



27 August 2021

Willow Grove & St Georges Terrace Greenban Speech to CFMEU DELEGATES

On behalf of NPRAG Executive committee and thousands of community members we would like to thank the CFMEU and its members for its principled stand to support the community over the past 18 months in our battle to stop the NSW Government from demolishing Willow Grove and St George's Terrace.

Your unwavering strength has given our community the willpower to stand up to the government and demand better for Parramatta's heritage. Moving the May Day march from its traditional CBD route to Parramatta this year to support the Willow Grove Greenban was a proud day for everyone.

I still get people comment to me about how they had never attended a union march before until this and this spurred them on to be more vocal and active in community causes.

When the government scabs HAUS Building Services entered Willowgrove in June and we sent out a call to arms – the enormous response from CFMEU delegates and members that turned up to assist community in blocking all three site entrances - as far away from Newcastle and Wollongong was inspirational . These events saw CFMEU members and community stand shoulder to shoulder from all sides of politics together - which demonstrated how much support this battle had.

We are certain that if the NSW Premier had not mismanaged the pandemic response that you would all be standing with the community today arms linked protecting Willowgrove. CFMEU and community put up a significant fight and that is a historical achievement. The state government knew what they were up against and ruthlessly took the opportunity COVID presented. I know like you, we would have preferred to go to combat and there is a sense of disappointment that this monumental battle ended this way.

This campaign has laid the foundations for struggles to come against corruption in planning and the alienation of community voice by elected representatives that are meant to represent us not corporate spivs

Thank you to Darren Greenfield for your tireless work on advocating beside me whenever I called on you. To all the delegates and members that mobilized when we called - your loyalty to the cause and the community will always be remembered.

It's up to us now to make sure that we own the un-sanitized narrative of our battle for our heritage – this is our fight – this our victory in forcing the government to listen to the community. WE saved the 1880s St Georges Terrace to remain on Phillip Street. While NPRAG don't consider the outcome for Willowgrove a win for heritage being pulled down and possibly rebuilt elsewhere we are hopeful that the opposition the government faced over this heritage crime will make them think twice about trying it again.

This four-year long campaign for community has shown the government that we mean business and will mobilize with our allies far and wide to fight back. I hope that this will inspire other communities to dare to struggle for better outcomes for our heritage and environment for next generations.

Suzette Meade – NPRAG Secretary