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Subject: Online Submission

06/11/2019

MRS Holly Carroll
7 / 14 Lawrence ST
Freshwater NSW 2096
holly@roomtwoten.com.au

RE: DA2019/1119 - 4 / 0 Bennett Street CURL CURL NSW 2096

Hello Mr. Lane,

I hope this note find you well.

As the owner of Room Two Ten in Freshwater, I am raising concerns re: DA2019/1119. Based on the below, I am writing to notify the Council of my extreme and resolute objection to Cambridge Markets in Freshwater (regardless of their location).

From the information presented, I understand Cambridge Markets are working with the Harbord Bowling Club to launch a large scale (min 50 stalls) market including coffee, pastries, fashion & homewares. My objection is based on 1) the existence of at least 14 coffee & cafe providers in the Freshwater; 2) the redirection of foot traffic, which is already at an all-time low due to environmental factors; 3) Freshwater has recently decided to partner with The Organic Scarecrow, which was intentionally chosen over Cambridge Markets for specific reasons.

As a cafe owner, I expect & welcome a competitive business landscape. Business brings business. But 14 cafes in Freshwater exist already, and we do not welcome another coffee machine in any capacity. The overcrowded cafe market is only a small portion of the massive hurdles we have faced in the 5 years of opening our doors at Room Two Ten and at this point, it is not an exaggeration to say that even a fraction of trade taken will break us. Cambridge Markets knows this (see point 3 below), and despite explicitly instructed by Council not to provide coffee/cafe-like services they still sought out coffee partners for their markets. Therefore I have no reason to trust this will not happen again.

The location of markets at Harbord Bowling Club will severely detract whatever foot traffic is left in Freshwater from visiting the rent-paying, council-paying small businesses already on Lawrence Street. These are excellent businesses as well, not junk dollar shops. Surely anyone living in the area or working for Council can walk down Lawrence Street and empathise with the owners who work here, live here and had zero control over what has happened to their neighbourhood. Redirecting foot traffic and business to Cambridge Markets at the Bowling Club would be another added layer to making Freshwater extraordinarily inhospitable to small business.

This is not my first objection to Cambridge Markets. The ideation for a market originated with Friends of Freshwater on behalf of the community and then taken up by Council as a Freshwater revitalisation project. At the time, Cambridge Markets was approached to answer a community need to provide basic groceries as well as provide a temporary surge in foot traffic for local business until new retail anchor tenants were operating (which is still yet to happen 5 years on). The brief by Council requested market operators to focus solely on fruit and veg, and the location proposed was the village centre.

There is a reason Council rejected Cambridge Markets and it was their inability to stay to brief and its likely severe and unalterable impact on the existing local business. What was supposed to be mostly (if not all) fresh fruit & veg in the Village Centre, was then (and even now) proposed as a massive market, away from the business village and inclusive of coffee, bakery, fashion & homewares - all duplications of existing business in Freshwater and zero incentive to visit existing local business. Cambridge Markets is the antithesis of the original market intent. Please see Zoe Johnson at Northern Beaches Council for further details. At present, The Organic Scarecrow has become the market partner and a very welcome addition to Freshwater Small Business.

Here is a snapshot of what it's like to own a business in Freshwater since 2014: We have had continuous, major development in this small village on both sides of the street - think cut-off services, construction so loud you must close trade, etc. The loss of both anchor tenants in Freshwater and zero replacements for 5 years. 30% rent increase based on residential land value (not including annual and expected 5% incremental increase). 5 to 14 coffee providers in 4 year period for a population of 15k - which is a 180% increase. A decrease in Mr Zakos leased shops by 75%.

Which all goes to say business is hard enough already and my vigilance is necessary, especially when another hit is preventable. What Freshwater needs is diversification of business, leased spaces, anchor tenants, more foot traffic. Not a fly-in market with zero ties to the community inflaming an already bad situation.

All the best,

Holly Carroll
Room Two Ten
holly@roomtwoten.com.au
0417 321 262