



14 November 2023

Dear Mr McKee

FOKE wishes to thank you for your many years of service to Ku-ring-gai Council as its General Manager since 2006 and as its Director of Finance (2001-2006) since you first started working for Ku-ring-gai Council in 1998. An enormous and respected legacy that is greatly appreciated.

We thank you for your leadership that has been important in protecting so much of Ku-ring-gai's natural, built and cultural heritage from overdevelopment, forced amalgamation and higher density rezonings.

We greatly appreciate your determination to successfully oppose the NSW Government's forced amalgamation agenda in 2017 and your record of sound financial management.

We recognise your significant achievements including your commitment to:

- Heritage protection for Ku-ring-gai through the Gazettal of Heritage Conservation Areas across Ku-ring-gai Town Centres.
- Environmental stewardship for Ku-ring-gai through an IPART approved Environmental Levy that provided \$4 million a year for a range of environmental projects in 2019.
- Establishing an award-winning open space acquisition strategy that has led to the creation of 15 new parks and playgrounds from 2006-2020.
- Local government excellence as recognised by Ku-ring-gai Council winning the A R Bluett Award for best performing metropolitan council in NSW in 2014.
- Ensuring Ku-ring-gai Council was one of the first councils to respond to the Greater Sydney Commission's requirement for new local environmental plans with the adoption of Ku-ring-gai's Local Strategic Planning Statement in 2020.
- Implementation of a development contributions scheme to provide new community facilities in areas of high density development.
- Sound financial management through a combination of rigorous debt reduction, increasing income, land purchases and strategic long-term planning.
- Improving budget outcomes through the integration of Ku-ring-gai Council's asset management, financial and operational planning and associated reporting.
- Rate restructuring that provided \$36 million for infrastructure renewal over 20 years.
- 'Activate Ku-ring-gai Civic Redevelopment Program' to revitalise Ku-ring-gai's main centres.
- \$29 million multi-purpose recreational area for netball, soccer and golf for Ku-ring-gai residents.
- \$20 million fitness and aquatic centre at West Pymble.

- Refurbishment and modernisation of Ku-ring-gai's central library at Gordon.
- Building a new Council depot at Pymble as well providing new headquarters for SES volunteer emergency services.
- Provision of the large public space and underground parking for 130 cars at Lindfield.

We will not forget how you steered Ku-ring-gai Council through difficult State Government challenges. Your successful management of Council's financial performance ensured Ku-ring-gai Council was one of the only councils in NSW to meet the State Government's financial criteria under the 'Fit for the Future' sustainability program. Nevertheless, the NSW State Government proposed merging Ku-ring-gai Council and Hornsby Council. When Ku-ring-gai Council resolved to oppose this merger, you led a successful legal challenge to the merger process resulting in a win in the Court of Appeal that maintained Ku-ring-gai's independence.

Thank you again for the huge difference you have made in leading, protecting and retaining so much of Ku-ring-gai's natural, built and cultural heritage and in the strategic planning and delivery of new infrastructure for Ku-ring-gai.

We wish you the very best in your new endeavours ahead.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Cowley  
President