

Submission to the Department of Planning on the Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan by Rouse Hill Heights Action Group Inc

Rouse Hill Heights Action Group Inc (RHHAG) cannot support or oppose either the current zoning densities or the new proposals under the Land Use and Implementation Plan, (LU&IIP) as we are unsure if both scenarios can have major negative impacts on some of our members. We are totally confused, though, as we are getting conflicting reports from all quarters.

We would be happy with either system if they did not negatively impact on our members. Some of our members claim that the best scenario for RHHAG members is the current system to be retained, but with accelerated infrastructure so that development of the rest of Riverstone East is not delayed.

As the result of this confusion, we are constrained in our suggestions.

However, we wish to make the following points which have been approved by our members:

- How did the Department of Planning (DoP) get it so wrong in their current zoning density regulations, which allowed the situation to get to the current crisis?
- Why has it taken so long for the DoP to act to try to rectify the problem?
- How did the DoP come up with the new numbers for maximum density? RHHAG understands that Blacktown City Council (BCC) has not been consulted on this issue for at least 18 months, and BCC was not aware of the proposed maximum density numbers.
- Why doesn't this new LU&IIP apply to the South West Priority Growth Precinct?
- Does the LU&IIP apply to Box Hill North Precinct, which is not officially part of the North West Priority Growth Centre?
- If this new LU&IIP only applies to the NW Priority Growth Centre, we see the problem of developers going elsewhere, especially if areas like Box Hill North are exempt. This has the potential of seeing land next to major roads, stations and all other infrastructure, being left to stagnate.
- Provided it does not negatively impact on our members, RHHAG would not oppose an increase in the proposed maximum cap on the number of dwellings per hectare, depending on the closeness to major infrastructure.
- RHHAG has received professional advice that land in not yet rezoned areas, such as Stage 3 of Riverstone East, and West Schofields and Shanes Park Precincts, may have its development delayed if the unforeseen higher density continues and takes up all the available infrastructure. The same may apply to currently rezoned but as yet undeveloped blocks in other Precincts.
- RHHAG has received professional advice that the proposed new density cap, especially in R3, has the potential to cause a shock to property prices, as the possible yield diminishes. This may see development in R3 stagnate. We have already seen sales of R3 land fall over following the exhibition of the LU&IIP. It may be that the values of R2 land will also fall as a result of implementation of the new proposal.

- There may be a problem with the proposed minimum lot sizes in R2 limiting the number of dwellings possible in some properties situated, for example those situated under power lines. In Guntawong Road for example, some properties face the double constraints of power lines and natural drainage flows which may make it difficult to achieve the minimum dwellings (15) let alone the maximum (25).
- How much of the available infrastructure will be taken up by the proposed higher density in the Schofields Town Centre? Is this another reason why the density caps have been proposed?
- How will property prices be affected by the planned increase and then abolition of the Section 94 cap?
- If more money is needed to support the growing need for infrastructure, how will the proposed removal of Government subsidies for infrastructure affect the market?
- How will property prices be affected if higher density than planned uses up the available infrastructure, and more parks, water and electricity supplies need to be purchased/ built?
- There needs to be strong consultation with all the stakeholders, to ensure that the new system when enacted, does not cause new problems. Perhaps there needs to be provision for the new laws to be able to be overruled (e.g. higher or lower density than allowed) if say, the relevant Council and the Minister can be convinced it is necessary, is a quality development, and will add to the amenity of the area. It has been suggested that this may be possible if the new system is a DCP rather than a SEPP change.
- RHHAG would like to see that the DoP pays compensation to those people financially impacted by any change to the current zoning densities. This appears to be downzoning, and would affect not only people in R3, but people in R2 who may see a flow-on effect in their land prices.
- RHHAG wants to see a scenario where our members get the best possible financial return for their properties- after all, they are supplying the land, which is the most valuable commodity in supplying housing. If land values are substantially reduced by any action by the government, the landowners will delay selling, leading to a reduction in land supply, with a corresponding increase in the price of available housing blocks.
- We also want to see accelerated rezoning of Stage 3, and the timely development of Area 20 and Riverstone East, as these precincts are in prime position to provide quality housing close to all amenities.
- RHHAG wants to see a fair system incorporated in the LU&IIP, and it needs to be done as soon as practicable. With the situation in limbo, it is causing concern to residents, impacting on property prices, and slowing development.

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