

# FOKE Talk

## NSW Planning agenda for megacity Sydney Accelerates!

As you are aware from our last newsletter and emails to members, Ku-ring-gai Council has prepared a draft 20 year Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) for Ku-ring-gai that meets the objectives and population targets established by NSW Planning, and its implementation arm, the Greater Sydney Commission. All Councils are required to do likewise.

Commencing in the latter part of this year there are a number of policies being put forward for community comment to further inform these planning objectives. In November we were asked to complete a Housing Survey to inform Council as to our expectations of appropriate housing for the future in Ku-ring-gai.

Council's statement that the projected increase in Ku-ring-gai's population over 20 years of an additional 31,000 people, 'represents a relatively modest growth compared to many parts of Greater Sydney' fails to mention the fact that since 2006 the population of Ku-ring-gai has increased by 20% to 2018 (as stated in the LSPS). Council fails to take into account the cumulative impact of the earlier period since 2004 when Ku-ring-gai was targeted for high growth.

**This new target projects another increase of 25% up to 2036. This is a dramatic 50% population increase over 30 years. This is not a modest growth...this is a rapid and destructive growth target.**



So, we will have a draft Housing Survey on exhibition in early 2020. We are also requested before Christmas to complete the survey on a Draft Urban Forest Strategy and Draft Recreation in Natural Areas Strategy, as well as a Draft Community Participation Plan.

**Please participate and go to [www.km.c.nsw.gov.au/Your\\_Council/Organisation/Have\\_my\\_say\\_public\\_exhibition](http://www.km.c.nsw.gov.au/Your_Council/Organisation/Have_my_say_public_exhibition)**

The draft LSPS was approved by Council on 19<sup>th</sup> November with minor amendments, though much more were sought from the community. It is a sign of the speed of this process that no baseline studies have been undertaken in the preparation of the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement to inform the document.

An improved process was undertaken in 2000 in preparation for the Ku-ring-gai Residential Development Strategy, where 4 baseline studies (Environment, Heritage and Local Character, Traffic and Transport and Infrastructure) were undertaken as a basis for planning before the Plan was drawn up.

Key studies critical to the LSPS remain unfunded such as the Local Character Study, Urban Forest, Green Grid, Open Space Sport and Recreation, and Creative Arts Strategies. Funds must be allocated to ensure these studies are completed in the short term. We would also think it is imperative that an environmental study is undertaken to assess the cumulative impacts of the past two decades of development on the critically endangered ecological communities.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

In concluding FOKE's 25<sup>th</sup> year of founding and celebration we thank our members for their continuing support and encouragement. In celebration of 25 years of Caring for Ku-ring-gai we have had a banner made and it has been hanging in several council banner pole positions to celebrate our milestone.

With so many planning and development proposals now being determined in the main by unelected State Government planning panels, it is hard to keep track of all the developments impacting Ku-ring-gai. Two councillors Councillor Sam Ngai and Cedric Spencer that were appointed to the Sydney North Planning Panel have been replaced by Councillors Cheryl Szatow and Martin Smith who we hope will support the development standards that Ku-ring-gai Council has put in place and especially in preserving our heritage.

Since our last newsletter we have written submissions on the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement, Ku-ring-gai Chase Plan of Management discussion papers, Ku-ring-gai's Housing Strategy, the Gordon Bowling Club Planning Proposal (which the Council proposes to rezone for medium density housing) and Mimosa Rofe Park. Council is proposing to replace the grass at Rofe Park with artificial turf which we believe would detrimentally impact the surrounding critically endangered bushland.

Ku-ring-gai Council is moving apace with instruction from Dr

Dearing of the Greater Sydney Commission to prepare a new Housing Strategy and Local Environmental Plan to house a further 31,000 population in Ku-ring-gai over the next 20 years. One wonders what will be left of the leafy gardens and streets of Ku-ring-gai. The State Government keeps moving the goal posts and insisting council add more and more medium and high density housing to this area. I encourage all residents to join the Housing Strategy Discussion Groups and sign up for updates on this important issue at <https://www.oursay.org/kmchousing>.

