



FRIENDS OF  
KU-RING-GAI  
ENVIRONMENT INC.

May 2010

*Dear FOKE Members*

**STOP PRESS: TOWN CENTRES PLAN Gazetted**  
**SEE OVER PAGE 3 Please keep contacting the media, politicians and talk back radio.**  
To assist, there is an updated “contact” sheet on [www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au)

**FULL HOUSE AT FOKE PUBLIC FORUM: DICK SMITH - POPULATE: PROSPER OR PERISH?**

With over 300 people in attendance, it was standing room only on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April at the FOKE 2010 Public Forum following the AGM. Mr Smith said the FOKE Forum was the largest group he had addressed on this important issue. “Coming home” to Ku-ring-gai where I grew up and spent the first twenty-three years of my life was a moving experience for me. To find such great support for my concerns about unrestricted population growth with no plan was absolutely fantastic.”

**At the Forum Dick Smith called for Australia to have a policy on population growth.** He said a sustainable level of population must be scientifically determined and a policy developed to insure it is maintained. He is deeply concerned that the lack of a proper scientific risk analysis of the impact of a proposed Australian population of 35 million by 2050 could see today’s younger generation facing starvation by the end of the century. “Can an arid continent, already struggling to come to terms with a changing climate, cope with such a population or will Australia become similar to the rest of the world, struggling to deal with a population it can scarcely feed?”

**Dick Smith said the consequences of failing to address the effects of sustained population growth without an overall planning or coherent population policy will be felt by future generations.** Australians need to reassess what constitutes happiness, economic success and a good standard of living. Our current yardsticks for success were GDP, growth levels and ever increasing profit margins.

**A brand new paradigm for national economic success and happiness needed to be introduced** to deliver a sustainable future in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Mr Smith said. Failure to change our thinking will result in a much lower standard of living and all that implies for future generations of Australians. Is this the legacy our generation wants to leave? Mr Smith asked.

**FOKE has been outspoken about its concerns over the issue of a lack of planning on biodiversity within the urban environment, crumbling infrastructure and the destruction of our built and natural heritage.**

**Dick Smith called on Australians to question the need for a constantly growing population and for politicians and business people to re-evaluate the perceived need for continued economic growth as a measure of success. (See over)**

**SUSTAINABLE POPULATION THE KEY TO SURVIVAL**



**Above: Dick Smith speaks with a resident following the address *Populate- Prosper or Perish?* There was widespread media coverage of the event including talkback radio, television coverage, letters and articles in the press.**

# We'll all be living like battery hens

ANDREW PRIESTLEY

AUSTRALIAN children are becoming like battery hens as high-density living takes over Australia, says entrepreneur Dick Smith.

Describing himself as a "free-range kid", Mr Smith told a Killara audience on Thursday that Australia was hurtling towards catastrophe if our population kept growing, with the potential to reach 100 million by the end of the century.

Mr Smith talked about his childhood in Roseville, building cubby houses and playing under the garden sprinkler.

"I was born and bred in Ku-ring-gai. I was a free-range kid," he said. He contrasted his childhood with that of modern children growing up in high-density areas, who he described as "battery kids" with no open space to play.

Mr Smith said Australians paid good money for free-range eggs and chickens but weren't providing for free-range kids.

"We value the chickens more than our children," he said.

The core of the problem, Mr Smith said, was a continued push for population growth from government and business to maintain economic prosperity. Mr Smith said this was a recipe for disaster.

## DICK SMITH SAYS ...

**I was born and bred in Ku-ring-gai. I was a free-range kid.**

**We value the chickens more than our children.**

**What if the population keeps growing? There will be sheer misery and starvation.**

**It's a 30 per cent chance my little granddaughter won't have won't have enough to eat.**

**We think we'll move forward each generation (but) our young people are far worse off than we were.**

**We're seeing the start of the destruction of the Australian way of life we value.**

"What's likely to happen if the population keeps growing? There will be sheer misery and starvation," he said. "It's a 30 per cent chance my little granddaughter won't have enough to eat by the end of the century."

With houses becoming less affordable, an explosion in high-rise development and reduced open space, Mr Smith said Australians had worsening living standards.

"We think we will move forward in each generation. Our young people are far worse off than we were," he said. "It's because of population growth."

