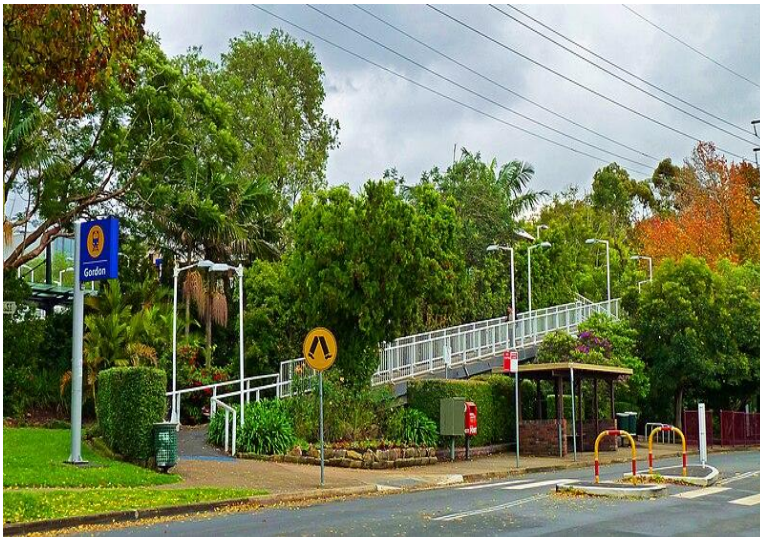




BRIEFING NOTES

Presented by Friends of Ku-Ring-Gai (FOKE)

Shadow Planning Minister – The Hon
Scott Farlow MLC

Date: Wednesday 21 May 2025, 9.30 am

Kathy Cowley

Attendees:

Kathy Cowley (President of FOKE)

Kathy.Cowley@bigpond.com

Janine Kitson (Vice President FOKE)

janinemkitson@gmail.com

Ursula Bonzol (committee member FOKE and Chair of
the K-ring-gai Geo Region Steering Committee)

ubonzol@yahoo.com.au

Shankar Sapkota (member of FOKE)

Shankar.sapkota45@gmail.com

Meeting Agenda

- 1. Kathy** - introduction/update regarding Ku-ring-gai TOD and LMRH planning.
- 2. Shankar** – to speak on impact on young families and liveability.
- 3. Janine** – impact of housing policies on the environment and heritage.
- 4. Ursula** – impact of SSD/HDA spot rezonings on local infrastructure and affordability.
- 5. Invitation** to tour of TOD areas of Ku-ring-gai.
- 6.** Thank you

Federal Government's Housing Policy is driving the NSW Housing Policy:

The Albanese government Housing Accord is pushing the NSW Government to set ambitious new targets to boost the supply of new houses. It has emboldened the NSW Government to introduce draconian and undemocratic planning, rezoning and land release processes. Yet the NSW government does not have sufficient funds to provide necessary infrastructure to support its implementation. It has not done the proper studies to assess the capacity of local government areas, such as Ku-ring-gai, as to whether it has the capacity or infrastructure or heritage and environment constraints to sustain further densification. No assessing of cumulative impact has been carried out.

The State Government has forcibly imposed Transport Oriented Development (**TOD**) within 400m of four rail stations – **Roseville, Lindfield, Killara** and **Gordon** to yield 23,200 new dwellings within 15 years and 7,600 within 5 years. This represents approximately 55,000 new residents across 4 stations.

The government has now also imposed **Stage 1** Low and Mid-Rise development consisting of dual occupancies on 400m² lots either attached or detached must be imposed over 50 % of R2 zoned houses of Ku-ring-gai. Ku-ring-gai Council is proposing a lot size of 1015m². The NSW Government also imposed on 8 Ku-ring-gai suburbs (excluding Warrawee),

Stage 2 Low and Mid-Rise development which will allow 3 storey manor and town houses (up to 5 storeys with the affordable bonus) within 800 metres of the rail stations and St Ives and 6 storey (plus bonus for affordable housing) manor houses and townhouse in R3 and R4 zoned areas of Ku-ring-gai. We estimate that 80-90% of Ku-ring-gai urban areas are now upzoned for increased densification. The only areas excluded from the State Government housing policies is flood prone land, bush fire prone land and heritage listed homes (to be further clarified).

