



FRIENDS OF  
KU-RING-GAI  
ENVIRONMENT INC.

April 2011

*Dear FOKE Members*

## FOKE'S 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & PUBLIC FORUM

Accompanying this Newsletter is the NOTICE of FOKE'S AGM.  
We value your membership and look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

**DATE:** Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011  
**TIME:** 7.30 pm followed by the Public Forum which will commence at 8.15 pm following the conclusion of FOKE's 2011 AGM.  
**VENUE:** Killara Uniting Church Hall corner Karranga Ave and Arnold St ("Fiveways") Killara.

### PROFESSOR BILL RANDOLPH Bsc (Hons) Geography, PhD

Associate Dean Research and Director City Futures Research Centre,  
Faculty of the Built Environment, University of New South Wales.

Deputy Director of the University of NSW/University of Western Sydney  
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)

We are delighted that Professor Bill Randolph has accepted FOKE's invitation to be the 2011 Guest speaker at the Public Forum that will follow the AGM. Professor Randolph joined the Faculty of the Built Environment at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in August 2004 (from the UK) as Professor and Director of the City Futures Research Centre.

At UNSW Professor Randolph leads a research team specializing in housing policy, urban development and metropolitan planning policy issues. Professor Randolph has 30 years experience as a researcher on housing and urban policy issues in the academic, government, non-government and private sectors.



### .....OVER TO THE LIBERAL/NATIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT

What successive Labor Governments did to Ku-ring-gai was wrong. Neither the new Coalition Government nor Ku-ring-gai Council should be beholden to Labor's Plans, zonings or dwellings targets. No place should have its future determined by Plans produced in such a toxic and biased atmosphere as existed under Labor. The politicised and dysfunctional Labor system has caused appalling planning outcomes destructive of the natural and built heritage and amenity of Ku-ring-gai. It's now over to the Liberal/National Coalition Government to take drastic counter action to address the issues that facilitated the destruction and to ensure planning outcomes that respect the valued and valuable Ku-ring-gai context.

## “LEARNING FROM KU-RING-GAI: GETTING DENSITY RIGHT”

Excerpt by Alan Miller from The Berkshire Review – An international journal for the arts.  
[www.berkshirereview.net](http://www.berkshirereview.net)

*“The **destruction** # of Ku-ring-gai at the hands of state-appointed planners has been sad, unconscionably wasteful, unnecessary and irreversible. It has resulted not only in devastated streets, but in the complete disillusionment of local residents who were cynically ignored by their government. It must never happen again. (# Electronic version of this newsletter provides a link to the powerful documentary *State of Siege* produced by Ku-ring-gai resident Dennis Grosvenor [www.tropicofoz.com.au](http://www.tropicofoz.com.au) )*



**“Strip Mining of Ku-ring-gai” - Sites are moonscaped, towering canopied trees felled.**

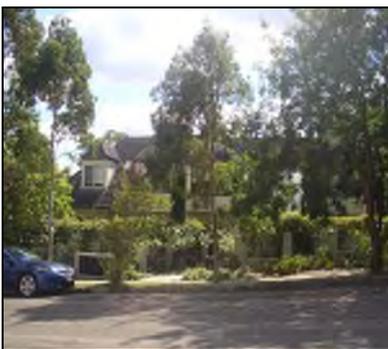


**Another Ku-ring-gai hot-box rises over its neighbour & holy car park. An ugly sewerage pipe towers over all.**



**“Before” cooling, carbon absorbing trees contrasted with “After” - energy-guzzling air-conditioned flats**

*We must learn from Ku-ring-gai that getting density right is entirely a matter of execution. Medium density can be as brutal and destructive as a six storey Ku-ring-gai “egg crate” or as graceful and enduring as a Paddington terrace house. Architectural history teaches us that there are many building typologies — including terrace houses, semi-detached dwellings and Miesian courtyard houses — which increase density while maintaining and even improving the natural environment. It is a disgrace that increased density has been treated by planners as a kind of cod liver oil to be forced on local communities regardless of their situation. Houses should not be off the rack commodities, designed for the ideal consumer.*



**Examples of Ku-ring-gai densification that actually look like homes, respect the context & have architectural merit.**

*The numbers and targets which underpin calls for increased density are not sufficiently rigorous. Typically far more of an area than is necessary to achieve a “target” is rezoned, with extremely messy results. In my experience the methodology behind this ‘over-zoning’ is extremely rubbery if not entirely arbitrary. Rather than insensitively rezoning existing neighbourhoods, densities should be increased in precise, circumscribed areas, such as former industrial sites, where redevelopment will improve the city. The sensibility of the urban designer, who designs streets and public spaces, needs to take precedence over that of the planner, who colours in blocks on a map according to the demands of a spreadsheet. Public confidence in the concept of increased residential density has been, with good reason, shattered.”*

## HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREAS (HCAs)

**Ku-ring-gai is virtually the only Local Government Area in NSW not to have HCAs in place prior to urban densification.** The blame lies significantly in the refusal of successive past Labor State Planning Ministers to gazette Ku-ring-gai's HCAs. Despite Ku-ring-gai being of national significance for its tree canopy, its built, cultural and natural environment, its outstanding 20th century housing and the evidence it provides of 20<sup>th</sup> century town planning and conservation philosophies, intense densification has been able to occur disregarding all of these features. The few HCAs established as part of the Town Centres Plan are inadequate.

