

# FOKE Talk

## Endless Growth or Endless Greed

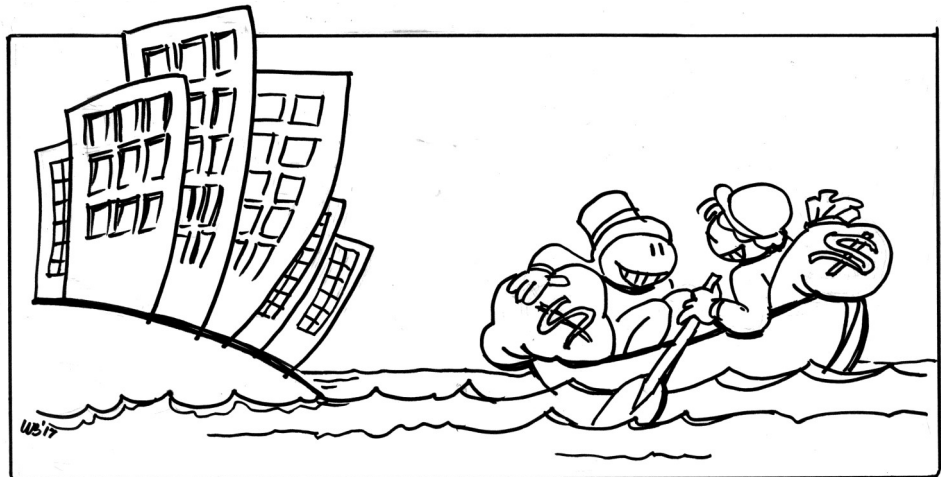
At the FOKE AGM on 24 May 2017, Dick Smith's speech focused on Sydney and Australia's ability to sustain the massive forecast increases in population that are currently projected.

If the current level of population growth continues, it is reasonable to expect that Australia will have a population of 100 million within 50 years. Sydney's population alone is projected to be nearly 9 million by 2056.

As printed in the Sydney Morning Herald on April 2017 Bernie Fraser, the former head of the Reserve Bank of Australia, stated 'that Australia is approaching a "danger point" where the gap between rich and poor becomes so vast it could have "awful" far-reaching consequences at every level of Australian society.'

Following on from this quote, Dick highlighted that an increasing population tends to benefit the wealthy more so than other groups.

So far Australia has been a country where our wealth was shared across our population, unlike the USA. But this is now changing where the top 1% of Australians own more than the bottom 70%.



In fact, progressively over the past 5 years the Australian GDP (Gross Domestic Product), meaning income, per capita is reducing. This is not the figure that is publicised, only the total figure hits the headlines, supported by our high population increases that allow the per capita figure to remain hidden. Other countries, such as Canada, measure GDP and growth on a more informed per capita basis. This is what we should do as well.

**The biggest failure of government, both Federal and State, is that everyone is avoiding the need for a Population Policy.** This is about making sure that our population continues to have the resources to provide jobs, education, health and support...not just for a few but for us all. Growing too fast and without any reasonable Population Policy as to how we manage to allow all our citizens a good standard of living is part of sensible Government. It is not anti-immigration or racist. It is about a sensible limit.

Australia currently takes in 200,000 migrants a year. That is five Jumbo jets of people every week coming over full and leaving, apparently, empty. Australia's immigration number as a percent of population is currently the highest in the world by a long way.

### What can we do?

Number one we need a Population Policy that limits the number of immigrants per year. This should also address our need to continue with a sensible refugee intake and temporary visa migrants. We need a better measurement of GDP as a per capita measure to ensure we start to close the extreme disparity between the rich and the poor. NSW Government must get serious about a decentralisation strategy to ensure revitalisation of our 'dying' towns by adding jobs, health and education infrastructure. It is all too easy to rely on growing Sydney with no limits, feeding an extreme capitalism agenda, to the detriment of its residents and liveability in both Sydney and regional towns. To see a video of the talk, go to [www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au)

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

Well a lot has happened since our last newsletter. Momentously, Ku-ring-gai won its Courts of Appeal case in March, with Judge Basten stating that Ku-ring-gai Council was 'denied procedural fairness' by the State Government in not providing the full KPMG report on which the amalgamation justification was based. However, we doubt this will be the end of the matter as the Premier continues to state her determination to proceed with forced amalgamations.

FOKE thanks Ku-ring-gai Council, and in particular the former Mayor Cheryl Szatow and the four councillors (Berlioz, Armstrong, Malicki and McDonald) for their strong and determined stance they took against the merger with Hornsby, despite attempts by other councillors to rescind the Appeal. We are encouraged to see that Mayor Anderson is now publicly supporting a stand alone council.

The FOKE committee has been kept very busy in preparing submissions to another set of NSW Government legislative planning changes placed on public exhibition and the Greater Sydney Commission Draft North District Plan. These submissions are available on the FOKE website.

