



PRIME MINISTER

Reference: MC19-079994

10 DEC 2019

Councillor Joe Awada  
Mayor  
Bayside Council  
PO Box 21  
ROCKDALE NSW 2216



Dear Mayor

Thank you for your letter dated 20 November 2019 regarding consideration of Yarra Bay as the site for a new cruise ship terminal in Sydney.

I agree this is a significant matter of importance to local communities and I acknowledge there is growing concern over the potential impact of the NSW Government's proposal. I am aware the NSW Government has committed to considering community concerns as they continue their work to bolster Sydney's cruise ship capacity. As you are already aware, the development of infrastructure to support the cruise ship industry is the responsibility of the NSW Government.

As you have raised the feasibility of using Garden Island as a dual defence/civil facility in your letter, I want to share the advice I have received on that matter.

The Commonwealth's decision to exclude Garden Island as a potential cruise ship terminal site was based on an independent review commissioned by the former Federal Labor Government in 2011 and conducted by former Secretary of Department of Defence, Allan Hawke. The Review found:

*"... current and future Navy capability requirements of Garden Island facilities are essentially incompatible with cruise ship access over the long term, except on the existing ad hoc basis. Provision of the guaranteed, shared access to existing berths at Garden Island sought by the cruise industry cannot be achieved without adversely impacting naval operations."*

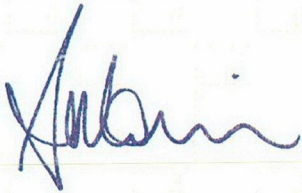
The subsequent and up-to-date advice maintains that it would not be in our national defence interest to operate a shared facility at Garden Island, due to the increasing challenges of managing berth space and infrastructure alongside expanding Navy operations.

I appreciate that some commentators and industry bodies would prefer allowing access to Garden Island, but the Commonwealth is firmly committed to guaranteeing Australia's national security and responds to advice from our Defence advisers on these matters.

The Commonwealth will continue to prioritise and support the Australian Navy's use of the Garden Island Defence Precinct as a naval base. However, the Commonwealth has provided the NSW Government with \$250,000 to support developing other options for additional cruise ship berthing sites in Sydney. In such circumstances, I am sure you can appreciate that our national defence must take priority and we must take the official expert advice provided.

Thank you again for your letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Morrison', with a stylized flourish at the end.

SCOTT MORRISON