



From the President

Well what can I say following the Extraordinary Council meeting of Thursday 16th! A very big thank you to all our members and supporters who filled the gallery to overflowing. By our count there were over 300 present—according to some the largest gallery since the misconceived proposal for an airport at Galston.

In particular, I would like to thank everyone for showing restraint when listening to others who oppose us, and for the quality of comments addressed to the meeting. By doing this we demonstrate that we are not just a noisy rabble, but a serious group with valid concerns and sensible ideas for the future of our area.

Our primary aim for the extraordinary meeting was to stop the draft Plan going on exhibition. It is fair to say that we were resoundingly successful, with a unanimous vote from all Councillors present. It was very encouraging to listen to Councillors finally recognising that the draft Plan, and Rural Lands Study upon which it was based, are both seriously flawed, and demand a thorough review.

Looking forward there remains a substantial amount of work to be done if we are to succeed with our aim of restoring growth to our area through 5 acre subdivision. We are in the process of developing a firm plan of action, and will announce the details following our next committee meeting.

In the meantime, I encourage you to maintain contact with Councillors and other politicians when the opportunity arises.

And if you support our aims but haven't yet joined, please consider doing so. Everyone has something to contribute—even if it's as simple as calling others to inform them about meetings and decisions of the Council. By working together, we are much more likely to achieve the outcome that's 30 years overdue. (Note that we are still processing recent membership applications, so don't be concerned if you have not yet heard from us. We are working on it.)

Once again, thank you all very much, and let's look forward to a revised Rural Plan that incorporates the community's aspirations, and restores a reasonable level of growth to our area.

Alex Davidson, President

Website

Please note that the address of our website has changed. It is now www.5acresnow.com.au.

We plan to make more use of the website over the next few months to keep members and the public informed about the issues and our activities, so please visit it regularly.

Council's resolution

To their credit, Councillors voted to defer exhibition of the draft Rural Plan until a Working Group has reviewed it and consulted with the community. The full wording of the resolution is as follows:

1. *The briefing be received.*
2. *The matter be deferred.*
3. *A Working Group be established comprising the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, North Ward Councillors, the General Manager and/or his nominees to consult with the community on the outcomes of this meeting and review of the draft LEP & DCP.*
4. *The Working Group report on the infrastructure requirements (both transport and utilities) need to support its recommendations as part of the report to be prepared for the first meeting of March 2005.*
5. *The Mayor be authorised to engage an independent Town Planning Consultant to assist the Working Group.*
6. *A further report be referred to Council by the first meeting in March 2005.*

Metropolitan Strategy

Have you ever wondered what drives plans that ignore the wishes of local communities? Or why we were confronted with a Rural Lands Study that seemed to be following an agenda far removed from our interests?

Answers to these questions can be found in the Metropolitan Strategy discussion document recently released by the State Government (www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au).

Instead of presenting a series of choices for comment, the document presents "Directions" that an elite group of

planners, politicians, and invited "experts" have decided will form the future of Sydney. Public participation is restricted to comment about the detail, where most of it will be dismissed as not being in accordance with the aims.

As with the Rural Lands Study, the whole process is upside-down. Directions should be set after public consultation, not before. Only then should planners start their work.

We encourage you to contact the State Government and tell them this.

Our Aims

As we announced at our inaugural public meeting on 12 September 2004, our primary aim is to regain the right, withdrawn some 30 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 unduly impacting upon the environment.

To join us, simply provide your name and full contact details, along with a \$10 joining fee and details of any skill or service you can contribute to:

5 Acres Now Inc.
PO Box 6164 Dural NSW 2158

(Please note that we reserve the right to reject applications from those who we believe do not support our aims.)