Our Public Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> May with guest speaker Dick Smith AC, attracted a huge crowd who spoke on his concern for the long-term sustainability of perpetual population growth. We are most grateful to Dick Collingridge for filming the presentation.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May myself and committee member Ursula Bonzol met with the Greater Sydney Commission District Commissioner Dr Deborah Dearing. Over an hour and a half meeting at her office in North Sydney, we pressed the importance of protection of Ku-ring-gai's unique and



threatened environment, its importance to Sydney and its history. The meeting was helpful to understand what her role allows in terms of strategic planning for Ku-ring-gai and the North District and the expectations to increase housing capacity within Ku-ring-gai beyond what we had been promised by our Liberal MPs.

## September Council Elections

This September we have the opportunity to elect or re-elect Councillors who represent the interests of our community, our Ku-ring-gai. Please take some time to consider whether your ward councillors are reflecting your preferences and priorities, rather than their own. Publicly available Council minutes show how Councillors have voted on issues such as Council amalgamation, heritage protection, appropriate developments and services.

This is an important election following the Ku-ring-gai victory in the courts against forced amalgamation. We do not want to elect a Council who support the interests of the State Government over that of the community!

## Upper House Bill put up by Shooters and Fishers and The Greens

On Friday 24 June, the Greens, Shooters and Fishers successfully

raised a bill that:

- Halts all outstanding forced amalgamation proposals until residents are given their say in a binding referendum.
- Gives residents in councils that have been forcibly amalgamated the right to have a plebiscite on de-amalgamation.
- Stops this or any future government from amalgamating councils without first holding a binding referendum of local residents.

This Bill passed in the Senate by 21 votes to 18. An amazing achievement for Save Our Councils Coalition and the community groups, such as FOKE, who have been active in fighting against amalgamation for over a year. We thank those politicians working in the community interest to give back democracy to the community.

Our NEVER GIVE UP approach has given us the strength to fight the State Government and fight for the true meaning of democracy.

Regards  
*Kathy Cowley*



# 10th Anniversary of Saving Blue Gum High Forest

By Christiane Berlioz

The 5-year campaign to save the Blue Gum High Forest was remarkable as it involved the contribution of individual residents, Kuring-gai community groups and the support and financial contribution from three tiers of government.

The campaign for preserving the Blue Gum High Forest (BGHF) was a two fold. Firstly, it is due to the extraordinary work of local residents Nancy Pallin, Andrew Little, Neroli Lock and other community environmentalists that scientific and historical data was collected and submitted to the NSW Scientific Committee proving the significance and rarity of the Blue Gum High Forest. As a consequence, the BGHF Ecological Community was successfully listed as *critically endangered* under Commonwealth legislation in 2005 and *endangered* under NSW legislation.

The second part of the campaign consisted in acquiring two privately owned blocks of land that adjoined the largest remaining remnant of BGHF forest consisting of Dalrymple Hay Nature Reserve (state owned) and Brown's Forest (council owned) in St Ives. The lots at 101 and 102 Rosedale Road were very important due to their location and at the time they were being proposed for redevelopment which would have involved clearing of much of the vegetation on the blocks as well as clearance for a bushfire asset zone in the forest. The issue was securing the funds for the purchases.

Who can forget Nancy Pallin's presentations to community groups such as Rotary, Probus, FOKE, SIPA etc? The principle was to educate the community on the value of the forest and to get them on board. That is how I became involved, as I was president of one of the groups at the time.

A coalition of a number of local community groups called the Blue Gum High Forest Group was formed. The Group organised walks through the forest, letter box

drops, it encouraged letter writing by residents and community groups and lobbied all levels of government. It also collected about \$50,000 in donations from community groups and residents toward the land acquisitions.

**Fortunately, at the time, there were a number of environmentally conscious councillors who were instrumental in council's eventual financial contribution to acquiring one of the lots and council's support in general.**

In 2006 the NSW State Government paid over \$1M for 5.5 hectares at 100 Rosedale Road. The campaign continued.

I wrote to Malcolm Turnbull, the then Federal Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, requesting funding and inviting him to visit the forest. He sent his advisers from the National Reserve System Programme to Sydney. I recall our enthusiasm as, with Nancy and council staff, we guided them through the forest when they came up from Canberra.

By setting up a power point displaying Nancy's photos of the forest in St Ives and Gordon Shopping Centres, passers-by were presented with dot points about the forest and encouraged to write to Malcolm Turnbull MP, with copy to our local Federal MP, Brendan Nelson. In just two days, three hundred letters requesting financial input from the Australian Government to purchase the second lot of land were written, bound and delivered.

The Federal Government responded favourably! So with a contribution of around \$500,000 from Council, \$50,000 from the community and \$350,000 from the Commonwealth, the purchase of 102 Rosedale Road (5.3 hectares) was finalised in December 2007.

