

# FOKE Talk

## New Plans for Ku-ring-gai's Future: Massive increase in High Density!

Following many months of working behind closed doors, the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) North District Commissioner, Dr Debra Dearing, and council staff have released for public comment, the *Draft Ku-ring-gai Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)*.

Council's strategic planning has been under the supervision and guidance of the GSC's North District Commissioner, since the State Government put in place the Greater Sydney Commission and appointed the Chief Commissioner, Mrs Lucy Turnbull, in 2016.

Amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 requires councils, including Ku-ring-gai, to realign their current planning documents to meet the Commission's aims. As a result, Ku-ring-gai Council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP) is being reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the priorities outlined in these plans.

Ultimately, the LSPS will help guide future changes to Ku-ring-gai's planning controls - the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP).

**We urge all residents to read the Draft LSPS and to make a submission before the August 12 deadline.**

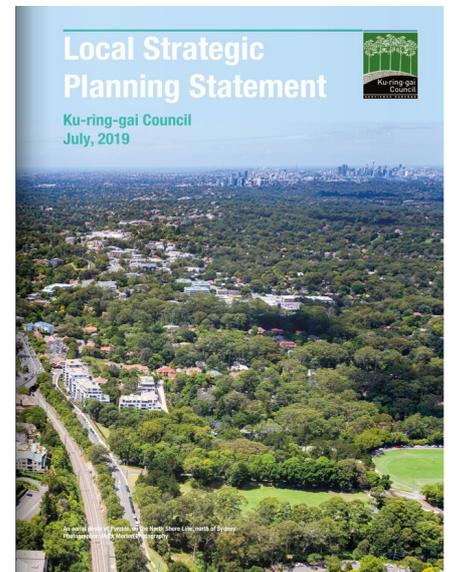
Overall, the LSPS espouses all the correct statements about protecting the environment, Ku-ring-gai's biodiversity, character and heritage. How-

ever this is overshadowed by the high number of new dwellings to be required in our area. The plan acknowledges we have already exceeded our North District plan targets for 2021. The notes section of table 2.13 also states that many areas already planned for development have yet to be included in dwelling targets. FOKE has consistently argued for no changes to the current LEP zoning until those areas already planned or designated for medium and high density in our town centres are taken up.

We understand that Ku-ring-gai dwelling targets set from 2004-2031 of 10,000 new dwellings have already been met. These numbers need to be taken into account in this new plan.

Specifically concerning are the 'Principles for Housing' which now plans to locate high density housing within an 800 metre radius from our town centres. In our current LEPs high density is essentially restricted to town centres. In NSW high density has meant High Rise!

This change will have a dramatic impact on our heritage areas, usually with close proximity to town centres. Gazetted Heritage Conservation Areas are to be avoided. The LSPS then adds a section of medium density of up to 400 metres around 'neighbourhood cen-



tres' and as an interface between high and low density dwellings. This will continue to dramatically alter the heritage character and tall tree environment of Ku-ring-gai! The plan put forward in the draft is ecologically damaging and unsustainable.

The essence of the document is a foundation for the Housing, Open Space, Heritage, Sport, Recreation, Social, Cultural, Employment and Sustainability plans that will be produced by Council and Exhibited for comment.

**This draft planning statement is important as it will establish the planning principles in Ku-ring-gai for the next 20 years!**

### ACT NOW

For more information and to  
**Have Your Say:**

[www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/Popular\\_pages/Ask\\_discuss\\_or\\_comment/Have\\_my\\_say\\_public\\_exhibitions/Ku-ring-gai\\_Local\\_Strategic\\_Planning\\_Statement\\_LSPS](http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/Popular_pages/Ask_discuss_or_comment/Have_my_say_public_exhibitions/Ku-ring-gai_Local_Strategic_Planning_Statement_LSPS)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

In celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019, I am pleased and proud to say that FOKE has been a consistent and passionate community voice for Ku-ring-gai. As a group we have never given up or been deterred by our antagonists. We have stayed positive and true to our primary aims and objectives - to work on behalf of residents for the maintenance, preservation and enhancement of Ku-ring-gai's heritage, character and environment, both built and natural.

We cannot say that it has been easy or without its challenges - However, one of the most rewarding aspects is the wonderful dedicated people we have met, with whom we have collaborated, campaigned and worked with in our efforts to protect our heritage and the environment.

Some of Australia's earliest conservationists and environmentalists have lived in Ku-ring-gai, namely Annie Wyatt (who formed the Tree Lovers Civic League and was the driving force for the founding of the National Trust), Creswell O'Reilly (the Tree Mayor), Charles WE Bean (who was significant in calling for the Green Belt round Sydney and the establishment of the Parks and Playground Movement), Alex Colley (World Heritage champion) Paddy Pallin, Eccleston Du Faur and in more recent times Dr Charlie Veron (The Godfather of Corals), Peter Garrett, Robert and

Nancy Pallin and Janet Fairlie-Cunningham to name but a few.

