

SUSTAINABLE INGLESIDE ADVOCACY GROUP

**Submission to the NSW Department of Planning & Environment on the
Ingleside Draft Strategy and Draft Technical Studies**

28 February 2017

6. Peri Urban Areas



PERI URBAN AREAS

Sustainable Ingleside Advocacy Group's vision for Ingleside

'to be a lighthouse development showing how a modern community can live sustainably and in harmony with the natural environment'.

Further submissions have been made on the following key issues regarding environmental sustainability:

1. SIAG Overview
2. Biodiversity
3. Energy and Climate Change
4. Natural Hazards
5. Noise
6. Peri Urban Areas
7. Scenic Protection
8. Social and Demographic Issues
9. Sustainable Urban Design
10. Transport and Traffic
11. Urban Trees
12. Waste management
13. Water Cycle Management
14. Waterways

SIAG has also submitted a document consolidating its individual submissions into one PDF file ("SIAG Consolidated Submission")

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Peri urban areas are the interface between our cities and rural or bushland areas comprising a mixture of urban, residential, semi-rural agricultural and biodiversity zonings. Their major purpose is to provide a soft thick edge of protection from urban stormwater and detritus so that the valuable land beyond retains its productive capacity, in this case natural wildlife and water quality values. They also supply economic diversity.

The Ingleside development has great need for these peri urban edges, given the iconic bushland assets that lie on its perimeters. The Draft Land Use and Structure Plan (Draft Plan) has done a good job with its Environmental Conservation and Rural zonings providing for a diversity of land use as well as smudging the edges of the Ingleside precinct allowing development to flow, for most part, softly into the Garigal and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Parks, Minkara Reserve, Katandra Bushland Sanctuary, Ingleside Chase Reserve, and through Elanora Country Club and Monash Golf Courses.

However the zoning of small housing lots immediately above the southwest edge of the Ingleside Chase Reserve, is one area where a rezoning would be beneficial. This is an area of great natural scenic beauty and high value biodiversity surrounded by housing on all sides apart from a northern corridor.

A second buffer omission is the zoning of small housing lots off Powderworks Rd immediately above the northeast edge of Garigal National Park. Both areas should be buffered and rezoned for large lot housing to complete the precinct's protection of its iconic Parks and Reserves that surround it.

We note as well the omission of a zoning for community gardens. This is a lost opportunity. Locally grown food benefits residents in a multitude of ways. It provides food fresh from the ground, inspires an interest in locally grown and locally consumed produce, provides outdoor activities for the not-so-fit or older residents, and provides neighbourhood centres of interest. Their presence also reflects the early non-indigenous history of Ingleside as a market gardening and orchard area.

Finally peri urban areas can also be responsible for nutrient rich water finding its way into unpolluted creeks and waterways. This needs to be addressed with particular and immediate focus on the water quality of McCarrs Creek

Accordingly we make the following recommendations

Recommendation 1

- That regular water monitoring is undertaken in the creeks downstream of the Wirreanda Valley and Bayview Heights to preserve the existing quality of McCarrs Creek.

Recommendation 2

- That the Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy Version 2 (Draft Strategy v 2) rezone the south-east edge of the interface between Ingleside Road and Ingleside Chase Reserve as a buffer zone with a larger lots zoning behind this zone.

Recommendation 3

- That the Draft Strategy v 2 rezone the small lot housing area off Powderworks Rd above the northeast edge of Garigal National Park as a buffer zone with a larger lots zoning fronting the Road.

Recommendation 4

- That the Draft Plan v 2 include the zoning of 4 community gardens sited within 5 minutes walk to the medium density zonings in Wirreanda, North Ingleside, South Ingleside and the Wilga Wilson area. These areas should be sited so that nutrient run-off will not enter down-slope of waterways.

Recommendation 5

- That the Draft Plan v 2 includes a soil map so that suitable land for community orchards and gardens can be identified.

Recommendation 6

- That the Draft Plan v 2 include a larger area zoned for local food production to be placed under Council management for leasing to putative market gardeners, orchardists or an aspiring community group.

Recommendation 7

- That the Draft Land use and Structure Plan Version 2 (Draft Plan v 2) includes the zoning of land for a community orchard.

Recommendation 8

- That all the land zoned for community gardens, orchards or commercial leasing be placed under public ownership and managed by the Northern Beaches Council

BACKGROUND

Principles

The planning and provision for peri urban areas in the case of Ingleside gives shape and substance to the principle of designing to create places for people through productivity, sustainability and liveability by enhancing and connecting the environment and the community; and by providing a diversity of options and experience.

