

**Orchard Hills  
Community Consultative Committee**

**Date:** 28 January, 6:30 – 8 pm

**Location:** Online, Zoom

<b>Attendees</b>	
<p><b>Community members</b></p> <p>Diane Azzopardi (DA)</p> <p>Ajmair Chauhan (AC)</p> <p>Deborah Cutajar (DC)</p> <p>Don Feltis (DF)</p> <p>Tony Napoli (TN)</p> <p>Bree Wilson (BW)</p> <p>Ed Zussa (EZ)</p> <p>Felicity Grima (FG)</p> <p>Christine Vella (CV)</p> <p><b>Independent Community Commissioner</b></p> <p>Professor Roberta Ryan, Independent Community Commissioner (RR)</p> <p>Isa Crossland Stone, minute taker, office of the Independent Community Commissioner (ICS)</p>	<p><b>Government representatives</b></p> <p>Anthea Sergeant, Executive Director, State Rezoning, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) (AS)</p> <p>Nicola O’Brien, A/Director State Rezoning, DPHI (NO)</p> <p>Ellen McCormack, Acting Manager Orchard Hills Precinct Planning, DPHI (EM)</p> <p>Christine Gough, City Planning Manager, Penrith City Council (CG)</p> <p><b>Other attendees</b></p> <p>Kate Robinson, office of the Independent Community Commissioner (KR)</p>
<b>Apologies</b>	
Con Paphatzis (CP)	

Item	Description	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome - RR</b>	
	<p>RR welcomes all attendees to the meeting.</p> <p>RR explains that the exhibition is closing in February and therefore the cut-off date for submissions is near. This meeting has been scheduled as an opportunity for agencies to hear from the community</p>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Actions Arising</b>	
	<p>KR recalls EZ's question re NDAs and whether their removal will be retrospective.</p> <p>KR says that she has found that they are not likely to be retrospective. At this stage, the removal of the use of NDAs is being considered under the acquisition review being undertaken by the Department of the Planning. The removal is a recommendation and has not yet been enacted.</p> <p>KR says that she and RR will continue to pursue more information about Council rates and the potential for support from Council in the areas not being rezoned.</p>	<p>KR to pursue more information on rates and potentials for postponement from the Council to share with the community.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Update: Penrith Council Submission report</b>	
	<p>CG shares that Council is preparing a submission on the rezoning plans highlighting a number of concerns including the deliverability of infrastructure and availability and capacity for servicing in Orchard Hills.</p> <p>Council's draft submission report will be available publicly on its website on 6 February as part of the papers for the Council meeting on 10 February. KR will be in touch with the CCC to share a link when it becomes available.</p> <p>AC asks CG whether the submission from Council is similar to the draft that was presented in late-2024.</p> <p>CG says that the report will deal with similar themes, but will expand upon them significantly.</p> <p>AC asks if major State infrastructure such as main roads will be funded in other ways aside from the Council contribution levies.</p> <p>CG says that she is not able to answer this question. The Department would need to clarify what infrastructure has been identified as a state responsibility.</p> <p>CV asks if the 'Major Distributor Road' is Wentworth Road.</p> <p>CG says no, it is the new road that is being planned to come down from Kent Street and will loop around.</p>	<p>KR to share a link to Penrith Council's submission when it becomes available.</p>