**This dire situation caused the Australian Council of National Trusts to place areas of Ku-ring-gai (National Trust-Identified) on its 2009 List of Australia's Top Ten Heritage Places at Risk.** The listing described the threat as:

*Loss of settings and entire garden streetscapes; loss of trees and bushland; demolition of many individual outstanding heritage homes and replacement by six-storey apartment blocks and loss of community under insensitive development and unsympathetic rezonings.*

The fate/outcome was listed as: *Strongly suffering. Ku-ring-gai's heritage is being smashed and shattered.*

Given the significance of the National Trust-Identified Areas, FOKE is most concerned that only 7 of the National Trust-Identified Areas are included in Council's current "*Heritage Conservation Area Review North*". With the exception of Council Areas 23, 25, 27 and 28, the National Trust-Identified Areas in the north are greatly reduced or not recognised at all, leaving these National Trust-Identified Areas exceedingly vulnerable and exposed to more unsympathetic infill development and to gross and inappropriate development. This is unacceptable. While some people may believe that HCA controls are an extra level of interference by councils, studies have shown that HCA controls lead to increased amenity and enhanced property values. FOKE strongly supports HCAs.



**Demolished 6 Culworth Ave Killara in a Potential Conservation Area**



**Its replacement**



**Its unacceptable impact. There are more examples of appalling outcomes.**



**There is less likelihood of this unbalanced streetscape occurring in a Heritage Conservation Area.**

*“Conservation and development are not mutually exclusive objectives; they should, and can, be part of single planning process. Conservation projects need provision for development just as surely as competent development requires an adequate approach to determining conservation policy. Developments do not take place in a vacuum but an existing place, in existing surroundings. This seemingly obvious fact has to be understood and accepted before decisions on the relationship of conservation and development can be made.”*

“The Conservation Plan” (published by The National Trust), Dr J. S. Kerr.

Visit [www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au) for videos, a PowerPoint and general information on Heritage Conservation Areas.

FOKE's website plays a large part in projecting an effective public face to the planning and environmental issues confronting Ku-ring-gai and other communities across NSW.

**Heartiest congratulations to Graham Lewis, FOKE's webmaster, for being recognised in the 2011 Ku-ring-gai Lions Club Community Service Awards.**

## UNLIMITED GROWTH? CAP ON POPULATION IN CITIES?

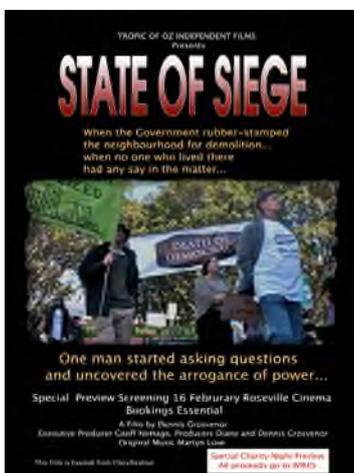
An article published in the Sydney Morning Herald 29.3.2011 reported Prime Minister Gillard's opinion that some of Australia's most densely populated areas have reached their "carrying capacity." The article's heading "*Cap on population in cities could slash the value of houses*" represents the opinion of the Urban Task Force Australia. In response we reprint the following letter from the "Letters to the Editor" page.

*The People Power report from Urban Taskforce Australia ("*Cap on population in cities could slash the value of houses*", March 29) is typical of that organisation's focus on the short-term business interests of its members while ignoring the longer-term well-being of the wider community.*

*It ignores the fact there cannot be infinite growth in a finite world and that growth must stop eventually. It commits the error of assuming that because past growth has been necessary, then continuing growth is the only acceptable future, and it pays no heed to the fact that our capitalistic system is wonderfully adaptable. Further, it fails to recognise that should the construction industry diminish in size then many young people now becoming trades people and building professionals will be available to work in more socially redeeming fields than covering our best farmland with concrete slabs.*

*At current rates of growth, Sydney will have 9 million people in another 50 years, 18 million in 100 years and 36 million in 150 years. That is the future the Urban Taskforce has in store for us. It should be seen for what it is; a lobby group promoting narrow short-term business interests.*

**John Burke** Wahroonga



### STATE OF SIEGE – OF ONGOING UNIVERSAL RELEVANCE.

*When the government rubber-stamped the neighbourhood for demolition ... When no one who lived there had any say in the matter... One man started asking questions and uncovered the arrogance of power.*

Three years in the making and released prior to the NSW State Elections, Ku-ring-gai resident Dennis Grosvenor's powerful *State of Siege* documentary has been greeted with standing ovations and described as compulsory viewing.

In addition to Roseville Cinema running an extended season, *State of Siege* has been shown in the Sydney CBD and regional NSW. Requests for the film have come from Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland. Academics from several universities have sought screenings for pedagogical purposes. [www.tropicofoz.com](http://www.tropicofoz.com)

## HERITAGESPACE New Heritage Website [www.heritagespace.com.au](http://www.heritagespace.com.au)

Please check out the recently launched web portal hosted by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) on behalf of the NSW community and funded by a grant from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. The site allows anyone in the community to post heritage issues. HERITAGESPACE also provides the latest heritage news.

*Sincerely FOKE Committee*

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