

**foke**



FRIENDS OF  
KU-RING-GAI  
ENVIRONMENT INC.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**25 MAY 2022**

*“Have the developers now been put in charge of our urban future? The decision by the new NSW Minister for Planning, Anthony Roberts, to ditch ministerial planning principles begs that question. The principles were directed at making Sydney more climate ready and resilient, but now developers are confidently predicting that an essential set of design and place rules to protect and expand tree canopy, improve urban and building cooling and walkability, create more green spaces and achieve net zero will be dropped or massively amended.”*

**Jeff Angel Total Environment Centre, SMH April 2022**

The quote above highlights the widespread community concern as stated by Jeff Angel of the Total Environment Centre, echoing the opinion of groups such as The Better Planning Network and the Nature Conservation Council. This follows the latest changes made by the newly appointed Planning Minister Anthony Roberts which are not only disappointing, but alarming. We believe that the developers have been firmly put in charge of our urban future! See the further explanation in the Report.

Along with 2020, 2021 will be another year that we will never forget!

While we are now adjusting to a world that will still be impacted with different variants of COVID 19, thankfully we now have several vaccines which are proving to be of some assistance in lessening the health impacts of the virus and helping us go back to leading a more ‘normal’ life again.

The FOKE committee over 2021 continued to operate its committee meetings via Zoom. It will certainly be easier once we are fully vaccinated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> booster to enable us to commence face to face committee meetings again. This year we changed committee meeting times to afternoons instead of evenings.

We were still able to hold the last AGM on the 26 May 2021 in the Killara Uniting Church Hall with the required health restrictions in place.

## ● FOKE'S SUBMISSIONS - GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PLANS

2021 was a particularly busy year for FOKE submissions in response to State Government, and Ku-ring-gai Council policies and plans. FOKE's submissions can now be accessed by members on our newly updated website. They are located under the Resources tab. A full history of all submissions is now available from 2013. Please see the website for the completed submissions prepared and submitted by FOKE during 2021 and into the first months of 2022.

Listed below are the local and state government submissions FOKE has made in 2021.

- Draft Local Character Clause and Overlay Submission
- Design and Place SEPP Submission
- Ku-ring-gai Local Character Background Submission
- Hornsby Park Masterplan
- Development Application – Roseville College Sport and Wellness Centre Bancroft Avenue Roseville
- Review of NSW Heritage Legislation Discussion Paper
- Planning Proposal and Site Specific DCP for Lindfield Village Hub Site
- St Ives Showground and Precinct Lands Plan of Management
- St Ives Showground Precinct Plan of Management Crown Lands submission
- Planning Proposal 47 Warrane Avenue Roseville Chase
- Ku-ring-gai Council Draft Biodiversity Policy
- Ku-ring-gai Council Urban Forest Strategy
- Planning Proposal 4 Pennant Avenue Gordon Bowling Club
- Warragamba Dam Raising Project submission
- Planning Proposal Killara Lawn Tennis Club and Killara Bowling Club Interim Heritage Order and proposal to rezone from R2 to Private Recreation.
- Design and Place SEPP Exhibition Period to Remain as 28 February 2022 submission
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Draft Cycling Strategy and Draft Cycling Policy submission.

Along with the submissions we sent numerous emails to the Mayor and councillors on matters being debated at council in relation to the topics pertaining to Ku-ring-gai Council policies and planning proposals, and follow-up emails in support of earlier submissions we had made. Most of FOKE's submissions are copied to MP's Jonathan O'Dea, Alister Henskens SC and Paul Fletcher for their information, to keep them updated as to the issues and matters of concern to residents.

2022 is setting up to be another year of urgent matters that FOKE will need to address by way of submissions and targeted action. Our particular interest will be what the new Planning Minister does by way of further changes to the NSW Planning System and how it will impact Ku-ring-gai.

## Draft Design and Place SEPP

On 5 April 2022, the NSW Government announced that it has abandoned its plan to introduce its proposed State Environmental Planning Policy for Design and Place (**DP SEPP**). The decision comes following "extensive consultation with industry and stakeholder groups".

The changes under the proposed DP SEPP were detailed and placed regulatory pressure on developers to respond to changing societal attitudes towards our built environment. However, the proposal was met with criticism that the changes did not reflect the current housing needs in NSW- particularly from the key development and property lobby groups. Therefore, the abandonment of the DP SEPP signals a change in direction for the NSW Planning System. The renewed focus is on affordability of homes, not quality or sustainability of design.

