



FRIENDS OF  
KU-RING-GAI  
ENVIRONMENT INC.

November 2011

**BREAKING NEWS  
CRITICALLY IMPORTANT  
SEE PAGE 2 & INSERTS**

*Dear FOKE Members*



## PACIFIC HIGHWAY ONE OF THE WORST

**2011 “WE NEED SOLUTIONS TO THE PACIFIC HIGHWAY CONNECTION TO THE F3 ALONG NORTHERN SYDNEY.”** NRMA Director Jan 2011

*“The Open Road” - ‘The Gloves are Off’ Redflag Campaign.*

**2007 “URBAN INSANITY” -**

*“ANYONE else noticed the Meritonisation of the Pacific Highway between North Sydney and Wahroonga? Home after home has been bulldozed, replaced by block after block of units each one ungoring more and more cars onto the main North Shore artery. Is this sane urban planning?”*

(Peter Fitzsimons SMH Feb 2007)

## 2011 - IT'S OFFICIAL! RTA REPORT.

***“Drivers will not be surprised to learn a RTA Study reveals this main thoroughfare (the Pacific Highway) is one of the worst.”*** (North Shore Times Oct 2011)

The finding that the Pacific Highway is *already* “one of the worst”, should be taken most seriously by planning decision-makers, at Local and State levels, as they re-formulate, with some haste, the Ku-ring-gai Town Centres Plan following the previous Town Centres Plan being declared invalid by the L & E Court.

The finding reinforces the serious concerns of the NRMA about the congestion on the Pacific Highway as expressed in the NRMA’s “The Open Road” editorial “The Gloves are Off” Jan 2011:

*“We need solutions to the Pacific Highway connection to the F3 along northern Sydney”.*

**It is not a solution** to persist with a Town Centres Plan that proposes **greatly enlarged, unnecessary and undesirable** retail-commercial-residential developments straddling or adjacent to the Highway at 5 railway stations (and in St Ives). The Highway is the connection – the major road link between Sydney’s CBD and the F3 in the North.

**It is not sane urban planning** to worsen the Pacific Highway’s functionality when it is already one of the worst. The previously proposed and greatly enlarged precincts would be a disaster for the Pacific Highway causing *even more* cars “ungorging onto” it, *even more* pedestrians criss-crossing it, *even more* reverse-parking cars counter-flowing to it and *even more* overflowing turning lanes dangerously blocking it.

It must be noted that Ku-ring-gai’s central elevated ridge from Roseville to Wahroonga, on which the two main transport modes (the Pacific Highway & the North Shore railway line) are located, enforces a close hand-in-glove juxtaposition, thus preventing the Highway from functioning independently of any encircling railway station developments.

It must also be noted there are, already, very large retail/commercial establishments in relative close proximity at all compass points: north at Hornsby; south at Chatswood; east at Belrose and west at

2009 NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE AWARDS HIGHLY COMMENDED

2008 NSW GOVERNMENT HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS AWARD

2000 FOKE, WINNER, NSW HERITAGE OFFICE CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD

“HERITAGE WATCH OVER OUR PLACE OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE – KU-RING-GAI”

KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL COUNCIL (NSW) METRO PRIDE AWARDS.

Macquarie. Multiple and greatly enlarged shopping precincts on the Highway won't help any of them or the local, attractive, human scale, under-the-canopy village shops of Ku-ring-gai.

For full RTA Report: <http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/publicationsstatisticsforms/reports/index.html>

● **L & E COURT DECISION** ● **KU-RING-GAI'S NEW TOWN CENTRES PLAN ...THIS TIME!!!**

The previous Town Centres Plan was never a good plan. It was imposed by the previous Government and its representatives; it did not have the support of experts and it ignored the residents. It failed Ku-ring-gai. If it had gone ahead it would have done even greater damage to Ku-ring-gai than its co-densification policy LEP 194 which has given Ku-ring-gai out-of-context multi-unit apartments and inadequate supporting infrastructure. (See other articles in this & previous FOKE Newsletters [www.org.au](http://www.org.au) ).

The Court-rejected Plan must be replaced by a new Town Centres Plan which respects Ku-ring-gai's character and provides appropriate supporting infrastructure. (See RTA & NRMA Reports page1).

Council will soon commence the consultation process. We must again send submissions and participate in forums etc. Encourage others to do so. Council's Director of Strategy and Environment, Mr Andrew Watson, has stated that all the previous 1,800 submissions in relation to the Court-rejected Plan are now of "historic interest" only!

