

From the President

What a fantastic turnout at the meeting we organised last Sunday at the Glenorie RSL! There was almost 150 adults in attendance—one of the largest community meetings for many years. Given that it was organised at very short notice, I would like to thank all those who attended and all those who put such energy into organising it.

However we can't rest on our laurels until the object of our resentment is well and truly buried, because this time the authorities have really overstepped the mark, and moved into territory that does not belong in Australia.

Right now the absolutely-most important thing we can all do is call Councillors, and attend the extraordinary Council meeting scheduled for **7 pm Thursday 16th** at the Council

building, 129 Showground Rd Castle Hill.

When you call Councillors, make sure you tell them about your own personal circumstances—how the imposition of an environmental protection zone will completely destroy your hopes for the future, and how the failure to incorporate subdivision to 5 acres will do the same thing.

The only way we will achieve change is by working together and focussing on the issues that affect us, so if you haven't already, I encourage you to join our association and make a donation to our fighting fund.

Thank you all very much.

Alex Davidson
President

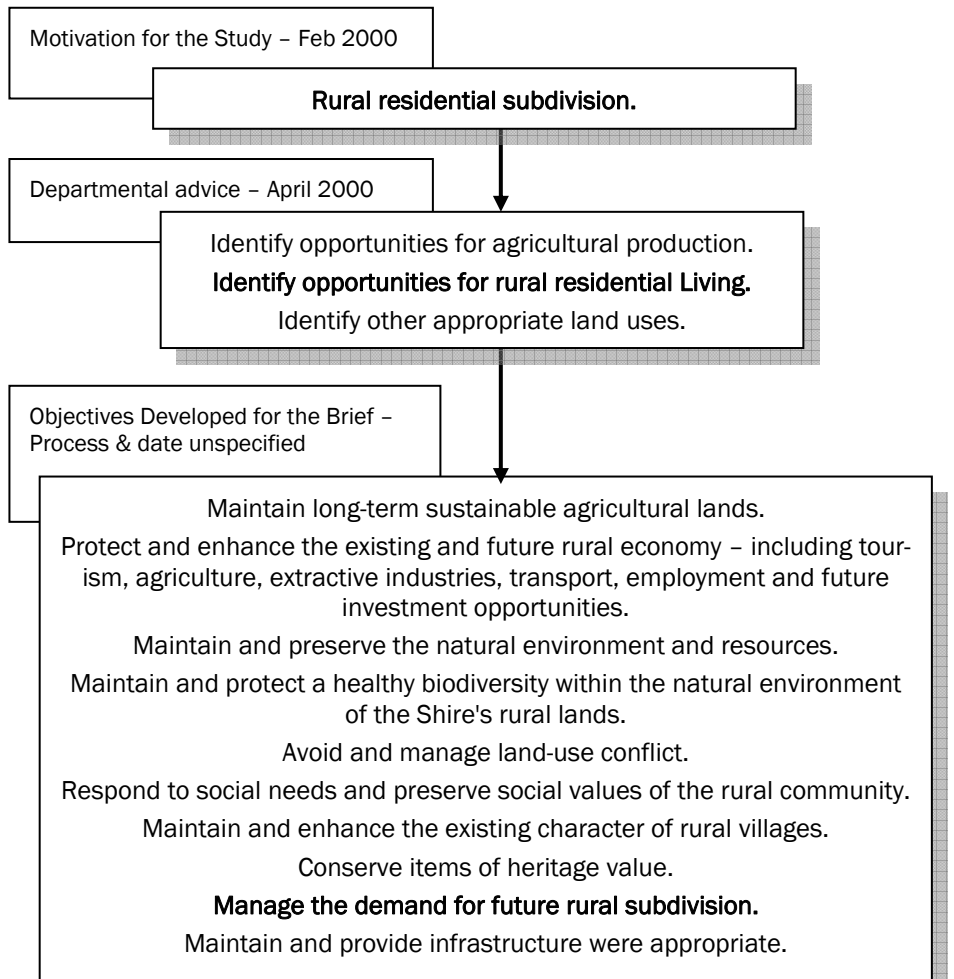
What went wrong with the Rural Lands Study?

