

# Residents' Action Group For Auburn Area

## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER MAY 1998

### THE NEW DRAFT LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN PROPOSED REZONINGS WILL AFFECT YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE

**Auburn Council has issued five papers for public comment prior to drawing up a new town planning scheme - now called a Local Environmental Plan. These documents, if adopted with the intentions outlined, will become law for the Auburn Local Government Area and its community and will change the face of our suburbs and the way we live forever.**

The Council is required to update planning controls, as many amendments have been made to the Auburn Town Planning Scheme Ordinance since it was introduced in 1970, but there is no requirement for rezoning. An exemption has been granted by the Minister due to the overdevelopment of flats and massive developments proposed for the Olympic Village, Lidcombe Hospital and the RAAF at Regents Park.

#### The main rezoning issues are:

- Residential 2a (houses only) areas in Auburn, Berala, Lidcombe and Regents Park to be zoned 2b (Townhouses) and be subjected to infill development. These will be offset by backzoning from 2b to 2a in the Oxford/Dudley Streets area and the Parramatta Road end of Frances/John Streets; areas which have already suffered from creeping infill townhouse development. However, the rezoning (2a to 2b) on the eastern side of Berala (Campbell, London, Brixton, Hyde Park Road and in between), as an example, will destroy the local amenity, produce more flooding by increasing stormwater, in an already overtaxed catchment, and put further stress on the social infrastructure - mainly the already overpopulated Berala Public School.
- The area south from Lidcombe railway station to Victoria Street to be zoned for mixed use. Factories, warehouses, offices, townhouses, the possibility of high rise, and the traffic and noise they bring will be mixed up with houses. The present factories and shops adjoin but do not greatly intrude into the quiet, village style, 2a (houses only) residential area.
- New 2d zone to cover mixed residential types on sites such as Lidcombe Hospital and the RAAF at Regents Park. No height limit is shown for this zone.
- Council car parks at Auburn, Lidcombe and Regents Park and the Council civic buildings in Auburn to be zoned 3a General Business. These properties are presently zoned special uses. Rezoning the car parks would enable them to be easily sold or overbuilt with high rise; the rezoning will also facilitate the sale of the Auburn Library and the destruction of the Town Hall as part of the plan to rebuild the Council offices to accommodate the police service.
- Local Business 3c (essentially corner shops) to be zoned 3a general business or included in surrounding zone.
- Existing and new 3a General Business (shops, offices, hotels, flats) zones to be subject to so called performance based controls with no firm height limit or floor space ratio.

There is only a 28 day exhibition period from when the discussion papers were advertised **which is the minimum period of time required by law.** RAGAA moved for 90 days to allow the community plenty of time to read

and understand the full meaning of this document, ask the planners questions and make written responses. That time frame was squashed and only gained additional support from a surprising avenue - Cr Keegan. The community will have 28 days in which they will have to find time to read the document, attend forums and lodge objections/suggestions. There are five papers and a summary to digest and we ask, why is Council in such a big rush?

#### The new Draft Local Environment Plan will allow **MULTISTOREY HIGHRISE**

There are also major zoning changes in  
**ALL SUBURBS!**

There is only a  
**28 day exhibition period**

Will you be affected?  
**YOU MUST ACT NOW!**

Cr Keegan openly stated recently that he's never taken much notice of petitions. That's nothing new. The ALP and others would also seem to have forgotten that petitioners are voters.

Our arguments against many aspects of the documents are valid. Our public meetings prior to the election raised many issues associated with overdevelopment, too much infill medium density development and highrise and the impacts on the local infrastructure (social and physical). **At the time, Crs Curtin and Cassidy publicly supported our views on these issues which helped them gain public support as well as our preference votes.** Will they stand and support the same facts and issues again? Time will tell.

### HIGH RISE & OVERDEVELOPMENT "ITS ON AGAIN"

In November 1995, the RAGAA/ALP resolution restricted height limits of buildings in commercial areas to 3 storeys. The forums that were held at the time, showed the community wanted 3 storeys & the developers 8! Despite knowing this, the new draft still pushes for higher buildings.

In March 1997, the ALP, supported by the Independents and the Liberal, moved to have a 5 storey height limit in shopping centres. RAGAA opposed this, and still oppose highrise (as they were elected to do) However, as was stated prior to and since the election, we can only be successful if we are supported by like minded councillors. Where are those like minded councillors now? In opposition! RAGAA are now 2 to 10.

The latest motion sponsored by Cr Le Lam and supported by the others (Cr Donaldson was absent), was to have a policy where developments in the shopping centres were assessed on their merit, with no density or height controls. That same concept has now appeared in the discussion papers for the Local Environment Plan. This type of planning as proposed by Cr Lam, is "performance based" - in other words "open slather" in the wrong hands of power with "merit" being a subjective opinion. If you have a pro high rise council which we would seem to have these days, then you will have nothing to look forward to.

Our councillors, Judy Jones and Erica Hockley, strongly opposed Cr Lam's motion and reminded the other councillors what the community views were and that 6 councillors were elected to oppose high rise and overdevelopment. RAGAA and the ALP were elected on these issues, the others did not have opinions or policies on development issues so should not go against community views.

Since March 1996, RAGAA have had spasmodic support from the ALP. One minute they share our views on overdevelopment, privacy and overshadowing and high rise, the next minute they don't. On what basis they formed their decisions is something we do not know. This "changing floor" was the reason Judy stood against Cr Curtin for Mayor.

