

Submission to:

The NSW Department of Planning & Environment, on

Planning for a Sustainable Future: the Ingleside Precinct

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Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about precinct planning for the Ingleside land release, and to suggest some policy and design proposals for better sustainability outcomes.

As a local resident, a sustainability professional and an on-ground volunteer who has worked to value and care for the natural environment in this area for over 25 years, I have a keen interest in the impacts and outcomes that result from this process.

I believe an exemplar sustainable community at Ingleside – a ‘lighthouse development’ could be possible given the political will, vision and government leadership to make it happen.

Ingleside: an opportunity to shape change in NSW

In today’s world, a development of up to 3,400 new homes by 2030 should be informed by leading edge urban development standards, in line with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

This project could become a ‘shining example’ of best practice leadership for ecologically sustainable development in a sensitive urban coastal environment. There is an opportunity for Ingleside to be an exemplar of sustainable precinct planning and development in NSW and to showcase NSW on the world stage as a leader in creating sustainable communities.

While there is evidence of a clear intention to embrace “the highest possible standards of ecologically sustainable development”, my concern is that the proposed precinct-wide redevelopment of Ingleside will founder on the barriers, and will only bring incremental change in a positive direction when so much more is possible.

Creating a Sustainable Community

1. Valuing and caring for our environment

Ingleside is an environmentally sensitive site in an urban coastal environment - connected to the ocean, surrounded by natural bushland reserves and with high biodiversity values. This site epitomizes the need for holistic thinking and innovative planning in harmony with nature for the cities of the future.

Biodiversity conservation within the Ingleside precinct is a matter of significant importance to the wider Pittwater community. For many years, the local community have been involved in valuing and caring for the natural environment, protecting and restoring ecosystems including creek systems and protecting fauna. I am personally very concerned about the biodiversity conservation issues associated with this development.

Large areas of good quality habitat will be cleared. The planners are exploring biodiversity offsets but there are difficulties. And, we need to ensure wildlife corridor connectivity across the landscape and into the National Parks. With the onset of climate change, the challenges will be magnified.

However, the proposed precinct-wide development of Ingleside provides a rare chance to put care, concern and restoration of Ingleside's creeks up front. We should grasp the opportunities and seek to prioritise restoration and rehabilitation of our waterways holistically, as we look towards putting in place the foundations of a sustainable community at Ingleside.

New opportunities to create win-win outcomes for people, natural ecosystems and wildlife are emerging through water sensitive urban design and the application of biophilic urbanism – making cities and suburbs more 'nature-full' – as a means to create a sustainable community and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The evidence is growing that 'nature deficit disorder' (Louv, 2005) is introducing pervasive disorders into our socioecological systems as well as into the natural ecosystems that sustain us.

The Greater Sydney Commission has indicated that our waterways are a priority. They form part of the Green Grid, currently being planned to make Sydney a sustainable city. Ingleside is part of that vision.

2. Valuing and caring for our heritage

In creating a sustainable community, it is important to establish connective practices that nurture and sustain an ethics of care. Heritage is important, for both existing residents and new residents of an area, as it provides locates an area in context, and helps to create as sense of place.

The Heritage Interpretation Study undertaken for the precinct planning process has done a good job of identifying heritage values and items within the Ingleside area.

Ingleside is home to a rich Aboriginal heritage, which has been identified. Other key heritage items of non-aboriginal and cultural heritage have been identified, and noted for development of interpretation activities to raise awareness and appreciation, including the story of the rich agricultural heritage of the Ingleside district. Remnants of this agricultural heritage of farms and market gardens remain to this day.

- **Farmer's market and permaculture hub:** The vulnerabilities and security of the system that supplies our fresh food, is a sustainability issue that is moving to the forefront of thinking and around the nation, in Sydney and in the northern beaches area, community gardens abound.

I propose that at Ingleside, connective practices could include building on the agricultural heritage of the area through continuation of farmers markets and permaculture hubs such as Ingleside Growers Market and New Leaf Nursery. We could grow more of our own food locally in community gardens throughout the precinct. People love to grow veggies, share knowledge and get together in community.

In our western society, food production and consumption is a major issue. Food is shipped around the world, using fossil fuels and generating unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions.

An active program of interpretation and education for a more resilient and sustainable food future – including community gardens, urban aquaculture and bees and would make a valuable addition to creating community in Ingleside and connecting people to the natural world.

3. Enabling High Performance Housing

With the world trying to contain global warming to not more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels, we should be meeting our energy needs from renewable energy sources. Given the will to overcome barriers, and embrace new thinking – wide scale deployment of solar based technology and ecological architecture is possible now.

Ingleside could be designed and developed as an exemplar project, showcasing to the rest of NSW, Australia and the world how sustainable cities can be created from the neighbourhood level up. Sustainable building design to deliver ‘green buildings’ and energy efficient homes is critical.