*"We want to make it easier to build quality, affordable homes – not harder. As I've said before, my focus is on changes that help us pave the way for more homes in liveable communities."*

To bring about this goal, the new Planning Minister, Anthony Roberts, has expressed his intention to update the BASIX standards "help people build homes that are more comfortable, save people money on their power bills and contribute to our net zero target".

On 14 March 2022, the Planning Minister revoked the 'Minister's Planning Principles' forged by his predecessor Minister Robert Stokes. Again, the message was boosting the supply of new homes and housing affordability. Housing affordability has become the NSW Government's clear objective for the planning system.

With the discontinuance of the DP SEPP and revocation of the Planning Principles, there is much uncertainty regarding the plan to consolidate the State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPS). It appears that the consolidation plan has been put on hold because the 14 individual SEPPS were intended to reside under an umbrella of the respective planning principles.

These changes represent a shift away from a principles-based approach to planning, recommended by the NSW Government Architect and supported by former Minister Stokes. Although this change may provide respite in the perceived housing crisis, we believe it is a very detrimental change to the NSW Planning System and favours the development and property industry over community long term interests.

The Australian Institute of Architects, NSW Chapter, has condemned the scrapping of the NSW Government's proposed Design and Place SEPP, "labelling the backflip high-risk for the environment and communities, and ruinous for risk-management."

"In removing these guidelines, the government has chosen not to support sustainable, resilient places and good design. We cannot understand how the government can support this position. These moves are purely short-term and will be to the detriment of our future cities."

The Design and Place SEPP had some significant areas which FOKE argued against in our submission, but these could have been addressed and the policy amended and improved. The beneficial aspect of this SEPP was introducing a Design Guide as a core element for both a quality-built environment and meeting the needs of climate change via nine principles including the use of more sustainable materials, improved biodiversity and conservation, an increased tree canopy and addressing water storage and re-use as well as improved solar aspect to reduce energy consumption and targeting better resilience to climate change.

FOKE's submission in response stated clearly that we believe the SEPP and associated Urban Design Guide will not assist in building community trust in its current form, in what is an already flawed and corrupted planning system.

The FOKE submission raised concerns regarding the potential for the policy in targeting R2 low density residential areas. We believe this SEPP is another assault by the current State Government on the character of existing suburbs and puts increased density as the key aim of the policy.

Objective 3 of the Urban Design Guide effectively ignores current LEP's, environmental and heritage considerations and would impose a blanket density over the entire municipality that would extinguish any individual characteristics.

Objective 15 of the Urban Design Guide was also of concern as the objective was to override local zoning and reduce detached dwellings to only 30% in areas where the number of dwellings per hectare is currently 15 dwellings or greater. The design guide uses the term "compact neighbourhoods" as the preferred outcome!

### **Selling Community Owned Assets**

Council commenced Planning Proposals for two council owned assets in 2021. The two properties, on which FOKE made submissions, that are proposed for sale and redevelopment are 47 Warrane Avenue Roseville Chase (bowling club) and 4 Pennant Avenue Gordon (bowling club). The sale of these two properties, along with the sale of Bates Park in Roseville Chase, is proposed to go towards the funding of the Marian Street Theatre redevelopment in Killara.

Councils Planning Proposals received considerable objections from the community urging council to retain and re-purpose the facilities for the benefit of the community and future generations.

Until the early 2000's successive councils in Ku-ring-gai had protected council owned assets including car parks by classifying the land "Community" land. This meant that Council could not sell the land or lease the land for more than 21 years.

In a dramatic shift in culture, around 2006 a swathe of previously protected council owned lands was reclassified by council resolution to "Operational" land enabling them to be sold.

Departments within council identified land that they deemed 'surplus' to community needs and now they are progressively being sold to raise income to deliver community infrastructure projects or potentially reduce budget deficit.

To date over 20 public assets have been reclassified. Residents are losing the benefit of land and facilities that provide aesthetic, environmental or social values in their areas. Facilities which will never likely be replaced by Council.

We do not believe this mass sell off is sustainable and question whether residents are getting value for money. We question whether the extent of the sell off is reasonable or rational given the continuing demands from the State Government for more dwellings and the continuing pressure to deliver open space and facilities for a rapid increase in population.

There is concern that council's priorities are focused on immediate economic benefit but do not consider intergenerational, social or environmental values.

