

# The Three Great Lies

that distort Sydney planning

Elizabeth Farrelly August 2024

# Madness, badness and sadness in spades

May 12, 2016



# Sydney will be unrecognisable now that the planners have gone

SMH May 26, 2016



# Sydney's planning storm is building to a tempest

SMH June 25 2016

...en asked recently whether it was appropriate for her to attend a party fundraising gig as Greater Sydney Commissioner. "Is that how I've been led?" But yes, it was. And yes, it is an issue. Obviously.

...temporary edge. But now, the storm. It's been building awhile. Westconnex and Light Rail, Barangaroo and Packer's casino all massively abuse public money, land and trust for outco

The temptation to upzone public land then flog it delivers windfall billions while stripping the public realm to the bone. This should be illegal. Instead, we allow these same people to trample round the city,

...or accountability - are somehow more honest than those elected. So almost all planning decisions are now made by state appointees. There's the Planning and Assessment Commission (casino), the Greater Sydney Commission (briefed to hand down mandatory plans to councils), the



If you thought the tempests were over, think again. Conditions in Sydney right now converge towards a perfect planning storm unprecedented ferocity, and the war tie-ups across three levels of government are...  
**Le LIVRE**

oppose the public interest. Our children's children will shake their heads and say, "What were you thinking?" But that's barely the tip of it. There are things in the wind that make Barangaroo look small and Westconnex gentle, if not exactly progressive. It's a whole barrage of shifts - legislative, customary, political, attitudinal, physical. Most are superficially plausible and, taken alone, innocuous. But when mixed and left to simmer they

spending billions on a filthy and retrograde road that will benefit no one but the operators (at \$26 a trip it's hardly going to benefit even fake tradies from the west-harbs) and developers whose land is upzoned accordingly. We allow this government to establish Urban Growth, briefed to maximise yield from public lands. We let them "rethink" the Crown Land system to make it easier to reclassify and sell. We

noncommittal on Westconnex. But Lucy, her boss, is far more positive, calling this dirty road (into which hubby Malcolm is kicking \$3.5 billion) "a rational response to a major congestion challenge". As if. Malcolm Turnbull's concern for his Cities Minister Angus Taylor, was one of those squeezing developers for donations in 2011. Baird's is so great the biggest development this country has seen - the



## Media Releases

# PIA opinion article in response to “Sydney will be unrecognisable now that the planners have gone”

“Elizabeth Farrelly SMH 26 May 2016) raises some good points on some of the recent major projects in Sydney. However, we would like to assure your readers that the planners are alive and well, and still have their passion!

“As the professional body representing the planning profession, the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) takes exception to the suggestion that planners have left the room...”

“The planners haven't left the room; they're *in* the room - with the developers...”

Prof. of Urban Planning History Karl Fischer 2016

# S The city is waiting for change

**T**o paraphrase Mark Twain, recent reports of the death of Sydney are greatly exaggerated. In fact, if there is a demise we must lament, it is the absence of progressive voices in the Emerald City willing to offer solutions to the important debate on Sydney's future.

In a growing trend, reactionaries are raising their voices in our town, yearning longingly for a by-gone era. A stick-your-head-in-the-sand style attitude is their preferred approach - ostensibly a Carr-esque "Sydney is full" argument coupled with a new-must-equal-bad undertone.

We must plan for an extra million people who will call Sydney home over the next 10 years. Change is coming and our only option is to decide how to shape and couple it with progress that makes people's lives better. We must be guardians of the elements of our city that we love the most - the naturally beautiful surroundings, the clean, green and safe city we enjoy today.

Evidently, for a community not accustomed to new government projects for 20 years now - save for the construction of some sporting facilities at Olympic Park - it can be uncomfortable dealing with the disruption caused by the need to retro-fit the infrastructure Sydney needs into existing communities.

Yes, there has been bad planning in Sydney - the neglect of our leaders in the past who thought it too

**Rob Stokes**



hard or at best too costly to support our burgeoning population with new public transport, roads, hospitals and green space.

Some say that as we age change can be harder to accept. While that is an inaccurate assumption to place on most Sydneysiders, it is those of an older ilk who will remember a city dominated by trams. A light-rail system that some argue was the most extensive in the world at the time - ripped up and concreted over more than 50 years ago. Today, the inner-Sydney suburbs serviced by this long-gone system are some of the most sought-after.

In an about-turn, millennials have flocked to these denser neighbourhoods, where it is more likely their grandparents resided than their suburbia-dwelling Baby-Boomer parents. They love the convenience, the vibrancy and the lifestyle these environs offer.

The County of Cumberland planning scheme, which mapped out Sydney in 1948, is often touted by contemporary planners as an exemplar of city plan-making. It identified our commercial hubs - the CBD, Parramatta, Liverpool, North Sydney, Hurstville, Bondi Junction, Bankstown, Ryde and

others that are still the centres of our poly-centric city today. It distinguished locations of present and future roads, railways, green corridors and recreation spaces.

There's only one problem. Since this time there have been 16 premiers. Yet there are projects identified in 1948 that we are only building today. No wonder there is a level of disruption being felt by communities across our city - we are decades behind in our delivery.

If you study the plan, you will see the route for the Westconnex project working its way through St Peters in a mirror image of the road being constructed today. In the north you can see a space reserved for a hospital at Frenchs Forest - again, only today being constructed. And there in bright lights is the tram network - today being rebuilt along Anzac Parade.

It's very easy to look back and wish we'd never ripped up our light-rail network, hadn't banned terrace housing for a 50-year period - creating an undersupply of this increasingly favoured dwelling type, or hadn't rested on our laurels for a dozen years after the Sydney Olympic Games, resulting in, well, not much happening at all.

