

Submission, Sutherland Draft LEP Review  
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February 14, 2014. Please delete my personal information before publication.

To the Independent Review Panelists.....

Please find here my recommendation about a way to proceed in light of the taci-turn events surrounding the twice exhibited Sutherland Shire Draft LEP.

From my viewpoint, the sequence of events that stain the machinations of this objectionable document's public sharing (very nearly not properly shared with the public for a first time in May last year), are as vital a consideration in reviewing what has gone askew with this plan's public drafting and exhibition, as is much of the content of this haphazardly grafted document.

To sum up this sequence, after a first controversy regarding the statutory length of time for the "first edition" LEP's exhibition was hurdled, the plan was greeted with what might have been (to its architects) an unanticipated response of overwhelming public rejection. The draft LEP document was then "hijacked" by the chief contributor of most of the proposed plan's most objectionable document, (the former Mayor Kent Johns) who, perhaps believing his presumption that ***all could be imposed*** on this community may have been a naïve initial misreading of the Shire's social landscape, anxiously topped up the amended document with 19 more pages of further provocations in a deliberate last-minute strategy to conceal even more of his licentious personal planning agenda from a gathering tide of aroused community oversight.

These are see-through indiscretions that would make for comic embarrassment were they not to do with the way a community is meant to go about the business of agreeing on an environmental plan for the future of the places they choose to live in. The sequence I have summed up here speaks volumes of the clandestine motivations that have bewitched what should have been a clear and transparent process resulting in the usual and predictable argumentative tides of genuine community debate. What we have now in Sutherland Shire, is the fog and confusion of a polarising acrimony, not the clarity required where civility and vision on both sides of an opinion, can creatively dialogue and work together to combine and make public an overall vision.

I put it to the Panel reviewing this misappropriated planning document, that.....

the basic right thing to find and to recommend to Sutherland Council as a way of "right-tracking" this molested public document's proper sharing with its community, is to;-

1. put aside the re-drafted (second) LEP exhibited in August – September of 2013,
2. put aside also the appended grab bag of "Mayoral Minutae" ingredients that were grafted onto this 2<sup>nd</sup> LEP document at the closing moments of a public Council meeting by ex-Mayor Kent Johns, and....
3. request that Council should re-visit the original May unamended version of the LEP, and put ***this*** document back on public display, ***IN TANDEM WITH*** the Council planning staff's 700 page summary of the original 2000 odd public responses that resulted from this original document.

A very lengthy and accommodating period of public examination of the two jousting documentations must follow, the public discussion resulting from these two distinct clarities, being the proper argumentative terrain of dissension that the Sutherland Shire community needs to undertake.

The current debate and hostility in this community has been inflamed by a nest of interferences from one public figure's cocksure and self-ordained presumption that his own agenda is the only digestable way

forward. These interferences have amounted to an insulting abuse of power, and the abuse has stimulated a toxic confusion of warring sides that have become an affliction on this community and its environment. The most appalling circumstance of the lot of it is, the architect of it all is himself, a newcomer to both this community and its environment, - a far more natural environment that is physically and terrain-wise a much more contrasting one to that which he last exerted his trademark changes upon, (the Rockdale / St George area).

Clear this man's input out of the fray, and let the community of Sutherland Shire re-look at the original kindling material put to us, along with what was in good faith provided as this community's original response to it at that time, and better will prevail.

There are well-heeled, single vested interest loud mouths a plenty down here who sniffed the opportune winds that Mr Kent Johns was so quickly fond of belching, who have since that time beaten a well-trod path to the front pages of our Shire's compliant "Leader" newspaper to never miss an occasion to spell out all the fat reason\$ why he or she represents everybody else's best interests in wanting to make a million here, or ten million there, on apartment blocks, thicker densities, and instant vertical suburbs that valiantly require an "LEP like this", or an "LEP like that". They are in the main, the same single interest representatives that have beaten a well-trod path to make verbal representations to your Panel's Review,- an effort gleaned now of more intent motives because they all worry about a guarantee that what they have so hastily invested on the strengths of Mr John's belched winds of opportunity, may not be forthcoming.

These people are partisan. They do not speak of a planning document that begets an *Environment Plan* for a **Whole Place**, they speak of their own fractional proprietories as developers seeking piecemeal gains and leveraged re-zoning possibilities,- "shopping lists" which are then contorted with weasel words that "sales pitch" their wants as being in the interests of the multitude.