The Federal/ NSW Government's Housing Policy is substandard, chaotic, environmentally irresponsible, and undemocratic. It will dramatically impact Ku-ring-gai's character, heritage, amenity, environment, sustainability, critically endangered species, liveability, Net Zero carbon budget, and services and infrastructure in adverse ways.

- It will irrevocably change many parts of Sydney. Ku-ring-gai is known as the “green lungs” of Sydney. Climate change will exacerbate poor air quality and extreme temperatures and make the city of Sydney unliveable. It fails to recognise the role of Ku-ring-gai's canopy trees in keeping Sydney's temperatures cooler. It fails to recognize that the health of Sydney's swimming beaches depends on healthy catchment protection – such as those in Ku-ring-gai.

The Federal/ NSW Government's Housing Policy abandons Federal climate and biodiversity commitments:

- The NSW Government Transport Orientated Development (TOD) aims to reduce carbon emissions by providing multi dwelling housing near railway stations – Roseville, Lindfield, Killara, Gordon. However, this will drive carbon emissions from demolition of existing houses and extensive land clearing and loss of tree canopy. Concrete is a major carbon emitter.
- There are no controls to reduce energy in multi storey buildings with higher energy demands from lifts, air conditioning, and drying clothes. Nor do the plans implement climate safe energy e.g. reverse cycle air conditioning, heat pumps, insulation and solar panels and community batteries, EV charging stations, composting, food gardens and sufficient deep soil landscaping.
- The NSW Government plans will wipe out any chance of recovery or maintenance of the federally and stated listed critically endangered ecological communities. In the light of the biodiversity crisis, it is appalling that Ku-ring-gai, a place of such high conservation value, is being rezoned.
- No consideration of Impacts on natural hazards and resilience: No assessment has been made of the potential impacts of climate change and of locating additional population in areas subject to flooding, or bushfire.

Ku-ring-gai's Federally Listed Environmental Values undermined:

- FOKE is working for a long-term vision of a UNESCO Geopark to identify the significant geological heritage of the Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion – yet run off from overdevelopment into the national parks that surround it will be exacerbated – shows appalling environmental oversight. Through the GeoRegion steering committee we have identified a significant area encompassing Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park that highlights significant geological features from both the national and international viewpoint.
- Reduced landscaping and tree canopy: The changes propose substantial increases in density; for example, permitting far higher floorspace ratios, necessarily resulting in loss of landscaping and tree canopy and further degrading critically federally listed endangered ecological communities (Blue Gum High Forest, Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest and Duffy's Forest), biodiversity (Gordon Flying Fox Reserve), bushland and impacts on the surrounding three National Parks.

Ku-ring-gai's Nationally significant built heritage is under threat:

- Ku-ring-gai should have been Nationally heritage listed as it has the finest collection of 20th century domestic architecture in the nation.
- Ku-ring-gai's nationally significant heritage includes its architecture, history, streetscapes and natural environment.
- Ku-ring-gai has a notable collection of 20th century architecture.
- Many of the homes were designed by prominent Australian architects.
- The architecture is considered to be of high aesthetic, historic, scientific, and social value and yet all 46 HCAs are under threat from the NSW housing policies.

Extreme levels of immigration numbers contributing to housing crisis:

- The Leader of the Opposition Mark Speakman has said that the Minns Labor Government needs to work with Federal Labor to reduce the state's record high immigration rates in order to alleviate pressure on the housing market.
- Allowing the NSW Government to pursue its housing policy encourages the Federal Government to maintain unsustainably high levels of immigration.
- Federal Labor needs to wind back their unsustainable levels of immigration to meet allow housing to catch up and meet a current supply issue.
- Bringing in over 500,000, or even a reduced figure of 250,000 immigrants, creates demand pressures which will take generations of planning, resources and hundreds of billions of infrastructure dollars to satisfy. Supply will always lag demand. The only option is to remove the excess demand by reducing net overseas migration to around 70,000/year. This can be done with immediate impact and at no cost.

Anti-democratic and Corruption Prone:

- The Minns Housing Plan is antidemocratic removing local government from the planning process. Destroying local democracy at a time when democracy has never been more important.
- Introduction of 'non-refusal standards' for the new planning controls risks corruption.
- Like the controversial planning provision called Part 3A cultivated under the previous NSW Labor government it was widely criticised, including by ICAC, as creating a "corruption risk" due to the ability of the minister to take wide-ranging decisions to impose developments on communities. More recently there have been reports of money laundering through property.
- The NSW Government is refusing to release the evidence as to why Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon had the infrastructure capacity to be a TOD. Evidence denied. "Cabinet in confidence".