We believe it is time to stop the sell off and reconsider options for the longer-term benefit of residents including the sale of 828 Pacific Highway, the purchase of which triggered the mass reclassification of council owned facilities for possible sale.

### **Review of NSW Heritage Act**

In May 2021 the NSW Government announced a major review of the NSW Heritage Act. The NSW Heritage Act (1977) is of fundamental importance to the identification, protection, promotion and conservation of heritage in NSW.

FOKE attended the National Trust Forum held in Sydney on 9 June to hear a panel of experts in the field of heritage and conservation speak of their concerns as to the changes the State Government were proposing. The National Trust believes the Act is working well and that any changes to the Heritage Act should result in a strengthening, not a weakening, of the Act.

The review was undertaken by the Parliament of NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues and nearly 300 submissions were made by organisations and individuals.

The Committee tabled its Review on 22 October which includes 27 recommendations. The key recommendations include:

- That the *Heritage Act 1977* provide increased opportunity for community participation and co-design in the identification, protection and management of heritage and that this participation and co-design include Indigenous members of the community.
- That State Significant Developments are only able to override heritage concerns after the Minister has consulted with the Heritage Council of NSW and is satisfied that there is a clear net benefit to the community for proceeding with a State Significant Development which results in a diminution of an item's heritage value
- That the NSW Government amend the *Heritage Act 1977* to provide for immediate enforcement powers.
- That the NSW Government introduce on a trial basis, a community driven, early round nomination process calling for potential State Heritage Register nominations for preliminary consideration by the NSW Heritage Council.
- That the NSW Government improve the support it provides to owners of State Heritage listed items, in order to incentivise ownership and make activation and adaptive re-use of heritage items easier and more viable, without compromising the protection of the item's heritage value.

- That the State Government further investigate the use of categories as a way of promoting greater consistency in the heritage approvals process, to give heritage owners a much better understanding of the changes or alteration that might be possible to their State-listed properties.
- Locally listed items of heritage should be mandatorily listed and consolidated on to the State Heritage Inventory so that application can be made more readily for State significance if necessary.

Overall, the Committee believes there is a need to modernise the Act in terms of widening the concept of State heritage beyond conventional heritage as buildings and structures, extending this to intangible cultural heritage, reflecting aboriginal culture. We await the legislative reform to the Act when finally tabled.

### **Ku-ring-gai Housing Strategy Approved**

In July 2021 council received a letter from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure advising that the Council's Draft Local Housing Strategy was approved. However, the letter from the Department had a "sting in the tail" which was not outlined in the joint media release by MPs Jonathan O'Dea and Alister Henskens SC MP on 16 July 2021. Read here their Media Release and Council's response. <https://www.krg.nsw.gov.au/Council/News-and-media/Mayors-message/Mayors-Message-2021/Mayors-message-22-July-2021>

It appears that Ku-ring-gai Council is far from off the hook in providing additional dwellings over the near term. The focus of the Department of Planning remains medium and high-density rezoning with an implied threat that if council does not comply then the Minister will intervene!!

### **• KU-RING-GAI GEOREGION, POTENTIAL UNESCO GEOPARK LISTING**

Over 2021, the FOKE Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion sub-committee was extended and now includes FOKE member Angus M Robinson, representing the Australian Geoscience Council, Dr John Martyn, geologist, celebrated natural heritage author and STEP member, Dr Peter Mitchell, environmental scientist and former Macquarie University Head of Physical Geography, Bob Conroy, retired National Parks and Wildlife Services Executive Director, David Robson, Geophysicist and former Chief Geophysicist of the Geological Survey of NSW, and Jayden Walsh, ecologist and expert on the flora and fauna of the Ku-ring-Gai Chase National Park.

Our main goal of identifying an area as a major GeoRegion which has the potential of being nominated as an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark, subject to State Government approval, remains our priority.

Over 2021 we have essentially finalised the area for the GeoRegion as encompassing Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, with the eastern boundary being the northern beaches and to the west to the Berowra River and Hornsby Quarry in order to include a number of nationally and internationally significant geoheritage sites.

The establishment of this GeoRegion aims to build on the existing recognised values of the area, its biodiversity, natural and Aboriginal cultural heritage, and highlight its foundation of

nationally and internationally significant geology and geomorphology that has resulted in the development of these unique traits. The plan is to re-invigorate and highlight the area's importance with the unifying aspects of a GeoRegion through the establishment of geosites and geotrails linking the various features and aspects of the area.

