



FOKE Talk

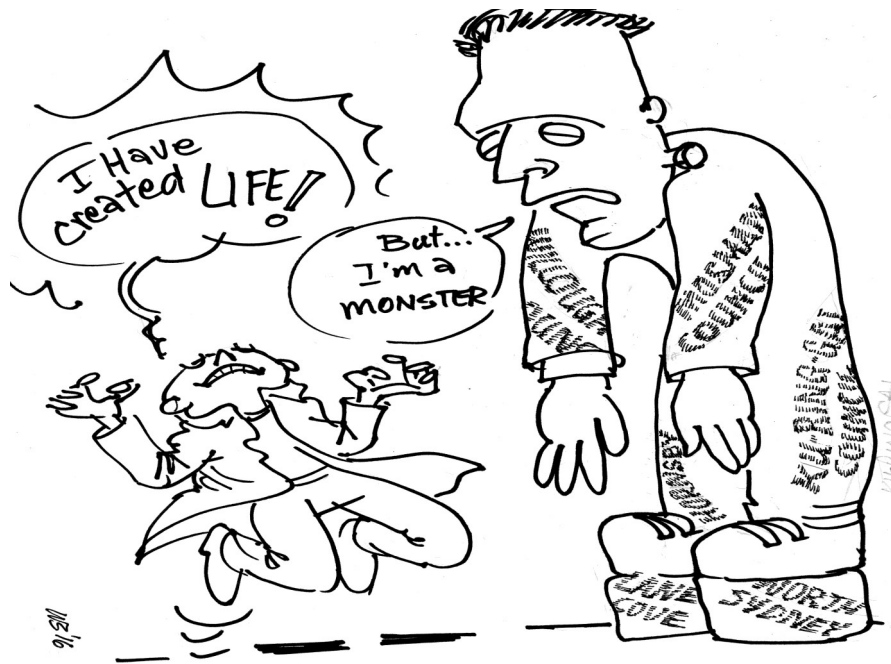
Liberals Abandon Ku-ring-gai

Have the many broken promises of the Liberal Coalition Government finally exposed it as the party that puts corporate profit before the public good? We were promised that planning powers would be returned to the community, no forced Council amalgamations and transparent government.

All of these have been pre-election lies. **Ku-ring-gai is now battling our Liberal representatives and the Baird Government to respect the views of the community and keep to their promises.**

On Feb 3rd there was an outstanding turnout of over 700 Ku-ring-gai residents at the Council Boundary Review sessions at Pymble Golf Club. In total, 95 speakers out of 100, argued that the amalgamation of Ku-ring-gai with Hornsby is clearly detrimental to the interests of the residents of Ku-ring-gai.

There is no logic in this merger as Ku-ring-gai Council already services one of the larger populated metropolitan areas in Sydney. The Merger Proposal as presented by NSW Government does not highlight any improvements for residents of Ku-ring-gai. The risks however to Ku-ring-gai of higher rates, reduced services, reduced representation, increased unsympathetic development and the loss of protections for our heritage and environment are enormous.



This amalgamated council will be one of the largest in NSW – larger in size than the Government’s own recommendations.

In essence the entire amalgamation consultation process is a pre-determined farce perpetrated by a Government obsessed with fast-tracking development at all costs. The community consultation has been undemocratic with submissions made to a Government appointed delegate. The lack of detail in the cost benefit analysis has been appalling, with the Baird Government refusing to release the evidence that claims the amalgamations will bring savings and ‘efficiencies’ to local government. The full KPMG Report has been embargoed as ‘Cabinet in Confidence’.

Again and again as part of this process, Ku-ring-gai Council was found to be well managed, in a healthy financial position providing quality services and facilities to its residents. The only criteria that this Liberal Government can use to force an amalgamation is ‘scale and capacity’ or population size. Even on these criteria the Government’s own projection of savings is an exceedingly low 1.5% of overall budget and, being calculated over a period of 20 years, is susceptible to significant margins of error.

Who will benefit from this forced amalgamation? . . . Not the community. However there is plenty of evidence that amalgamations will benefit the property industry who will push for higher densities, overdevelopment and opportunistic profits at the cost of environmental, heritage and local identity.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As NSW commences 2016, we continue to be bombarded with changes from the Baird Government via NSW Planning and Department of Local Government. This Government appears obsessed with centralizing all planning controls, and minimising any need for community consultation, in order to follow its pro-development agenda.

As you would have all been aware, the proposal to merge Ku-ring-gai Council with Hornsby is now back with the Government, following a period of consultation and submissions to their delegate. In no way could the NSW Government see that this amalgamation meets with the wishes of the residents of Ku-ring-gai. The opposition has been intense.

We thank all those who attended the meetings at Pymble Golf Club in February, joined the various rallies and made submissions to the Boundary Commission prior to the 28 February deadline.