<p>CV says that she was made aware by the Department that there will be acquisitions made along Wentworth Road eventually for the purposes of Stages 3 and 4. Is Council considering this?</p> <p>CG says that at present they are not dealing with Stages 3 and 4, but they are cognisant of the need to identify the wear and tear, acquisition and other impacts to Wentworth Road, which will remain a rural road.</p> <p>CV says that she was sent some information by the Department of Planning that shows a visual of Wentworth Road having upgrades on its Western side (including kerb and guttering and installation of a walking path) in Stage 1. It also shows that 13.4m will be acquired on the northern side of the road in Stage 3 and/or 4. If these acquired properties include homes, the relevant homeowners should be made aware.</p> <p>CG says that at the moment, this section of Wentworth Road is not on the Council's acquisition list, but she expects that there will have to be some road widening to enable Stages 3 and 4. She will follow up about this section and see if it ought to be addressed in the Council's upcoming submission. CG will follow up at the Council to raise this potential issue for consideration.</p> <p>BW asks if it is likely that this planning process will reset itself if changes are made to the plans (i.e. changes will involve a new plan submission, a new exhibition period and associated submission process).</p> <p>AS says that it is not easy to answer BW's question clearly in the hypothetical.</p> <p>The Department will consider whether they need to re-exhibit plans based on the scale and impact of the proposed change. Sometimes, engagement will involve targeted consultation with relevant landowners rather than full exhibition.</p> <p>BW asks if there is a usual timeline within which there can be a turnaround wherein adjusted plans are exhibited for feedback and wherein feedback is responded to or addressed.</p> <p>AS says that the standard exhibition period tends to run for 28 days, but the Orchard Hills project exhibition period has run much longer to reflect sentiment in the community that there be additional time to review relevant material.</p> <p>DC says that the DPHI has not been thorough in the tasks of informing the community (including this CCC). The CCC was not briefed on the content of the draft plans prior to the release.</p> <p>She noted it took the Department of Planning 10 days after the release of the draft plans to officially notify landowners who were slated for acquisition. In the meantime, these landowners had to look through pages of documents and maps to try to</p>	<p>CG to pass on CV's note to the Council, for their review and reporting on the exhibited plans, that there appears to be planned road widening and associated property acquisition on the northern side of Wentworth Road, as well as upgrades to the Western side of the road in Stage 1.</p>
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<p>understand what it meant. Some found out through social media that their homes were proposed for acquisition. It caused a lot of unnecessary stress and anxiety.</p> <p>DC says that a lot of the community feels the Government has been disrespectful of the community in Orchard Hills and as a result there is distrust of the Department and the rezoning process.</p> <p>AS says that at this stage, before reviewing the submissions, the Department does not have the data relating to volume and/or content of submissions and is not able to provide a map for the timing of the finalization process. They will work towards clarifying a timeframe for reviewing submissions when they are able to access more information about the data they are working with.</p> <p>AS explains that the drop-in sessions in late-2024 were designed to ensure that any community members who wanted to speak to Department representatives, and the Department's communications (which used a database) were intended to reach all landowners including those whose properties are marked to be acquired in the draft plans.</p> <p>DC says that the cost of infrastructure to service the rezoning seems to be an issue for the Council and the DPHI. She is concerned that the community will be absorbing the economic strains of infrastructure delivery through increased rates. DC says that the rates should not be charged on a property on which infrastructure is not/will not swiftly be available.</p> <p>RR acknowledges DC's concerns and says that the particular issue of rates has been a consistent focus of this CCC's discussion over time. The Councils, RR, KR and all other agency parties are keenly aware of it.</p> <p>RR asks CG to comment on behalf of the Penrith Council.</p> <p>CG is not able to provide specific advice but assures DC that Council is keenly aware of the community's rates-related concerns. At this stage with the draft plans, it is not possible to provide much clarifying information.</p> <p>AC notes that RR and KR planned at the end of 2024 to seek a more information and commitments on the matter of rates, particularly for owners of land involved in Stages 2-4.</p> <p>RR says that they have been seeking more information from Council for the group on the rates.</p> <p>KR says that this <a href="#">fact sheet</a> from the Council is useful, which details that rates postponement will be offered to landowners in Stage 1. It is yet to be clarified what support will be offered to landowners in Stages 2 and 3.</p>	
