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Bayside Council
Submission on DA-2017/179 - Cooks Cove Southern Precinct
Attention: Marta M Gonzalez-Valdes, Coordinator Major Assessment Team

Dear Ms Gonzalez-Valdes and Assessment Team,

I strongly object to DA-2017/179 which proposes to turn the currently publically accessible Southern Precinct of Cooks Cove into a golf course.

We are expected to accept higher densities in our area. But with higher densities we need more playing fields and public green space and not less. Already we read from time to time about sport clubs that struggle to get access to playing fields. That would get a lot worse if we not only increase the size of the population but also reduce the number of playing fields. I have counted the playing fields in Cooks Cove, although in some cases I had to estimate because the individual playing fields were not marked. I arrived at 15 fields, including 3 small ones and 2 more where I was not sure. That leaves about 10 full-sized fields including Saint George Soccer Stadium. The plans on the current golf course site include 4 fields including one stadium. That means a reduction in fields by about 11 including 6 full-sized ones even though the population is growing.

Cooks Cove also has two wetlands, Spring Street Wetland and Landing Lights Wetland. Both of these have a completely different look and ambience to each other and to wetlands I have seen elsewhere. Spring Street Wetland is quite wooded and the main body of water of Landing Lights Wetland is quite open. Spring Street Wetland is to be obliterated. And Landing Lights Wetland will be compromised by having golf lawns going right up to the water bodies. I am not a wetlands expert but I understand the ground around the water bodies of a wetland to be an important part of the wetland. That would be consistent with a sign at the Landing Lights Wetland which says "Migratory Bird Habitat – Your co-operation in keeping to walking tracks would be appreciated". And with another sign which states that disturbance of the land is prohibited by the Threatened Species Conservation Act. But in any case, unfettered access would be lost.

Then there are the bicycle paths. Sure, some new bicycle paths are in the DA. But the existing bicycle connectivity would be compromised. Currently, bicycle riders can ride from the intersection of Spring Street and West Botany Road to Marsh Street, all away from major roads and mostly on bicycle paths. In the DA plans, bicycle connectivity starts from somewhere between Terry Street and Tantallon Av. For the section from Spring Street to that starting point, the plan says "Existing path to be retained & protected". That path is a footpath that does not go all the way to Spring St but ends at a bus stop opposite Terry Street. It is to be extended there with a width of 1.2m which is too narrow to be shared by bike riders and pedestrians. The existing path also has a diagonal section from near the bend in Firmstone Garden to the start of the northern section of Eve Street. This section would be pushed

towards the backyards of Firmstone Garden, making it longer and curvier. This has safety implications because riders coming from the north would enter the first curve after a downhill section where they can be expected to be significantly faster than usual. There is a curve there now, but this curve would have a greater angle. In addition, the existing visibility problem at that curve would get worse.

There is also a golf driving range in the Southern Precinct. I mention this to emphasise that golfers already have a share of the precinct.

It is not enough to consider the current uses and amenities of the precinct. We must also consider the unrealised potential. The foreshore land north of Spring Street Canal could be developed into a substantial park rather than the narrow ribbon which is proposed now. The bridge over Muddy Creek could be built in addition to the path along Spring Street Canal, significantly cutting travel times to the beach both on foot and by bicycle. The dilapidated Saint George Soccer Stadium could be restored and upgraded. As I will explain, I don't believe the development plans for the current golf course site need to be contingent on sacrificing the Southern Precinct, so connectivity with the airport along the foreshore for bicycle riders and pedestrians can probably still be achieved.

Let me answer the obvious question which is how to pay for upgrades to the Southern Precinct. Even if the planned development of the current golf course site does not go ahead, the NSW government site <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-your-area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts/Bayside-West-Precincts> shows that there is plenty of other rezoning to high density planned for Arncliffe and Banksia. This will lead to an increase in rate revenue and to section 94 contributions. Those could be used to upgrade the Southern Precinct which is essentially the eastern parts of Arncliffe and Banksia.

I have seen the "Copy of financial statements and reports" for Kogarah Golf Club, covering the years ending March 31, 2015 and 2016. Kogarah Golf Club was already making a loss before Westconnex compromised the golf course. And that is even though the club has been paying peppercorn rents for the Rockdale/Bayside council land which is part of the current golf course. I am not implying mismanagement by the club. I believe the reason is the declining popularity of golf. This decline is documented in the GolfAustralia "2015 Golf Club Participation Report". We should not give up the Southern Precinct for any private interest and certainly not for a loss-making club and a declining sport.

The club's own "Securing our Future" document makes it clear that the club would not be viable on its current site if the relocation proposal does not go ahead and would then sell its land (which is less than half of the site). It would be even less viable if Council and the NSW government reclaimed their part of the current site which would be easy enough as all long-term leases on the site have expired. Obviously, rezoning the land that Council owns and then selling it would generate a huge amount of money, some of which could be used to upgrade the southern precinct. As the club would sell its land, development of the current golf course site can then go ahead. Just to avoid any misunderstanding, I am not expressing approval for those development plans. Rather, I see them as a separate issue.

I request that Bayside Council reject Development Application DA-2017/179.

Yours Sincerely,

Rasmus Torkel, 11/1/2017