On your behalf, FOKE is also opposing the proposed Low Rise Medium Density Housing as Complying Development. This proposal, explained in more detail in this newsletter, aims to avoid community consultation and existing LEPs in order to allow multiple dwellings on land sizes of 400sqm to 600sqm that are currently zoned residential R2.

Under existing LEP's residents can object to and comment on new development in their area as part of the normal assessment process. By making medium density development complying development residents will not be notified of any such developments. This is contrary to what the NSW Government promised at the last election.

FOKE has also campaigned against the reduction in protection for vegetation incorporated in the proposed Biodiversity Conservation Act. With Ku-ring-gai one of the last areas of threatened urban forests of any size and importance, it is essential that the protections of the existing Acts be retained for the benefit of future generations.

Overall we have been intensely disappointed with our Ku-ring-gai representatives, both state and Federal, Alister Henskens, Jonathan O'Dea and Paul Fletcher who have remained either silent or muted in their views. In other words, Ku-ring-gai and NSW have fallen to the juggernaut that is NSW Planning and this Liberal Government. In effect, our Liberal representatives have not sided with their constituents but rather have supported their Liberal party even if that is to the detriment of their community.

We urge all residents to let their views be known to their representatives and that support is a two-way agreement.

We value and appreciate your ongoing membership and support for the work FOKE undertakes for Ku-ring-gai residents. Please find enclosed the 2016 membership renewal form.

Yours Sincerely,
Kathy Cowley



Single Dwelling Zoning Under Threat

Exempt and complying code

The NSW Government is currently proposing a new route for the delivery of medium density development – complying medium density. Currently the R3 zone has been designed to deliver medium density. This proposal to change medium density to complying development would effectively wipe out zoning for this type of housing as it could now be done anywhere. The proposed planning instrument covers all residential (single dwelling) R2 land in NSW with a street frontage of 12.5m or more and a minimum lot size of 400sqm.

The medium density housing could be:

- Two dwellings (dual occupancies) on a single lot of 400sqm
- Three to four dwellings on a single lot of 500sqm (manor homes – a single building which contains four dwellings)
- Three to ten dwellings on a single lot of 600sqm (townhouses/terraces/combination of development types)

This proposal applies an effective blanket rezoning to medium density (with minor exceptions) to all low-density residential R2 land. It does not take into account the cumulative effects of intensifying development on local infrastructure, services, traffic, street car parking, social services and amenities.

This proposal excludes community input and overrides any local LEPs. **Under complying development, local residents are not notified and do not have the right to comment on or object to the development under the normal Council merit-based assessment process.** It ignores local environment plans and this is contrary to the government's election promise for increased consultation with communities.

Express your objections to your local MPs NOW. See Contact sheet for details.

Baird's War on Nature



NSW will soon wake in fright when it confronts the full horrors of the impending legislation for a new biodiversity act. Instead of protecting NSW's wildlife, the legislation that purports to protect wildlife will do the opposite.

Premier Baird's Biodiversity *Conservation Act*, due for public release in March 2016, is set to fast-track land-clearing approvals to appease big agribusiness and property developers.

Before the election, Premier Mike Baird committed to "enhancing the state's biodiversity to benefit current and future generations", but again he has broken his promise in favour of his pro-development agenda to weaken our nature protection laws.

It proposes a much reduced *Biodiversity Conservation Act* to replace the *Native Vegetation Act* and the *Threatened Species Act*. It plans to weaken the state's land clearing laws that were introduced in 2003 to stop broad scale land clearing.

Premier Baird and his Liberal/ National Party Coalition seem hell bent on winding back the clock. One had hoped we had become wiser and could now appreciate the importance of trees, not just for wildlife but for soil conservation and water quality. Land clearing just made the land hotter, saltier, sterile and more vulnerable to wild bushfires and dangerous floods.

The scientifically based *Native Vegetation Act* has saved hundreds of thousands of hectares from the bulldozer and chainsaw. Expert ecologists say that these land-clearing controls have saved more than 1 million animal deaths over 10 years.

If the land clearing laws are scrapped then thousands of possums, quolls, koalas and gliders will be killed each year. Already Australia has one of the highest rates of species extinction in the world. Almost 1000 plant and animal species are at risk of extinction. NSW's population of koalas has declined by 40 per cent in the last 20 years alone.

'Biodiversity offsets' are also to become the new 'accounting' solution to environmental loss and degradation. These offset schemes allow developers to destroy wildlife habitat in exchange for cash or dissimilar types of habitat.

Land-clearing controls are also important to ensuring Australia keeps its international promise to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Trees and vegetation are critical carbon sinks and air cleansers.

We need stronger biodiversity laws – not weaker ones. We need a new vision to protect, restore and ensure resilience for our precious biodiversity.