The identified area has now been accepted and strongly supported by the local State Ministers located across the proposed area, the former Environment Minister Matt Kean, now Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure, Cities, and Active Transport, Rob Stokes, Federal Minister Paul Fletcher, local councils and community groups. We are now embarking on the next stage of development of the project which focuses on developing a range of geotrails across the GeoRegion. Importantly, the Geological Survey of NSW has also stated it has no objection to a GeoPark embracing the GeoRegion area.

To date we have established a stakeholder working group comprising the Environment managers of Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai and Northern Beaches councils, the Greater Sydney Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service and members of our steering committee.

Geotrails and geosites are currently being identified, tested and developed to highlight the key elements of national and international significance. Our objective is to have several promoted geotrails supported by signage across the designated GeoRegion by end 2022.

In this identification and signage development, it is important to build upon the geology and landscapes to highlight the specific fauna and flora that developed dependent on the various rock types and subsequently the cultural development of an area.

The GeoRegion is significant in terms of the density and extent of Aboriginal habitation with sites from caves, rock engravings, grinding grooves, middens and ceremonial customs in such proliferation the area represents one of the most extensive areas in Australia in terms of remaining evidence of long-term Aboriginal habitation.

A 135 page book graphically describing the natural and cultural heritage of this outstanding GeoRegion has been prepared by Dr John Martyn, one of our Steering Committee members. A sample of the work completed so far can be viewed via the following link <https://www.foke.org.au/projects-2/ku-ring-gai-georegion/>

As highlighted in previous reports, the ultimate objective of the project is to be Australia's first UNESCO Global Geopark, however this requires that a 'de facto' Geopark be in operation for at least a year. A nomination as an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark is also one of the key strategies of the National Geotourism Strategy being advanced by the Australian Geoscience Council. We are working towards the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion being one of the first projects to be advanced as an Aspiring Global GeoPark in Australia. To date there are no Global GeoParks in Australia, though 177 exist worldwide in 46 countries.

Naturally, this process of seeking government approval for an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark will need to involve both the State and Federal Governments and we are aware that this may take years rather than months.

We sincerely thank Ursula Bonzol (FOKE committee member) for leading the project along with geologist Angus M Robinson (a longstanding FOKE member) and the team of natural and cultural heritage specialists in order to progress this project to the stage of an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark nomination.

### ● NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2021

During the 2021 National Trust Heritage Festival, Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment (FOKE) led a “History of Tree Lovers” Walk celebrating Ku-ring-gai’s history of local conservationists. The guided tour was conducted on Sunday 16 May, led by Janine Kitson, Vice President, a former National Trust Director, and walked past Annie Wyatt’s home finishing at a café that has recently been renamed ‘The Wyatt Café’ located on Werona Avenue, on the eastern side of Gordon Station.

The walk also included the plaque erected to commemorate Annie Wyatt and her founding of the National Trust of NSW. In 2005 a group of Ku-ring-gai conservation groups planted a Blue Gum sapling as part of the 60th Anniversary of the National Trust. This juvenile *Eucalyptus saligna* is growing into another very significant tree. It is yet another reminder of just how important Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby is as the birthplace of Australia’s modern conservation movement.

The handout for this walk stated, “Annie Forsyth Wyatt was determined to make beauty the centrepiece of Australian society by championing Australia’s colonial architecture and its environment. As a child she witnessed the logging and ‘wanton destruction’ of Western Sydney bushland and its fine colonial houses - something she never forgave. She believed the economy needed powerful guardians to protect places of beauty for perpetuity and established Australia’s first National Trust in 1945, modelled on the English National Trust. Her hope was that the National Trust would be that guardian.

Annie proudly described herself as an ‘ardent tree lover’. Her determination to protect trees galvanised after witnessing Ku-ring-gai council trucks dumping rubbish into Gordon’s bushland valley and polluting its local creek. So incensed was she over this that she sought advice from her neighbours - one being Mrs Edith Bradfield, wife of J.C.C Bradfield, one of Sydney’s most respected and popular engineers of his times as he built the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Annie then gathered more neighbours, and over a cuppa tea, on her home’s front porch, she launched Australia’s foremost tree defenders organisation - the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers Civic League. It worked to promote the beauty of Australian trees and why they were so beneficial. They planted trees, distributed tree seeds, organised school writing competitions and worked to gain the support for trees from local governments.