Our local MPs must do more to ensure Ku-ring-gai's character, heritage and the amenity for its residents are not further degraded from the potential addition of thousands additional dwellings.

In 2015, when challenged by the Daily Telegraph regarding 31,000 dwelling figure, Mr Henskens stated *"The short answer is the development that was imposed upon us was 10,000 new dwellings and we've already seen the impact that has had. I have no information to suggest (31,000 new dwellings) is true in any fashion. If there is a plan to do that, I will be fighting to stop it because I do not believe that we have the infrastructure that could possibly sustain that level of development."*

We believe it is essential that our two local MPs Alister Henskens and Jonathan O'Dea, Dr Dearing North District Commissioner GSC, Mayor and council planning staff meet to discuss the inconsistencies and questions over the required population increase and

subsequent new dwellings required in Ku-ring-gai over the next 20 years.

All stakeholders need to understand and have realistic expectations of planning in Ku-ring-gai that will curtail inappropriate development, ensure any plan is ecologically sustainable and will not destroy Ku-ring-gai's renowned Federation and Inter-War heritage character.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and a safe and enjoyable 2020.

**Kathy Cowley**  
President

**Join FOKE Now!**

Call or email us or join  
online at  
[www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au)

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





## Sydney megacity plans *continued from page 1*

FOKE recommends that it be a requirement for council staff to prepare a Ku-ring-gai Map overlaying all development which has occurred in the past 15 years since the Residential Development Strategy and subsequent LEPS were put in place since 2004, covering the projected 800 meters from each local centre, and 400 metres from neighbourhood centres, as required for high or medium density in the LSPS.

This will need to be overlaid with Ku-ring-gai fire zones, riparian and sensitive bushland areas, heritage conservation areas, heritage homes, areas of high slope and slip, developed SEPP 5 and Seniors Living development sites, dual occupancy and boarding house development which has been approved and built etc to assess the constraints and the cumulative impact and layering of development which has occurred within Ku-ring-gai since 2004. Only then will we be able to assess a realistic target for growth.

FOKE will continue to pursue informed and proper process and the feasibility of this additional population with Ku-ring-gai Council, our councillors and our local representatives. It is clear that Ku-ring-gai's heritage and environment has been impacted and degraded from the last two decade's urban consolidation programme.



# Hillview precinct recognised as a Heritage Conservation Area

Following years of action by FOKE and the Turramurra community, the Hillview precinct has been recommended for gazettal as a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) by Ku-ring-gai Council.

Unfortunately, the entire location remains zoned for development. Rather than a redevelopment zoning FOKE will continue to push for an Environmental Conservation zoning that protects the site's built and ecological heritage.

Hillview is an example of a heritage conservation area with public and private lands, on which are heritage items. The HCA is of significance, locally and nationally. The significance is due both to the history of the site - but also the HCA's critically endangered ecological communities of species and landscape siting. Sadly, for years this ecological setting has been un-recognized.

All public and private lands and buildings together form a unique HCA which miraculously still stands in 2019. Hillview HCA can be restored and should not be lost to development lobbying. It is suggested to be transformed into a Health and Wellness precinct. If Turramurra is properly master-planned, it can become an example of how adaptive re-use can be achieved to save rare built heritage and urban biodiversity. Already excellent examples of such a transition are evidenced in the Grounds of Alexandria and the North Sydney Coal Loader among many others.

Local Government needs to submit this site to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for Environment to rezone Hillview HCA for protection, or neglect and demolition will take over.

The suggestion has been made that Hillview's Garage/Stables can be adaptively re-used as a Local Council initiative. Restored as an information centre for Ku-ring-gai's rare ecological communities, the Garages can become a focal point to raise cultural and environmental aware-



ness by staff and volunteers of Council's Urban Forest Strategy and Wildthings.

Turramurra means "big hill" and the siting of this miraculously un-touched precinct is rare. There is an aboriginal significance to articulate - which has not been done before. This is rare urban biodiversity that today embodies the spiritual value of our vanishing aboriginal inheritance.

