

FOKE Talk

HILLVIEW AT RISK



FOKE has grave concerns for the future of Turramurra's 'Hillview' and the 'Hillview Heritage Conservation Area' that borders Pacific Highway, Kissing Point Road and Boyd Street.

Neighbours living near 'Hillview' have told the FOKE Committee that they fear Hillview's owners, the NSW Health Department are planning to sell the property. FOKE is now seeking verification from MP Alister Henskins. Regardless, it is obvious that the NSW Government has failed to provide the necessary funds to maintain the historic buildings and FOKE fears that this budget starvation is causing 'demolition by neglect'.

'Hillview' is a collection of historic buildings that were once renowned

guest houses dating back to the 1890s as Sydney folk travelled to Turramurra on the newly opened railway line to holiday there for health respites. The property includes two 'guest' houses and a historic garage referred to as the 'Stables' as well as a croquet lawn, stone fence with remnants of exceptionally elaborate iron gates and row of significant trees.

'Hillview' is one of Ku-ring-gai's most significant sites and was named because of its magnificent viewlines to the Blue Mountains and Botany Bay. Today it celebrates excellent views to Pymble's Sheldon Forest – one of Ku-ring-gai's most significant Blue Gum High Forests and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forests.

Regretfully Ku-ring-gai Council

has recommended that the proposed Hillview Heritage Conservation Area not be extended. This area includes the old Commonwealth Bank, two Federation shops with their attractive roof lines and chimneys, and the original 1890s chemist on the corner of Kissing Point Road and the Pacific Highway.

'Hillview' is still one of the largest remaining sites in Ku-ring-gai in public ownership, and is too important to lose. Sydney celebrates other heritage precincts that have been adaptively reused such as the North Sydney's Coal Loader, the Alexandria factory in Alexandria, and Sydney's 'Rocks'. **Surely such a significant Sydney site as 'Hillview' has the potential to be transformed into a thriving community open space precinct with cafes and adaptively reused heritage buildings?**

Between the NSW Government and Ku-ring-gai council, not only has 'Hillview' been rezoned for 5 storey apartments, but also the Little Village Park, opposite Hillview and adjoining Turramurra Railway Station, which, if realized, will destroy the site's heritage significance.

'Hillview' and its extended Heritage Conservation Area are worthy of state heritage listing and are too important for Ku-ring-gai and Sydney to lose.

ACT NOW: Please contact your councillors and MPs to save our precious Sydney Heritage.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

It was wonderful to welcome so many of our members to our AGM this year. Thanks also go to the members of FOKE who have participated in our National Trust Heritage Festival Events in May. As a result of the raffle and Pecorino talk and lunch we donated \$1675 to the EDO. The presentation was made to the CEO David Morris at our Public Meeting "David vs Goliath" on 23 May.

Over the last three years FOKE has raised close to \$5000 for the EDO. Such a worthwhile environmental law organisation which has had its State and Federal Government funding politically stripped away in recent years. Primarily due to its success in litigation and court wins for community groups fighting inappropriate mining and other environmentally destructive developments in NSW e.g. Bulga community. The EDO is now funded predominantly from individual donations.

In the week leading up to our "Time for World Heritage" talk and lunch at the Pecorino Café the local media positively reported FOKE's announcement that we would be pursuing the possibility of World Heritage Listing for the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. Alister Hensken's SC MP was quoted as supporting the initiative stating "The landmark amply satisfied the world status criteria. There is no reason why the world should not be made aware of its outstanding beauty and biodiversity." Both Berowra and Bradfield MPs

Julian Leeser and Paul Fletcher also said they would support the campaign.

Thanks also to our members who supported our campaign to stop the Lindfield Library site from being prematurely sold off to fund other councillor priority projects. We had only ten days in which to campaign to stop the immediate sale. Thankfully the motion was amended to take out the references to the immediate sale of the library. We could not have done this without the wonderful support of so many residents who answered our Facebook survey, wrote emails and spoke at council.

With many councils now fighting the state government's push for greater density in Sydney, we continue to support the immediate need for an open discussion on a sustainable Population Policy for Australia at the Federal level.

Our next major campaign will be to save Turramurra's historic "Hillview" from being sold by the State government to developers for high density development. Former Planning Minister Hazzard altered the draft Ku-ring-gai LEP and rezoned parts of the site R4 which will allow intrusive high density apartment development. We hope you will support us with the campaign to stop the sale of this historic and important Ku-ring-gai icon.

With my best wishes,

Kathy Cowley

PRESIDENT



Lindfield Library Site Update

Thanks to all the residents who contacted Sam Ngai and other councillors, and those who spoke passionately at the Council meeting on May 8th, opposing the Notice of Motion intending to rush the sale of the Lindfield Library site. On the night an amended Notice of Motion was presented, however this new motion still contained factually incorrect details as there had been no resolution for Council to sell the Lindfield Library site.

As Mayor Anderson has advised 'Any such proposal would be a separate process with extensive community consultation. Thankfully, those councillors agreed to remove reference to a sale from the motion.' This amended motion was passed by 5 councillors to 4 against.

With just over a week's notice of the original motion, we had 178 people respond to our survey which was presented to councillors. Overwhelmingly, the responses were in favour of retaining the Library site and community rooms until another site was locked in for its replacement (99%), with 98% of respondents unhappy if the Library site was sold and not replaced.

Join FOKE Now!

www.foke.org.au

Death by a 1000 Cuts



At our Public Forum in May, David Morris, CEO of the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO), spoke passionately about the problems biodiversity currently face in NSW under the contentious Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 introduced into law this year.

