



MEDIA RELEASE

1 December 2013

MINISTER HAZZARD MUST ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING BILL FAILURES

Kathy Cowley President of FOKE said today "Minister Hazzard has indicated that the Government would delay the passage of the Planning Bill until Parliament resumes next year following numerous significant amendments made to the Bill by the minor parties in the Upper House last week".

"The Upper House successful amendments to the Bill included:

- The removal of code assessable development
- The retention of affordable housing provisions for new developments
- A partial repeal of the Mining SEPP that makes the size of a mining resource the principal consideration of the consent authority." Kathy Cowley said

"Minister Hazzard must accept full responsibility for the Bill's failure in gaining wide community acceptance." The Minister received over 6000 public submissions in response to the draft Planning Bill. However, the overwhelming majority of the public submissions were strongly opposed to the Bill. Yet the Minister and government proceeded to ignore those 6000 submissions and adopt a flawed and compromised Bill which gave the Minister wide discretion to determine matters without adequate scrutiny or appeal and was described by the ICAC as a corruption risk", Kathy Cowley said

"The government chose to ignore community views and the Coalition's election promise 'to hand back planning powers to local communities' in drawing up the Bill" Kathy Cowley said

"Over 1700 signed letters of objection were collected in Ku-ring-gai and presented to Premier O'Farrell and Mr O'Dea MP and key members of the Upper House, against the Planning Bill. Despite significant Ku-ring-gai community objections Mr O'Dea voted with the government in the Lower House to approve the Bill." "The Premier was absent from the Chamber when the vote was taken which showed how little importance and recognition he gave to resident's submissions opposing the Bill" Kathy Cowley said

"The community saw the new planning system as an opportunity to address the planning wrongs of the past and to create a world class planning system that would be fair, balanced and transparent and 'hand back planning powers to local communities' but what the Minister and government delivered was a very poorly drafted and biased bill which favoured developers and big business interests, over community interests", Kathy Cowley said.

"We urge the Premier O'Farrell and Mr O'Dea to now shelve the Bill and start again based on the Moore/Dyer Report recommendations and genuine community based consultation", Kathy Cowley said.

"We encourage residents to write to their local MPs. There is now another 90 days to urge the O'Farrell Government to scrap the NSW Planning Bills and demand a planning system that genuinely protects community wellbeing, our environment and heritage," Kathy Cowley said.

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Also see www.foke.org.au

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