In cities, change is the norm. We should be more alarmed when change isn't happening than when it is. The important challenge is to shape the change we want to see.

Rob Stokes is the NSW Minister for Planning.

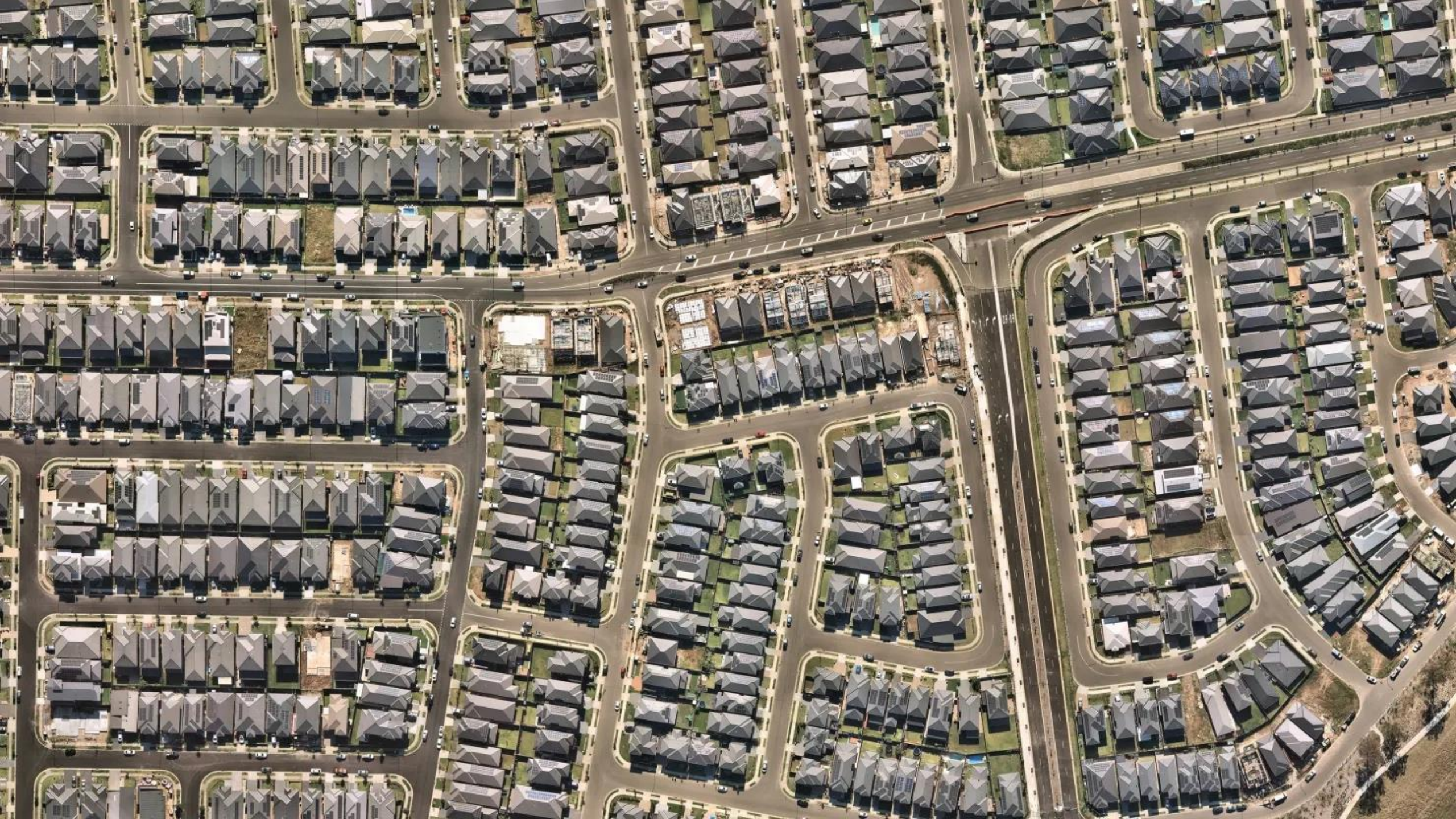
## Sydney, it's not me: it's you

**I** i Sydney. Thanks for coming by. You're looking well. And I appreciate



There's the sense that you don't even have a plan for us any more, as though you don't even care what

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Belin

Marigny

Marigny

Marigny

Marigny

PAUL

PAUL

PAUL

Grand Théâtre

Office de  
Tourisme

Maison du Vin  
de BORDEAUX

Tourny

Les Quais

Quai  
Jeanes

ESPACE DE VENTE

ESPACE DE VENTE

BOISSONS BIEN ET DE FANTAISIE

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LE MAURICE





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REAL DE COPES

Real Cerveza  
SANGRIA  
TIPS

OCA

HOTEL

Real Cerveza

Real Cerveza

# KILLING SYDNEY

The Fight For a City's Soul

ELIZABETH FARRELLY

'Expressing your long held concerns  
our governments, our cities and  
COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

...ious issues in a way which neither  
...ities of mystified the lay reader.'  
PAUL KEATING ON THREE HOUSES  
'Great cities need great champions.  
Sydney needs Elizabeth Farrelly.'  
ADAM SPENDER

KILLING SYDNEY

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DONATE

## Citizen-led design for better cities





1/7/24

## INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE: GIVE THE KIDS A SAY

“In the future, will we all be stuck in tiny apartments with no outside space?” This was the opening question to me in a recent interview with a group of primary school children. No, I said, slightly taken aback. Grim apartments aren’t the only option. We have a choice. Carefully I painted a picture of the middle way – delightful apartments with rooms and corridors, big windows and balconies, fresh air, sunshine and courtyards.





