

AGM

DATE: SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2006
TIME: 4:00 pm
PLACE: GLENORIE RSL
3 POST OFFICE RD, GLENORIE

With the exception of our secretary, Angela Muller, existing officer holders (see over) have indicated they are available for re-election to the same positions. Please forward nominations for the position of secretary or other position to the address below, or bring them with you to the meeting.

This will be an important meeting, as we will be discussing our strategy for the year, and seeking your input. It will be open to members, new members, and guests, so invite anyone you know who shares our aims. It would also be appreciated if you could bring along \$10 cash to renew your annual membership.

Agenda

- ◆ President's Report
- ◆ Treasurer's report
- ◆ Election of office-bearers
- ◆ Review of last 12 months activities
- ◆ Strategy for next 12 months
- ◆ Open discussion/suggestions

Draft Rural Plan—no further ahead

Last June the council voted to submit the draft Rural Plan to the state government for their approval to place it on public exhibition. This is the Plan which places most of our land under an environmental overlay, and fails to heed the call of the majority of large-lot landholders for 5 acre subdivision.

According to a letter our secretary received from the Department of Planning, it now appears that the draft Plan will be returned to the council for further amendment—not so that it complies with our wishes, but so that it complies with the state government's standard template for council Plans.

The council's attempts to impose zonings on us that we don't agree with is bad enough—now it seems that the state government wants in on the act.

It is difficult to see how this will bring us any benefit at all, and really calls into question the whole approach to zoning. Shouldn't zones be determined by those they directly affect, not by politicians and bureaucrats?

We hope to have more information about this by the time of the AGM, so make sure you attend.

Roadside Placards

What do you think about placing signs on the road boundary of your property to promote our issues? If you have any ideas about this, please bring them to the AGM, or contact one of our committee members.

President's Column

Although it's been several months since our last newsletter, committee members have been quite busy attending council meetings and keeping abreast of issues that may concern us.

For my part, I wrote to all councillors regarding recently-tabled amendments to the council's tree management policy, which they claim extends to trees on privately-owned land. I pointed out that I, not the council, own the trees on my property, and added that I have never consented to the council managing them. Accordingly, I asked that they remove all references to the management of trees on privately-owned land. I also suggested that all council reports include a section summarising their impact on private property rights.

Naturally my suggestion was considered and rejected, but later I received a response from the council containing the following most astounding claim:

"It is unrealistic to consider that a property owner has exclusive rights to manage or maintain a property as they see fit."

Ownership is defined as the exclusive right to manage and control property. Without that right, we are no longer owners, but merely leaseholders—custodians and caretakers, expected to meekly obey directions issued by the real owners, whoever they might be.

This is a completely unacceptable state of affairs, and one that we must oppose in the strongest possible way.

Clearly the council, presumably in the belief they are acting on behalf of "the community", considers they have a greater right to manage and maintain property than title holders. There is a word for this, found often in the writings of Marx and Engels, but I won't repeat it here in case someone tells me to sit down and shut up.

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.

Rates for rural landholders may rise

Many members have commented about substantial increases on their latest government valuation notices. Averaging around 80%, the increases appear to be well above those for urban properties, and have the potential to substantially increase rates for our members. A quick check using the calculator provided on the council's website indicated rate rises in the order of 30-40% for the examples we used.

Should increases of this magnitude occur, it will be a most unjust outcome, since many of us are on fixed or di-

minishing incomes, and are not permitted to reduce the size of our holdings to reduce our rates burden. The only choice we have is to sell and move out of the area—is this the underlying agenda?

It is also interesting to note that many of us are included within the rating category "Residential", yet have nothing like the level of services that those in the urban areas have, such as a sewerage system, street lighting, footpaths, kerbs, guttering, decent roads, etc. So why should our rates be calculated using the same formula?

Could Hawkesbury Council serve us better?

You may have heard talk regarding a possible merger between Hawkesbury and Baulkham Hills councils. While we can't see how this would offer us any benefits, it does throw the spotlight on another question:

Would it be in our interests if just the North Ward of Baulkham Hills became part of Hawkesbury?

Certainly a majority of Baulkham Hills councillors continue to vote against our interests, appearing to treat us as unpaid custodians of a resource for others to enjoy.

We would be interested to hear your opinion on this issue, either at the AGM, or by contacting any of our committee members as detailed below.

Q—Who owns your land?

Since our last newsletter, the council has been particularly busy with rules and regulations that intrude into our daily lives. There's been a Social Plan, a Cultural Plan, extensions to their Tree Management Guidelines, and approval of the Action Plan component of the Environmental Management Plan.

You may recall that the Environmental Management Plan contained some 460 objectives. Well these have been "condensed" into 167 "action points", most of which directly override the right of owners to manage their own properties.

The list of activities regulated by council rules and regulations now numbers many thousands, to the extent that it is hard to think of something not covered.

The net effect is that we have lost the benefit of property ownership.

That benefit is the right of an owner to exclusively control and manage, and is the driving force that underlies all development and progress. Once you deny people that right, the

benefit goes too, as the examples of Cuba, North Korea, or China 30 years ago show. Development halts, living standards fall, and despondency sets in.

Sadly we can see a microcosm of this in our district. Denied the right to develop our properties in response to demand, there has been little progress for 40 years. Businesses are going backwards, and many properties are in a state of disrepair, to say nothing of the lack of public infrastructure. Everything is regulation green.

It is well past time for the council to recognise the damage that denial of ownership causes, and restore a healthy respect for private property rights. Instead of proclaiming more and more regulations, the focus must turn to rolling back their intrusion into our lives, freeing us to bring prosperity to the area.

And naturally, the first place to start is to restore the minimum lot size to 5 acres, as it was 40 years ago, before the rot set in.

5 Acres Now Committee Members

President	Alex Davidson	9652 0285	Glenorie	alex@ccstar.net
Vice President	Lynn Lollback	0418 118 906	Kenthurst	all4lollback@AOL.com
Secretary	Angela Muller	4573 6075	Maraylya	mail@homecafe.com.au
Treasurer	Carol Petith	9652 0015	Glenorie	carolpetith@bigpond.com
Committee member	Bob Lollback	0418 118 906	Kenthurst	all4lollback@AOL.com
Committee member	Gaye Wheatley	9652-1871	Forest Glen	primepropertygaye@century21.com.au
Committee member	John Wheatley	9652-1871	Forest Glen	
Committee member	Don Pye	4573-6446	Kenthurst	donaldpye@bigpond.com
Committee member	Rob Laird	4572-8699	Cattai	rcl@bigpond.com