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SUBMISSION ON DA-2017/179, Cooks Cove, Southern Precinct

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Total Environment Centre has a long history of involvement in the protection and enhancement of the area subject to the DA (and adjoining wetlands and parks). Recently we undertook an inspection of the affected lands. Given their international and metro significance they should be fully restored not reduced – and would form a critical part of the proposed Green Grid proposed by the Greater Sydney Commission as well as meeting their objectives to avoid further urban heat island impacts (of increasing importance in a warming climate) and enhancing biodiversity.

We have a number of concerns about the proposal:

1. The removal of the Spring Street Wetland. The DA justifies this on its unsatisfactory condition but it is well located for restoration. This can equally be an argument to improve its state and its integration into an enhanced wetland system particularly in view of the historical loss of wetlands in the area. It should be regarded as an integral middle linking part of the Landing Lights wetland system. The DA also proposes to remove a significant area of casuarina and eucalypt vegetation. Rather than remove the wetland, the proponent should restore it as recompense for the (potential) loss of other public land.
2. Similarly the phragmites vegetation and ecotone around Landing Lights is to be removed. We regard this vegetation as an essential buffer for a site which performs a critical feeding area for migratory species that are sensitive to disturbance.
3. Disturbance to the wetlands and migratory species is likely to increase due to the consistent use of the area by golfers. Currently human presence in the area is quite minimal and sporadic. The golf course comes too close to the wetlands (and it states there will be golf balls landing in the wetland) - its proposal for swale buffers is entirely inadequate. Construction should not occur while the wetland is being visited by migratory species. The use of pesticides and fertilisers is

an ongoing threat despite the construction of bio swales as it would take only one incident to wipe out a population as well as cumulative impacts weakening bird health and the food chain.

4. The wetlands should not be under the control of the Golf Club which will have its golfing assets as its key concern. It is not an appropriate (conflicted) body to manage such an internationally important set of wetlands. They require their own conservation trustee that can fully advocate for their protection over time.
5. There will be a significant loss of public open space. The DA does little to justify this beyond some minor improvements to pocket parks. Government needs to appreciate that retention of public open space in a growing city is fundamental to a livable city. It has both present and potential importance. In essence the Golf Club and developer are privatising public open space and not paying sufficient compensation, if it proceeds. A much improved analysis of the implications of the loss of the parkland over time is required.