- Money laundering through real estate is a significant problem in Australia, and is considered relatively easy to do. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has seized millions of dollars in assets linked to money laundering, including real estate.
- We strongly believe the SSD housing will not provide affordable housing and will be built predominantly for local and overseas investors.

Will not address housing crisis and affordability:

- Insufficient justification for changes: While the “housing crisis” is acknowledged, no analysis has been provided to Council or residents to justify the detailed changes proposed and no estimates of the additional population likely to result has been provided. (Ku-ring-gai has already experienced a population increase of at least 21% over the last fifteen years).The preferred scenario is targeting 24,562 new dwellings, but with the affordable infill housing the figure is more likely to be 30,000 just within the TOD.
- Proposals will exacerbate affordability issues. Some portion of current housing stock is being purchased by wealthy foreign and local investors and left vacant, exacerbating scarcity of available residential properties leading to rental stress and reduction in affordability of home ownership across Sydney. Without changes to occupancy use of properties this policy outcome will continue. Minn’s policy does not address this problem.
- Housing supply in itself will not resolve the housing shortfall and affordability. "Providing more affordable housing for Sydney is more complex than simply setting targets and building houses. Blaming lack of progress on local councils is similarly simplistic. Removing proper assessment processes and rushing through residential rezonings is guaranteed to create poorly designed and built housing. Speed will not increase affordability. It will, however, result in housing that is isolated, car-dependent, poorly insulated and under-serviced. It is time the state government questioned its creed that “the market” will solve our housing crises. It needs to pay due attention to the inherent complexities of housing a growing population of more than 5 million people.”
- See <https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/general/gutting-greater-cities-commission-nsw-government-setting-failure>
- “The problem of developer’s drip-feeding development. The Productivity Commission estimates a 1% increase in overall housing supply (implicitly achievable through planning deregulation) could deflate rents by 2.5%. But what makes this scenario implausible is the development industry’s time-honoured – but entirely rational – practice of drip-feeding new housing supply to keep prices buoyant. Even if planning relaxation could enable ramped-up construction, it’s hard to imagine that being sustained in the face of any resulting market cooling.”
- See: <https://newsroom.unsw.edu.au/news/social-affairs/market-has-failed-give-australians-affordable-housing-so-don%E2%80%99t-expect-it-solve->

- Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon have been targeted with additional development under the Transport Oriented Development Programme and will be 8-28 storeys with bonuses for affordable housing. The current TOD SEPP 'affordable housing' density bonuses are currently used simply as a cover by developers for a further increase of 30% in height and scale regardless of the unsuitability of individual sites, and when 'affordability' is relative only.
- See: [Philip Oldfield, the head of the University of NSW's school of built environment, said developers are building apartments primarily for owner-investors, not for people that actually live in the apartments.](#)

Housing Suitability:

Much of the recent housing development across Sydney has prioritised small apartments, often unsuitable for families who require larger, more sustainable living spaces. Mostly, less than 92m² and often includes dead spaces.

As families engage from work from home and at the same time try to build families with a couple of kids, more and more apartments are being built side by side, often crammed in. Is this the new norm for most of Sydney?

“The beauty of a place lies in its ability to speak to our hearts and reflect what we value”

The proposed apartments without planning doesn't allow people to connect, rather creating accommodation that is temporary and soulless.

Infrastructure Failure:

Impact on roads, services and infrastructure: The changes take no account of the potential increase in population and impacts on old sewerage infrastructure, traffic, parking and demand for services and facilities; for example, parks, schools, hospitals, swimming pools, libraries and community centres that are required to service new residents, landfill. Water pressure has been lowered over much of Ku-ring-gai with the addition of 13,000 dwellings over the past 15 years. There are no provisions to acquire land to create more parks and playgrounds or purchase environmentally sensitive bushland on private land. Councils and residents are being lumbered with increased rates and costs to prepare for the housing densities whilst the State Government has undertaken to provide just \$200 million to be spread across metropolitan councils that adhere to the NSW Government's dwelling count.