

## NEW SOUTH WALES LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

6 May 2009

### DEMIAN DEVELOPMENTS LEWISHAM SITE APPLICATION

**Ms SYLVIA HALE** [7.20 p.m.]: I speak on the continuing on the continuing abuses inflicted by the part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, and in particular about an application by Demian Developments for a site at Old Canterbury Road and Longport Street, Lewisham, which has been called in by the Minister for Planning. This application is yet another disturbing example of how business seems to be done in New South Wales. Showing its familiarity with the process, Demian Developments has donated more than \$20,000 to the New South Wales branch of the Australian Labor Party since 2002. But it has not stopped there. Accessing the Labor old mates network, Demian has engaged the former Minister for many things, Carl Scully, to argue its case to his former colleagues.

What are the justifications for the Minister calling in this development? What is so significant about the proposal that it requires the intervention of the State Government? Actually, there is nothing that sets this development apart from many other development applications other than it overrides the draft sub-regional strategy process that Marrickville Council is currently undertaking at the behest of the New South Wales Department of Planning, and it will be a huge overdevelopment. Demian proposes a massive five-tower development, including two towers of 14 storeys and one of 12 storeys, 524 residential units and retail floor space of 9,000 square metres, incorporating a major supermarket, a liquor store and 15 speciality stores. In bypassing the council, the developer is seeking the Minister's connivance in overturning the Government's own planning processes and the views and wellbeing of the local community.

A report commissioned by Demian forecasts that the commercial development would capture one in every three dollars currently spent by residents of Lewisham, Petersham and Dulwich Hill. The report ignores the fact that people cross local government boundaries to shop, and omits any mention of the impact on the nearby Summer Hill village and Leichhardt Market Town, the shopping place of many Lewisham and Petersham residents. By undermining existing shopping strips, the Government once again undermines effective provision of public transport and drives more people to private motor vehicle use. Traffic projections indicate that the intersection of Old Canterbury Road, Longport Street and Railway Terrace will be severely impacted.

The developer also attempts to justify its proposal by asserting that it is located next to the former freight rail line and has the potential to be serviced by an extension of the light rail from Lilyfield. The Greens are on record as supporting the extension of light rail to Dulwich Hill, but we do not support poor planning for the area surrounding that line. I call upon the Minister to refer this application back to Marrickville Council. There is no good reason why

it should not be decided by the local council in accordance with local planning guidelines.

There is yet another worrying proposal in the Marrickville local government area, namely the proposed rezoning of the former Enmore School site. Since the Government first approached Marrickville Council with an application to re-zone the site and convert the building to flats, local residents have demonstrated their continued opposition to the proposed sale of this school. Marrickville Council, or at least its Green councillors, have opposed the proposed sale from the beginning. Foremost among the reasons for that is the necessity to look to the future needs of education in the area. The 2007 Draft Regional Strategy paper of the Department of Planning anticipates that the population of the Marrickville local government area will grow by 5,000 people over the next twenty years.

The effect of that growth will be an increasing demand on existing infrastructure, including schools. Planning for future population increases is not simply a matter of looking at where people are going to live, but also at where they work, shop, enjoy relaxation and recreation and where their children will be educated. The Government has made this mistake before. In the mid 1980s, at precisely the time it was planning for significant population growth in Pymont and Ultimo, it closed inner city schools. The result is we now have overcrowded schools in those areas, a problem that will be greatly exacerbated if and when the Carlton and United Brewery site project at Chippendale ever proceeds.

Erskineville Public School is yet another example. In the 1980s the Government slated it for closure. Now the school is full, and it has been necessary to enforce a rigid application of boundaries so that children who live in the area are able to gain entry to their local school. It is a simple equation. More residents equals more children, equals a greater demand for educational facilities. The State Government has choices. Either it should stop advocating population growth or it should promote decentralisation, or it should build more schools. At the very least, it should stop selling off schools and preserve public assets in public hands.