

COUNCIL MEETING— REPORT ON LIFESTYLE ZONE

We have just received a statement from the Mayor, Cr Sonya Philips, regarding the council's position on the Landscape and Rural Lifestyle Zone. In it, she refers to the recent statement made by Frank Sartor, the Minister for Planning, that the Zone may be scrapped, but urges everyone to keep up the pressure. She says:

"Whist this is welcome news and no doubt a direct result of the collective co-ordinated and mature approach taken by residents to gather information and engage in purposeful debate, I feel I must encourage everyone involved to not cease their push for a better outcome for the entire community...".

The Mayor then goes on to say that this issue will be debated at the next council meeting (Tuesday 20 September), and invites us all to attend. Details:

DATE: TUESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2005
TIME: 7:00 pm
PLACE: COUNCIL BUILDING
129 SHOWGROUND RD

Meeting with Sartor & Westacott

Since our member's meeting on the 29th August 2005, our President & Secretary attended a 90 minute meeting with the Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor, and the Director General of DIPNR, Jennifer Westacott. Several other community groups were represented, and we all received a fair hearing.

Sartor opened the meeting with a couple of key points—first, there will be changes in regard to the proposed green zone; second, they want "high quality" development in the growth centres. He also discussed the concept of "green trading" at length. This is a system where the government sets a target for the percentage of bush for each precinct. Developers then must buy enough green credits from those with bush properties to reach the target.

Our President took the opportunity to reinforce the points made in our joint submission: that the Landscape & Rural Lifestyle Zone violates private property rights; that any such zone must provide for large-lot subdivision; and that there should be 5 acre subdivision in our area to cater for those displaced by development.

The response to this was that they need to move quickly to resolve the problems arising from the growth centre plan itself, and they did not have enough resources to consider the issue of 5 acre subdivision in our area at the same time. He said this should be taken care of by the council's plans, prompting the Mayor to make a reference to the proposal in the draft plan for 1 acre development around the villages. However, as was pointed out, this is not what we have been advocating.

Sartor closed the meeting by saying that he expected to have some revised proposals ready one week following the close of submissions (7 October) and stressed the need to continue making submissions.

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.

President's Column

There's been plenty happening over the last few weeks regarding planning and the politics that goes with it. The good news as far as we are concerned is an apparent willingness by the new planning Minister, Frank Sartor, to review the proposal for a green zone—most likely scrapping it altogether outside the boundary of the actual north-west growth centre itself.

While this will set a major precedent which we can use to argue that the environmental overlay proposed in the council's draft rural plan should also be lifted, it is disappointing that we are no further ahead with our call for 5 acre subdivision.

In fact, over the last year, nearly all our effort and attention has been taken up simply to try and get back to the position we were in 18 months ago, when there were no green zones on the table, and when the debate was much more clearly focussed on the issue of rural subdivision.

It is hard to believe the amount of resistance we have encountered to what is, after all is said and done, nothing more than a call for us to be able to each determine our own future with our own land.

Alex Davidson, President

News in brief...

The Director General of DIPNR, Jennifer Westacott, announced her resignation the day after our meeting with her and Sartor last week. According to other news reports, she was instrumental in pushing for inclusion of green zones in the growth centres plan...

We received a letter from the Mayor acknowledging receipt of our joint submission to the growth centres plan...

In response to a question, the council confirmed that there has never been a successful application for rezoning a property from rural 1(a)/1(b) (25/100 acres) to rural 1(c) (5 acres).