One question we've asked many times is this: "Why is it that the draft Plan (LEP & DCP) developed from the Rural Lands Study doesn't incorporate any realistic proposal for growth through subdivision in the area, when the fundamental reason for producing it was just that—rural residential subdivision?"

The answer to that question goes right back to the start of the current Rural Lands Study. There we can see how the original goal was quickly buried and sidelined during development of the study Brief.

To help make this clearer, we've produced this diagram of the process.

Given this, we believe that the funds remaining in the Rural Lands Study account should be used to prepare a new Plan that incorporates the original goal of rural residential land subdivision. There is no reason why the planners couldn't put their considerable expertise into developing a positive, forward-looking plan that achieves a benefit for the community, rather than the current negative, no-growth prescription for preserving the past.



Our Aims

As we announced at our inaugural public meeting on 12 September 2004, our primary aim is to gain the right to subdivide large lots to 5 acres. That's why we are called 5 Acres Now. We believe that given all the surrounding issues, this is a very reasonable goal. We are opposed to anything which

threatens this goal.

To join us, simply provide your name and full contact details along with a \$10 joining fee to:

5 Acres Now
PO Box 6164 Dural NSW 2158

Key issues and concerns with the Rural Lands Study and proposed draft Plan

The failure to provide a realistic proposal for subdivision to 5 acres is unjust and anti-democratic, because:

- It deprives landholders of their reasonable expectation to be able to subdivide their properties in response to market demand, and in accordance with all past patterns of development.
- Many properties in the 25 acre zone are already 5 acres or smaller. If it was acceptable in the past, when the population was much lower, and demand less, then there is no good reason why isn't it acceptable now.
- Developable land in the area has NO agricultural potential. It's best use is for 5 acre residential lots.
- Subdividing large lots to 5 acres will produce no more than a few hundred additional dwellings in the area over the next few years – about the same amount of development that occurs **each week** in rest of the Sydney basin.
- The lack of town water and reticulated sewerage is **not** a reasonable argument against subdivision to 5 acres. These issues can easily be addressed on site, or by raising the funds for the necessary infrastructure.
- There is an unsatisfied demand for about 200 5-acre lots per year. This plan adopts the policy of cutting the supply to control the demand – an anti-market, artificial constraint that simply increases prices while denying choice to prospective purchasers.

The environmental protection zone 7(b) is unjust and anti-democratic, because:

- If this goes ahead it will reduce property values because it reduces existing usage rights and future development potential, yet there is no proposal to provide any form of compensation. Studies carried out recently for a productivity commission inquiry show values reduced by as much as 71% after the imposition of environmental protection zones.
- It confers a benefit on one section of society at no cost to them but substantial cost to others.
- It penalises those who have protected and maintained the bushland, and benefits those who have cleared it. It will cause owners to clear bush on land not within the zone in case they get included at a later date.
- It overrides and undermines private property rights – one of the most basic elements of Australian society. Landholders did not ask for this zone to be imposed, and do not want it.
- There is every reason to expect that the zone will be removed after prices fall and developers have bought into the area. This is precisely what has happened in the US, were such zones were imposed in exactly the same circumstances.

Other points in the draft plan

- The draft plan makes no provision for any reasonable level of development in the area. It will simply lead to a further running down of services and business closures.
- Growth in the rural area has been stifled for the last 30 years – this plan does nothing to restore a reasonable balance between growth and environmental concerns. It is completely one-sided.
- Overall the draft plan deprives us of our birthright to determine our own future. It represents a serious loss of freedom.
- 50 years ago there were essentially no zoning controls. We are now smothered with them. Unless we put a stop to these infringements of our freedoms, what will it be like in another 50 years?