



**GLOW**  
Great Lifestyle Of Wickham

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Chief Executive Officer  
**Attention: Urban Planning Team**  
City of Newcastle  
PO Box 489  
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300

### **PP and draft PA - 41 and 47 Throsby Street, Wickham**

As founder of the network Great Lifestyle of Wickham I am writing to reinforce our endeavour to improve the brown field sites and the 1900s village of Wickham.

GLOW is responding to the planning proposal for the proposed LEP changes to Height and FSR at **41-47 Throsby Street, Wickham.**

This site falls within the **Village Hub**, which is intended to be preserved as a low-rise, low/medium density for mixed residential & commercial area. The proponent claims that the proposed amendments will be within character and a social benefit to the community whilst achieving the intent for redevelopment as outlined in the Wickham Masterplan. Due to identified significant mines workings to the north of the Village Hub the proponent proposes to increase the density of 41-47 Throsby Street to help achieve the loss of density not achievable on the land to the north. We have prepared a response to the community's concerns as outlined under Section 3.33 of the Act to identify the true site constraints and the undesirable results that will occur if such a amendment to the LEP is granted.

The Village Hub has an existing height limit of 10m, allowing for up to 3 stories. This height limit was determined initially to be an acceptable maximum LEP height for the majority of the Wickham Masterplan area to help integrate within the context of the built form and existing infrastructure such as the narrow and predominantly one way road network. The smaller allotments within the suburb limits the redevelopment options of the area with the acquisition of many smaller lots not being economically feasible for most Developers. The LEP height limit increases logically as you approach the major transport node of the Newcastle Interchange and the intersection of Stewart Avenue and Hunter Street. The proposed variation to height is not a logical given its location from the Interchange and impacts of such potential building mass relative to the surrounding smaller allotments. Visually the proposal will have a major visual impact as viewed from the iconic Newcastle Harbour representing an isolated tower complex surrounded by predominately 2 storey dwellings or 3 storey residential flat buildings. This is not the first impression Newcastle wants to present to visitors to the Harbour of a possibly 8 storey (28m) isolated tower looking more like a strategic planning mistake than a well considered master planned example of modern urbanisation and planned urban design.

GLOW has participated in consultation, survey and planning of Wickham for the last 30 years. Working tirelessly with Newcastle City Council and stakeholders putting together the Wickham Master Plan 2017 and now the review WMP 2021 the LEP and DCP. The Village Hub is designed to add liveability and connectivity to the city of Newcastle, the Master Plan 2021 has been written and accepted to ensure this.

As required under section 3.33(2) of the Environmental Planning and assessment Act 1979 we have identified for Councils considerations a response to *Part 3 – The Justification for those objectives, outcomes and the process of their implementation.*

### **1. Is the planning proposal a result of any strategic study or report?**

WMP identified Strategies and Actions to implement the key objectives:

1. Improve accessibility and connectivity within Wickham and to adjoining areas
2. Create safe, attractive, and inclusive public places
3. Ensure built environment is functional, responsive, and resilient

The WMP 2017 vision identified six interconnecting character precincts. The intent of the precincts is to determine the envisaged character for different parts of Wickham based on their location, physical attributes of the built environment, redevelopment opportunity and density.

This is a critical consideration of the WMP, the character of the precincts has been a long considered approach that has evolved over the past 30 years. The physical and built environment has played a key role in determining the location and extent of each precinct.

The Village hub is defined as;

*“terrace style housing, shop top housing and smaller residential apartment buildings with a street wall height of up to three storeys along each street fronting setback, which incorporate design elements that complements that of existing housing stock”.*

The area is predominately made up of smaller allotments and single and two storey dwellings. These smaller lot of around 200-300m<sup>2</sup> provide for a limited yet considered housing opportunity of 2-3 stories and the majority of the larger allotments in the Village Hub have already been developed into 3 storey Residential Flat Buildings with commercial ground floor elements.

#### **1. Improve accessibility and connectivity within Wickham and to adjoining areas**

Creation of a Laneway link from Throsby Street to Furlong Lane does not create any public benefit.

The proposed widening of Furlong Lane is not possible due to a large number of small allotments that adjoin it that would not be willing and in some cases not be able to dedicate land to the widening of the laneway. The acquisition of land for the required laneway widening along Furlong Lane would be detrimental to the typically smaller allotments of 200-300m<sup>2</sup> within this area.

Development applications such as DA2021 00328 - *31 Throsby Street Wickham* are approved and recently constructed structures that are built to the boundary of the Furlong Lane and with a perceived design life of over 100 years it is unlikely to be demolished any time soon to allow for the widening. Therefore the widening of Furlong Lane is flawed and creating an access lane from Throsby Street as proposed to direct and intensify its use has no public benefit.

The Wickham Masterplan that proposed this laneway link also identifies the laneway joining to Hannell Street. Hannell Street is a RMS controlled road and with a signalised intersection only 40 meters to the south on Throsby Street Council should refer this to RMS for consultation. Given RMS more current position on road networks this is highly unlikely to be supported by RMS. We understand that a Traffic Management plan was undertaken several years ago as part of the initial Wickham Masterplan however this is now very much out of date given how Wickham has evolved and this report should be updated. The updated report should also consider Councils proposed uplift to 41-47 Throsby Street as part of the report. The increased density proposed and proposed laneway are likely to have a much greater negative impact on the amenity of the area than initially considered. The initial traffic Impact Assessment considered greater density distributed to

the north and able to utilise the wider two way Church Street to help distribute the additional traffic whereas now the proposal to increase the density just at 41-47 Throsby Street will dramatically increase the daily vehicle trips along Throsby Street towards Hannell Street.

