



Hon. Brad Hazzard
Minister for Planning
Legislative Council
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO PLANNING REVIEW WHITE PAPER

I chaired a community meeting last night at Glebe Town Hall which considered the Planning Review White Paper. The meeting of 100 or so was well informed and debated several issues in the paper with our expert speakers, Corinne Fisher, Better Planning Network and James Ryan, NSW Conservation Council. The meeting agreed unanimously to the following resolution.

PLANNING FORUM RESOLUTION

Objectives

Planning should be democratic and for the whole community and for the future. It should not put economic growth above social and environmental concerns, nor favour developers above other groups as does the White Paper. It should be ecologically sustainable and follow internationally recognised ESD principles.

Community Participation

The Community participation that already exists in the preparation of local plans should be improved and extended to the preparation of statewide policies and regional and subregional plans. The requirements and procedures for Community Participation should be specified in the Planning Act and must be followed for the plan to be valid. Neither the Minister for Planning nor his/her department should have the right to change a plan that has been correctly made, or approve a development that has not been correctly exhibited and assessed.

The Act should guarantee the right of the community to comment on plans at every level, including the development application stage.

Plans

The Act must create a Statewide database to provide the necessary information (evidence) for drawing up plans, and this database must be accessible to everyone. Where necessary, councils and regional planning boards must be provided with assistance to enable them to draw up plans.

Types of Development

Every type of development except those that have no impact, or a very low impact, should have its merits assessed and be advertised for comment by the community.

Environmental and Heritage Protection

Existing environmental and heritage protection should be retained and guaranteed by the Act. This includes all Conservation Areas and Items of Environmental Heritage. The Act should make provision for the inclusion of newly identified Areas and Items. Developments likely to impact on environment or heritage must produce a study of the likely effects. The study must be done at the developer's expense by a consultant from a panel chosen by the consent authority and with no links to the developer.

Infrastructure

The Act must require a complete assessment of the need for additional infrastructure created by a development proposal. This includes not just service requirements such as roads and drainage, but social requirements such as schools, parks, libraries and community centres, whether provided by the developer or government. The developer's contribution to infrastructure funding must be deposited as a bond before a development is approved.

Zones

In general, existing zones should be retained, and should only be altered to reflect more accurately the type of development they contain.

Affordable Housing

Simply building more homes does not make them affordable. Federal and State Governments should provide incentives for more affordable housing, and they also have a responsibility to build and maintain public housing and to retain and purchase land for public housing. Public housing and land should not be sold to developers.

I ask you to consider these matters as you plan the Bill and deeply consider them during your preparatory negotiations. I would be surprised if these themes do not recur and as your government has promised to engage with the community it is your duty to listen and respond. Therefore, will you please reply to me as soon as you can informing me of your response to this significant community forum?

Yours truly

John Gray PhD

President

May 17, 2013