FOKE Events

National Trust

Heritage Festival 2016



Paddy Pallin WALK SUNDAY 24 April

This Lindfield walk will focus on the achievements of Paddy Pallin and his bushwalking conservation movement. Meet at Lindfield Railway Station Ticket Office. **9.45 am for 10 am start.** Finishes at 12 noon. **Free.**



TURRAMURRA to Sheldon Forest WALK SUNDAY 1 May

Walk from Turramurra Railway Station to Sheldon Forest and learn about FOKE's vision for this rare urban forest a short distance from the Hillview heritage conservation area. Meet at Turramurra Railway Station Ticket Office. Meet **9.45am.** Finishes at 12 noon. **Free.**

FRIENDS OF KU-RING-GAI ENVIRONMENT INC.

Established 1994

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Janet Harwood

Denise Hendy

Kerrie Piper

Tanya Wood



Facebook: FriendsOfKuringgai



FOKE at the CAFÉ TALK

Biodiversity Matters. Ku-ring-gai Matters.

SUNDAY 8 May

Enjoy a light lunch and coffee at the heritage café Pecorino, on the east side of Gordon Railway Station, while listening to a range of speakers talk on why biodiversity matters to Ku-ring-gai. **Cost \$30.** **This is a fundraiser for EDO**

NSW. Meet at **12.45 pm** Pecorino Café, 77 Werona Ave, Gordon 9498 8020. **BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL FOR CATERING**

PLEASE NOTE: Bring a hat, water, snack and wear good walking shoes to both walks. For bookings ring Janine Kitson (02) 9498 2402 or Mobile 0428 860 623.

Local Democracy — Not Dictatorship Hyde Park Rally



Over 1500 people rallied in Hyde Park on 13th March to vent their anger at the Baird Government's forced amalgamation of 70 NSW Councils.

Organised by Save Our Councils, residents across Metropolitan Sydney, Regional and Country councils that are facing forced amalgamation gathered to listen to speakers tell of the lies and betrayal of this Liberal Government.

Professor Brian Dollery, acknowledged expert on Council amalgamations, confirms the figures don't add up and believes the real agenda is: "The big end of town wants fewer local councils because it is easier to get development applications approved."

The anger and sense of betrayal was palpable at the broken promises, lack of transparency or real community consultation of this whole process. **The Liberals refuse to listen to their constituents at their own peril!**

Community Rejects Amalgamation



It was standing room only at the Pymble Golf Course on 3 Feb 2016 for the Council Boundary Review with regard to the proposed merger of Ku-ring-gai with Hornsby Council.

Thanks go to all those Ku-ring-gai residents who attended, presented and wrote their submissions against this forced take over.

Where is Paul Fletcher?

Is Paul Fletcher, Federal Minister for Local Government, indifferent to his constituents?

On 26th February over 100 Ku-ring-gai residents attended a Rally outside Paul Fletcher's Lindfield Office.

The purpose was to deliver a letter from an alliance of 13 Ku-ring-gai Community groups, including FOKE, to ask him to stand with the Ku-ring-gai community and intervene immediately to halt the process of forced amalgamation of Ku-ring-gai with Hornsby Council.

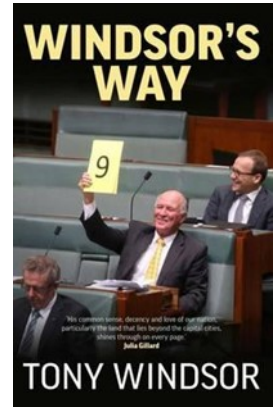
The letter stated "the Liberal government when elected in 2011 promised the people of NSW that there would be no forced council amalgamations and that the community's views would be listened to and respected". Communities believe that the amalgamation process now being imposed on them has broken that promise.

Unlike other Federal politicians, Mr Fletcher, despite being Minister for Local Government, has not taken a stand on the Baird Government's actions on this issue despite the overwhelming opposition expressed by his constituents and Ku-ring-gai Council.

With a Federal election to be held this year, again we ask our representatives, who are they representing? Are they indifferent to the views of their constituents when there is vast opposition to an issue?

Where is the support that they once asked of us?

BOOK REVIEW



Windsor's Way by Tony Windsor

This insightful memoir focuses on Tony Windsor's time as a State and Federal Member for New England where he was involved in supporting hung parliaments for the NSW Greiner Liberal/Coalition Government and for the Federal Gillard ALP Government.

Tony Windsor shines a light on the politics of regional NSW and argues that people need to use their vote strategically.

Tony Windsor argues that safe seats actually do a disservice to the community. No matter how unpopular a political party's decisions are—the local representative fails to challenge them and stand up for their communities in the knowledge that they will always win the next election.

Perhaps a lesson for Ku-ring-gai?

ADVANCE NOTICE FOKE AGM

The FOKE AGM will be on **Wednesday 25 May 2016** at the Uniting Church Hall, Killara at 6.30 pm. More details to follow.