The revised traffic report should then be presented to RMS for comment. The traffic report will also identify how the Laneway will not be able to accommodate suitable traffic volumes and forms no public benefit. It will identify that the intersection with Hannell Street is unacceptable by RMS and they will recommend maintaining and directing the concentrated traffic flows to Throsby Street. The report will identify the issues with emergency vehicles utilising the Furlong Lane with very tight turning paths and narrow road pavements and footpaths causing possible pedestrian / traffic points of conflict due to restricted lines of site.

The proposed new laneway connection being offered as an offset to the uplift in this site will be proven by the points above and an updated Traffic Management Plan and comments from RMS to be strategically flawed and of no public benefit. The Laneway merely helps the Developer by providing a buffer between what would be a vastly increased residential density that directly adjoins a conflicting land use zone being the Emerging Industry Quarter.

The Emerging Industrial Quarter as identified in the Draft WMP has a desired future character of fostering business and employment generation, particularly on sites less conducive to residential amenity. To support a range of low impact and clean business uses, including high technology industries, manufacturing and creative industries.

The provision of the proposed new Laneway link simply provides a benefit to the Developer by creating physical separation between the two land uses to minimise conflict whilst providing additional street frontage which aids in the design of the future Residential Flat Building by providing greater access to light and air circulation and balcony opportunities. As demonstrated above there is no public benefit being provided merely a perceived one.

## 2. Create safe, attractive, and inclusive public places

As detailed above the proposed laneway does create or provide an attractive or useful space to the public. A pedestrian & cycleway link within the proposed development of 41-47 would serve the same benefit however limited this may be when considered against the resulting increased density and height of the site.

The increase in the height from 10m to 22 & 28m within the village area compromising largely of smaller allotments unlikely to be redeveloped will have a significant impact on solar access and privacy if it is allowed to proceed.

Servicing issues already exist along Throsby Street and Furlong Lane for the three storey Residential Flat Buildings already constructed to the east of the site. Bin collection and traffic and parking issues already exist, and this is a current situation for recently completed buildings in the last 5 years. We can only imagine what the impacts will be if the density is doubled, and heights increased as proposed only further increasing the already emerging issues as a result of the higher densities.

## 3. Ensure built environment is functional, responsive, and resilient

As previously outlined the proposal will create a portion within the Village Hub that will be significantly out of character with the surrounds and the overall WMP that concentrates density and building height towards the south near the major transport hubs and not within areas of smaller allotments and residential housing that has limited redevelopment opportunities. The future dominance of the built form will become an abnormality when considered with the overall planned building heights especially as viewed from the Harbour. A concentrated tower development 8 stories high isolated amongst predominately 2 & 3 storey buildings does not represent an orderly or logical urban built form.

The provision of a laneway that has no public benefit to offset the vast increase in density and building height does not seem logical and will be to the detriment of the entire Wickham community.

***2. Is the planning proposal the best means of achieving the objectives or intended outcomes, or is there a better way?***

The objective of the WMP is to provide a strategic guidance for the City of Newcastle's planning decisions and delivery of coordinated urban renewal outcomes for Wickham. The current FSR and HOB within both the Village Hub & Emerging Industrial Quarter can still achieve higher density and mixed use RFB developments without compromising the overall amenity and character of the northern portion of Wickham. The proposal presented offers no public benefit but numerous identified public and community issues.

***3. Is the planning proposal consistent with the objectives and actions of the applicable regional, sub-regional or district plan or strategy (including any exhibited draft plans or strategies)?***

The Hunter Regional Plans 2036 outlines its goals to achieve a vision to support the growth of the Newcastle region over the next 20 years. The regionally focussed goals listed;

- The leading regional economy in Australia
- A biodiversity-rich natural environment
- Thriving communities
- Greater housing choice and jobs

We do not believe the Regional plan in that it contradicts the orderly development of the Village Hub which will have a negative economic impact on the existing businesses by increasing traffic, parking and service vehicle access within the constrained road network which has little opportunity of being able to be widened or improved.

The community will suffer as previously identified due to the excessive proposed building height and density proposed with no public benefit provided or beneficial infrastructure being provided.

***4. Is the planning proposal consistent with a council's local strategy or other local strategic plan?***

The proposal contradicts the orderly development as outlined in both the LEP and DCP by providing an abnormality within the WMP area. The proposed LEP amendments are not within the public interest and provide no benefit to the community as a result of the proposal.

## Conclusion

As outlined above GLOW has responded as a representative of the Wickham Community and provided a review of the proposal against Section 3.33(2) of the Environmental Planning and assessment Act 1979. The review clearly identifies failings in the proposal and when considered within the context of the WMP and the greater Wickham and Newcastle Communities the proposal is not a logical response the redevelopment of the site as the proposal does not provide any community benefit and would have a much greater negative impact on the community without achieving any public benefit.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynette Kilby". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Lyn Kilby