

# FOKE Talk



Council is currently undertaking the development of a new Community Strategic Plan. The current Plan was completed in 2013. It is a legislative requirement that each Council prepare a long-term plan with the input of its community.

A Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is intended to be a shared vision of what we all value and want for Ku-ring-gai's future.

This process of consultation and feedback with Council will continue until early 2018, so it is essential that we all make our voices heard...what we value, what we want improved, what we want protected and how we see Ku-ring-gai progress into the future.

In terms of importance, the CSP is the highest level plan that a council and community will prepare. The purpose is to identify the community's main priorities, aspirations and goals for the future and then agree strategies for achieving them.

*More than anyone else, this is the community's plan for its area. The first and foremost objective of the Community Engagement Strategy, is to 'Give the community*

*the opportunity to shape the future of Ku-ring-gai'.*

Our area has changed over the past decade. In the last ten years our population rose from 105,000 in 2006 to 123,000 in 2016, an increase of 17% prior to further current developments. Since 2006 an additional 5,758 units have been built in Ku-ring-gai. Our demographics are changing as is the built landscape, and we need to state clearly what we value to determine the plans, priorities and resources for the future.

Major areas for discussion in developing the Community Strategic Plan are:

**1. Future Challenges for Ku-ring-gai.**

What do you perceive to be your number one opportunity or challenge for Ku-ring-gai over the next 10 to 20 years and how can we manage it?

**2. Providing Services to our Community**

What are the services required for the different age and cultural groups in our community?

**3. Protect & enhance our natural environment**

How best can we work together to help protect and enhance our natural environment?

**4. Access, Traffic and Transport**

What can be improved to facilitate better access and connections to, from and within Ku-ring-gai?

**5. Improving our local economy and employment opportunity**

How should Council create opportunities for businesses and local jobs?

**6. Managing our places, spaces & infrastructure**

Ku-ring-gai should have well planned, clean and safe neighbourhoods and public spaces. What can Council do to best plan, design and construct to standards that are compatible with the local area?

**7. Council leadership**

What does Council need to do to ensure it best delivers services and projects to the community?

**How to Have Your Say?**

Go to [conversations.kmc.nsw.gov.au/ku-ring-gai-community-strategic-plan-review](http://conversations.kmc.nsw.gov.au/ku-ring-gai-community-strategic-plan-review)

Online there are discussion forums around key strategic areas. You can add your viewpoint to these or email directly to the Community Engagement

Co-ordinator Will Adames  
[wadames@kmc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wadames@kmc.nsw.gov.au)

or call on 9424 0757

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am sure most of us who fought so hard against the forced amalgamation with Hornsby, were relieved to hear, prior to the local government elections in September, Premier Berejiklian's announcement that she was calling off council amalgamations. Thankfully due to Ku-ring-gai Council's Supreme Court win against the Berejiklian Government, Ku-ring-gai council had already won its case to stand alone. However, those that were already amalgamated have not been so lucky as the Councils that took the fight right up to the government.

The recent by-elections in Cootamundra and Murray, despite maintaining the National Party held seats, have had their majority reduced significantly due to a decline in trust in the State Government. We understand that the forced amalgamations in those areas was one of the main reasons why country voters turned against the Nationals and the State Government and voted for parties that do not support amalgamation.

Last month the Berejiklian Government Lower House members including our local MPs Jonathan O'Dea and Alister Henskens, voted down the Shooters and Fishes Bill which was aimed at attempting to bring back democracy to local councils in ensuring that plebiscites be held before any amalgamations occur. The Minister for Local Government Gabrielle Upton MP described the bill "as a roadblock to future amalgamations". **We believe it is still policy of the Berejiklian Government to merge councils!**

Our newly elected Ku-ring-gai Council now consists of 5 Liberal members who stood as "Independents", a One Nation "Independent" and four genuine community independents. It is clear the policy of allowing members of a political party to run as "independents" is a sham which needs to be addressed by the State Government and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). We hope that the Liberals on Council will put the interests of the community they

were elected to represent ahead of those of their party.