These market place bargain seekers will continue with their partisan representations just as eternally as that hollow "news" organ "The Leader", keeps telling us it's the newspaper of our community, all the while showcasing us each cat walker's claims and credentials on its coveted Page 1. Neither entity knows the stuff that substantially amounts to a genuinely enlightened self-interest, and that is precisely the end-point a draft and amended Local Environment Plan for an entire locality needs to be steered toward,- something that encapsulates the needs, values, and character, of all that are here, and all that is here, at present, and indicates the capacity to sustain those same satisfactions without undue sacrifice, into the future.

Such a prospect takes a decent investment of time and genuine transparency, and the result should not be something prone to wholesale upturn and dissolution every half dozen years either.

As well as defining areas of expansion of the built and business environment, a Local Government Area's "Environment Plan" ought to be about other more visionary scales and subjects of oversight. "Population Impact" would seem just as functionary a discussion to have as "Population Accommodation". Ditto for Economic Impact, and Economic Cultivation.

We ought also to be talking just as loudly about the preservation or conversion of our physical environments,- be they the natural ones of landscape and ecological features, OR the urban ones of the built environment. What do we wish to keep? What can we agree on that might be expendable? What do we value? How do we identify the physical and social characters of communities we wish to foster and maintain, and lend these places and localities growth processes that do not throw away the babies with the bathwater? Why the hell do we arrive local heritage lists, (State Government mandated), only to bureaucratically erase items whenever a sectional or proprietorial interest wants it gone?

Why do we like living here? What may be the distinctive charms of village areas, vegetated areas, topographies, townships, public buildings, shopping strips, indeed, whole suburban swathes, to the character, the conformities, or even the contrasting dynamics of, the agreeable places we have arrived, to live at? How do we keep and promote the things we identify as valuable, and accommodate the developments we agree will be necessary?

Should we agree to define some basic wants and desirabilities as rights? For example, what form of life on a) this planet; and b) this solar system, should be denied sunshine, non-wind tunnelled gales, fresh air even, & quietness, because opportune mavericks governing a mere single LGA of said planet at the precise moment that the capital City of the same place was glowing in the temporary limelight of an International Real Estate frenzy, saw their chance to make a fast buck by sweeping the planning rule books clean, (State Government encouraged too!) and making it possible to erect cheek-to-jowl skyscrapers of apartment blocks so that humans should live like battery hens?

Getting back to ground level again,- should we not be talking also, about the integration or the segregation of employment precincts, with or without of residential ones? Should we not be talking about these sorts of possibilities,

just as crucibly as we do about “spot re-zonings”, that new term of unbridled self-interest fashioned by the persistence of individual property owners and apartment block developers, anxious to increase the size of their own erections?

My apologies for the irresistible temptation to lump the cravings of those who so reliantly seek out the anointment of The Leader’s front page to have their way over Local Government planning rules and regulations, into the same camp as enthusiastic brothel patrons. Call it a weak attempt at gutter humour. I maintain though, this well-established precedent, is a reliable indicator of the rough-shod code of practice that getting things one’s own way has become in Sutherland Shire, very regularly, among those with money to propel their partisan interests. And it reeks of the same sort of back-door practices that have governed the maligned exhibition of the Draft LEP document to date.

Re-exhibiting the two original documents I urge the public revisiting of in this submission, may well give this community the chance to re-approach the kinds of givens I have outlined in the last six or seven paragraphs, - the stuff of a considered LEP. This, along with a proper, un-hurried re-examination of the original Plan and its tableau of responses, should get us to the kind of discussion we need to have to incorporate such topics in an eventual, properly-arrived at LEP. Sutherland Shire deserves this clarity

By way of a more strident Post Script, I enclose over page some print-outs of Building Industry Directory websites still accessible by a simple google search of the Net. Mr Kent Johns remarkable “man-in-a-hurry” demeanour, knows no better defining trademark of achievement than his zeal to incorporate within this LEP, not just the State Government’s requested 10,000 extra housing units within the Sutherland Shire within a specified time frame, but a unilaterally surrendered provision for 20,000 extra dwellings,- an act of extraordinarily unexplained executive decision-making that Mr Johns does not seek to spell out the rationale for.

Along with the provision of a potential 10,000 more apartment dwellings than the State has asked Sutherland Shire for, Mr Johns has also circled two entire suburban areas of the Shire he proposes that the State Government’s Planning Department should become the direct planning and development consent authority for...!?

