

# NOTICE OF AGM

**DATE: SUNDAY 21 February 2010**  
**TIME: 5:00 pm**  
**PLACE: GLENORIE RSL**  
**3 POST OFFICE RD, GLENORIE**

All committee positions are open. Please forward nominations to the address below, or nominate at the meeting. New members who support the aim of relaxing land use restrictions and reducing lot sizes in the non-urban area welcome. Bring \$10 to join or renew your annual membership.

We are pleased to announce that the new Mayor of Hills Shire Council, Peter Dimbrowsky, has accepted our invitation to speak at the meeting and outline the type of changes he would like to see occurring in our area. With the draft rural LEP close to public release, we are sure Peter will have plenty of interesting things to say, so mark this date on your calendar now.

## Agenda

- ◆ Minutes from last AGM
- ◆ President's Report
- ◆ Treasurer's report
- ◆ Election of office-bearers
- ◆ Annual review
- ◆ **Guest speaker: Peter Dimbrowsky, Mayor, Hills Shire Council.**
- ◆ General Business, discussion.

## Draft rural LEP—March 2010?

After numerous delays, it appears that the draft rural LEP will be tabled in the first quarter of 2010. While there are signs that some of our concerns may have been addressed under the new council, we need to remain prepared to examine it closely and suggest amendments prior to final adoption. To assist with this, we plan to circulate a summary of the good and bad points shortly after the plan becomes public. Following this, we encourage all members to discuss their concerns with councillors, and if necessary make submissions during the public exhibition period.

## Tree Management 'Guidelines' for private land

At the last council meeting of 2009, the Hills Shire Council adopted a revised 'tree management' policy called 'Tree Management Guidelines for Trees on Private Land'.

Backed up with very high fines (due to a misprint, it is unclear whether the maximum fine is \$1.1m or \$110,000) for non-compliance, these are hardly 'guidelines'. They are regulations that violate private property rights, and will be of concern to everyone who appreciates that such regulations are not the hallmark of a free society. Given that controls over trees on private land are not mandatory under the new LEP template, it is hard to understand why they were adopted. Let's hope that reason prevails, and these regulations are quietly shelved, or at least replaced with non-compulsory guidelines.

## President's Column

It's been over a year since our last newsletter. During that time the committee has been quite active, however there has been little to report by way of progress towards our goal until now.

Shortly after the last AGM, we met with representatives of the then planning minister, Kristina Keneally. They assured us that they would consider our concerns and relay them to the council. Five months later we received a copy of a letter from the Minister to the council which confirmed that our call to reduce the minimum lot size to 5 acres was being discussed with the council. It also invited our members to make submissions to the draft plan when it was released.

Since then we have received several indications that the draft plan was about to be released, but all those dates have come and gone.

Again we are being assured that the draft plan isn't far away—2 recent council business papers have made reference to a March 2010 date—so let's hope this time the goalposts stay put.

Behind our call for smaller lot sizes is the issue of private property rights, and the way this principle—so fundamental to maintaining freedom and preventing democracy from descending into majority rule—has been eroded in the name of planning.

The recent case of farmer Peter Spencer, who went on a hunger strike for 52 days to protest against laws prohibiting him from clearing his own trees on his own land so he could farm it, is a graphic example of the despair and hopelessness that this sort of loss of ownership can lead to. We must all congratulate Peter for the stand he has taken against these unjust laws, and hope that it leads to a greater realisation of the importance of government at all levels respecting the sanctity of property.

**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](http://www.5acresnow.com.au), or contact us as detailed below.