

NOTICE OF AGM

DATE: SUNDAY 22 July 2007
TIME: 4:00 pm
PLACE: GLENORIE RSL
3 POST OFFICE RD, GLENORIE

All committee positions are open. Please forward nominations to the address below, or bring them with you to the meeting. New members welcome. Bring \$10 to renew your annual membership.

Agenda

- ◆ Minutes from last AGM
- ◆ President's Report
- ◆ Treasurer's report
- ◆ Election of office-bearers
- ◆ Annual review
- ◆ Strategy discussion (see below)

Strategy Discussion

If the government and council have their way, we are all supposed to return to our corners and keep quiet for the next 3-4 years, while they work away amending the LEP so that it complies with the new LEP templates.

We can't afford to let that happen without our input.

We need to remind them about the concept of ownership—that it is we, as owners, who should be deciding what we do with land we own, not bureaucrats, politicians, or others who believe they have the right to exercise ownership rights over land they don't own.

With that in mind, make sure you attend the AGM to hear about and discuss the following:

■ Feasibility of a legal challenge to zoning restrictions

There may be grounds for seeking compensation under the Land Acquisition Act for the loss of use brought about by zoning restrictions and other government regulations. Details will be outlined at the meeting.

■ The proposed supermarket at Glenorie

Woolworths have lodged a DA with Baulkham Hills Council to build a supermarket at Glenorie, which the committee welcomes. We want to hear your opinions. (Also note that the Glenorie Progress Association is organising a public meeting about this proposal, to be held at 8 pm on the 26th July at the Glenorie RSL.)

■ F3 to M7 Review

The federal government is reviewing the decision to build a tunnel under Pennant Hills Rd. Many of the submissions call for a type "C" bypass road through our area, either instead of, or as well as, work to relieve congestion on Pennant Hills Rd. More details at the meeting.

President's Column

At our last committee meeting I expressed my disappointment at our lack of progress towards the goal of reducing the minimum lot size to 5 acres. It seems that we are still at first base; however I was reminded that had we not been active, things would be much worse. A green zone with a 100 acre minimum lot size would most likely be covering many of our properties, and the issue of 5 acre lot sizes would have received much less publicity.

So while in some ways our efforts have been worthwhile, we still have a long way to go.

When I first became involved in this, I naively thought that it would be a relatively straight-forward process of demonstrating that there was widespread support among landholders for reducing the minimum lot size; that 5 acres was a reasonable figure; and that the reasons put forward against such a change were basically all nonsense.

Now, some 4 years on, I have come to the sad realisation that sense and reason have no place when it comes to dealing with the government. Different tactics are needed.

Given that there seems to be no inclination within the current council or state government to do anything but continue fobbing us off with delaying tactics, I think we have now reached the point where we need to consider challenging the state government and/or council through the courts. Other groups around the country concerned with property rights and lack of compensation for loss of use are coming to a similar conclusion, and it may be in our interests to work together with them.

This will be the central topic of discussion at our AGM, and I look forward to seeing you there.

Alex Davidson, President.

More information ...

The primary aim of **5 Acres Now** is to regain the right, withdrawn some 40 years ago, to subdivide large lots to 5 acres in the so-called "rural" area of the shire of Baulkham Hills. That's why we are called **5 Acres Now**. We believe this is a very reasonable goal

that will benefit the area by restoring a moderate level of growth without undue impact upon the environment or infrastructure. To find out more, visit our website: www.5acresnow.com.au, or contact us as detailed below.

“Day of Reckoning” rally & Wendell Cox visit

It was good to see such a strong turnout of our members at both the rally and the Wendell Cox information evening held in February.

As a combined groups' rally, it was understandable that the focus would not be on our particular issue, however it was a bit disappointing that the news reports referred to it as an “anti-development” rally. At least our placards featured prominently in the TV footage.

Wendell Cox made an excellent presentation at the information evening. His themes were that restrictive zoning policies lead only to one thing—unaffordably-high land prices—and that the job of planners was to help people to live and work where they wished, not restrict their choices through

misguided policies such as urban consolidation.

He pointed out that in Atlanta, a city with a population similar to Sydney, but where the city has been allowed to spread in accordance with the wishes of buyers and sellers, it takes only 3 years average annual salary to buy an average home, whereas it takes 8 years in Sydney. He also mentioned that infrastructure levies in Atlanta are \$6,500 or less per lot, compared to around \$150,000 here, yet the infrastructure in Atlanta is arguably better than in Sydney. And although Atlanta is some 4 times larger than Sydney, average commuting times are lower.

All this makes a lot of sense, so why are we still forced to maintain 25-100 acre lots so close to the city?

Rural lot sizes raised in Parliament

It was good to hear the newly-elected state member for Hawkesbury, Ray Williams, comment on the issue of rural lot sizes in his inaugural speech in Parliament. Referring to the policy of urban consolidation as “socially and fundamentally flawed”, he said:

“...some minority and unelected green decision makers would have us believe that to develop one more inch of land or cut down one more tree would increase the temperature of the world and we will all burn in a fiery hell”, and because of this, “...families live on 20, 30, 50 and 100-acre blocks of

land but are unable to even subdivide a small portion to give their children a home”.

He further noted that in the rural areas of the Hawkesbury *“...there is an opportunity for further five-acre development...”* and that *“five-acre development is not only sought after but is also sustainable...”*.

If you have an Internet connection, you can read the full text of Ray Williams' speech by searching under “Hansard & Papers” at: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au

Revision of LEP to comply with Templates

About 2 years ago the state government announced that all councils must rewrite their LEPs (Local Environment Plans) within 5 years so they comply with state-government-defined “templates”. That means that by 2010/11, the rural zones 1(a), (b), and (c) currently applying to our area will need to be replaced with zones from the template. However the template zones do not exactly match the existing zones, so changes are inevitable.

Several councils have already asked the government to explain how existing “rural” zones are to be migrated to the new template, particularly in areas like ours, where the predominant use is residential, not primary production.

Responding to this, the government has issued a series of “guidelines”, making it clear that existing “rural” zones

will need to be changed to “large lot residential” if the “future intended use” is residential.

This of course raises the question of who gets to determine the “future intended use”. Is it, as it should be in a country where property is privately owned, to be determined by owners, or will the government continue to override ownership rights and **tell** us the future intended use of our land?

Our president sought clarification about this point at a recent council meeting, but not unexpectedly the response provided did not answer the question.

After decades of dissatisfaction over the current restrictions on subdivision, the council and government cannot be in any doubt about the intended future use of land in the minds of owners. It is now time they acted accordingly.

5 Acres Now Committee Members

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