For the new Plan to be acceptable there must be a major rethink - building heights must be lowered; bulk and scale must be reduced; real protection for endangered ecological communities must be provided; full and proper recognition of Ku-ring-gai's heritage must be given; overall respect for the distinctive Ku-ring-gai context and its nationally significant tree canopy must be evident and the major traffic problems e.g. the Pacific Highway, must be satisfactorily addressed. *And* in the interests of transparency, statistics on which reliance is placed and the bases of their calculations must be made public.

**THE NEW TOWN CENTRES PLAN MUST ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING:**

**"A sense of place**

**"Character: sense of place and history" (p 39 PIA\* Urban Design Manual)**

*"Urban designers create authenticity by enriching the character of the site and locality – they avoid standard solutions. This is the key ingredient for successful places.*

*New development should enrich the qualities of existing urban places. This means encouraging a distinctive response that arises from and complements its setting. This applies at every scale – the region, the city, the town and the street (Llewellyn –Davies 2000 p 14)"*

(Excerpt: "Submission for the Planning System Review: Planning in Ku-ring-gai – a case study" by Jane McMillan. B.App.Sc. (Hons).MA. MPIA Town Planner. \* PIA -Planning Institute of Australia)

**WE CANNOT AFFORD TO GET THE NEW PLAN WRONG.**

**HAVE YOUR SAY DURING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS. PLEASE USE THE ENCLOSED FOKE CONTACT INFORMATION SHEET TO COPY YOUR CORRESPONDENCE TO THE MEDIA & POLITICIANS. (The Contact Information Sheet is also available from [www.foke.org.au](http://www.foke.org.au))**

**UNDER LEP 194: ONE EXAMPLE OF LOSS OF CHARACTER: SENSE OF PLACE & HISTORY, TURRAMURRA**

**THE NEW TOWN CENTRES PLAN *MUST* RESPECT CHARACTER, SENSE OF PLACE AND HISTORY.**



**Before: A Turramurra Pacific Highway home.**



**Before: A Pacific Highway streetscape.**



**After: A Pacific Highway streetscape.**

► “BAD EXAMPLES” - KU-RING-GAI’S MULTI-UNIT APARTMENTS IN THE MEDIA AGAIN, BOTH IN AUSTRALIA AND NOW OVERSEAS.

“OUR BAD EXAMPLE....

*For some time TFF has been banging on about the "Meritonisation" of Sydney, the process whereby once gracious streets and corridors are overdeveloped by rapacious builders, unchecked by compliant governments. The best example is the Pacific Highway, north from Chatswood to Hornsby. Well, last month, Joel Kotkin, a "distinguished presidential fellow in urban futures" at Chapman University in California, visited and subsequently penned an article for forbes.com. In it he wrote: "What is happening to lovely Ku-ring-gai and the Great Australian Dream should stand as a warning of what happens if planners, and their big developer allies, gain total sway. Let's just hope America's traditional decentralisation of authority will prevent our middle-class dream from following the sad trajectory of our hitherto lucky friends down under.*

*You can read more about his visit on the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment website, found at [foke.org.au](http://foke.org.au)."*

The Fitz Files - Peter Fitzsimons, Sun-Herald 6.11.2011

**COMMENT:** In previous newsletters FOKE has been drawing attention to the “Meritonisation” of Ku-ring-gai by RALAN Pty Ltd which has developed over 15 sites in Ku-ring-gai. Many of the RALAN apartments, like Meriton’s, have been bought off the plan by overseas investors.

► INTERNATIONAL PLANNING EXPERT DISMAYED AT THE THOUGHTLESS HIGH-RISE PLANNING IN KU-RING-GAI.

As publicised above in *OUR BAD EXAMPLE*, Joel Kotkin, the current Professor of Urban Development and Fellow at Chapman University in Orange, California, USA was in Australia recently as the International Keynote speaker at the Property Council Congress “Cities Summit 2011”.

As guest of Save Our Suburbs Inc. Mr Kotkin visited different parts of Sydney including Ku-ring-gai ’s suburbs, all of which are affected by the high density policies of the previous Labor State Government. Mr Kotkin was appalled at the inconsiderate destruction of the community environment and said **what was happening in Ku-ring-gai was amongst the worst he had seen** and that it is dreadful that the surroundings that people have built up over the years and into which they have put a large portion of their life’s efforts are being destroyed by bureaucratic ideology.

Mr Kotkin said that high density advocacy is a religion and that high-density policies threaten traditional family lifestyles tending to result in places in which people do not wish to raise children. He noted that high-density housing (in prosperous countries such as Australia) feature very low birth rates and that it is a myth that high-density is more sustainable.

On reflecting on the beautiful canopy treed environment in Ku-ring-gai he said it is much more pleasant to come home to a place with a bit of a backyard. He asked what happens to wild life when gardens and trees disappear?

