

To Whom It May Concern,

**Re: State Significant Development Application SSD-91496958
159–167 Darley Street West, Mona Vale NSW**

We write to formally object to the above proposal.

We are deeply distressed by the scale of this development and the long-term impact it will have on Mona Vale's environment, character and liveability. We chose to downsize and move here specifically because of the suburb's coastal village feel, low-rise scale and tree canopy. We are not opposed to additional housing, but we are strongly opposed to overdevelopment that permanently alters the ecological and built character of this area.

1. Major and Irreversible Impact on Flora, Fauna and Tree Canopy

(Our Primary Concern)

Of all our concerns, the ecological impact of this development is the most serious and the most upsetting.

The project's own reports confirm that this is not a cleared or low-value site. The Biodiversity Development Assessment identifies **native vegetation aligned with Spotted Gum forest communities**, specifically **Plant Community Type 3234 – Hunter Coast Lowland Spotted Gum Moist Forest**. This vegetation forms part of the remaining urban bushland fabric of Mona Vale.

Scale of Tree Loss

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment confirms:

- **88 trees assessed**
- **58 trees proposed for removal**
- **Only 26 trees retained**

This is a **substantial loss of established canopy**, not minor pruning. Mature trees provide nesting hollows, food sources, roosting habitat, shade and canopy connectivity. These functions are lost immediately and cannot be replaced by new plantings for decades.

Habitat for Wildlife

In this immediate area we regularly observe:

- Long-nosed bandicoots
- Possums
- Frogs
- Microbats

- A wide range of birdlife
- Owls that hunt through this corridor at night **including endangered powerful owls**

Species such as powerful owls and microbats depend on large trees, connected canopy and low levels of disturbance. Increased lighting, noise, human activity and canopy removal all degrade habitat suitability.

Habitat Connectivity and Cumulative Impact

While the BDAR discusses habitat connectivity, this development cannot be assessed in isolation.

This is the **first large-scale development in this precinct**. If approved, it will:

- Remove a large portion of canopy on this block
- Fragment vegetation continuity between neighbouring properties
- Increase hard surfaces and disturbance

Each future development will remove more trees. Wildlife will not disappear overnight — it will be displaced **incrementally**, project by project. This is how suburbs permanently lose biodiversity.

Urban Heat and Environmental Resilience

Tree canopy is critical infrastructure. The loss of 58 trees on a 6,000m² site will:

- Reduce shade
- Increase local temperatures
- Reduce cooling through evapotranspiration
- Increase stormwater runoff

This undermines Mona Vale's environmental resilience in a warming climate.

Limits of Replanting

Replacement planting cannot replicate mature canopy:

- New trees provide negligible habitat for many years
- Basement structures limit soil volume for future large trees
- Landscaped podiums rarely support long-term canopy growth

The post-development ecological function of the site will be significantly lower than it is today.

2. Traffic, Parking and Safety

Darley Street West is a small dead-end street already experiencing congestion and access difficulty at peak times. It is not capable of safely accommodating a development of this scale.

Concerns include construction traffic, increased daily vehicle movements, overflow parking, and worsening safety conditions in a suburb that already has high parking pressure and two nearby primary schools at capacity.

3. Inappropriate Height, Bulk and Precedent

A six-storey development in this location is completely out of character with the surrounding built form, which is predominantly detached housing and low-rise development. Even four storeys would be excessive in this particular pocket.

This is **the first development of this scale in these newly rezoned residential streets**. Approval will set a powerful precedent for similar height and bulk across Mona Vale, fundamentally changing the scale and identity of the suburb.

4. Flooding and Stormwater Risks

This area has a long-standing history of flooding that has never been fully resolved. Increasing hard surfaces and deep basement excavation in a coastal catchment will worsen stormwater behaviour.

We are particularly concerned about basement flooding risk, increased runoff, and the resulting impacts on neighbouring properties and insurance costs.

5. Overshadowing, Solar Loss and Health Impacts

A six-storey structure will cast significant overshadowing over neighbouring homes and apartments, reducing natural light and solar access and increasing dampness and mould risk, with associated health and amenity impacts.

6. Loss of Privacy

The height and bulk of the development will introduce direct overlooking into surrounding properties, resulting in a substantial and permanent loss of privacy.

7. Questionable “Affordable Housing” Outcome

While we support genuine affordable housing, it is difficult to accept that apartments in Mona Vale — where prices often exceed \$2.5 million — will deliver true affordability.

8. Misplaced Density – Better Locations Exist for Housing Growth

The recent rezoning of low-rise residential streets to allow buildings of this height occurred through a State-led process with little meaningful input from Council or the local community.

Mona Vale already has a defined **commercial centre near the shops and bus interchange**, with large areas of underutilised commercial land that are already cleared and within genuine walking distance of services and public transport. Higher-density housing in this location would:

- Reduce car dependence
- Support local businesses
- Protect established tree canopy in residential streets
- Place housing where infrastructure already exists

By contrast, this site is not within easy walking distance of shops or transport, meaning future residents will rely heavily on cars, worsening congestion and parking pressures.

A mixed-use approach in Mona Vale’s commercial core would make far more strategic and environmental sense than clearing habitat trees and increasing traffic in established residential streets.

Conclusion

This proposal represents misplaced density in an environmentally sensitive residential pocket, when more suitable, already cleared and better-connected locations exist within Mona Vale’s commercial centre.

It is excessive in height and bulk, incompatible with its surroundings, and fails to properly account for serious ecological, traffic, flooding and amenity impacts.

As the **first development of this scale in this precinct**, it sets a precedent that will drive progressive canopy loss, habitat fragmentation and permanent change to Mona Vale’s character.

We respectfully request that SSD-91496958 be **refused**, or at the very least substantially reduced in height, footprint and excavation to allow meaningful retention of mature trees and habitat.

Thank you for considering our submission.