Mayor Jennifer Anderson was re-elected again to the Roseville Ward but with a greatly reduced vote from the previous election, in the main due to her earlier support of an amalgamation with Hornsby Council and attempts to stop the legal action with other fellow Liberal members. The legal action was ultimately successful in stopping the amalgamation from going ahead in the Supreme and High Court! Mayor Anderson has now publicly stated her support of Ku-ring-gai Council as a stand-alone Council and we sincerely hope this will remain her position into the future.

All the Liberal member "independent" candidates signed the Save Our Council's Coalition pre-election survey in September to confirm they would not support amalgamation. With the Liberal policy continuing to support amalgamation, time will tell if they will be pressured by their party into changing their written commitment to the community!

The ever-increasing centralisation of planning decisions has meant, that against widespread community and Council objections, the Berejiklian Government made it mandatory for all councils to have Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels (IHAPs) for development approvals above \$5 million. Please see separate article for more detail.

We have also included Johnathan O'Dea's speech to parliament on overdevelopment in Ku-ring-gai, and fully support his stance that Ku-ring-gai has done its share.

For the last two years we have held a luncheon and raffle at the Pecorino Café during the National Trust Heritage Festival Walks in April/ May to raise money for NSW EDO. It was gratifying to read in the EDO's report an ac-



knowledge of FOKE's donation again this year.

The weakening of the Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1997 passed into law in November, strongly supported by the Berejiklian Government and the Fred Nile Party. The key amendments sought to strengthen the legislation were unfortunately not supported.

This has indeed been another very busy year for the FOKE committee, with meeting with the Greater Sydney Commission District Commissioner, attendance at numerous government and Council meetings, tens of submissions sent regarding planning and environmental issues, and organisation of activities against Council amalgamation and the destruction of our heritage and natural environment.

We thank you for your membership, your support and encouragement throughout the year.

Kind regards,

Kathy Cowley

PRESIDENT

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



# NSW Government take over of local planning

On 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 Planning Minister Roberts announced the introduction of mandatory Independent Hearing and Assessment Panels (IHAPs) for all Councils in Sydney supposedly to 'guard against corruption and lead to better local planning decisions'.

This imposition applies to all Development Applications with a value greater than \$5 million up to \$30 million. However, we are already burdened with the Sydney North Planning Panel established in 2016 to determine regionally significant development applications with a capital investment value of more than \$20 million, which can also conduct rezoning reviews where a developer is denied a rezoning request by Council.

The Independent Planning Assessment Commission (PAC), also under delegation from the Minister, then reviews and approves major developments above this value. As we have mentioned in previous newsletters, the PAC to date has a rate of approval close to 99% in favour of developers vs the community. One can only assume that iHaps will follow the same pathway.

There has been widespread community concern regarding the mandatory imposition of iHaps on all Councils, which takes more development approval decisions away from local council and elected councillors into the hands of unelected State Government appointees.

The standard model for IHAPs comprises three independent expert members from law, government, planning, architecture and one community member. The community member will represent the geographical area within the Local Government Area of the proposed development. No councillors are allowed to be included. Therefore, there will be only one member with a local perspective on the development. We believe IHAPS have been put in place to facilitate development which may not always be in keeping with the local area and



which will have less scrutiny by the community.

"It is essential the Government has a transparent and accountable process in place when assessing DAs of significant value, when there is a conflict of interest for the council or developer, or when they are of a sensitive nature," Mr Roberts said. "By making IHAPs mandatory, local councils will be able to focus on providing community services, strategic plans and development controls for their local area."

In other words, this State Government is increasingly taking development planning out of the hands of the community. IHAPs will be able to handle DAs where they seek to depart from a local development standard or have numerous objections. The idea that this government controlled body will reflect community concerns and uphold local development controls against developer interests is naive. This has not been the experience with other government bodies.

In the Sydney Morning Herald on 8th August, the president of Local Government NSW, Keith Rhoades, said the panels have "the potential to actually reduce the accountability and transparency of planning decisions".

"Councils are accountable to the community where panels are not," he said.

Cr Rhoades also noted the minister would appoint the "powerful" chair of the four-member panels, who must have worked in law or government. "This could conceivably include a former member of the government of the day – hardly the transparent, independent and conflict-free expert promoted in the Government's media release announcement," he said.