Mr Kotkin expressed concern at the design of some of the high-rise buildings and said communities should be allowed to fashion their environment according to their tastes and not have other people's ideas inflicted upon them. Mr Kotkin’s overall view was that if development continues in a similar fashion, living in areas such as the Ku-ring-gai will eventually become no different to living in the CBD.

See also: <http://www.forbes.com/places-spaces/> <http://www.newgeography.com/content/002487-dense-urban-thinking-down-under>



*“What we are looking for is an architecture that is a response to place, not an imposition on it.”*

**Glenn Murcutt**  
Masterclass July 2011  
*Australian Financial Review* Nov 2011

**LEP 194 MULTI-UNIT DEVELOPMENTS IN KU-RING-GAI IGNORE CONTEXT BUILT & NATURAL. PLANS FOR THE NEW TOWN CENTRES MUST NOT.**

## ► GRATTAN REPORT ON “*THE HOUSING WE’D CHOOSE*”- A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Early in 2011 the Grattan Research Institute conducted an on-line survey concerning the housing choices of 706 individuals in Sydney and Melbourne. Subsequently 81% of the respondents (572 individuals) completed a second survey designed to ascertain their “trade-off” choices (if their original choice was beyond their means). The numbers were small but the questionnaires were very thorough and included pictures, floor plans, numbers of bedrooms, maps of the cities and many other details. The authors claim (as far as such claims are possible with these numbers) that the participants were representative of the general population in terms of income and geographical location,

There was no great difference between the respondents in the two cities concerning preferences. In both cities detached and semi-detached houses were preferred to apartments in multi-storied buildings by the majority of respondents (66% in Sydney and 74% in Melbourne). The big difference between the cities was in the number of dwellings actually constructed between 2001 and 2010. In both cities, the total number of dwellings built in 2001 was approximately 30,000. Over the subsequent decade (presumably as the result of the policies of the NSW Dept of Planning) this number fell to an average of 22,000 per annum in Sydney whereas in Melbourne it remained at more than 30,000 per annum. In Melbourne, 18% of new dwellings were in multi-storied buildings, in Sydney, the percentage was 45%.

No doubt the Grattan Report will be interpreted according to the prejudices of its readers. However there can be no doubt that over the last decade, the housing stock in Melbourne increased at a significantly greater rate in Melbourne than in Sydney.

\***Grattan Institute** was formed in November 2008, responding to the desire for an independent public policy think-tank focused on Australian domestic public policy. The Board comprises a cross-section of business, academia and government. The research programs are supported by a public policy committee and reference groups involving experts from across the community.

## ► POPULATION REPORT FROM KU-RING-GAI COMMUNITY GROUP, STEP INC.

*"There is an emergency afoot that most of the world is trying to ignore. It is time to turn, face it and deal with it."*

With world population now exceeding 7 billion, it's timely that STEP Inc has released its '*Position Paper on Population*' in October.

STEP Inc plays a significant role in the protection of the natural environment and our remaining local urban bushland, so it's no wonder that the population debate has been highlighted as a matter of critical importance.

STEP Inc's 20 page report highlights some of the absurdity in Australia's current rate of population growth, which sees our numbers doubling every 42 years to reach 100 million by the turn of the next century. The severe environmental impact of such a scenario is deeply troubling.

This wide ranging position paper argues strongly for population stability to deliver a more sustainable future and to protect the fragile urban environment that remains. Addressing outmoded economic metrics, the absurdity of infinite population in a world of finite resources (the old 'growth at any cost' argument), overconsumption, climate change, it is an enlightening read for any FOKE members who are passionate about our natural heritage, which is of course, many. It is also valuable information for students of urban environment and geography, and any FOKE members following the population debate closely.

Contact [secretary@step.org.au](mailto:secretary@step.org.au) to find out how you can obtain a copy, or to contribute or join STEP Inc.

*Sincerely FOKE Committee*

A Carroll 9498 1807, K. Cowley 9416 9007, R Maltby (Minutes Secretary), C. Darby, J. Johnston, J. Harwood, D. Mobberley, K. Pickles, J. Posen, D. Warner.

### VALE JAN LANGLEY

**With heartfelt sadness we mark the passing of Jan Langley. An early member of FOKE, Jan joined the Committee in 2005. If there were more Jan Langleys in the world it would be a better place. Jan gave her expertise, energies and talents to the community in many, many ways - to welfare programs, to her church, to education, to the arts, to conservation and to the environment. Jan was recognised with a number of community awards including the 2006 Ku-ring-gai Citizen of the Year for outstanding service to the Ku-ring-gai community (shared). We extend our deepest sympathies to the Langley family.**