

# FOKE Talk

## North Turramurra residents disillusioned

When council, in 2007 and 2010, proposed redesigning the North Turramurra Golf Course to include soccer fields and changeroom facilities, council promised to incorporate a park with children's playground and BBQ facilities in addition to walking tracks to adjacent bushland for the enjoyment of the wider community.

The North Turramurra Recreation Area (NTRA) project was partly funded with a 3.15% surcharge on ratepayers for 6 years to deliver a multi-use facility.

Although the site is the only open green space (other than a designated dog park) for the northern extremity of the peninsula, the non-sporting recreational uses have never been delivered.

In 2021, the Northern Suburbs Football Association (NSFA) lodged a Development Application to build themselves a Home of Football based at NTRA on Bobbin Head Road. The proposal consists of a 300-seat undercover grandstand, and includes an exclusive gym, physio room, player and referee change rooms, meeting room, corporate box, closed media box, café with office space and boardroom located in an adjoining administrative building.

**North Turramurra residents overwhelmingly objected to the proposal presenting written objections and petitions with over one thousand signatures.**

The main objections relate to the scale of the facility, intensification of use in numbers and time, its im-



pacts on evacuation in an area designated High Bushfire Prone and the long-term occupation of a large part of the NTRA site by a single user. Residents also raised existing issues with parking across driveways, noise and lights.

The NSFA acoustic, parking and traffic studies that concluded the new grandstand development would have no impact locally, were all based on the assumption of no change to existing player and spectator numbers.

The NSFA denied intensification of use despite residents pointing out the inconsistency with a NSFA 2021-2022 application for a NSW Greater Cities & Regional Sport Facility Grant in which the NSFA stated: *“proposed total visits with a grandstand and facilities would increase by 36,489 individuals to the site annually”*.

Residents were ignored and the DA was approved by the Ku-ring-gai Planning Panel on recommendation of staff. The NSFA propose to fund the construction of the building, but it is unclear as to who will be responsible for its maintenance. The approval of the DA means the NSFA can now apply for a Sports Grant.

Any Memorandum of Understanding between council and NSFA will be critical to financial implications on rate payers and use of the facility.

**This process has broken the trust of North Turramurra Residents with council.**

**The peninsula remains without a passive recreation area despite residents having contributed to its funding for years.**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

We hope our members are keeping well. It is disappointing that COVID is still with us and that we continue to need to deal with health issues relating to this virus.

Since our last newsletter and as conveyed in emails to members, the Gordon Bowling Club sale has been halted due to the strong representation by the community for the retention of the area for public recreation. Unfortunately, Council has seen fit to use the recently raised issue of a small amount of asbestos in the northwestern corner of the site to not only delay proceedings but have also fenced off the entire site.

Council has had since 2018 to fully investigate the site for its risks (not just a desk top evaluation) and to manage and remediate the risks in the public interest. All through COVID neighbours were using that land for recreation and yet now council has closed off the site preventing the public from accessing it for walking etc.

Not only is there no deadline for remediation, but it also appears that Council may be utilising this delay in order to once again raise the option of rezoning the land to operational and selling the site in the future.

December and the close of the school year is the time for FOKE to organise and attend school award presentations for the Jan Langley Sustainability Award (East Lindfield Public School) and the Jean Posen Environment Award (Lindfield Public School). The awards are given

by FOKE each year in the memory and recognition of two of our treasured past committee members Jan Langley and Jean Posen. Both women were passionate about protecting the environment and heritage of Ku-ring-gai.

For the last three years I have been unable to attend the awards due to COVID restrictions so it will be a pleasure to present the awards to the respective recipients again this year.

We recently learnt that MP Jonathan O'Dea, Member for Davidson, will not be recontesting at the next State Election. We have written to Jonathan on behalf of FOKE to thank him for his years of community service and representation for the people of Bradfield. We thank him for his helpful assistance and advice to FOKE with regard to a number of planning matters over the years.

We recently met with Jonathan regarding our concerns with the Planning Proposal for the Lourdes (now renamed Levande) Retirement Village, Killara. We were pleased to know he shared our concerns and were happy to receive a copy of his Hansard speech to pass on to members. Please refer to the article in the newsletter.

We thank all our members for your continuing membership and support over the year and wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Kind regards,

Kathy Cowley  
PRESIDENT

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



**Join FOKE Now!**

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

*Established 1994*

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## Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion Study a Major Step Forward Planning strength-

As highlighted previously, in 2018 FOKE initiated a project to add extra protections to, and increase awareness of, Ku-ring-gai's natural heritage focusing originally on Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

This has since developed into a much broader area as we have advanced the proposal of a GeoRegion with Ku-ring-gai Chase as its centre, but extending from Berowra Valley, from the Hawksbury River to northern Lane Cove National Park, east to the coast from Barrenjoey to Dee Why.

This large area, of approximately 44,000 ha, across northern Sydney showcases exceptional characteristics, with over 50 national and internationally significant geological environments of the Triassic sandstone landscapes of the Sydney Basin, unique and rare flora and fauna, and a density of Aboriginal sites that reflects the length of habitation in this area, with 1,424 sites currently recorded. A short video on the [Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion](#) link here or via our website.

The proposal has been endorsed in principle by the Geological Survey of NSW and is supported by three local Councils (Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, and Northern Beaches) and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and local MPs. 'Geotrails' identifying a network of key sites are being developed with appropriate interpretation, with



the first of these expected to open in early 2023.

The Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion is also referenced and recognised in the Australian Government's THRIVE 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy as having the potential to be one of three GeoRegions to be nominated as an Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark for Australia.

On 17<sup>th</sup> November, the GeoRegion Steering Committee presented at the Linnean Society Sydney Symposium, highlighting the outstanding **Natural and Cultural History of the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion**. A major co-authored technical study under-

pinned the presentations and is published in the current Linnean Society *Proceedings* journal.

The project Steering Committee believes that the contents of this study will form a solid basis for any proposed nomination submitted to UNESCO assessors. The Review Paper link [here](#). A PDF version will be available on the FOKE website.

It remains FOKE's focus to ensure that our natural and cultural heritage is valued by the next generation as well as our growing number of residents. Only when areas are valued will communities fight for their conservation and protection.

## Ku-ring-gai's Urban Forest Strategy needs stronger action

The Ku-ring-gai Draft Urban Forest Strategy lacks support for improving Biodiversity. There is no discussion on how current forests will be protected from dieback, tree death and cumulative impacts, nothing about fines for destruction of rare forest trees, their hollows and food for bees, possums, or the powerful owl. These are all an essential and urgent part of a strategy for urban forest, especially in an environmentally sensitive area like Ku-ring-gai.

FOKE's concerns raised in our submission were that there is inadequate recog-

nition for the protection and replenishing of the threatened endangered ecological communities namely Blue Gum High Forest (BGHF), Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest and Duffy's Forest.

There is inadequate recognition in the strategy of the main policies driving the considerable loss of trees within Ku-ring-gai, specifically State Government Urban Consolidation polices for new housing development. The lack of adequate protection of Ku-ring-gai's environ-

ment and Council's own policies within Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) that allow unsustainable development within areas containing remnant threatened ecological communities.

Gardens and trees continue to be replaced with hard surfaces and concrete and this will continue unless Council challenges State government dwelling targets and mitigates the actions of the 10/50 Code in Ku-ring-gai.

*Continued on page 4*

## Lourdes Retirement Village Proposal spells disaster

The above Planning Proposal (PP) represents what is so detrimental and concerning about the current NSW Planning System. The current planning system is allowing developers and land owners to exploit Local Environmental Plans and zonings overriding local community interests.

Planning Proposals (PP) are determined and approved by State Government appointed planning panels whose members consist of retired representatives of government, the law and/ or current professionals within the planning and property development industry. We understand that over 90% of the PP's determined by NSW Planning Panels are approved.

The Lourdes Retirement Village, now known as Levande, has recently been purchased from Stockland by a Swedish private equity company EQT Infrastructure. The sale was announced in February 2022 with EQT acquiring Stocklands portfolio 58 Retirement Living Villages.

FOKE is deeply concerned that the Lourdes Retirement Village Planning Proposal is contrary to appropriate planning within a high bushfire area and is definitely not in the public interest in that the PP:

- is inconsistent with state strategic plans and with local strategic planning strategy and pre-



sents an unacceptable risk to life and property by increasing dwelling numbers and a vulnerable population of residents.

- seeks to retain the use as a retirement village and intensify the number of dwellings and occupants and is inappropriate on land with the highest risk to life and property i.e., senior's living. The proposal supports a doubling of the number of residents on the site, though the increase is not for the elderly but for 'non-senior' housing.
- contradicts Section 4 of the Planning for Bushfire 2019 that establishes *strategic principles for the exclusion of inappropriate development*.
- is highly flawed due to inaccuracies, omissions and misleading assumptions, the PP does not adequately consider and

respond to fire hazard and risk, and impact on the biodiversity of the locality.

- detracts from the adjoining conservation area and the heritage items in the area, particularly on views from the adjoining bushland and adjoining residential lands.
- includes the construction of 31 new independent townhouse buildings (to incorporate a total of 63 medium density residential townhouses) for 'non seniors' on the bushland interface.
- intends to use R3 'non senior' townhouses in the Bushfire Flame Zone at the interface with bushland to the south is unacceptable.

The Blackash Bushfire Assessment submitted by the applicant with the PP is flawed and under-estimates the likelihood of a bush fire, its potential severity and intensity and the potential impact on life and property.

Member for Davidson, Jonathan O'Dea's [Parliamentary speech](#) against this proposal stated, *FOKE believes the planning proposal aims to maximise development and financial gain for the owners of the site rather than fulfil strategic planning goals or care for elderly and vulnerable people, and that it certainly does not prioritise the potential risk to lives or homes in the event of a major bushfire in the adjoining bushland. Essentially, I agree.*

The EQT proposal is not in the public interest and hopefully will be refused. We understand that the proposal will be determined in early 2023.

### *Urban Forest Strategy continued from page 3*

A stricter requirement for applicant's landscape plans to make provision for locally endemic species within new developments and to ensure they are planted is required. The increased canopy target of 49% remains too low.

Importantly, delays in forest management have critical consequences. FOKE has been calling for a recovery plan for the BGHF as an urgent issue for many years.

Crucially, there is no recommendation to support increased protection for environmentally sensitive areas and improving biodiversity as part of the Urban Forest Strategy. The plan lacks detailed steps to conserve biodiversity, such as implementing fauna management plans, state tree removal deterrents, crucial wildlife rehabilitation, hollow replenishment and a rewilding programme.

**If adopted It will be the green flag for a lot of biodiversity loss and bushland alteration.**