**Adaptively re-using this heritage conservation area is an opportunity to raise awareness of Ku-ring-gai's disappearing inheritance while protecting and conserving its value.**

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

*Established 1994*

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## Lindfield Village Hub Update

As you are undoubtedly aware, FOKE and the Ku-ring-gai community has been fighting the over-development of the Lindfield Village Hub for the past 4 years.

In August this year, Council made its recommendations to Councilors to approve a massive development of the site which would allow three residential towers of 8, 10 and 14 storeys. The extensive community consultation was ignored which had recommended nothing higher than the previously approved self-funding plan of three 7 storey towers. This earlier model also included a significantly larger open green space.

High rise heights of 10 and 14 storeys would set a precedent for all of Ku-ring-gai if approved.

Following protests by the Lindfield and Ku-ring-gai community, including Davidson MP Jonathon O'Dea, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, Council amended the plan to be a maximum of 9 storeys. The clause inserted was that the height of this development should be no higher than the highest building in Lindfield, which is the height of the Aqualand building in Lindfield Avenue, which stands at 8 storeys. The resolution also nominated the minimum size of the park, plaza, library and community facility which are the same size as the original 2015 Council plan.

As the previous approved 2015 model met all the self-funding requirements with a 7 storey set of 3 buildings, we still do not have answers as to why this change occurred. We now must remain vigilant that further height amendments are not incorporated and that the Lindfield Library and Community Facilities on the existing Lindfield Library site are maintained until new facilities are operational.

Thank you to all members and residents who wrote to Councilors with their protests against the new Lindfield Village Hub plan.

## Heritage Camellias Saved

Sydney Trains Director, Mr Rod Smith, has met with FOKE to share his delight in returning five of Professor E. G. Waterhouse's original 1930s camellias back into Gordon Railway Station's gardens.

These original Camellias were removed and stored off site by Ku-ring-gai Council and Bill Parker of Camelliarus in 2018 until they could be replanted back into Gordon Railway Station gardens.

Not only have Sydney Trains, with Ku-ring-gai Council, rescued, stored and replanted Professor Waterhouse's camellias, but they have also replanted 39 new *Camellia sasanqua* plants to recreate the lengthy hedge that was removed when Platform 1 was widened and covered with a new canopy in 2018.

Sydney Trains have taken the initiative to plant a new green vertical garden to cover the western Bus Interchange wall, facing Gordon Rail Station.

A plaque now commemorates this collaboration between Sydney Trains, Ku-ring-gai Council and the community.

Renowned Ku-ring-gai heritage expert, Jennifer Harvey, was able to confirm that Ku-ring-gai Council worked with eminent camellia expert and linguist Professor E.G. Waterhouse in 1927 on garden plans for Gordon Station costing 1,000 pounds.

In 2018 Sydney Trains gave strong assurances to FOKE that they would protect the State Heritage values of Gordon Railway Station and its gardens. And they have. These works follow a strong tradition of garden 'beautification' works for Ku-ring-gai railway gardens. It is something we can all be proud of and extend to other stations.



## Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park UNESCO Update



Over 2019, the FOKE sub-committee has spoken to a range of experts on the geology, flora and fauna of Ku-ring-Gai Chase National Park (KCNP). In addition, we have researched a list of unique and endangered plants and vegetation through contact with the Royal Botanical Gardens. Having also spoken to advisors in the area of UNESCO World Heritage Listing, and evaluated the detailed criteria, we have made the decision to initially apply for UNESCO Global Geopark listing.

We see this an important first step in engaging the appropriate groups to assist in the further development of any potential World Heritage Listing. Specifically, KCNP has had Commonwealth Heritage Listing since 2006.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. A Global Geopark does not afford any additional protection to the area other than whatever is in place through government legislation and regulation. In establishing a UNESCO Global Geopark, it becomes the responsibility of the Geopark managing authority to both respect any existing regulatory protection measures, as well as put in place appropriate geoconservation measures or controls not already provided by the NPWS.

Reviewing the Application criteria for a Global Geopark it is clear that KCNP already meets many of the criteria. Specifically, community engagement, natural and cultural heritage, management structure and geoconservation.

We thank Angus Robinson from the Australian Geoscience Council, for his on-going assistance in this project.