

The decision made by the [Liverpool City Council](#) not to approve the Development Application for a Dan Murphy's in Moorebank South-West Sydney, provides an informative illustration of the local council processes and the need for community engagement. This case study considers the local council [Development Application](#) (DA) phase and the efforts required by community members to oppose to the Development Application.

Local council development approval phase

On 27 September 2012 FABCOT PTY LTD (Woolworths Corporate Property division) lodged a DA with the Liverpool City Council for the development of a 1,390 square metre Dan Murphy's liquor store.

A notice of the DA was placed on the premise and on the [Liverpool Council website](#) inviting comments from the public on the proposed development.

On 30 May 2013, the DA was referred to the Liverpool Council Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel (IHAP). The IHAP is an independent forum where applications and objections are assessed independent of the Local Council.

At the IHAP meeting on 30 May 2013, the IHAP heard representations from both the applicant and objectors. The IHAP requested additional information from the applicant to address some concerns about the DA.

On 19 July 2013, the IHAP reconvened and assessed the additional information. The [IHAP recommended](#) that the DA be approved by Liverpool City Council with additional conditions relating to the stores fit-out with associated signage, car parking and loading facilities. The IHAP panel also noted that "the consumption of alcohol is a broader social issue the resolution of which transcends the assessment of this development application."

On 31 July 2013, Liverpool City Council held a council meeting. At this meeting, the Liverpool City Council considered the recommendations made by IHAP to approve the DA. The Liverpool City Council did not approve the DA. The [minutes](#) from the meeting indicate the DA was not approved because:

- The proposed development would result in unacceptable social impacts on the community as a consequence of the retailing of liquor at prices and an increase in the density of liquor outlets in Moorebank (section 79C(1)(b) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979).
- The site is not suitable for the proposed development given the proximity to sensitive community members such as Nuwarra Public School and users of the Moorebank Community Facility (section 79C(1)(d) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979).
- The proposed development would prevent the achievement of high density residential

development.

- The proposed development would result in unacceptable impacts on the community as a consequence of traffic generated by the development.
- The proposed development would be inappropriate having regard to the submissions received opposing the DA.

Community involvement in local council process

On 27 November 2012, a local businessman wrote to the Liverpool City Council outlining their concerns with the proposed development. The main argument by the local businessman is that a Dan Murphy's would have negative social impacts on the locality, particularly given the development site is next to a school and 100 metres from a preschool.

Following this first letter of objection, further investigations were carried out by the local businessman. These investigations other groups within the Moorebank community who were also concerned with the DA, such as the local school P&C and representatives from the local health services.

The research also resulted in finding useful research and statistics on the harms associated with alcohol to assist in community members objections to the DA.

During the Liverpool City Council's processes the community of Moorebank were able to generate [local](#) and [state](#) media attention to raise the profile of the issue. These media stories helped with increase community awareness of the DA.

At the Liverpool City Council meeting, eight community members addressed Council members outlining their concerns that a Dan Murphy's on the proposed site will result in negative social impacts.

The efforts by community members demonstrate the influence a united and coordinated approach in the objecting to a DA.

Lessons learnt from this case study

This case study provides an insight into Local Councils DA processes and provides encouragement to communities. In particular it shows:

- The importance of highlighting the negative social impacts under section 79C of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* when objecting to a DA.
- The role and interaction of community members and council officers in forming a view on the DA.
- [Community mobilisation](#) is an important tool to achieve change.
- The importance of questioning alcohol industry claims and fact checking these claims where possible.