He said the lifestyle Australian's knew and loved was under threat. "We're seeing the start of the destruction of the Australian way of life we value," he said.

Mr Smith addressed more than 300 at Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment's public forum at Killara Uniting Church hall.

He called on the political parties to have a population policy, cut skilled migration and conduct an assessment on whether Australia can sustain projected population growth.

"We want a policy that says, 'Do we actually want that many people?'" he said.

He urged his audience to vote with their feet if political parties did not act on population growth.

"We don't have to put up with it," he said. "All we have to get is one of the parties to have a policy and they will be elected at the next election."

Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment president Anne Carroll said: "When Dick talks, people listen."



Do you agree with Dick Smith?  
Comment online  
northshoretimes.com.au



ASSAULT ON BATTERY: Dick Smith, to whom people listen.

## HUGE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION GROWTH COULD HAVE GRAVE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES Source: Extract from Daily Telegraph News April 12, 2010

**SUPER-sizing Australia's population may have grave consequences on our health, boosting rates of obesity, asthma and depression, a new study warns.** The findings, published online in the Medical Journal of Australia, come amid a debate on Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's call for a "Big Australia". Australia's population is expected to expand by more than 60 per cent, reaching 35 million by 2050, with rapid immigration driving the growth.

Deborah Pelser, Lunbeck Australia's scientific affairs manager, said Australia's cities would have to accommodate the influx of immigrants. The Federal Government has said that to meet the challenge of a growing population, cities would have to increase their urban density.

But Dr Pelser said increasing urbanisation was linked to higher rates of obesity, asthma and depression unless it was accompanied by appropriate town planning. Those living in more built-up areas also were also at an increased risk of developing schizophrenia.

A study has found heart disease, diabetes, chronic neck and back pain, asthma and migraine were less prevalent among those with more green space available to them. Dr Pelser said "There was a very strong correlation between lack of green space and depression and anxiety disorders."

Another study found "urban sprawl" in Sydney was linked to a greater likelihood of being overweight or obese and inadequate physical activity. Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some types of cancer. "Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's vision of a super-sized Australia, while it might have some short-term economic benefits, will put further strain on the health system... It is clear that, even at Australia's current population of only about 20 million people, the public health system is struggling to cope with demand," Dr Pelser said.

Dr Pelser said changes would be needed to deal with the increased, yet still ageing, population and their multiple diseases, many caused by growing urbanisation, including increasing the health workforce.

## IS THIS PROGRESS? IS THIS SUSTAINABLE? NO!!

Destroying a beautiful and historic area; trashing a cooling, carbon-absorbing tree canopy; converting the pollutant-absorbing green canopied skyline to one of square, multi storey air-conditioned apartment blocks; forcing people out of their homes prematurely; causing others to live in fear of their single storey family home being dominated by 5 storey apartment blocks uphill on their northern boundary; all widespread, destructive and unacceptable changes that are happening in Ku-ring-gai under the guise of “planning” and serve as a damning indictment of planning in NSW. Even though most thinking residents accept that Ku-ring-gai must accept its reasonable share of Sydney's expanding population, and must inevitably change to some degree in that process it is as if those responsible for “planning” are determined to destroy the character and heritage of this, our place, Ku-ring-gai.

These photographs below provide one example.



*Left:* Before: April 2008 showing the context/ streetscape of Pymble Ave Urban Conservation Area 18 looking west to east up the hill. *Right:* Pymble Avenue apartment development (April 2010) at the top of the hill on the corner of Pymble Ave & Everton St dominates the area, shows no respect for neighbours, nor the valued and valuable context.



*Left:* April 2008 same location showing the context/ streetscape of Everton St Pymble looking north to Pymble Ave. *Centre:* Contrasting two different worlds - the apartment blocks seen through the foreground/context. *Right:* April 2010 the apartment blocks on the corner of Everton St & Pymble Ave show scant regard for “Community, regions, “sense of place” and heritage” which is listed as one of the Seven Foundation Principles of Sustainability in - *In search of Sustainability* by Jennie Goldie et al CSIRO 2005. The Principle states:

*Sustainability recognises the significance and diversity of community and regions for the management of the earth, and the critical importance of "sense of place" and heritage (buildings, townscapes, landscapes and culture) in any plans for the future.”*

## Town Centres Plan Gazetted: Minister Kelly's Press Release raises many questions.

In gazetting (formalising) the Town Centre Plans on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010 Minister Kelly has issued a press release that raises many questions.