We hope in some way that FOKE is continuing to shine a light on their work, their legacy and achievements in supporting the causes for which they campaigned so hard.

With increasing days of development overdrive and attack on the environment - community activism and groups such as FOKE are needed more than ever if our children and future generations are to enjoy the environment, heritage and lifestyle that we and past generations have enjoyed.

I would particularly like to thank and pay tribute to past President Anne Carroll who so ably and passionately led FOKE for 20 years.

I also want to acknowledge and thank all committee members past and present who have contributed so much to FOKE's work and particularly our loyal FOKE membership.

However, there is still much to do and to continue to fight for. I am reminded of the late Honourable Tom Uren who said at a FOKE Public Meeting in 2011 "You have something special here in Ku-ring-gai - fight for it!" FOKE intends to fight on!

Kind regards

**Kathy Cowley**

President

**FOKE celebrating  
25 years of caring  
for Ku-ring-gai!**



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

*Established 1994*

**PO Box 403**

**Killara NSW 2071**

**Tel: 9416-9007**

**Web: [www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au)**

**Email: [info@foke.org.au](mailto:info@foke.org.au)**

To ensure you are on our mailing list please write to us at the email address above.

President: Kathy Cowley

Vice-President: Janine Kitson

Treasurer: Tanya Wood

Minutes Secretary:

Katrina Pickles

**Committee:**

Ursula Bonzol

Carolyn Darby

Janet Harwood

Denise Hendy

Dinah Warner

Tanya Wood

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online at

[www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au)

## Congratulations FOKE . . .

Dear FOKE members,

**Re: Celebration in 2019 of the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the founding of FOKE**

I commend Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment (FOKE) on 25 years of community service and engagement.

The Ku-ring-gai Council area is a beautiful place to live. FOKE has helped to protect our local heritage and environment through the efforts and involvement of many local members and supporters.

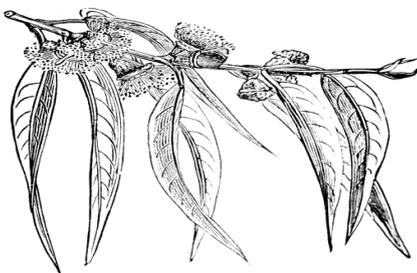
Its contribution has included photographing sites and streetscapes to record the heritage significance of our community for future generations. I recall that this 3 year project received a NSW Government Heritage Award.

We must all be careful to reasonably preserve Ku-ring-gai's character, including to resist inappropriate densities and building heights. I particularly recognise Kathy Cowley, the current President of FOKE, and past President Anne Carroll, for their leadership. Both have been past Local Women of the Year in the Davidson Electorate.

I trust you enjoy tonight's meeting, and again congratulate all concerned on FOKE's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Yours sincerely,

**The Hon. Jonathan O'Dea MP**  
Member for Davidson  
Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly



## Biodiversity Legislation Favours Offsets over Conservation

Michael Sheather-Reid, Managing Director, Travers Ecology, spoke about the NSW's Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and how it might protect Ku-ring-gai's three critically endangered ecological communities - Blue Gum High Forest, Sydney Turpentine & Ironbark Forest (STIF) and Duffy's Forest at FOKE's annual public meeting on 22 May, 2019.

Michael acknowledged the work of FOKE in protecting Ku-ring-gai's 'environmental splendour' and how FOKE reminded him of his mother's determination to protect her local environment - a wetland not far from where she lived. His mother's concern for protecting the environment became a defining influence on his life and inspired him to study ecology and work full time in restoring and protecting damaged and threatened landscapes across NSW.

Michael, shared his in-depth knowledge of the new Biodiversity Conservation Act brought in by the Berejiklian Government in 2016. He attempted to explain the

### Congratulations to FOKE on turning 25 years of age.

The Ku-ring-gai area and its environment is unique in Sydney and most of Australia.

Residents come or stay in this area because they greatly value its special character.

Any organisation in our area that promotes its welfare and has survived for 25 years deserves congratulations.

Happy birthday FOKE.

I hope that you continue to promote the preservation of the unique character of our area and that your members enjoy a good time tonight.

Best wishes,

**Alister Henskens**  
State Member for Ku-ring-gai



'brave new world' that lies behind this new environmental legislation with its deeply complex codes and regulations. The legislation creates the paradigm where nature is seen through the prism of a financial exchange system using such terminology as 'market-based conservation mechanisms', 'biodiversity credits', 'offsets payment calculator', 'self-assessment'.

Unfortunately this new 'biodiversity' protection legislation has been a massive failure leading to the escalation of land clearing and deforestation across NSW. The Nature Conservation Council of NSW have condemned the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 that permits the bulldozing of 99% of identified koala habitat on private land.