Today Annie Wyatt is commemorated in the garden adjoining Gordon Railway Station. There in this small strip of garden is one of Ku-ring-gai’s most significant trees - a lemon scented gum that her Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers Civic League planted in 1930.”

Janine has been an ardent supporter of Annie Wyatt’s legacy and has worked to demand better outcomes for our heritage buildings, including Gordon Railway Station. This has led to meetings with NSW Rail with locals demanding that the new concrete walls be covered with climbing plants that one day will transform it into a ‘green’ wall.



Janine has currently stood down from the committee to stand as an Independent in the forthcoming Federal Election on 21 May. We wish her every success and hope that she will re-join the committee when she next has available time.

### ● **THE BETTER PLANNING NETWORK NSW (BPN)**

BPN continues to lobby on behalf of its member groups (FOKE being a founding member) in response to State Government planning policies.

An example of the submissions BPN submitted on behalf of the NSW wide membership in 2021 were:

- Submission to the Inquiry into the Local Land Services Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2020
- The Draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan: An extinction plan for the South West Sydney koalas and other wildlife
- Draft Design and Place SEPP.

### ● **CHARLES BEAN SPORTSFIELD DEDICATION**

The Charles Bean Sportsfield was finally dedicated and officially opened by Mayor Jennifer Anderson in September, nine years after the ownership was transferred to Ku-ring-gai Council. In 2013 FOKE nominated Charles W Bean as the name for the UTS Lindfield oval. As President of FOKE, I was invited to attend the September dedication ceremony officiated over ZOOM by Mayor Anderson, Ku-ring-gai Council Director Community Janice Bevan with Anne Carroll, Charles Bean's granddaughter, and members of her family. Several community representatives were present including a representative of the Army who addressed the dedication.

Anne Carroll spoke at the dedication of:

“The importance of this peacetime cause to Bean is that he actively pursued it at the same time as he continued to be engaged, among other things, in the writing and editing of the monumental Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918; overseeing the realisation of his vision for the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and lobbying for what was later to become the National Archives of Australia.

Charles Bean was an eminent Australian. My brother Edward Bean Le Couteur remembers him as gentle, caring and unassuming.

In recognition of the immense significance of his influence and his works within Australian history, the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World has, this year, inscribed on its Register his diaries, photographs and records held by the Australian War Memorial and the State Library of New South Wales. Those records include Dr. Bean's works for open space, for sport and for recreation.

Given Charles Bean's passion for these things: open space, sport and recreation it is most fitting that a sportsfield bears his name.” (Quotation from Anne Carroll's speech)

## ● NATURAL TURF ALLIANCE

FOKE has recently joined with 14 other North Shore community groups including STEP and the Friends of Norman Griffith Oval in a combined group named the Natural Turf Alliance. Many community groups across Sydney are concerned about environmental issues in the resurfacing of grass ovals to synthetic turf. Ku-ring-gai Council approved the synthetic turfing of the Norman Griffith Oval in 2020. FOKE wrote a submission opposing the proposal.

The Friends of Norman Griffith Oval are currently raising money to pay for expert advice on the environmental impact of the proposed field at Norman Griffiths Oval as well as research into impacts of other synthetic fields around Sydney.

## ● FOKE WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK

FOKE's website has been updated to a new server with the wonderful assistance of web developer Leo Martyn. Ursula Bonzol continues to be our webmaster. The web address remains [www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au) FOKE is most grateful for the time-consuming and dedicated work Ursula carries out throughout the year particularly in uploading newsletters and articles and in addressing technical problems with the website.

Leo will continue to be engaged on a yearly basis to ensure the website is operating smoothly and efficiently. We also hope to move to the more professional Mailchimp email newsletter format with his assistance in 2022.

FOKE's Facebook is an important aspect of our social communication and the wider readership. It hopefully raises topics and articles of interest to members and the wider community and allows an avenue for expression on the topics related to Ku-ring-gai and NSW Government that we cover.

## ● FOKE'S STUDENT PRIZES

### **Macquarie University Prize**

The FOKE committee has decided to discontinue the Macquarie University prize. FOKE's commitment to fund the academic prize was for three years. We advised Macquarie University that we would not be renewing the Award in 2022.

With the continuing pandemic and the difficulty in maintaining a consistent dialogue with the university in addition to the ongoing health restrictions, we were unable to attend and meet the recipient of the FOKE Environment Prize at the University's presentations of Prizes in either 2020 or 2021.

