

## From the President

After a slow couple of months following our members' meeting in November, events are now starting to move ahead quickly. In December the council appointed Connell Wagner to review the work leading up to the draft Rural Plan, and this week we attended 2 related meetings—the Community Liaison Group meeting (see report below), and a public one held by the Sydney Agribusiness and Tourism Alliance. Next will be a **very important public meeting** on the 16th (details overleaf), followed by the first report back to the council in March.

We were very encouraged by the support from councillors Griffiths, Shore, and Williams at our November meeting. They have subsequently presented our submissions to the working group reviewing the Rural Plan. I also extend thanks to state Liberal member Steven Pringle for attending that meeting to receive our submission, and for his unequivocal public statement this week that he hopes the 7b environmental zone does not proceed.

While it is pleasing to note that the review objectives (see below) are firmly focussed around the issue of rural residential subdivision, we must remain vigilant to make sure there is a genuine attempt to address them by way of changes to the Rural Plan. It was disturbing to hear the review consultants state that their role did not extend to "validating" the Rural Land Study strategy, but only to whether the draft Plan was a valid response to the strategy.

We must make sure that, in the words of Michael Watt (council's Director of Planning Services) this week, "no stone is left unturned", regarding the review. In particular, we must make sure the express wish of the community for the right to subdivide large holdings becomes part of the

## RURAL LAND STUDY REVIEW - OBJECTIVES

- To review the documentation produced as part of the Rural Lands Study to date.
- To review all submissions and representations received in relation to the Rural Lands Study;
- To review the potential for sustainable subdivision within the rural area, considering the following options:
  - Potential subdivision of lots, e.g. lots over 5 hectares;
  - Potential for further subdivision around village areas, i.e. Kenthurst, Maroota, Glenorie, Dural, Middle Dural and Annangrove etc;
  - Subdivision where there is access to reticulated water, i.e. Cattai Ridge Rd, Kenthurst Rd, etc;
  - Potential subdivision in Maraylya, Box Hill, Nelson and Pitt Town Rd, Kenthurst.
- To review the opportunity for rural enterprise zoning and tourism, agribusiness based activities in the LEP and DCP;
- To identify potential for best practice solutions to create sustainable subdivision outcomes having regard to infrastructure constraints;
- To assist and advise the Working Group in its deliberations

Rural Plan. It needs to be remembered that we are not asking for a favour, but merely to have restored to us a right taken away decades ago, when Sydney's population was much smaller. Now is the time for change.

**Alex Davidson, President**

## Community Liaison Group Meeting

On 1 February, 3 members of our committee attended the community liaison group meeting scheduled as part of the review of the Rural Land Study draft Plan. Total attendance was about 40, including 3 councillors, and the meeting lasted about 2 hours. It was a closed meeting, conducted by Connell Wagner, the consultants appointed to review the draft Plan.

Most of the discussion centred around the issue of rural subdivision. The message, loud and clear, was that the great majority in the community support 5 acre subdivision. Many commented that such subdivision should be a basic right of property ownership, not something we need to go down on bended knee for. It was also pointed out that lack of water and sewerage is not a valid reason to deny this right, because developments can be made self-sustainable through the use of tank water and enviro-cycle systems.

### **Vital Public Meeting—see over**

The other item that received attention was the iniquitous proposal for a 7b environmental zone. There was almost unanimous support for dropping this zone altogether; however the response from the consultant was less than encouraging. He suggested that maybe the environmental zone simply needed to be explained better!

In the business, this is referred to as "managing expectations" - in other words, trying to find ways to make an unpalatable idea palatable. That is social engineering at its worst.

The reality is that almost no-one wants such a zone; no sound reasons have been advanced to justify it; and it would be unjust because it would seriously devalue our properties. In short, it is only one step away from theft of our private-owned property. It must not be allowed to go ahead.

This, and our call for 5 acre subdivision, must be voiced in the strongest possible terms at the meeting on the 16th.

## 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 unduly impacting upon the environment. To find out more, visit our website: [www.5acresnow.com.au](http://www.5acresnow.com.au), or contact us as detailed below.

## Rural Lands Study Review

# Important Public Meeting

**Date:** Wednesday, 16th February 2005

**Time:** 7:30 pm

**Place:** Pioneer Room, Castle Hill Community Centre  
cnr Pennant and Castle Streets, Castle Hill  
(Castle Grand, opposite Castle Hill Police Station)

**Protect  
your  
future!**

### **Say “YES” to rural subdivision**

The Baulkham Hills Council is reviewing the Rural Land Study. A key purpose of the review is to determine the opportunities for subdivision of large lots (over 10 acres) for low-density rural residential housing. This meeting is your chance to say “YES” to these proposals, and tell the council and consultants that:

- 5 acre rural residential subdivision is widely supported in the community;
- The new rural Plan must recognise the aspirations of the community, and produce real benefits for the district, not lock it up for another 30 years.

### **Say “NO” to the environmental zone**

The draft rural Plan prepared by the council proposed to impose a restrictive environmental zone (7b) over more than half the Shire. Your property was probably included in the proposed zone. Such a zone would seriously devalue your property, and severely restrict permitted uses. This meeting is your chance to say “NO” to any proposal for an environmental zone:

- No sound reasons have been provided as to why it is needed;
- It is akin to theft, because no compensation was offered for the loss in value;
- It is inconsistent and arbitrary because the boundaries were not determined according to any acceptable environmental criteria;
- It undermines private property rights, a fundamental part of Australian society. If it is allowed to go ahead, what rights will be next to go?

**5 Acres  
NOW!**  
www.5acresnow.com.au

For more information visit [www.5acresnow.com.au](http://www.5acresnow.com.au), or contact our President, Alex Davidson 9652 0285, or Vice-President, Lynn Lollback 9654 9469.