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DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FOR A 136,000 GRAVE CEMETERY AT VARROVILLE IN THE SCENIC HILLS
(MACARTHUR MEMORIAL PARK), 166-176 St Andrews Road, Varroville- FILE NO.3293/2017/DA-C

This submission is to recommend that Campbelltown Council reject the above Development Application (DA).

The proposed cemetery is totally inappropriate in its footprint, scale and range of structures and the presentation to Council at this time is unconscionably premature given that the Heritage Minister's decision is still pending on the NSW Heritage Council (HC)'s recommendations to revise and extend the curtilage of Scenic Hills Varroville Homestead.

The State Heritage Listed (SHR NO.00737) Varro Ville Homestead and surrounding landscape is a unique asset demanding preservation for its heritage values, for the amenity it provides to the local community and in recognition of the essential role the traditional green space of the Scenic Hills area plays, both visually and environmentally, in the broader South Western Sydney Region. Campbelltown's Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2015 appropriately articulates the objective "to preserve the rural heritage landscape character of the Scenic Hills".

The proposed DA features kilometres of concrete roadways, up to 8m in width to accommodate parking either side in the context of provision of a staggering 350 car spaces in total in the complex. It incorporates a number of large and imposing buildings including a 'chapel' that actually comprises 3 chapels and mortuary, a function building capable of accommodating 300 people, and an 80 seat cafe which also appears to be in contravention of zoning prohibitions.

Additionally the Proposal doesn't even pretend to preserve green space by restricting graves to those found in a lawn cemetery, but permits all the grave types- no doubt maximising commercial advantage and also permitting the development of a necropolis densely filled with structures of every imaginable design and numbering a colossal 136,000.

These are but some of the concerning features of the proposed DA that will *ensure* the obliteration of the rural character of Scenic Hills and the loss of yet another treasured vestige of green space in the South West Region.

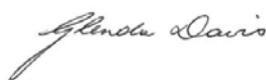
The "rural heritage landscape character" that Campbelltown's 2015 LEP commits to preserving also includes 'built' elements of pastoral agricultural heritage such as dams, vineyard trenching and lines of site to and from road and homestead and its approaches.

While the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT)'s *own* Conservation Management Plan requires that heritage item's decreed to be of 'high significance' be 'retained and conserved', it is now proposed that the development be approved *before* recommended further archaeological assessment and *before* the Heritage Minister's decision on the Heritage Council recommended increase of curtilage around Varro Ville Homestead. This haste is puzzling and confounding, and surely must not be permitted.

Also, in light of the NSW government's cemetery report released in November 2017, it appears that the CMCT's assertion that this proposed development is addressing an impending burial space crisis in SW Sydney and Macarthur is completely unfounded. On p39 of that report SW Sydney is stated to be currently 'well served' for burial space (until 2056 no less!) and that the shortage lies elsewhere in districts South and North of Sydney. Let land be found and cemeteries located there if and when needed, rather than this region's precious heritage landscape be sacrificed in order to address a 'problem' that isn't even ours.

It is dearly hoped that Council Officers and Councillors alike will reject the above DA. It is, in summary, inappropriate in design, excessive in dimension, premature in its presentation and not needed. Were it granted approval this would represent a deeply disturbing failure of Campbelltown Council to honour its commitment to its community: to preserve and manage the rural heritage landscape character of the Scenic Hills that it professes to value.

Yours sincerely,



Glenda Davis

President