

INTERNATIONAL PLANNING EXPERT, JOEL KOTKIN, EXPRESSES DISMAY AT THE THOUGHTLESS HIGH-RISE PLANNING IN KU-RING-GAI

A visiting leading international planning expert has recently toured suburbs in Ku-ring-gai and expressed dismay at the destruction following years of thoughtless high rise planning forced on the area.

Joel Kotkin, in Australia as the International Keynote speaker at the Property Council Congress "Cities Summit 2011", is one of the world's leading thinkers and futurists on urban development. He is currently Professor of Urban Development and Fellow at Chapman University in Orange CA and author of a new book "*The Next Hundred Million: America in 2050*" and "*The City: A Global History*".

Mr Kotkin visited Ku-ring-gai's suburbs, all affected by the high density policies of the previous Labor state government, and other areas as guest of Save Our Suburbs Inc. He 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 high-density policies threaten traditional family lifestyles. They tend to result in places in which people do not wish to raise children. He said 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. High density advocacy is a religion.

In 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 onto them.

Mr Kotkin's overall view was that if development continues in a similar fashion living in suburbs such as the Ku-ring-gai area will eventually become no different to living in the CBD.

Jane McMillan (consultant Town Planner and Ku-ring-gai resident), who kindly assisted SOS with the Ku-ring-gai tour, has subsequently been asked to submit an article for Joel Kotkin's publication *New Geography*.

Read more at:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/joelkotkin/2011/10/18/dense-urban-thinking-down-under/>
<http://www.newgeography.com/content/002487-dense-urban-thinking-down-under>