In the light of this extraordinary zeal by our captor ex-Mayor to transfer so much of our own Local Government planning power to higher authority, the precise question that should beg explanation to every Shire resident interested in the hijacking away of his or her area’s local planning powers, is this:

***“For whose distinction is it, that we in Sutherland Shire are volunteering more land for apartment real estate development, than a demanding State Government is even asking for?”*** (The question needs to be asked, noting that across the board, some 80% of such sales are attracting the capital of overseas investors,- Sydney Morning Herald, 13.9.2013)

I do not attempt to answer a question only Mr Kent Johns and elements of the State Government might be in a position to explain, but I do draw a long-bow link to the only rationale that may exist for an ex-Mayor of both Rockdale and Sutherland Shire, in being a principle player in the water filtration industry.

If Mr Johns was in the pay of developers, or if his private working life was directly in the building industry, ratepayers and residents of the LGAs he commanded the Mayoralty of, or represented as a Councillor of, would expect to be informed of this at the outset of such terms.

I put it to all I talk to, that though Mr Johns’ haphazard political theatricalities include all the sanctimonies and righteousness of an “up-front” political player (he does declare his managerial background in the water filtration industry), he is nevertheless a person who can expect net gains to his financial life in the fullness of time, in terms of the take-up of his various private companies’ water treatment and filtration technologies, particularly in tall-storeyed concentrations of apartment dwellings, where maybe a generation or two previous, he himself zealously acted beyond the pursuit of even State Government maxims, to provide for the erections of tens of thousands of units of apartment dwellings requiring water treatment technologies well beyond the par of the usual mains access that routinely use to go with a plumber’s skills and trade, on a home on a quarter acre block.

Perhaps Mr Johns has taken it upon himself by now to clear up this little indiscretion that remains on the World Wide Web,- about how the building industry itself recognises Mr John’s private business activities as a part of their own? Mr Johns is up to his armpits in the building and construction industry, but he needn’t mention it to anyone, because his input is many degrees of separation removed from his pay-offs, and is safely achievable within the fullness of time.

Sincerely



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## Kent Johns

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### Social Networks featuring Kent Johns

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##### Kent Johns

Locality: Sydney Area, Australia

Summary: General Manager at Veolia Water

Industry: Utilities

Experience: Veolia Water (Public Company; 10,001+ employees; VE; Utilities industry): General Manager,



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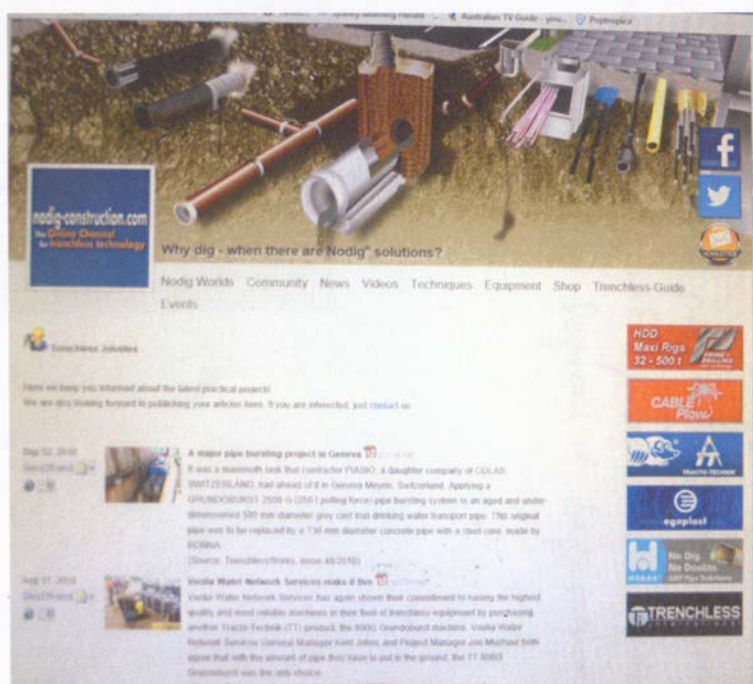
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(Source: [Trenchless Australasia](#), issue July 2010)



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May 12, 2010  
David Oswald

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(Source: [TrenchlessWorld](#), issue 48/2010)

Aug 17, 2010  
David Oswald

**Veolia Water Network Services make it five**  
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## Kent Johns

Mayor. Sutherland Shire Council. General Manager -  
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Sydney Area, Australia Utilities

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## Kent R. Johns Wrong

**Mayor**

Phone: +61 \*\* \* \* \* \* HQ Phone

Email: k\*\*\*@\*\*\*.au

Sutherland Shire Council

Administration Centre 4 20 Eton Street  
Sutherland, New South Wales 2232  
Australia

**Company Description:** Sutherland Shire  
facilities for primary and secondary schools  
fields for... [more](#)

### Background

#### Employment History

Councillor  
[Sutherland Shire Council](#)  
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