A ‘high-visibility solar suburb’ vision for Ingleside, using PV panels on rooftops and on community buildings that can work to decarbonise the energy system would provide tangible evidence that Ingleside is being developed “using the highest possible standards of ecologically sustainable development”.

Energy efficiency measures are also necessary, and should be designed into homes up front. Smart energy systems that provide real-time data feedback to residents can effectively reduce demand by at least 15% and ideally, this type of direct feedback information system should be designed into new homes as standard. It is very hard to retrofit a building. Much better to get it right up front.

- The Draft Strategy flags the possibility of delivering housing and development that is above and beyond the current building sustainability benchmarks in NSW (BASIX 40 for water and energy). This line of thinking should be pursued, supported provided by the market analysis outlined in the Kinesis Peer Review & Strategy Analysis for the Ingleside Precinct. Kinesis are proposing BASIX 60 for energy and BASIX 50 for water.
- Further, to assist with the aim of reducing consumption of fossil fuels, consideration could be given to establishing a micro-grid within the precinct as is suggested by Kinesis as part of a precinct energy solution.
- We need to overcome the barriers that obstruct transition to high performance housing, find ways to work with developers and work on mainstreaming sustainable housing that reduces GHG emissions.

4. Enabling low carbon personal mobility

The sustainability issues we are face relating to transport are climate change and peak oil. As a society, we need to be planning for decarbonisation of the transport system.

Personal mobility and transport will be a major issue at Ingleside. The area is elevated and remote with poor public transport and so people will be relying on private cars and using fossil fuels to get around. The steep gradient of the topography in some parts of the precinct may be an issue.

- **Public transport** within the precinct will need to be significantly improved. Plans for a Bus Rapid Transit system sometime in the future should be prioritised, to enable urban commuters to access the city and Macquarie Park along Mona Vale Road.
- **Active transport** should be maximised throughout the precinct, which should be designed to promote walkability and provide the ability for commuters to use bikes to get around, to the maximum extent possible.

- **Planning for electric vehicles:** Given that people are likely to be reliant on their personal cars, decarbonisation of the transport system can be further encouraged by supporting and promoting the uptake of electric vehicle technology. EV support infrastructure including charge points should be built in to new homes, 3 phase charge points installed in unit block car parks, and solar car ports located where vehicles can top up their charge with renewable energy while the owners go about their business.

5. Aiming for zero waste to landfill

In our western society, waste is a major issue and households generate a significant part of the waste stream. Other waste streams are commercial waste, green waste and construction and demolition waste. In addition, pollutants including plastic that has been flushed from our catchments enters waterways causing significant environmental harm.

The Northern Beaches councils have established the Kimbriki Resource Recovery Centre which aims to eventually reduce waste to zero, but the Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy is silent on the issue of waste with the exception of a brief mention of potential for dumping of waste in bushland.

Kimbriki Resource Recovery Centre is an infrastructure asset that is destined to become a major resource in terms of re-using materials and engaging community through education to raise awareness of sustainable resource management and the 'circular economy'. At Ingleside, we should be aiming to:

- Maximise recycling of construction waste
- Reduce household waste in operation and
- Increase the recycling rate of household waste

6. Community education and engagement for sustainable living

Our world is on an unsustainable path. Through our profligate Western lifestyles, we are consuming much more than our Fair Earth Share.

If we are serious about creating a sustainable community at Ingleside, the ecological footprint of individuals and households will need to be brought onto a reducing trend. We need to learn how to effectively engage individuals and households in learning to reduce their ecological footprint.

Community education is part of the planning, through the Green Star Communities framework and provision should be made to engage new residents. The new community centres would be ideal locations and should be designed as sustainable buildings up front, in anticipation of their use for sustainability education. A good model for such a Centre is the Randwick Community Centre, a leader in the field.

7. Collaboration with research and science

I propose that the Ingleside Precinct be supported to achieve innovation the innovation objectives being set, by developing a 'living lab' process to explore barriers and obstacles encountered in the real world, with the CRC for Low Carbon Living; the CRC for Water Sensitive Urban Design and the CRC for Bushfire and Hazards.

There are several areas that could be helpful if they could be acted on. These are:

- Make the precinct EV ready
- Mainstream high performance housing
- Innovation to apply the principles of biophilic urban design to the precinct
- Innovation to apply leading practice principles of water sensitive urban design and
- Connecting with leading edge research to build capability, resilience and community responsiveness to natural hazards and the impacts of climate change

In summary

Urban design for sustainability is the future. With adoption of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and as the impacts of climate change begin to bite, there is a need to develop (and re-develop) liveable, sustainable and resilient cities and suburbs for the future.

Through planning for a sustainable future, The Ingleside land release offers an opportunity to shape real change in planning for sustainable communities in NSW, and to mainstream community learning for sustainable living.

References

Kinesis (2016) Ingleside Precinct – Sustainability Peer Review + Strategy Analysis.

Louv, Richard. (2005) *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* Algonquin Books

NSW Department of Planning & Environment (2016) Ingleside: Draft Land Use and Infrastructure Strategy