The entire Ingleside precinct today is a classic example of a peri-urban area comprising a mixture of urban, residential, semi-rural agricultural and biodiversity land use, fringed by high value bushland. Not only does this land use provide a range and diversity of lifestyles, it also provides a precinct-wide leaky wildlife corridor.

The Environmental Panel Advisory Paper for the Greater Sydney Commission states that *'there is a need to strategically consider much of this land for its own value not just as land in waiting for urban development as the benefits are considerable.'*

Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy

Rural Land Zoning

The Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy (The Draft Strategy) has zoned approximately two thirds of the Wirreanda Valley and all of Bayview Heights as rural land. This zoning will retain their current peri urban character.

Both areas are sited at the interface with Ku-ring-gai National Park. Both sites have healthy eco-systems capable of assisting with future water management demands, the urban heat island effect, air quality, carbon emissions, and nutrient recycling issues that will flow from the precinct development, while continuing to support the biodiversity that surrounds them.

As contributors to the liveability of the projected adjacent urban area they contain natural scenic assets and significant landscapes capable of hosting more hiking trails to support the projected population.

Environmental Conservation Zoning

Environmental Conservation zones soften the edges of the rest of the precinct apart from the escarpment running along parallel with Ingleside Rd to the SE, and an area zoned for small lot housing above the northeast corner of Garigal National Park just south east of the junction between Powderworks Rd and Mona Vale Rd.

Issues

Nutrient Rich Zones

The water quality of McCarrs Creek is of particular concern with regard to the development of Ingleside as the creek is used as a standard for water quality in Sydney Coastal Creeks by a number of agencies and universities. The additional urban stormwater created by the new housing estate contemplated at the eastern edge of the Wirreanda Valley and in the Cicada Glen Catchment may pollute downstream creeks flowing into McCarrs Creek.

Heightened agricultural activities in the Valley may also increase the nutrient outflows. Together these uses may become environmentally destructive to the currently healthy McCarrs Creek and waterway.

Ingleside escarpment

The zoning of small housing lots above the southwest edge of the Ingleside Chase Reserve needs rethinking. The Biodiversity Assessment Report Part A (pg 69) recommends buffer zones along the entire eastern and western faces of the precinct. Unhappily this recommendation has not been taken up in the current Draft Plan.

The water flow from the edge of the escarpment is not always confined to the Creeks. In flood time water finds its way over that escarpment in a myriad of ways and is no respecter of housing boundaries. Owners of these smaller lots will be naturally disturbed at the 'damage' these waters might do to their property and will seek to modify their land by channelling, diverting, blocking and otherwise changing the natural flow. And with the overflow piped directly into the Reserve will come a concentrate of fertiliser, dog poo, and the other pollutants of urban life.

Powderworks Rd

The zoning of small lot housing on the western side of Powderworks Rd on the edge of pristine bush and a golf course is also an issue as it would add substantially to the pollutants already entering Garigal National Park from the nearby busy road.

Community Gardens or Market Garden Zoning

No community gardens are shown on The Plan. This would seem to be an opportunity gone begging. While community gardens are not sited in peri-urban areas - they perform similar roles and deliver similar benefits albeit on a smaller scale. But they also do more than this and should be part of any sustainable development planning.

OPPORTUNITIES

Water Quality Management

While not a zoning issue per se - regular water monitoring of McCarrs Creek must be undertaken and must start prior to the commencement of any infrastructure development to provide an early warning of any problems with nutrient runoff from the developments on Mona Vale Rd, and the Wirreanda and Cicada Glen catchments.

Recommendation 1

- That regular water monitoring is undertaken in the creeks downstream of the Wirreanda Valley and Bayview Heights to preserve the existing quality of McCarrs Creek.

Ingleside Chase Reserve Buffer

In the case of the Ingleside Rd/ Ingleside Chase Reserve interface - a change in zoning on the east side of Ingleside Rd, from small lots to a buffer zone and larger lots, would release more land to soak up the water as well as allow it to spread more evenly across the landscape causing little or no damage on their way through.

This is the largest area to miss out the protection of a buffer zone and yet, to many, the Ingleside Chase Reserve is the bushland most in need of protection and buffering throughout the entire area.

Recommendation 2

- That the Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy Version 2 (Draft Strategy v 2) rezone the south-east edge of the interface between Ingleside Road and Ingleside Chase Reserve as a buffer zone with a larger lots zoning behind this zone.