The campaign led to the recognition of the environmental significance of the Blue Gum High Forest Ecological Community and its risk of extinction and also resulted in acquisition of two lots of land increasing the total area of the largest remnant of BGHF to 18 hectares. **The campaign is recognized by many as one of the most successful environmental campaigns.**



## FRIENDS OF KU-RING-GAI ENVIRONMENT INC.

*Established 1994*

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### **Committee:**

Ursula Bonzol  
Carolyn Darby  
Janet Harwood  
Denise Hendy  
Dinah Warner  
Tanya Wood

**Facebook:** FriendsOfKuringgai



## Update on NSW Planning Changes

Since our last newsletter much has been happening with regard to NSW Planning initiatives. Though NSW Planning have still not mandated the highly destructive Complying Medium Density Code, it has formed the basis of the infill development plans that supports the Greater Sydney Commission's North District plans and their objective of increased housing capacity through our region.

As mentioned, FOKE has made submissions to both the Greater Sydney Commission and NSW Planning regarding their proposals. These submissions are available on our FOKE website for your information.

**Unfortunately, we are proceeding down a pathway of greater autocracy by NSW Planning and our State Government.** In June, Planning Minister Roberts recommended to Cabinet to make it mandatory that Councils set up and use panels to decide on development applications. Cabinet has wisely sought to consult on this further. One of the reasons for the demise of the Labor Government in NSW in the 2011 election was these hated Planning Panels instead of reliance on community elected councillors.

Appallingly, Premier Berejiklian said that the Government's 'intention is much greater use of Independent Housing and Assessment Panels (IHAPS)'. This means planning decisions will again be taken away from the community with little transparency and accountability for developments and their approval to residents. Under Labor these resulted in some of our worst oversized developments being approved.

**Please make your views on returning to the 'bad old days of mandatory planning panels' known to your local MPs, Alister Henskens and Jonathan O'Dea.**

As part of the 2017 Budget presented by NSW Government on 20 June, is a dramatic increase in new housing across Sydney. It was made clear that Councils will be under pressure to rezone more land for housing, as part of the state government's determination to increase the supply of new homes. We understand our new figure is 10,000 more dwellings. **In Ku-ring-gai we can expect to see more areas zoned for medium density, with further threats to our limited community lands and green spaces.**

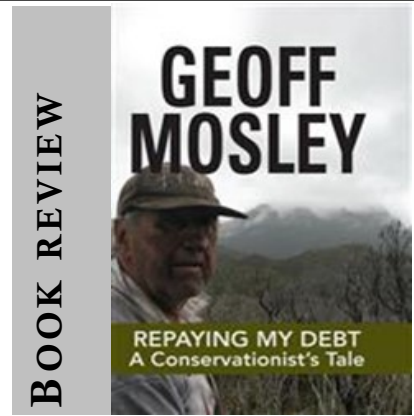
## Successful Heritage 2017 Festival



The 2017 National Trust Heritage Festival Walks that were held over April and May were well attended and expertly organised by our environment sub-committee members, Janine Kitson and Janet Harwood. Our final event was the successful lunch held at the Pecorino Cafe Gordon. Overall FOKE raised \$1300 as a donation to the NSW Environment Defender's Office.

Over 90 people attended these ecologically focused events that highlighted the threats to Ku-ring-gai's built and natural heritage.

Nancy Pallin (photo above) led the very well attended Blue Gum High Forest at St Ives Walk.



### Repaying My Debt, A Conservationist's Tale

*By Geoff Mosley, envirobook, 2017*

Dr Geoff Mosley's memoir is a history of the modern Australian environmental movement. He has played a key role in almost all of Australia's major environmental campaigns since migrating to Australia in 1960.

Geoff Mosley was born during the Great Depression and spent his formative years roaming the wild countryside in the Peak District in the northern midlands of England—where England's first national park was established in 1951. His parents' major recreation was 'rambling'—going for long walks across the countryside. Living simply and surrounded by abundant natural beauty was his experience as a boy.

Geoff Mosley was the Australian Conservation Foundation's Executive Director from 1973-1986. This involved him campaigning to save many of Australia's iconic places — Lake Pedder (unsuccessfully flooded in 1972), the Franklin River and Great Barrier Reef.

Geoff Mosley worked tirelessly to ensure that many of these places are today listed as World Heritage. **In 2000 he was involved in the successful campaign to World Heritage List the Greater Blue Mountains National Parks.** He remains active calling for Antarctica, the Australian Alps, the Royal National Park to be World Heritage listed, at a time when politicians are unwinding many critical environmental protections. He speaks out for a 'steady state economy' that prioritises Nature's protection.

**His memoir is a timely reminder that we all have a responsibility to repay our debt to Nature.**

**Get your friends to join FOKE Now!**

**Ku-ring-gai Needs a Strong Voice**

**www.foke.org.au Facebook: Friends of Kuringgai**

