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16/11/2024

MR TIM CARSE TIM
1 / 73 Lauderdale AVE
Fairlight NSW 2094

RE: DA2024/1216 - Gourlay Avenue BALGOWLAH NSW 2093

Subject: Objection to Development Application for Increased Commercial Usage by North Harbour Marina Pty Ltd

15 November 2024

Application No. DA2024/1216

Attention of the Development Assessment Team

I am writing to object to North Harbour Marina Pty Ltd.'s Development Application for its intensification of commercial usage within North Harbour cove.

Current situation and problems with the application

Much of North Harbour (Sydney) is designated a New South Wales 'Aquatic Reserve'; a status intended to protect our precious marine environment. This area encompasses a variety of natural and low-impact recreational locations, making it a popular leisure spot for both locals and visitors. Key concerns include:

- Natural Beauty and Ecosystems - North Harbour is a protected area because of its environmentally important and endangered Posidonia seagrass habitats and nearshore reefs that support diverse marine life. These include seahorses, sea dragons marine turtles and little penguins. NSW's Marine Estate Management plan has documented the fragility of the reserve's Posidonia seagrass meadow and its importance; because a multitude of sea animals rely on it for food, shelter and their breeding habitat. Given that Posidonia seagrass takes centuries to form a meadow, and 85% of such meadows have already been lost in NSW through inappropriate boating activity, it is crucial that we prevent further damage and ensure the preservation of this essential ecosystem.

Promoting an increase in the size and volume of large vessels navigating through the reserve, powered by their motorised propulsion is clearly inconsistent with protecting this ecosystem. It risks further damaging the reefs and seagrass meadow, thereby endangering the many sea animals that rely on it. The decline in Manly's little penguin population should be a stark reminder of how disastrous, inappropriate human activity has already impacted our environment.

- Non-motorised and low impact recreational activities - The area is used extensively for

kayaking, paddleboarding, small sail boating and swimming. Creating a new 50-metre-wide (164-foot) commercial access channel appears intended to direct an increased volume of customers and boat sizes to North Harbour Marina's commercial offerings. It would also mean that existing low-impact users would have to compete with larger vessels navigating the new channel to access these expanded services. This would be entirely incompatible with the current character and amenity of this sheltered bay.

Issues

It's evident that the original application prioritised profits over the local community and environment. Moreover, it foreshadowed the long-term commercial intent of its investors. Namely, revenue maximising super-yachts and alcohol sales. Its suggestion now that it will less intensively increase its impact on our environment, whilst still wanting to create a 50-metre-wide channel through this small, quiet bay is problematic for the reasons described in this submission. Moreover, it is entirely unnecessary, unless the company's longer-term aim is to still provide commercial services to the Super-yachts it wants to attract.

The current configuration of properly spaced swing-moorings effectively minimises the size, volume and speed of vessels navigating this small bay. This is healthier for the environment and for the many low-impact users such as kayakers, small sailboats, swimmers and paddle boarders. The company's claim that creating a 50m channel for vessels under power is for safety reasons lacks substantiation. Some residents believe this is the thin-edge-of-the-wedge, whilst the company plays its long game towards ever further commercial expansion. As a former boat owner who has lived in the area for 34 years and safely accessed the area numerous times, I can understand this perspective.

Loss of Amenity

This proposal stands to significantly undermine the amenity of residents and the broader community. Increased commercial activity would undoubtedly lead to heightened noise levels, congestion and a general reduction in the quality of life for those who live in or visit the area. This small, quiet bay provides a sanctuary for both residents and visitors and this character should be preserved, not compromised.

Environmental harm

The environmental impact of increased motorised boating activity cannot be overstated. North Harbour is an ecological treasure, home to diverse marine life and delicate ecosystems. The intensification of commercial marina operations adjacent to the reserve and within the cove will lead to greater water pollution, disruption of marine habitats and a probable increase in waste and fuel spills. This will not only harm wildlife but also degrade the overall health of the harbour.

Annexation of a public resource

Sydney Harbour is a public resource that should remain accessible and enjoyable for all. The desire to maximise profit through increased commercial activity must not outweigh the need to preserve our natural resources for future generations. It is unacceptable for a company to take over common property by creating a 50m wide channel to accommodate larger and extra vessels, contributing to the depletion and degradation of our shared resource and ultimately harming our community.

Based on its negative impact on the environment and community, I strongly urge our council assessment team to reject the DA submitted by North Harbour Marina Pty Ltd. Let us protect North Harbour as a shared, sustainable resource for everyone to enjoy now and into the

future.

Yours sincerely,
Tim Carse
1/73 Lauderdale Avenue
