

FOKE Talk

“A Sting” in Housing Strategy Approval

Council submitted Ku-ring-gai's Local Housing Strategy to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) in December 2020 with the core objective of meeting Ku-ring-gai's housing targets to 2036, through existing capacity and existing planning controls.

On 16th July 2021, Council received confirmation from the DPIE of the approval of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). However, the Department's confirmation letter included 12 additional immediate further planning impositions. The full letter is available on the [FOKE website here](#).

The following pro-development requirements are completely inconsistent with the Housing Strategy submitted and approved which relies on utilising available capacities. These requirements are:

- To submit planning proposals for new dwellings in Gordon, Lindfield and/or Turramurra local centres by December 2022.
- To submit planning proposals for new dwellings within St Ives local centre by December 2022. In the LHS this was to be part of the longer-term plan from 2031 and dependent on improved transport links.
- To identify neighbourhood centres such as Roseville, Roseville Chase, Killara, Pymble, Wahroonga, West Gordon and North St Ives for additional medium density housing for the period 2031 to 2036, with plans delivered by December 2023.
- Setting senior housing and medium density targets which were not previously required.

Additionally, this letter states that a specific medium density complying development model for Ku-ring-gai that had been previously agreed by the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) in the Ku-ring-gai Local Strategic Planning Statement is now refused. This is an extremely important element and an essential part of planning for Ku-ring-gai. With our built and cultur-



al heritage elements, riparian lands, surrounding bushland, vulnerable fauna and flora and undulating topography, any development must be tailored to its specific location.

Importantly, requirement number 9 is an updated implementation plan of these requirements by January 2022. This would be the first meeting of a new council, due to the postponed elections.

The threat from the Department is that they will accommodate developers and landowners in proponent-led proposals if council does not meet the requirements in its letter. It is both dangerous and disappointing when developers already have too much sway in local planning outcomes!

Critically, the proposed housing targets have not been updated and are based on pre-Covid population projections from 3 years ago. It is essential that the GSC issue updated population targets before foisting unnecessary increases in dwellings on existing infrastructure and communities.

The Government's Centre for Population had updated its projections in [December 2020](#). These projections show a 5% reduction in forecast pop-

ulation for Sydney vs pre-covid projected levels to 2026, and a 5.4% decline to 2031. This amounts to over 300,000 fewer people expected to reside in Sydney than projected in 2026 and 340,000 less by 2031.

Post Covid, Sydney population targets will be less than half the previous increases which will have a major impact on the housing requirements in our area.

The requirements in the DPIE letter of approval are inconsistent with the adopted and approved Ku-ring-gai Local Housing Strategy that provides new housing from existing capacity within Ku-ring-gai's current planning controls until 2036.

At the 16th November Council meeting this issue was debated with the resolution to reject the DPIE conditions. Unfortunately Mayor Spencer and Councillors Ngai, Kelly and Kay agreed with the pro-development conditions of the letter.

As we embark with a new council, please contact your councillors and local Ministers, Alister Henskens and Jonathan O'Dea, to ensure that an outcome that better reflects the aim of the approved Housing Strategy is agreed with the DPIE.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

The events in Council since late September have been not only disappointing but greatly concerning considering this occurred just weeks before council went into caretaker mode prior to the council elections on 4 December.

We question why the General Manager's (GM's) appointment is in question when we understand that the GM's performance was reviewed in July by all 10 councillors with the outcome being a "More than Satisfactory" performance review. The next review we understand will be conducted by the new council in 2022.

We hope with the gradual opening up following an extended period of Lockdown and with the community becoming more fully vaccinated that life will start to be more normal again.

Over the past months FOKE has been very busy responding to a number of planning issues including the rezoning proposals for the Roseville Chase and Gordon Bowling Clubs which have been vacated and the draft Urban Forest and Biodiversity Plans.

FOKE has recently joined with 14 other North Shore community groups including STEP in a combined group named the Natural Turf Alliance. Many community groups across Sydney are concerned about environmental issues in the resurfacing of grass ovals to synthetic turf fields.

In July council received a letter from the Department of Plan-

ning and Infrastructure advising that the Council's Draft Local Housing Strategy was approved. However the letter from the Department had a "sting in the tail" which was not outlined in the joint media release by MPs Jonathan O'Dea and Alister Henskens SC MP on 16 July 2021. Read here their [Media Release and Council's response](#).

It appears that Ku-ring-gai Council is far from off the hook in providing more additional dwellings than planned over the near term. The focus of the Department of Planning remains medium and high density rezoning with an implied threat that if council does not comply then the Minister will intervene!! See article on the Housing Strategy for Ku-ring-gai.

You may recall that FOKE representatives attended the National Trust Forum on 9 June to hear heritage experts' views on the Review of the NSW Heritage Act. FOKE subsequently sent a submission to the NSW Parliament Standing Committee on Social Issues. A report of the findings of this review of the Heritage Act is finalised and we have summarised the key recommendations in this newsletter.

With the local government elections occurring on 4 December, it will be even more important to examine and elect candidates that are truly independent of political parties and who genuinely wish to listen and represent the views of the community.

We urge you to look closely at the candidates and their record in fighting for the protection and retention of our built and natural

environment, our heritage and our unique biodiversity. The Council meeting minutes show the voting decisions of each councillor with regard to these key issues for those councillors standing for re-election. There are a number of new candidates standing for the first time.

We wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and fulfilling New Year.

Kind regards
Kathy Cowley
President



FRIENDS OF KU-RING-GAI ENVIRONMENT INC.

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Review of the NSW Heritage Act Report



without compromising the protection of the item's heritage value.

