panel considers to be appropriate, in an efficient and timely manner. The Chairperson consider that conducting the deliberation process during the public meeting is likely to inhibit rather than contribute to the quality of decision making by the Panel;
3. The Chairpersons consider that there are effective measures in place to ensure that the Panel operates in transparent and publicly accountable manner including:
  - objective criteria for matters referred to the Panel, which ensures transparency and certainty around what the Panel will consider.
  - requirements for the Panel to produce a statement of reasons for all decisions.
  - the fact that the chairpersons and panel members rotate from meeting to meeting.
  - requirements for Panel members to comply with the Code of Conduct for Local Planning Panel Members (August 2018) approved by the Minister for Planning under clause 28 of Schedule 2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) including the recently introduced requirement in clause 4.9 of the Code which provides:

*"All panel members must sign a declaration of interest in relation to each matter on the agenda before or at the beginning of each meeting. These declarations and any management measures put in place are to be published on the relevant council's website as soon as practicable."*

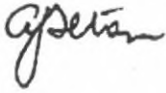
4. The Panel's determinations are currently made on the same evening as the public meeting and there is no objection to the decision being published on Council's website on that evening if it is administratively possible;



5. There is no objection to the public meetings of the Panel being webcast if it is administratively possible.

We ask that the above information be reported back to the Council for its information and notation.


Yours sincerely,



Chairperson  
(Adam Seton)



Alternate Chairperson  
(Paul Vergotis)



Alternate Chairperson  
(Sue Francis)

