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Hon Brad Hazzard MP  
Minister for Planning and Infrastructure  
Minister assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW  
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Sydney 2000

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6 May 2011

Dear Minister

I acknowledge your letter of 6 May in relation to my comments in respect of the Barangaroo development.

In your letter, you say that my comments were denigrating of those of the Lord Mayor, yet I remind you that the Lord Mayor was part of the process, a member of the Barangaroo Delivery Authority, who removed herself by resignation to be free to attack the project. I reject any notion that my characterisation of the Lord Mayor was denigrating of her other than to correctly point out that she stands squarely against the appropriate metropolitan development of the city.

I should have thought that as progenitor of this project, your Government would have afforded me the right to, as you say, fully and robustly participate in the debate. Your letter suggests that were I to remain Chairman of the Design Excellence Review Panel, I would forfeit that right. Hardly the open process you say you wish to preside over.

I have told you when we have met on other occasions that having managed the two great departments of state in this country, the Prime Minister's Department and the Treasury, over a thirteen year period, I have never been party to a more transparent and upright process than that in respect of Barangaroo – both the design process and the selection of the winning tenderer. Yet these processes have been brought into disrepute by the fallacious claims of the Lord Mayor and members of her Council, amongst others.

You know any matters between the Design Excellence Review Panel and me with the City Council go to the Headland Park. The Headland Park provides a once in 200 year opportunity to give Sydney a second harbourside park, book-matched to that of the Botanic Gardens at Mrs Macquarie's Point. The Lord Mayor and the City Council wish to vandalise this opportunity by retaining two cruise ship terminals at the same location. This would completely destroy the whole opportunity of this great civic and public space. Why the Lord Mayor and the City Council wish to alienate this public space to a Miami cruise ship company is beyond me. But nothing will stop me pointing this out.

The effect of your requirement that I desist from making relevant comments about the project would effectively muzzle me. Let me tell you, I am not to be muzzled. Therefore, my continued chairmanship of the Design Excellence Review Panel would be at odds with your Government's requirements that in this position I should remain a mute figure. This has to mean that I can no longer serve as Chairman of the Panel and relinquish my appointment.

It goes without saying that I will continue my observations from time to time as to developments within the project. That said, I wish the new Government well in its development. But I should also say that I will be as direct as I have been in the past if and when I believe the project is moving away from or not capturing the once in two century opportunity which currently presents itself.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PJ Keating', with a large, stylized flourish above the name and a horizontal line extending to the right.

PJ Keating