



I forward this to you guys because the whole process of consultation at Local government and state levels of governments, is a joke. Ratepayers are asked to submit their comments on matters of height and lay out in their LGA. Yet their work product Local Environmental Programs and Development Control Plans are almost a complete waste of their and councils time because they carry no weight in when ratepayers are fighting over developments in the land and environment court. Not forgetting when government is really determined they will regulate the legislation to permit what ever it is government want.

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/size-does-matter-council-offered-5m-to-approve-towers-at-double-the-height-20121210-2b5py.html>

Size does matter: council offered \$5m to approve towers at double the height

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Illustration: Cathy Wilcox

A DEVELOPER has offered a local council \$5 million in cash if it agrees to let it double the size of a controversial residential high-rise, a proposal that has left some residents "aghast".

Since first being bought in 2005, the Lewisham Towers site on Old Canterbury Road has been the subject of frequent and prolonged battles between developers and residents.

In 2009, there was a significant backlash against a proposal to build five residential towers on the site, with a maximum height of 14-storeys, because some residents feared they would dominate the suburb's skyline.

Marrickville Council voted that proposal down. Last year, provisional approval was given to an amended plan, which proposed building seven towers on the site, with a maximum height of 10 storeys.

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Then in July, Meriton acquired the site for nearly \$50 million.

Documents seen by Fairfax Media show they have now offered Marrickville Council \$5 million if it approves a development of six towers, the tallest of which will stand at 20 storeys.

"We're completely aghast," the chairwoman of the No Lewisham Towers group, Tamara Winikoff, said.

"It seems to make nonsense of the planning system".

The deal would take place under a voluntary planning agreement, which allows councils to enter into agreements with developers in exchange for in-kind contributions or cash.

The council's development assessment committee will consider on Tuesday night whether to accept Meriton's proposal, or enter into negotiations for a lesser increase in exchange for a smaller payment. The terms of the proposal will not be publicly disclosed at the meeting because the council said they were confidential.

"An approach was made to council," the mayor of Marrickville Council, Cr Victor Macri, said.

"There's nothing sinister about it. We put everything up to council."

Cr Macri would not say whether he supported a deal: "To be honest, I haven't had a look at it."

The Greens councillor Max Phillips said the council should reject the proposal and all voluntary planning agreements that have not involved consultation with the community.

"This proposal from Meriton would essentially mean council selling out the amenity of local residents for cold hard cash.

"The Greens are very concerned about a deal where a cash inducement is offered to ignore normal planning regulations."

Meriton was unable to comment.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/size-does-matter-council-offered-5m-to-approve-towers-at-double-the-height-20121210-2b5py.html#ixzz2EeiXK48F>