

24 November 2017

The Hon Anthony Roberts  
Minister for Planning  
GPO Box 5341  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr Roberts

**Seniors Living Developments in the Rural Areas of Hornsby Shire**

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The purpose of this letter is to seek your assistance to progress amendments to the State Government's policy for seniors housing which has the potential to detract from the character of the rural area of Hornsby Shire and impact on the sensitive environmental attributes of the area.

As you would be aware, land on the urban fringe is under development pressure to transform from rural to urban use. Hornsby Council previously resolved to investigate the opportunity for the urban release of the area known as South Dural for urban purposes. However, Council subsequently resolved to discontinue its evaluation of the proposal until an agreed plan is prepared to upgrade the State road network and other supporting infrastructure to sustain development of the precinct. A significant portion of land within South Dural adjoins urban zoned land and therefore, has the potential to be considered for seniors housing.

A coordinated and holistic planning strategy is required for the area to avoid ad-hoc planning outcomes resulting from site specific planning proposals and proliferation of senior housing developments. With this in mind, Council has sought to work with the State Government and The Hills Council to develop a clear vision for the rural areas in the region. It has been some time since Council wrote seeking an opportunity to discuss the preparation of a coordinated plan for the rural areas but to date we have not had a commitment.

Council's concerns about the proliferation of seniors housing in South Dural are now proving to be well founded. Council is aware of applications and proposals currently in various stages of planning that have the potential to result in over 1,500 independent living units and high care seniors housing being constructed within the precinct. The proliferation of seniors housing in our rural area is not good strategic planning. Consideration of the South Dural Planning Proposal has demonstrated the capacity of the State roads in the area requires immediate attention. Any increase in urban development should be supported by satisfactory funding arrangements to assist deliver essential community infrastructure such as open space and roads.

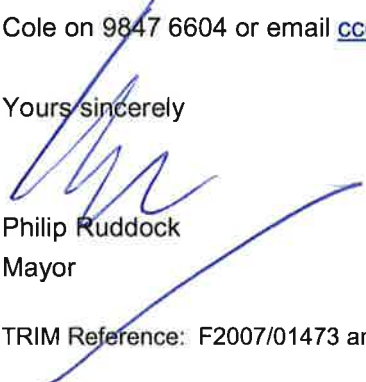
At its meeting on 8 November 2017, Council considered a Mayoral Minute which noted that the revised draft North District Plan prepared by the Greater Sydney Commission states that urban development is not consistent with the values of the Metropolitan Rural Area and includes an action to contain development to within existing urban areas. This position appears to be in conflict with State Government planning policy which promotes seniors housing development on the urban boundary.

Accordingly, Council resolved that I write to you to seek an urgent meeting to discuss the inconsistency of State Government planning policy which promotes seniors housing development with the recommendations of the Greater Sydney Commission that the values of the rural areas should be maintained. Until a clear vision for the region is prepared including an infrastructure and funding plan to cater for existing and future development, no further site compatibility certificates should be issued by the State Government for seniors housing developments in the rural areas of Hornsby Shire.

I acknowledge that the NSW Government recently released proposed amendments to State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 to seek to address the issue of incremental expansion of existing seniors living development. Although this is a positive initiative, it is respectfully suggested that the changes do not go far enough to address the issues being experienced by Hornsby Shire including proposals for site compatibility certificates for multiple parcels of land where only one parcel adjoins urban lands.

I am confident that if you are agreeable to a meeting, we would be able to determine an appropriate way forward to address these issues. To confirm details for a meeting, your office can contact Council's Christine Cole on 9847 6604 or email [ccole@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ccole@hornsby.nsw.gov.au) to make appropriate arrangements.

Yours sincerely

  
Philip Ruddock  
Mayor

TRIM Reference: F2007/01473 and D07334833

*I am keen to progress these  
so developments do not  
preclude a considered outcome  
for this important area  
Warmest regards*  