- That the State Government further investigate the use of categories as a way of promoting greater consistency in the heritage approvals process, to give heritage owners a much better understanding of the changes or alteration that might be possible to their State-listed properties.
- Locally listed items of heritage should be mandatorily listed and consolidated on to the State Heritage Inventory so that application can be made more readily for State significance if necessary.

Overall the Committee believes there is a need to modernise the Act in terms of widening the concept of State heritage beyond conventional heritage as buildings and structures, extending this to intangible cultural heritage, reflecting aboriginal culture. **We await the legislative reform to the Act when finally tabled.**

***Our very best wishes
to you and
your family
for a
Merry Christmas
And a
Happy New Year!***



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www.foke.org.au

In May 2021 the NSW Government announced a major review of the NSW Heritage Act. The NSW Heritage Act (1977) is of fundamental importance to the identification, protection, promotion and conservation of heritage in NSW.

FOKE attended a National Trust Forum held in Sydney on 9 June to hear a panel of experts in the field of heritage and conservation speak of their concerns as to the changes the State Government were proposing. The National Trust believes the Act is working well and that any changes to the Heritage Act should result in a strengthening, not a weakening, of the Act.

The review was undertaken by the Parliament of NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues and nearly 300 submissions were made by organisations and individuals.

The Committee tabled its Review on 22 October which includes 27 recommendations. The key recommendations include:

- That the *Heritage Act 1977* provide increased opportunity for community participation and co-design in the identification, pro-

tection and management of heritage and that this participation and co-design include Indigenous members of the community.

- That State Significant Developments are only able to override heritage concerns after the Minister has consulted with the Heritage Council of NSW and is satisfied that there is a clear net benefit to the community for proceeding with a State Significant Development which results in a diminution of an item's heritage value.
- That the NSW Government amend the *Heritage Act 1977* to provide for immediate enforcement powers.
- That the NSW Government introduce on a trial basis, a community driven, early round nomination process calling for potential State Heritage Register nominations for preliminary consideration by the NSW Heritage Council.
- That the NSW Government improve the support it provides to owners of State Heritage listed items, in order to incentivise ownership and make activation and adaptive re-use of heritage items easier and more viable,

2021 Charles Bean Sportsfield Dedication



In 2013 FOKE nominated Charles W Bean as the name for the UTS Lindfield oval. FOKE attended the September dedication ceremony officiated by Mayor Anderson with Anne Carroll, Charles Bean's granddaughter, and family. Anne's speech follows:

"The Bean family extends its thanks to Mayor Jennifer Anderson and Councillors for honouring Charles Bean by naming this playing field in Lindfield the "Charles Bean Sportsfield." We also extend our thanks to Kathy Cowley for suggesting that it be named after Bean, a Lindfield resident and a tireless advocate for open space, sport and recreation.

For those who come here to enjoy competitive team sport or to enjoy the sense of freedom that open space engenders it may be their first introduction to the non-military side of Charles Bean - the man who was so influential in shaping how we remember World War 1. Charles Bean was a peace loving, civic-minded man. His civic work and writings caused one of his biographers, to describe him as a 'social missionary'.

Bean's observations during the First World War of the peoples, who came from denser living conditions of more industrialised nations, compared with the stronger and healthier Australians and New Zealanders led him to place great value on the physical (and mental benefits) to be had from open space - recreational

space - ranging from bushland and gardens to dedicated open space for team sport.

To that end, among his town planning initiatives, Bean founded, in 1931, the Parks and Playgrounds Movement of New South Wales, the aims of which included maintaining the right of all Australians to enjoy healthy open-air sport and play. Land needed to be set aside for that purpose as the city of Sydney and its suburbs grew.

Documents held in the Australian War Memorial and the State Library of NSW are testament to the amount of energy and work that Bean devoted to his lobbying for land to be set aside for recreational purposes including Killara's Koola Park.

The importance of this peacetime cause to Bean is that he actively pursued it at the same time as he continued to be engaged, among other things, in the writing and editing of the monumental *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*; overseeing the realisation of his vision for the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and lobbying for what was later to become the National Archives of Australia.

Charles Bean was an eminent Australian. My brother Edward Bean Le Couteur remember him as gentle, caring and unassuming.

In recognition of the immense significance of his influence and his works within Australian history, the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World has, this year, inscribed on its Register his diaries, photographs and records held by the Australian War Memorial and the State Library of New South Wales. Those records include Dr. Bean's works for open space, for sport and for recreation.

Given Charles Bean's passion for these things: open space, sport and recreation it is most fitting that a sportsfield bears his name."

Loss of community recreation assets?

Over the past months Council is again seeking to transfer community land zoned for recreation into operational land for development.

The Roseville Chase and Gordon Bowling Clubs are no longer operating, however this should not mean that the land is then available for development. Both these sites are large, each over 10,000sq metres, and are in areas where other flat recreational land is unavailable.

Neither of these sites was mentioned in the Ku-ring-gai Housing Strategy for development. With an increase of 25% in our population since 2006, with further increases on the horizon, this is short-sighted and irresponsible.

Astoundingly, Gordon Bowling Club site is located in an area cited in Council's Open Space Acquisition Program as a high priority area with low available public open space for the current population.

In both instances, during Covid the local community has been utilising these spaces for recreation and exercise. In support, FOKE has also made submissions as to the irresponsible nature of these proposed zoning changes.

In both cases this Council has engaged consultants to support a Planning proposal to rezone the sites from recreational (RE1) to low density zoning (R2) when both reports state council's intention to reapply for upzoning to medium density (R3) before disposing of the site.

To date there are over 27 sites that were previously classified as 'community' sites, now reclassified as 'operational' and available for development.

We can not allow this loss of community land to continue to impact resident's health and amenity as our population increases. **Please make sure your vote counts on 4th December.**