As Elizabeth Farrelly accurately points out in her SMH article in 3 June 2017, 'Why would being appointed, and therefore unaccountable, make people more trustworthy?' Yes indeed!

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

*Established 1994*

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# O'Dea Parliamentary Speech on Urban Planning Strategy

1 August 2017 (Abridged)

“The issue of urban consolidation and development is a contentious one. While there is a need to provide for a growing population through increasing dwelling densities, particularly in areas close to public transport links, there is also understandable resistance to change. Those with established homes in leafy, quiet suburbs designated for growth can find the changing nature of their suburb difficult to reconcile as trees and open spaces are lost to high-rise apartments. Increasing traffic, people and pressure on established services are some of the implications, apart from the visual, that need to be considered in reaching a fair and reasonable balance.

In the Ku-ring-gai Council area of my electorate of Davidson, an assessment was made in about 2004 of the need to increase dwelling numbers in the context of the NSW Metropolitan Strategy. After substantial community angst and negotiation, it was agreed between council and the then NSW Labor Government that the increase for Ku-ring-gai should be set at 10,000 new dwellings by 2031. This is an agreement that should be honoured and one that I have consistently stood by—despite some, including NSW Labor, wanting to abandon the agreement and increase the number of new dwellings by 2031 beyond that target. Prior to the 2011 New South Wales election, Labor proposed boosting the 2031 target by 40 per cent to 14,000 new dwellings while the Liberals remained steadfast, supporting the agreed target of 10,000. Before the 2015 election, the Foley-led Labor Opposition indicated it wanted to triple dwelling targets for Sydney's north, which includes the Ku-ring-gai Council area.

*The Premier has correctly stated that the North Shore has done its bit in tackling population growth and that it is very important to protect the amenity of well-established areas.*

The Ku-ring-gai area is taking its fair share of new dwellings, despite sub-

stantial community resistance from some quarters. The agreement for 10,000 new dwellings by 2031 should be honoured by all. The extent of concern about overdevelopment in my electorate is reflected in the results of a recent constituent survey. More than one-third of the roughly 500 responses indicated that overdevelopment was their issue of main concern. There has been some discussion involving the Greater Sydney Commission on increasing new dwelling targets through to the year 2036. Any local dwelling target increase out to 2036 should be preceded by a process involving appropriate community consultation. However, based on available information, I personally do not currently see a need for further rezoning in the Ku-ring-gai Council area.

In closing, I want to refer to another related issue that has been subject to local discussion: immigration. While migration levels are controlled federally, there are understandably calls for a moderating of historically high overseas entry numbers as they are contributing heavily to higher population growth than previously projected. We need to act responsibly in protecting local areas while allowing for future population growth. That is a challenge.”



## 2018 National Trust Heritage Festival

Look out for FOKE event dates in April/May for an exciting program of events that highlight Ku-ring-gai's built and natural heritage.

### Sydney's Endangered Forests

WEA, Sydney

Thursday 15 March, 2018

6pm-7.30 pm \$28

Sydney includes magnificent national parks and Blue Mountains World Heritage. However Sydney also includes many splendid urban forests and woodlands. Learn about the history of these forests and woodlands that include Sydney's Cumberland Plain Woodland, Blue Gum High Forest, Turpentine-Ironbark Forest, Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub and the Blue Mountains Hanging Swamps.

Be staggered by how much has been lost but inspired by how much can be saved.

### Why Do Forests Matter for Wildlife, Climate & Wellbeing?

WEA, Sydney

Thursday 29 March, 2018

6pm-7.30pm \$28

Why do ecologists, zoologists, botanists, ornithologists and even health experts argue for the protection of forests not just in Australia but around the world? Why are forests important for wildlife, a safe climate and human health and wellbeing? This course looks at the history of forest protection both in Australia and around the world and why forests are so important for solving the crises of biodiversity, extinction and climate change.

These WEA Courses are both in conjunction with National Parks Association of NSW and located at WEA House, 72 Bathurst Street, a short walk from Town Hall railway station. Bookings essential. Contact WEA, SYDNEY Ph: (02) 9264 2781 E: [info@weasydney.nsw.edu.au](mailto:info@weasydney.nsw.edu.au), [www.weasydney.com.au](http://www.weasydney.com.au)