

Western Sydney Aerotropolis rezoning submissions detail heartbreak after homes rendered 'worthless'

ABC Western Sydney / By data journalist Catherine Hanrahan

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Angela Spagnol fought against the rezoning of her family home at Bringelly until the day she died. (ABC News: Supplied)

Angela Spagnol wrote the submission from her hospital bed.

"I sit helplessly in hospital literally fighting for my life.

"My husband is on one salary trying to pay off our home that they want to declare worthless, instead of being able to be at my bedside possibly exchanging limited time together."

Just weeks later, she died, aged 40, after battling with pulmonary hypertension.

Her submission was in response to the NSW government's plans for the new Western Sydney Aerotropolis.

It proposed that much of the Bringelly home she had lived in with her husband Chris and young son since 2018 would be rezoned.

The Spagnols were among the Western Sydney residents who made submissions on the draft Aerotropolis blueprint, which are due to be made public in early April.

Many of them claim the rezoning has made their properties worthless.

Chris Spagnol said Angela was "horrified" by what the proposed rezoning — released in September 2018 — had done to the value of their property.

It showed most of the couple's two-hectare block would be placed in an environmental and recreation zone, which means the land can never be built on.

"Imagine, we were horrified by it, but at the same time we thought, what have we done?" Chris said.

"We couldn't believe the government would do this to us, that they would allow this."

The Aerotropolis has 10 precincts, zoned as agribusiness, environment and recreation, enterprise, infrastructure, and mixed- use, which can be for housing and employment.

The Spagnols attended meetings and made submissions to the government, but in 2019, Angela's long-standing lung condition worsened.



la, her husband and son moved to the Bringelly property in 2018. (ABC News: lied)

Chris wanted to sell the property so he could spend all his time with Angela, but a real estate agent told him only the 12 per cent of his land that was zoned as mixed-use was worth anything.

A government-commissioned report valued mixed-used land in the Aerotropolis at \$400 and \$450 per square metre, compared with environmental land at only \$20 to \$70 per square metre.

"They stopped me from having the last year off with my wife," Chris said.

"I had a debt there, I had to pay it, I couldn't sell the place."

In late 2020, Angela's health took a turn for the worse and by early January she was in intensive care, waiting for a lung transplant.

"I'm not in a position to get angry," she wrote in her submission.

"My heart is so weak I can't get on the phone and make a call to media outlets and councils.



: Spagnol blames the government for not being able to spend Angela's final by her side.

"I've been told to reserve my oxygen and not speak. Please fight harder friends, and fight for me too."

Chris and his neighbours want the government to commit to buying their environmentally-zoned land, but the government has [earmarked only 37 environmentally-zoned](#) properties for acquisition.

A spokesperson for NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment said not all land zoned environmental would be acquired.

"Any land designated for public use will be acquired in accordance with the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991," he said.

"Those people who will have their properties acquired will receive an individual and independent valuation and they should get their own valuations as well."



submissions on the draft Aerotropolis blueprint are expected to be made public early April. (AAP Image/Dean Lewins)

The spokesperson said the department was currently reviewing submissions and "nothing has been finalised".

Livio Versi's 1.2-hectare house block in nearby Kemps Creek, is also zoned as environmental and recreational land.

Like the Spagnol's land, it is part of the "green spine" that runs along the creeks in the Aerotropolis.

"As soon as they did that, we couldn't do a single thing," Mr Versi said.

"No-one in their right mind would buy the place, knowing it's going to be a parkland," Mr Versi said.

All he wants is to be able to sell his land at a fair price and move elsewhere when he is ready.

"They say nobody will be worse off, but right now, everybody is worse off," he said.

Mr Versi worries for his elderly neighbours, who can't wait 10 or 20 years for the land to be acquired by the government.

One older couple in the street were told the best they could get for their property was half the 2019 value of their land.



Versi would like to sell his Kemps Creek home at a fair price. (Supplied: Lisa)

Western Sydney real estate agent Charlie Cini had one thought when he saw the draft plans last year.

"We've been screwed," he said.

Mr Cini's 2-hectare house block in Bringelly was zoned as enterprise land — to be used for employment — when the government gazetted the land around the airport in October last year.

But in the Aerotropolis precinct plans, Mr Cini's land is set to be parkland.

"What they have done is rendered my land unsaleable," he said.

After initially saying his land would not be acquired, the planning department said the government would buy the land — but not for 20 or 30 years.

"They want developers to buy it, which is an issue because who is actually paying for it at the end? It's the landowners because the developers will pay less for it," he said.

"I'm 63-years-old. I don't have another 20 years. So they have sterilised my land and it's unsaleable, so I can't move."

[A parliamentary inquiry](#) into the process for acquiring land for major transport and infrastructure projects was launched in March and will report by March 2022.



Western Sydney Airport is expected to look when it's finished. (ABC News: *lied*)