

**Date:** Monday 19/9/2016

**Subject:** Greater Sydney Commission Briefing, Dougherty Centre, Chatswood

**Questions and points to leave with the North District Commissioner.**

- 1) What impact will our input today have on the draft plan for the Northern District, given that the draft must be exhibited in November?** ie is this another token consultation?
- 2) Will the GSC have the ability to comment** on the Crown Land Review, the proposed Biodiversity legislation and the proposed Urban Tree SEPP?
- 3) Is the GSC familiar with the Planning for People Charter (2014)** developed by the Better Planning Network and endorsed by many councils, all political parties and independents, with the exception of the Liberal Party. The Charter is available online.
- 4) Will the District Plans mandate ESD?**
- 5) What is the GSC opinion of Willoughby Council's LEP?**
- 6) Where can new schools, childcare centres and recreation facilities be located in already developed areas like Willoughby?** Will properties be acquired on Just Compensation terms for these purposes (unlike the Haberfield/West Connex example)?
- 7) Can you ensure that development controls are upheld?** Much conflict arises when council's do not uphold their own development controls.
- 8) How can you address the potential conflict between urban consolidation, heritage and lifestyle** e.g. the North Chatswood Conservation Area and Boundary Road development?
- 9) How can political interference be avoided?** This led to the short sighted and ad hoc decision to close many schools in the Willoughby area, including Castlecrag Infants School. The district is crying out for more schools, yet the NSW Department of Education did not take the opportunity to buy properties around Willoughby Girls School when they became available. It is pointless to talk about increased density unless the required infrastructure is or cannot be provided e.g. schools, child care centres, libraries, recreation areas, upgraded sewerage and storm water systems.
- 10) How will you ensure that this plan will respect (and reflect) the wishes of the majority of residents, as we believe WLEP does?** Willoughby's LEP was a product of extensive consultation Against a background of a pro-development government which has allowed the removal of thousands of trees under the ill-thought out, ad hoc, 10/50 legislation, and the the proposed changes to the Native Vegetation Act and Threatened Species Act, which will allow open slather on land clearing

**11) The NSW Government has an abacus mentality. It is happy to sell our heritage, but not to spend to acquire properties for public infrastructure as in 9).**

**12) The Plan for Growing Sydney 2014, shows a dotted line representing a road/motorway across Middle Harbour, apparently between Northbridge, the southern tip of Castlecrag and the other side of the waterway. Can you clarify the status of this? Castlecrag residents fought for many years against a planned Warringah Expressway through the bushland of the Castlecrag Northern Escarpment. This is emphatically not supported. We do not need more roads.**

Public transport on the eastern side of Willoughby City is very inadequate, both serving the peninsulas, and in cross district (east-west) and to the city. Castlecrag is poorly served. throughout Willoughby North-south traffic flow is prioritised over east-west flow. The Edinburgh Road/EasternValley Way intersection is very dangerous but RMS appears only concerned with north-south flow and to date has resisted appeals to make it safer.

**13) Planning should be in the public interest, not that of the development industry.** The character of whole areas is being changed by overdevelopment, loss of trees, loss of visual and psychological amenity. Residents are not consulted, they lose their sense of place, their sense of belonging and the reason they chose to live there disappears.

**14) For Castlecrag, our main focus is on the conservation of the natural and built environment, (including the maintenance of the Griffin Heritage Conservation Area), the character, identity, lifestyle, heritage and sense of place of the area.**

**15) Planning must take account of the geology and geography of an area.**

- One-size-fits-all planning leads to lowest common denominator outcomes, not what we understand the GSC is purportedly about.
- Hyperdensity may generate developer profit, not liveability.
- Building quality and urban design are important for enjoyment, sustainability, energy efficiency.
- Code compliance likely to lead to poor quality development. "A dumb idea" - architect Philip Thalys.
- An improved, meaningful Basix is needed. The current Basix is a desktop tick-a-box, which is a joke, exploited by developers.
- Current legal requirements for a minimum 2 hours solar access in the middle of the day must be updated. This not only prevents utilisation of solar panels or prevents their installation altogether.

**16) Planning should deliver a balance of communities** which reflect age differences and not just become enclaves for the wealthy.

More **aged housing** is urgently needed. People want to age in place, in touch with their communities and social networks, not to mention their familiar health providers.

More consideration needs to be given to improved access for the elderly or **mobility impaired**. More disability parking spaces should be planned for.

**17) Sydney is unique among Australian capital cities for its urban bushland.**

All Willoughby's urban bushland must be permanently protected, with no alienation for e.g. recreation facilities.

**18) Bushland on private property should also be protected, as currently under SEPP 19.**

**19) The Foreshore Building Line should be retained.** Willoughby's FBL was extensively reviewed (1994 -1996?) and is vital in protecting bushland, habitat, flora and fauna as well as visual amenity and protecting against over-development.

**20) SEPP 19** We understand SEPP 19 is to be replaced by an Urban Tree SEPP. SEPP 19 protects more than just trees, it is specific to native vegetation and we do not support the loss of this protection.

**21) Crown Land:**

- No further alienation or sale.
- No support for off-sets or payment of money in lieu of off-sets.

**22) Community land:**

- No reclassification to operational.
- No destruction of native vegetation for temporary construction access, parking of vehicles as has happened recently at Wollie Creek, or creation of recreation facilities

**23) Open Space:**

We are concerned about a comment made at the recent meeting with the GSC at Lane Cove, concerning "**under-utilised parks**". An increased population will need all the open space it can get, Pocket parks provide for informal children's play and are a 'breathing space' in the landscape. They can also provide linkages between small isolated reserves and thus also provide habitat value.

**Cumulative impacts of development on open space**, but particularly on the natural environment, must be taken into consideration when development is planned. To date, bushland suffers a death by a thousand cuts. The pressure to convert natural areas to recreation reserves, as a result of pressure from increased density, must be resisted.

**Open Spaces, including natural areas, are already being loved to death.**

**24) Biodiversity needs much greater consideration in the planning process and should be included as a Liveability criterion.** We must plan for the continued existence of other species as well as ourselves.

**25) Trees will assume a much greater importance in a changing climate** - a counter to the heat-island effect, moderator of temperature and microclimate, habitat and wildlife corridors, soil stabilisers, especially important in linking small reserves.

They are important for improving air quality, visual and landscape amenity and providers of simple enjoyment and contributors to liveability.

The staggering tree losses under current government policies and activities show a complete disrespect for and ignorance of the functions provided by trees (and the natural environment generally) and for their natural heritage values, and must not be allowed to continue.

**Street trees and trees on private property are valuable and should have no less protection than provided by WCC's TPO.** We are concerned that the Urban Tree SEPP will allow lowest-common denominator protection of trees.

**Ausgrid maintenance policies are a major threat to our street trees.** Ausgrid contractors are paid 'pole-to-pole' and the more 'poles' that are vandalised brings the contractor more money. This practice must be made to stop.

**Progressive undergrounding of cables should be begun.** This would lead in the longer term to maintenance savings as well as removal of road-side hazards.

**Clearing of allotments from boundary to boundary prior to development must be prohibited.** Much remnant native vegetation and habitat is lost in this way.

Currently in Kellyville and Castlehaven, remnant Cumberland Plain vegetation is being cleared, and eucalypts are being piled up for burning. The resulting appalling development that is now occurring in these areas represents the ultimate in poor planning and are a disgrace. The resulting dwellings represent a cheap grab for money.

Decreasing allotment size to allow for urban densification must allow for **sufficient soft landscaping to permit growth of at least one deep-rooted tree** - reason: climate change, shading, visual amenity, habitat.

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