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<p>CG says that Council is having internal conversations around the extent of the rezoning in Stage 1, and what the capacity is for servicing this stage.</p> <p>DA says that she is concerned about the valuations coming through. She has had experiences working with clients in the surrounding area (particularly in Luddenham) whose land has been revalued and have been issued extremely high land tax bills.</p> <p>DA says that without infrastructure and given the high developer contributions, the risk is that there will be a shortage of developers and developer-interest. The community is very anxious about the rates and taxes they will be forced to pay.</p> <p>DA says that the use of traditional mail has not adequately served the community. She says that the database used by the Department to contact landowners and residents should have been updated well-ahead of the draft plans being released.</p> <p>CV asks about the process following Council's submission period and towards the final plans.</p> <p>RR explains that once the submissions have been reviewed, there will be clearer advice around the timeline of potential re-submissions, other engagement and rezoning.</p> <p>CV says again that through her own engagement with the Department, she has realised that about 13.4m of frontage will be taken off north side of Wentworth Road in Stages 3 and 4. CV has aimed to make her community aware of this as possible before the submission period ends. CV will send the relevant document to KR.</p> <p>CV asks for her fellow community members to make any other community members along this road aware of this.</p> <p>BW asks whether it is possible to pause the planning process until the infrastructure can be funded. It would be preferable, she feels, to pause this plan/exhibition process until infrastructure is funded so that landowners can live normally on their properties until infrastructure delivery and rezoning is economically viable.</p> <p>RR says that the Government is keenly aware of the fact that rezoning is just one part of the bigger process, and that a major challenge is funding and delivering infrastructure. Rezoning does not in and of itself provide the much-needed housing that is ultimately the subject of all these plans.</p> <p>BW asks if it is not possible for a government department to</p>	<p>CV to share with KR the documentation in which the planned removal of 13.4m frontage on Wentworth Road is detailed.</p>
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<p>fund the relevant infrastructure upfront. They would receive their investment through contributions down the line.</p> <p>BW says that from her understanding, there has not been much movement to get quotes and put out tenders for infrastructure delivery work. It is not reasonable and it is extremely distressing for landowners to be placed in a position, with high interest rates and land rates, to fund a process that is not close to being carried out.</p> <p>DC echoes BW's position.</p> <p>AC says that in his opinion, the proposed rezoning and works at Orchard Hills are economically not viable for private developers. He explains that without the infrastructure being funded by the Government, the project will not be feasible and it is likely that a good deal of landowners will be stuck paying high rates for many years into the future with no movement.</p> <p>BW is sceptical about the Government's promises of delivering affordable housing. As far as she is aware, the apartments that are planned to be built in Orchard Hills will not be on the market for affordable prices.</p> <p>DC says that along the metro (including along the Council verges), many of the properties have been left unattended and have become overgrown and generally left as rather a mess. She asks CG to follow up at Council about ensuring that this is dealt with.</p> <p>CG will follow up.</p> <p>BW asks if specific land that is set to be acquired in the draft plans will be addressed by the Council's submission.</p> <p>CG says that the report may address particular properties but may not necessarily address each property.</p> <p>BW says that it is quite stressful for the owners of land marked for acquisition to have to read through extensive reporting in order to find the relevant information about their own properties, and also to understand the technicalities and implications of these plans.</p> <p>CG understands this. She offers to BW and any other CCC members to contact her directly for assistance in interpreting any plans or documents that are unclear or difficult to understand.</p> <p>DA asks CG to what extent Council was involved in the DPHI's plans as they were being drafted, and what opportunities were there for feedback.</p>	<p>CG to follow up with Council about maintaining verges.</p>
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	<p>CG says that she and her team have a strong working relationship with the Department and did interact with the planning team throughout, but necessarily some changes and decisions of this State-led rezoning were made without Council's input.</p> <p>NO agrees with this. This process is typical to a State-led rezoning, which tends to be an iterative process that involves Councils and reflects their views to a significant extent.</p> <p>DC says that in The Vines, there are 29 homes that have been left out of plans by a boundary. She notes that in one of the reports she has read, there is reference to the tip. She asks whether the location of the tip is a reason for the drafting of this boundary.</p> <p>NO says that there are several factors that influenced the positioning of that boundary. The key driver arose in 2022 when the discussion paper was exhibited, there was mixed feedback on whether people would like to retain the executive style housing or would prefer renewal in The Vines. It was not clear whether one option was preferred, but in the plans, they have aimed to present a transition whereby some executive style housing is retained, and there is also some renewal.</p> <p>The Council's probable maximum flood (PMF) level is also a factor in the decision to present these plans. She notes that the Department has received a lot of feedback on The Vines and will be considering it closely.</p> <p>NO confirms that in the weeks following the 6 February, the Department will have a better overview of the submissions/public response and key concerns and issues.</p> <p>DA asks NO if it possible for the Department to provide an estimate of the timeframe for the submission review once the Department is aware of how many submissions there are.</p> <p>NO says this will not be possible.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Next meeting</b>	
	<p>RR thanks the attendees for their time and their contributions to the meeting discussion.</p> <p>KR will be in touch with further information about the next meeting date when she and RR have been provided a clearer idea of the Department's timeline for response to submissions.</p> <p><b>Next meeting date: TBD</b></p>	