

FOKE Talk

FOKE defends Ku-ring-gai against TOD

FOKE was invited to give evidence following its [submission](#) to the NSW Parliament's Upper House Inquiry into the development of the Transport Oriented Development Program (TOD) at the Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney, on 20 May, 2024.

FOKE concluded its [evidence](#) by calling on the NSW Government to withdraw the TOD program because of the devastation it would cause not only to the natural, built and cultural heritage of Ku-ring-gai but for Greater Sydney. This was supported by other community and heritage groups who gave evidence against the TOD including Save Greater Sydney Coalition (SGSC), Heritage Council of NSW, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Haberfield Association, Better Planning Network and Total Environment Centre (TEC).

Further evidence from other environmental groups is expected to be presented at the next hearing date on 24 July, 2024, including from [STEP Inc](#), another respected Ku-ring-gai environment group.

Ku-ring-gai Council has submitted its [Summons](#) (Case Number 2024/00173748) and has now commenced legal action against the TOD at the Land & Environment Court with hearings expected to proceed from 19 July, 2024.

FOKE strongly supports Council's legal action that defends Ku-ring-gai against the undemocratic and environmentally and heritage destructive TOD program, which is a blunt, one size fits all planning instrument.

Many community groups across Sydney have also expressed thanks to



FOKE for this landmark Ku-ring-gai Vs NSW Government case - as they feel abandoned by their Labor dominated Councils who they believe are kowtowing to the NSW Government and making deals prior to the local government elections on 14 September, 2024.

Legal action against the TOD must be taken.

It is the only power Ku-ring-gai Council has to save ratepayers millions of dollars in infrastructure costs that will come with the rezoning for high density housing in Roseville, Lindfield, Killara & Gordon.

It is concerning that Cr Cedric Spencer (Wahroonga Ward) voted to derail Council's legal action at the [Extraordinary General Meeting](#) on 4th June, 2024.

Cr Spencer also supported a dangerous precedent to approve 15 storeys on the corner of 345 Pacific High-

way & Havilah Road, Lindfield, as a member of the Sydney North Planning Panel.

However, Cr Kim Wheatley (Wahroonga Ward), also a member of the Panel, dissented this upzoning [decision](#).

Cr Martin Smith (St Ives Ward), Cr Simon Lennon (Gordon Ward), Cr Alec Taylor (Roseville Ward), Cr Greg Taylor (Comenarra Ward) and Cr Barbara Ward (Gordon Ward) all voted in support to retain the nine storey height limit at the [Council meeting of 18 May, 2024](#).

Be wary of candidates who do not support the TOD legal action and are prepared to support higher densities when you cast your vote at the local government election on 14 September.

We need candidates who will defend Ku-ring-gai.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

I want to thank the members who attended the AGM on the 22 May 2024. The President's Report which I presented to the AGM is enclosed with this Newsletter.

With the State Government's four TOD SEPPs now formally gazetted and underway we are concerned at the amount of harassment from real estate agents and property developers and now the emotional impact that it is having on members of the community in now seeing advertisements of beautiful houses being advertised in Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon for expressions of interest. FOKE is in the process of designing a new flyer to be letterboxed.

We hope members have taken the opportunity to attend the Council Forums to explain the Low and Mid Rise housing policies which will impact round every station 800 metres and beyond and St Ives.

We are concerned that the term 'NIMBY' is a term that is being used to divide the community and promote the government, media and developer lobby interests.

'Sydney YIMBY' is a recently formed lobby group advocating for "abundant housing in Sydney". Yet it has been incapable of presenting any evidence to support their claims that increasing housing supply will result in housing affordability. Their disregard for built heritage, environmental protection, climate change, cumulative impacts of development and commensurate infrastructure provision, lacks any consideration for future generations. Sydney YIMBY members are attending Ku-ring-

gai council meetings on a regular basis and are particularly focused on criticising FOKE's campaigning.

This YIMBY movement is now weaponizing the world "NIMBY" to denigrate, intimidate and to admonish individuals and groups who appreciate and advocate for the preservation of heritage and environment of their neighbourhood or those who simply value the qualities of where they have chosen to live and raise a family.

YIMBY's are also planning to target Ku-ring-gai in the local government elections on 14 September.

We understand that St Ives Ward may be a particular target by the YIMBY's in the elections.

The consequence of this disrespectful and misleading 'YIMBY vs NIMBY' binary is polarising debate.

It is vexatious and resulting in personal threats to members of FOKE.