The EDO's key concerns include the expanded use of biodiversity offsets, removal of a legal requirement to 'maintain or improve' native vegetation, and the use of self-assessable codes to 'de-regulate' clearing native vegetation.

Prior to giving its consent for development of an area with high native vegetation, Council requires a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report. One of the tests in this report is that of Serious and Irreversible Impact (SII) on the ecological community. Fortunately, Ku-ring-gai's Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest are already listed on the SII table. However, this could still be overturned by State Significant Development or Infrastructure works.

Outside of these few listed items, consent for clearing or development can be given where offset credits are used. These include Like-for-like replacement habitat up to 100km from the original site. Damningly, offsets also include monetary payments into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund!

The flexibility in the scope of offsets available provide ample potential for species to decline to critically endangered levels.

As residents we need to look at the big picture, if we allow trees and vegetation to be removed from our individual properties the overall impact will be huge for our ecological communities. One opportunity is to lobby Council to set up voluntary conservation agreements for high value communities on council owned land.

Gladys . . . Enough is Enough

Finally, the Berejiklian Government is having a moment of pause in their developer driven destruction of our suburbs.

In May, Planning Minister Roberts has responded to the pressure caused by the rapid growth of apartments by stating he will put a suspension on new residential developments in the areas of Ryde and Canterbury Bankstown Council.

Has our State Government and their mouthpiece, the Greater Sydney Commission, finally listened to the uproar among residents regarding the rapid spread of high-rise developments and the new laws allowing increased medium density in our R1 and R2 residential areas? The Government may have finally realised that it is the residents, not their developer friends, who will determine whether they are re-elected next March.

What this Government needs to un-

derstand is that Sydney's growing pains are not limited to these two council areas. All of Sydney is feeling the strain, with overcrowded trains, increased traffic congestion, crowded schools, loss of heritage, open space and amenity for residents.

This Government has to listen to their constituents and suspend new residential development across Sydney until infrastructure and services can absorb it. It also needs to rescind its flawed Medium Density laws which are just crowding more people into smaller spaces in existing suburbs. As complying development, this destructive and irresponsible medium density law does not require Council, transport or services to assess whether an area can even support it.

This Missing Middle code is so flawed that already four councils have been granted a 12 month delay from its July 2018 introduction, with another five councils seeking deferrals and more to come. Minister Roberts states there was extensive consultation, with FOKE among hundreds of submissions. **However, the Planning Minister never listened or altered the code in the face of nearly universal opposition for the medium density code to be complying development!**

If the only way this Government can meet its GDP growth targets and keep its coffers full are by selling Sydney to developers, what a short-sighted government we have.

Now is the time to act! Contact our Ku-ring-gai MPs, both State and Federal, and let them know your opinions.

Grand Strategies: Vision or Mirage?

In March, the final North District Plan was presented by the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC). This plan from now until 2056 is a vision of Sydney as *A Metropolis of Three Cities*.

Though the GSC has had numerous submissions on areas to strengthen or amend, it appears to remain largely unchanged from the Draft Plan of 2017. It retains grand statements of a '30 minute city', 'great places', 'liveability', 'sustainability' and 'high quality open space', but is essentially a plan to increase housing stock and housing density across Sydney. Though it uses terms such as innovative and visionary, this rhetoric is not supported by its own document.

One area we strongly support in the Plan is that when it comes to infill development, it states this should remain in the hands of Council in order to determine the best locations to enable a sensible integration. However, this is completely contrary to the Medium Density code released in May by NSW Planning which stipulates it as complying development.

In most local centres, areas up to 800m radius from the town centre are to be evaluated for increased density, unless it is a designated heritage or environmentally sensitive area.

Kur-ring-gai is tasked to add 4000 new homes in the period from 2016 to 2031, with up to another 10,000 by 2056.

Draft Ku-ring-gai Community Strategic Plans

In terms of the Draft Ku-ring-gai Community Strategic plan to 2038 and Draft Delivery plan 2018 to 2021, there is very little to

challenge. The strategies remain positive, with considerable community engagement across areas of environment, housing, culture, infrastructure, heritage, quality urban design, transport and employment.

The aspect that has the greatest concern, literally the 'elephant in the room', is how these strategies will be affected by a state government that wants to streamline assessments for development, requires regular LEP checks to meet strategic plans for higher density has already introduced mandatory IHaps (Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels) taking away our community voice on development proposals and is establishing standardised Development Control Plans across the Councils, a one-size fits all model.



The FOKE Heritage Festival ended with a luncheon that called for Kur-ring-gai Chase National Park to be World Heritage Listed. Madi Maclean, President of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, spoke on how the Greater Blue Mountains was World Heritage listed in 2000. Robert Crombie from the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre has been calling for Royal National Park to be World Heritage listed because it is one of the first national parks in the world. **Ku-ring-gai Chase is one of the first national parks in the world to be created for the intrinsic value of nature.**

These legislative changes introduced in the updated Environmental Planning and Assessment Act came into effect in March 2018.

Review the Draft Kur-ring-gai Plan at www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions

The issues residents face are primarily at the State level with the pressure to force more and more homes into Sydney. **If you want to change the way NSW Planning are pushing resident's voices to the sidelines, please write to your local MPs, Planning Minister Roberts and Premier Berejiklian. We are already in election mode and we require more restraint from our elected representatives!**

FRIENDS OF KU-RING-GAI ENVIRONMENT INC.

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