The aim in giving the award was to promote the importance and value of conservation of the environment and nature. FOKE wants to encourage students to become involved in their local area with regard to environmental issues.

## **Jan Langley Sustainability Award – East Lindfield Public School**

Jan Langley, a former parent at Lindfield East Public School made a significant contribution to the school and also was a member of the FOKE committee for many years.

The 2021 award was presented to Ivy Huang who was instrumental in the success of the Eco garden. As part of a team she cared for chickens, guinea pigs, and native birds. She was also involved with ensuring recycling bins were emptied and watering the school's vegetable garden and fruit trees, and in selling the Eco garden's produce after school. Ivy undertook the tasks in a happy and co-operative way, completing tasks above and beyond what was required, and was always willing to help others.

We sincerely congratulate Ivy Huang.

## **Jean Posen Environment Award – Lindfield Public School**

The 2021 Jean Posen Environmental Award was awarded to a student who exhibited passion, enthusiasm and a general commitment to improving sustainable practices and caring for the school environment. This year's award went to Emily Tai. We sincerely congratulate Emily on her achievement.

The award is presented in honour of the late Jean Posen who was a member of the FOKE Committee over many years and was passionate about the heritage and environment of Kuring-gai.

### **●FOKE COMMITTEE**

My sincere thanks for the valued and important contribution each committee member has made to the organisation and day to day running of FOKE - Ursula Bonzol, Christiane Berlioz, Carolyn Darby, Janet Harwood, Denise Hendy, Janine Kitson, Katrina Pickles, Dinah Warner and Tanya Wood.

The committee is adapting well to ZOOM committee meetings. Being a volunteer and non-profit organisation, I am most grateful for the time and energy that each committee member devotes to support the work and activities of FOKE.

The Treasurer's job is an all-consuming job of the executive committee, particularly in receipting, banking memberships throughout the year. I would like to thank Tanya Wood who has done a sterling job for the past three years in doing the banking, sending membership reminders and keeping the financial records for FOKE. Tanya has agreed to remain as treasurer for 2022.

I would also particularly like to thank Jill Johnstone who has continued to manage and update FOKE's membership lists and printing the address labels for postage for many years since her retirement from the committee. Jill is always so quick to respond to FOKE's needs in keeping our records up to date and providing labels for postage.

I sincerely thank Ursula Bonzol and Janine Kitson who collect, organise, write and edit the newsletter *FOKE Talk* for FOKE. I simply could not do without their expertise and help.

We are always happy to receive feedback from members as to articles or suggestions you would like us to include in the *FOKE Talk* Newsletters.

My thanks must go to Katrina Pickles and her wonderful assistance in recording and distributing the Minutes and also Carolyn Darby for her regular reports to the committee about the decisions made by the Sydney North Planning Panel, the Ku-ring-gai Planning Panel and Ku-ring-gai Council. With Carolyn's help we are kept up to date with Ku-ring-gai planning decision making.

With the easing of health restrictions over the coming year it is to be hoped that Council and panel meetings will be again held in the Council Chambers.

Special thanks must also go to our long-standing auditor Bruno Codemo who has audited and provided the AGM Statement of Accounts since 1995. We really appreciate his wonderful annual assistance to FOKE each year.

### **•FOKE MEMBERSHIP**

We thank our dedicated members for their annual renewal and ongoing support for the work that FOKE does in carrying out our functions and objects in caring and helping to protect Ku-ring-gai - the beautiful area in which we live. Whilst our work does not always result in changing or influencing government policies or plans, at least the politicians and councillors know there is a community group that is active, keenly observing and attempting to keep their decision making accountable.

You will note in the AGM accounts of the receipt of a large donation during 2021. A long-standing member who has left Ku-ring-gai to retire to the Central Coast, generously made the donation to FOKE. We thank the member sincerely for the \$5,000 donation.

We would greatly appreciate any assistance you could give to FOKE. We are volunteers and as you can see by this report, there continues to be an increasing demand to actively contribute to the policies being proposed by both State and local government. Events, education and communication with residents are also areas that will need more assistance as we move out of Covid.

### **•IN CLOSING**

We trust our members will maintain good health over 2022 and look forward to welcoming members to the 28th AGM and Public Meeting in 2023.

*Kathy Cowley*

PRESIDENT  
May 2022