Kind regards

Kathy

FRIENDS OF KU-RING-GAI ENVIRONMENT INC.

Established 1994

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Facebook: [FriendsofKuringgai](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofKuringgai)



Lourdes Proposal REJECTED



Retirement Village owner Levande's amendments to the planning proposals for 95-97 Stanhope Road, Killara has now been REJECTED by the NSW Department of Planning, following the Sydney North Planning Panel (SNPP) December 2023 decision.

Thankfully, on this occasion, the NSW Department of Planning accepted advice that the proposal was too dangerous to proceed with because of high bushfire risk.

FOKE worked closely with Lourdes residents to oppose the planning proposal.

FOKE expresses its thanks to Ku-ring-gai Council and their officers for their outstanding expert and comprehensive submissions to the planning proposal.

FOKE hopes residents of Lourdes will now have peace of mind and security of tenure living at Lourdes Retirement Village.



Forum: Say NO to Minns Wrecking Ball

**WED 7 AUGUST, 2024
6.30-8.30pm**

NSW Parliament Theatre
Macquarie Street, Sydney

Organised by Save Greater Sydney Coalition (SGSC), an alliance of community groups, including FOKE

NSW Housing Plans will only increase rents & prices in Ku-ring-gai

The Minns Government continues to denigrate Ku-ring-gai with its claims that it has not added a comparable amount of housing in our area to that of the rest of Sydney. However these claims are untrue.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) states that Ku-ring-gai's (KRG) population increase from end June 2010 to end June 2023 is the same as the rest of Sydney's increase for the same period. KRG increase of 12.7% vs a 12.9% increase for the rest of Sydney.

The NSW Housing plan using the Transport Oriented Development (TOD) program remains a blunt instrument to tackle a problem with many aspects.

All around the world short-stay rentals are being closed down, empty homes are being taxed, and long-term social housing is being built. The TOD program has none of these elements, and it will have the disastrous impact of destroying large swathes of the last remaining heritage areas across Sydney, changing the character of our suburbs for the worse, with little or no benefit in terms of improved affordability for rent or purchase.

The current focus on housing supply is misplaced especially as additional housing is needed in the short term.

The new policies should focus on more immediate solutions such as empty dwellings and excessive Airbnbs. Both are significantly underreported. A quick look at Airbnbs across the north shore cites many hundreds of places available. Similarly over 500 rental places are available across the surrounding areas of the TOD locations in KRG.

KRG used to provide a wide range of affordable rentals only a decade ago, however these 3 and 4 storey buildings were demolished for new luxury apartments. The TOD plan is the same. The developers will seek to purchase sites in KRG due to the high sales prices for units, but this will do nothing to improve rental or buying affordability for prospective residents.

Sarah Hunter, Assistant Governor (Economic) at the Reserve Bank of Australia, gave an insightful speech on Housing Market Cycles and Fundamentals on 16 May 2024.

She stated: *"Right now, just under 27 million people live in Australia, in about 11 million households. The average number of people living in each household has trended lower, from around 2.8 in the mid-1980s to around 2.5 of late. This may sound like a small change. But, if for some reason average household size rose back to 2.8, we would need 1.2 million fewer dwellings to house our current population – no small difference."*

Ku-ring-gai's average household size remains high at 2.84.

Fundamentals do matter.

Ku-ring-gai's Valued Architectural Heritage Talk by Dr Zeny Edwards OAM



Renowned architectural historian and former National Trust President, Dr Zeny Edwards OAM presented a talk on Ku-ring-gai's 'Intangible Tangible Heritage', at Gordon Library on 29 May 2024.

This well received talk focused on Ku-ring-gai's outstanding architectural heritage with many renowned architects who not only designed houses in Ku-ring-gai but lived here as well.

Dr Edwards noted how Ku-ring-gai's railway history is integral to Ku-ring-gai's heritage. Gordon Station is State Heritage listed (1999) and should not have surrounding high-rise that is incongruous to its 1890s character, setting and context.

Dr Edwards is the biographer of architect John Sulman who worked and lived in Ku-ring-gai and is today known as one of Australia's most significant architects and town planners. In many ways he was responsible for planning Ku-ring-gai's village character.

Dr Edwards highlighted Ku-ring-gai's unique values with its wildlife, trees and how its streetscapes are an integral component of Ku-ring-gai's visual character. Residents' regard for its trees has become part of Ku-ring-gai's cultural identity.