Michael's work as an accredited ecologist requires that he fully understands this deeply obtuse and flawed Biodiversity Conservation Act. He asserted that there may indeed be some opportunity, in the legislation, to protect Ku-ring-gai's critically endangered remnant Blue Gum High Forest, with so very little left. Forest once covered huge swaths of Ku-ring-gai, but today all that remains are the pocket size forests at St Ives (Dalrymple-Hay Nature Reserve) and Turramurra (Sheldon Forest).

Urgent and stronger environmental controls are needed to ensure that the recovery plans for these critically endangered forests are genuinely activated. Ku-ring-gai's environment is under severe and escalating stress with intense pressure for more medium-high rise developments.

# Post Elections: Where is the Sustainable Population Policy?

In both recent State and Federal elections, the issue of building a sustainable population policy for Australia and NSW was agreed. We have had a Minister for Population since 2010, but we still do not have a policy that is based on protecting our heritage, bushland and environment from degradation caused by an ever-increasing population that needs to be housed, educated, fed and watered, and that is just the start.

Over the past we have degraded our river systems, caused a deplorable number of extinctions of flora and fauna, and created many other environmental issues. The social fabric of our cities and suburbs is being eroded as we are being crowded together in often inappropriate and badly-constructed housing while little by little losing the character of our suburbs. It is facile to think that that record will be improved by exponentially increasing population.

Discussing the need for a population policy is neither racist or anti-refugee. It is about a reasoned use of our resources to support a sustainable population, not just now but in the future. Of course, there are many commercial interests such as the Business Council and the construction industry that feed off growth with lobbyists active in our parliaments.

Far too often 'sustainable' is assumed to mean that damage is minimised, rather than the accurate Brundtland definition that the earth's resources are used to 'meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Our current population growth of 1.7% hides a myriad of negative impacts. Most importantly, we have a negative Gross Domestic Growth per capita scenario since 2018. Our overall GDP remains positive only due to population growth, though still declining. Individually, however, we are getting poorer not richer. Though our unemployment rate remains at

5.2%, we have an increasingly under-utilised workforce!

At FOKE we recognise that we shall lose the conservation battle unless our population is stabilised. Our suburbs face a future of high-density high-rise as the population keeps growing. Urban bushland will be compromised or disappear and our standard of living will decline.

**So why are we concerned? There is an inexplicable failure to understand exponential growth. Growth at 1.7% pa means that the population will double about every 42.5 years. This means that we would have 50 million in 2061, 100 million in 2103, 200 million in 2144 and so on. That is surely unsustainable for such a dry continent. At this growth rate, one of the highest in the developed world, our cities would become dense, congested and 'unlivable'.**

A discussion on what would be an appropriate target and the planning necessary to achieve it should be both essential and urgent. Turning away from an unsustainable 1.7% pa growth needs to be undertaken in steps, in order to allow all to adapt.

The pre-election rhetoric about reducing immigration by 30,000 is only short-term and hence essentially useless. As is the idea that regions will take the greater number of new immigrants – there is a reason we all live on the coast: water. If the current policies of our governments continue unchanged our urban environment, both built and natural, will be irreversibly changed and degraded.

A sensible plan would be to reduce immigration gradually with an ongoing immigration level towards 70,000 pa to maintain a low growth population of 0.7% pa, similar to other developed nations. **But to achieve that we must appreciate that there is a problem, admit it and resolve to manage it.**

**This comes back to one of the basic tenets of good management...if you fail to plan, then you plan to fail! And that would be a disaster for our grandchildren, our biodiversity, our environment.**



## SEPP set to destroy Wahroonga HCA

A Development Application (DA) pursuant to SEPP (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 has been submitted to Ku-ring-gai council for a 6-unit medium density aged-care facility that includes a 12 vehicle underground car park with ambulance and garbage truck access at 27 Braeside Street, Wahroonga.

This residence was constructed c1900 and was once owned by Herbert Gordon Carter, the renowned former Mayor of Ku ring gai. The site is located within a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA), and is in close proximity (within 500m) of 9 heritage listed properties in Braeside Avenue, Wahroonga.

Since the NSW Liberal Government watered down restrictions on SEPP legislation in 2014, owners have been able to circumnavigate local planning controls in order to gut and subdivide what is the third oldest residence in the area. Hence allowing for modern, medium density housing into a low density residential street recognised for its heritage significance.

We understand that the residents affected in Wahroonga have lobbied their local MP and NSW Planning Minister. In February 2019, an amendment was made so that the Seniors Housing SEPP does not apply in Heritage Conservation Areas in Greater Sydney until 1 July 2020. Unfortunately, the amendment will not stop the progression and determination of the 27 Braeside DA due to it being lodged before this amendment.

Once councils have completed their strategic planning and community consultation, they will be able to choose how the Seniors Housing SEPP applies in heritage conservation areas in their local government area.

It is to be hoped that Ku-ring-gai Council will decide to disallow this SEPP in a Heritage Conservation Area.