If any councillors had stood on a platform of high rise, they certainly would not have been elected. **It also should be said that Councillors who don't live in the municipality or those who have potential interests should not even contemplate opposing the community's written and expressed views.**

*Your RAGAA Councillors will ONCE AGAIN appeal to the other councillors for what the majority of the community want.*

## **WE STATE THAT**

- *If the suggested rezonings are required by the State Government, let the Government rezone and risk turning Auburn into a marginal seat.*
- *If council is not under any Government pressure, where is the direction for these changes coming from?*
- *These rezonings are against the community's wishes expressed prior to and since the last election.*

*We understand that people are fed up with fighting their elected representatives to retain their quality of life, but do not give up, for this is exactly what your opponents are hoping for.*

### **You must:**

- **AGAIN SPEAK UP**
  - **AGAIN VOICE YOUR OPPOSITION**
  - **AGAIN SEND LETTERS TO COUNCIL**
  - **AGAIN ATTEND COUNCIL MEETINGS**
- Let the Councillors know you are still there - watching**

*Unfortunately if you are not heard this time, the rezoning proposals will become law before the next election.....*

***It will be too late!***

## **WHAT TO DO WITH QUEEN STREET? THAT IS THE QUESTION.**

We agree that it would be wonderful to have a variety store eg. Big W, Target, K-Mart in Auburn. However, do we need highrise flats over a commercial development that can not guarantee that all of its shops will have tenants? The last thing that Auburn needs is **more** empty shops.

If the developers feel that Auburn needs a new shopping complex, then give us just that. **All shops but no flats!**

We could well end up with another high rise flat development in Auburn which would complement the concrete mass in Rawson Street - TWINS!!!

## **LIDCOMBE HOSPITAL AN OPPORTUNITY LOST**

The proposed redevelopment of Lidcombe Hospital as a new residential area should have been a showpiece of urban renewal but with over 700 dwellings of mixed types (houses, terraces, townhouses) it will be more of the same for our area. Unlike other former hospitals at Rydalmere, Gladesville and Rozelle, the heritage buildings will not be retained for public use, but will be subdivided and altered for private residential use. Many dwellings will be built to the side and rear boundaries, especially onto rear lanes. Yes! Rear lanes, haven't they heard of the problems these create? This is not Paddington, it will be more like Villawood or Claymore. However, unlike infill development proper public open space will be provided.

The housing density of the site will exceed State Government Guidelines for middle ring suburbs, which is what the Auburn Local Government area is considered to be. Also, how will local schools, hospitals and other services cope with the population influx?

## **STATE GOVERNMENT TAKES OVER CONTROL OF HOMEBUSH BAY**

RAGAA welcome the move by Craig Knowles, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, to take over the planning controls of the Homebush Bay developments.

This move by the State Government would seem to have something to do with the 1800 odd flats proposed to be built in the Millennium Waters, a complex of 24 buildings ranging in height from 5 to 18 storeys.

Another development, Mariners' Cove at Homebush Bay, applied for one of its buildings be changed from "75 three bedroom luxury apartments" to "148 one and two bedroom apartments". This was approved by the Council.

Perhaps we might get lucky and see low rise medium density foreshore development as other council areas have now that Mr Knowles has come to the rescue.

It speaks volumes when a Labor State Minister disempowers planning controls of a certain area from a Labor controlled council

**Footnote:** What hasn't been printed in the local papers was that even though Cr Cassidy spoke against the changes to Mariners' Cove very strongly, he also supported the changes by voting for it.

### **Your RAGAA Councillors are:**

Ward 1 - Erica Hockley Phone: 9643 2157

Ward 2 - Judy Jones Phone: 9646 5092

### **Residents Action Group for Auburn Area**

P.O. Box 60 Lidcombe North NSW 2141

Authorised by L P Gordon. 24 Auburn Road, Berala

## **REGENTS PARK RAAF DEPOT ANOTHER ONE!**

The Department of Defence proposes to redevelop the RAAF depot for industrial and residential uses. Approximately two thirds will be industrial with the remainder residential (houses, townhouses, 3 storey flats) and public open space. Needless to say this will be higher density than required by Government guidelines. It also ignores the removal of flats from development in Auburn.

The industrial development will create traffic problems, which are acknowledged by the proponents and which they hope to alleviate by widening the bridge over the railway at Regents Park station and building new bridges over the pipeline from Sefton and over Duck River from South Granville. These will provide new routes for through traffic - more heavy trucks in Amy Street, Chisholm and St. Johns Roads and Berala shopping centre as well as peak hour rat runs. There is also a threat to Duck River and the endangered bushland along it.

*No one has ever asked Auburn Council for town houses, flats, shops, offices, hotels, warehouses or factories to be built next to them. No one has ever wanted to be overlooked or overshadowed or wanted more noise or rubbish. If you do not want these things to happen next door, or across the road, act now, waiting for the next election will be too late! So, its not next to you, maybe not today but tomorrow it could be your turn. Or, do you want to shop in overshadowed canyons?*

*Also, do not be misled into believing that if your property is rezoned you will be able to sell it for a fortune. The best prices are presently being obtained in areas that buyers believe are protected from development. \$300 000 plus is being paid for good brick houses.*