She argued for the need to consider how people from diverse cultural backgrounds see and appreciate Ku-

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krg.nsw.gov.au/demandbetterplanning

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ring-gai's natural significance and how these perspectives reiterate what long-time residents value most about the place they call "home".

Dr Edwards also put the case for how we impart a 'sense of place' on the young, through our children, grandchildren and school children. This experience will hopefully remain embedded in their psyche. It is the younger generation who will be the future advocates for the conservation of Ku-ring-gai's heritage.

Dr Edwards referenced the work of the Van Alen's Institutes 'Ecologies of Addiction' which calls on policy-makers to better understand the effects of city life on the minds and bodies of its citizens and how to build more resilient communities.

She called for planning powers to be returned to local councils and that more listening and consultation occur with residents who are emotionally and physically invested because of the longevity of their residence in Ku-ring-gai. The government needs to conduct these face-to-face dialogues in a respectful manner to consider the impact that such changes will have on the residents' emotional and mental well-being.

Dr Edwards concluded by saying "I am not against change. I welcome it if what is going to replace that which is being changed is better".

Vale Don Brew

18 August 1935 – 13 April 2024



FOKE is indebted to Don Brew for his many years of passionately advocating for Ku-ring-gai's heritage and environment.

As the founder and Convenor of BBK (Burns, Braeside and Kintore Avenues, Wahroonga Group) he strongly advocated for Wahroonga's heritage, along with his wife Desley. He helped establish the North Turrumurra Action Group (NTAG), the West Pymble Action Group and the Ku-ring-gai Community Shed. He was an active and supportive member of FOKE.

Don Brew worked tirelessly to protect and preserve Wahroonga's heritage that led to the gazettal of the Wahroonga Heritage Conservation Area.

Don Brew was renowned for his many 3-minute addresses to Ku-ring-gai Council meetings during the 2000s where he spoke with eloquence, intelligence and integrity explaining why Ku-ring-gai's heritage and environment was so significant.

BBK, under Don Brew's leadership, successfully campaigned to save heritage listed 'Craignairn', an 'Arts & Craft' house designed by Howard Joseland (1860-1930).

BBK played a lead role in saving remnant Blue Gum High Forest on the grounds of the heritage property of 'Rippon Grange', that had been designed by by renowned architect John Sulman (1849-1934) & Howard Joseland.

In 2011 Don Brew strongly supported Friends of Turrumurra's legal challenge against the NSW Planning Minister's proposal to rezone Ku-ring-gai. Each day he attended the Land & Environment Court hearings. He stayed for Justice Craig's judgement that overturned the NSW Government's rezoning legislation.

Don Brew's article "Who is in Control of the Juggernaut?", (National Trust, 2001) highlighted how, despite a third of Ku-ring-gai identified as National Trust Urban Conservation Areas, the NSW Government was determined to destroy this heritage.

Don Brew valued heritage, advocated for it and fought for it. He never gave up on Ku-ring-gai's heritage.

Photo: 2011 After winning the court case against the state government at the Land and Environment Court in Sydney. Left to right: Kathy Cowley, Christiane Berlioz and Don Brew

Vale Jennifer Harvey

10 August 1946—11 May 2024



FOKE is indebted to Jennifer Harvey's outstanding, meticulous and professional research that contributed so much to protecting Ku-ring-gai's outstanding 20th Century built heritage.

Jennifer worked tirelessly for the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society from 2000. She served as its Vice-President, President and co-editor, researcher & contributor to its journal — *The Historian*.

Jennifer's exemplary research was instrumental in protecting Gordon Railway Station when unsympathetic lifts were proposed in 2004. She then gave advice on heritage design features for this State Heritage listed station.

Jennifer Harvey represented the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society on Ku-ring-gai Council's Heritage Advisory Committee from 2004-2020. In this role she identified, researched and promoted Ku-ring-gai's heritage that played a significant role in the final gazettal of Ku-ring-gai's heritage conservation areas as well as new heritage items, particularly post World War II houses.

Jennifer lived a life protecting heritage, through her exemplary research, wherever she lived — not just for Ku-ring-gai. Living in Singapore in the 1980s she was involved in fighting to save the Raffles Hotel and Chinatown from demolition. In Kuala Lumpur she was a member of the Badan Warisan (Heritage Trust of Malaysia) & worked as a heritage adviser for the Malaysian Government.

An outstanding researcher who valued the gift of Ku-ring-gai's heritage for future generations. Thank you Jennifer.