Garigal National Park Buffer

Providing a zone on the edge of the Garigal National Park to buffer the park from the run off of the small lot housing, and a zoning change to large lot housing, would also assist this second 'missing link'.

Recommendation 3

- That the Draft Strategy v 2 rezone the small lot housing area off Powderworks Rd above the northeast edge of Garigal National Park as a buffer zone with a larger lots zoning fronting the Road.

Community Gardens

- Community gardens have an invaluable role, not just in the provision of fresh food, but as places for informal social interaction and cooperation. They provide an alternative community activity for the no-so able and elderly, a source of pleasure and satisfaction
- both in the gardening and the eating of the produce, an open air meeting place and an activity that binds a neighbourhood together.

Land would be zoned appropriately (neighbourhood centre or a specific community garden zoning) and leased from Council. While not onerous the fee should enable the enterprise to be self-sustaining.

Neighbourhood Community Gardens

Ideally these would be placed on good soil, and offered as existing plots with access to water. The best examples of these gardens in operation are those in Britain. All their community gardens have a long waiting list for a plot, generally stretching for 5 years or more. Any visitor to these gardens is struck by the intensity of purpose, the comradeship, the gossip, and the pride and sense of community that pervades the gardens.

Establishing a community garden on the edge of the Wirreanda valley sporting grounds would seem an ideal position for such a garden - just a short walk away from all the housing envisaged for the Wirreanda Valley and on the edge of the medium density zonings in North Ingleside.

We would recommend another 3 be established under an appropriate zoning. The second opportunity could be on the mooted Lane Cove Rd Park edge also adjoining the medium density zoning in North Ingleside. Two further community gardens should also be specifically sited in South Ingleside near the areas of greatest density.

Recommendation 4

- That the Draft Strategy v 2 include the zoning of 4 community gardens sited within 5 minutes walk to the medium density zonings in Wirreanda, North Ingleside, South Ingleside and the Wilga Wilson area. These areas should be sited so that nutrient run-off will not enter down-slope of waterways.

Recommendation 5

- That the Draft Strategy v 2 includes a soil map so that suitable land for community orchards and gardens can be identified.

Local Market Gardening

There is no market gardening currently being undertaken in the areas zoned for rural land use and it is possible, indeed likely, that market gardening in Ingleside will cease to exist with the development of the precinct. At a time where local food production is seen as an important part of a sustainable community this would seem to be a tragedy.

To encourage the continued existence of market gardening we recommend that further land be zoned to allow for local food production and put under Council management for leasing to putative market gardeners, orchardists or aspiring community groups as a commercial operation. Council could retain the option of selling the now productive land to the lessee in the future.

This arrangement provides opportunities in all directions. It could give someone a chance to build a business that adds value to community life. A community group may take on the lease. It may well be that a successful operation will push landowners in the rural zonings will turn their hand to local food production as well. Most of all it gives the community a further opportunity to buy fresh food locally.

Recommendation 6

- That the Draft Strategy v 2 include a larger area zoned for local food production to be placed under Council management for leasing to putative market gardeners, orchardists or an aspiring community group.

Community Orchard

Our final recommendation is that of a community orchard, again under Council management. Not only will this provide all the outcomes of a happy community endeavour as listed above, it also would also retain the memory of Ingleside's history as a market gardening area, and the birthplace of the Narrabeen plum.

Recommendation 7

- That the Draft Strategy v 2 includes the zoning of land for a community orchard.

Recommendation 8

- That all the land zoned for community gardens, orchards or commercial leasing be placed under public ownership and managed by the Northern Beaches Council

SUMMARY

While good zoning cannot solve every community issue -we commend the Draft Plans use of Environmental Conservation, Conservation Management and Rural zonings to effectively provide a peri urban buffer zone around the entire precinct, apart from the couple of omissions noted above.

The introduction of community garden spot zonings will take the peri-urban vibe inside the housing zone putting productive green islands inside the urban space, providing an opportunity for those in apartments to grow fresh herbs and vegetables for themselves, to share in an informal community network not bound together by ideology but by a sense passion, place, endeavour and fun. There is no reason why these gardens cannot be as successful as the British gardens have been for a century.

REFERENCES

The Draft Land Use and Structure Plan

The Biodiversity Assessment Report

AN URBAN DESIGN PROTOCOL FOR AUSTRALIAN CITIES <http://urbandesign.org.au>

Environmental Panel Advisory Paper for the Greater Sydney Commission