The Town Centres Plan is at odds with the Metrostrategy and the North Subregional Strategy (NSR) which sets down a **clear hierarchy of centres which is not recognised in the Ku-ring-gai Town Centres LEP**. The Government's Metrostrategy identified Gordon as a Town Centre, St Ives, Lindfield and Turramurra as ‘villages’, and Pymble and Roseville as ‘small villages’. However the Gazetted Plan has all six Ku-ring-gai Town Centres with no real differential in heights and scale. There is no clear hierarchy of centres. These centres are all within 15- 20 minutes walk or 5 to 10 minute drive of each other and will compete with each other for retail expenditure.

As the Sydney Morning Herald's thumbnail maps *Multi Storey future for leafy streets* May 26 shows the Pacific Highway, Metro Road One, through Ku-ring-gai, is to be crowded on both sides at numerous locations by greatly increased retail, commercial and residential development. It is neither safe nor efficient to mix through traffic, heavy vehicles, general motorists and cyclists with crisscrossing shoppers, pedestrians and reverse parking cars on an important major transport route that has no real plans for its widening. As the Pacific Highway is the major road linking the Bridge to the F3, Sydney is going to feel the impact of this congestion Plan that is short on commonsense.

Further, it is most disappointing that Minister Kelly perpetuates the statement first used by the former Ku-ring-gai Planning Panel Chair, Ms Elizabeth Crouch, to justify the Plan that **the LEP applies to less than 6 percent of the overall LGA**. This statement demonstrates a continued disregard for the valued and valuable Ku-ring-gai context. A percentage is not a proper test. If it were, then the rezoning of development of the historic Macquarie Street precinct or Hyde Park or The Rocks could be justified on the basis that each one of them represents only a small percentage of the total land area of the City of Sydney. If a percentage test were considered appropriate and we do not concede that it is, a more appropriate percentage would be the percentage of the Conservation Areas which will be impacted. On this basis approximately a massive 79% of The National Trust Urban Conservation Areas in Ku-ring-gai within the context of the Original Blue Gum High Forest are impacted and in jeopardy. Seed bearing soils are removed with moonscaping and extensive excavations of sites.

To say "stringent heritage and amenity provisions" had been incorporated to ensure "appropriate levels of protections for the areas' valuable natural and built heritage" is misleading and false. The Minister must be relying on the systemic misinformation from advisors and planners. There is ample evidence that the Ku-ring-gai Town Centres Plan will completely obliterate the heritage and neighbourhood character of six heritage significant suburban villages.

The Ku-ring-gai Town Centres Plan is not 'place appropriate' planning and can only be viewed as vindictive politics out of control.

***STOP PRESS: Further to our Enews IMPORTANT PUBLIC MEETING – 8:00pm, Thursday 3 June 2010  
Venue: Killara Uniting Church Hall, cnr Arnold St & Karranga Ave, Killara  
Source Ku-ring-gai Preservation Trust Newsletter***

***"Our planning system is not producing good results for NSW" John Mant***

**Hear John Mant, well-known urban planner, speak on planning in NSW – and the fundamental reforms so desperately needed to the NSW planning system. Current planning and development policies and practices are notorious for their scandals, corruption, and vested interests.**

**Developers and the political party fundraising machines have been the big winners – developers gaining unprecedented influence over development policies and decisions, and party political fundraisers reaping millions in developer donations.**

**But communities, residential areas, and urban and environmental amenity have been destroyed in the process, with the devastation ongoing and worsening. Fundamental planning reform is desperately needed.**

**A State election is due next March, with the possibility of a change of government. How should the current planning policies and laws be reformed? What should be done?**

**Few are as well-placed, as experienced, and as authoritative, as John Mant to address these issues. Please mark your diary. We look forward to seeing you there and supporting Ku-ring-gai!**

***Sincerely FOKE Committee***

A Carroll 9498 1807, K. Cowley 9416 9007, J. Langley (Treasurer) R Maltby (Minutes Secretary), J. Johnston, M. Galloway, J. Harwood, D. Mobberley, K. Pickles, J. Posen, D. Warner.