

Save Our Suburbs (SOS) NSW Inc.

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Newsletter
March 2006

For years we have been working to get rid of the influence of Sydney sustainability commissioner, Professor Peter Newman, and metropolitan strategy convenor, Professor Ed Blakely. We attended public meetings at which they appeared in order to challenge what we consider to be their misleading claims about the supposed benefits of their policies. They have never been able to answer our questions and a discomfited Department of Planning and Urban Affairs tried to prevent me from attending meetings or having an opportunity to pose questions. The final confrontation of many was at the CityTalks2005 seminar of 8 November last year at which Peter Newman was one of the keynote speakers. As usual he could not answer the question that I posed. The meeting ended up in disorder.

I wrote an article for the Monash University Journal *People and Place* entitled *Pipe Dreams: The shortcomings of ideologically based planning*. Professor Newman replied to this article in the next issue. I responded to him in the following issue and have heard nothing further.

THE END RESULT

Professor Newman has been sacked and Professor Blakely's committee disbanded.

This tops a long list of wins against individuals wishing to impose high-density on the Sydney community:

- Andrew Refshauge, Minister
- Sue Holliday, Director General
- Craig Knowles, Minister
- Di Beamer, Junior Minister
- Andrew Cappie-Wood, Deputy Director-Gen
- Jennifer Westacott, Director-General
- Evan Jones, Sydney Strategy Administrator

and now:

- Peter Newman
- Ed Blakely

High-density - the impact on your pocket

Previously we showed that in order to force high density onto communities, Government urban consolidation policy deliberately strangles the land supply. This creates artificial scarcities, driving land prices into the stratosphere. Industry has to pay high wages to help employees cope with excessive rents or mortgages and has to pay excessive factory rentals.

The ruinous outcome is becoming evident for all to see. Qantas has to move out of Sydney because the price of land is too high to contemplate expansion. New South Wales has become the worst performing state in Australia.

RENEWAL/APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF SAVE OUR SUBURBS (SOS) NSW INC.

(incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984, Reg. No. Y2946544), ABN#26 199 176 884

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* Note: Donations up to \$100, allocated to the SOS Party wing, are tax deductible.

Please mail to **SAVE OUR SUBURBS, PO Box 492, Wahroonga NSW 2076**

Please include a stamped self-addressed envelope if you would like the receipt.

Opinions are swinging

There has been a noticeable change in attitudes to overdevelopment. The March editorial of *The New City* asserts that I started the recent attack on urban consolidation with the *People and Place* articles. This may be right – subsequent to these articles there have appeared other articles critical of overdevelopment such as by Michael Duffy and by overseas visitors Professors Robert Bruegmann and Joel Kotkin. There have been radio programs on the subject (I was interviewed in one) and extensive press comment on housing unaffordability.

Well known demographer Bernard Salt recently wrote an opinion piece harshly critical of the high-density advocates. In summary he says: “Whenever lovers of suburbia have gathered to share their thoughts, they have been mercilessly howled down by the black-clad politically correct inner-city-living cultural elite who control the metropolitan planning process. We are mostly too scared and/or too polite to counter the screeches of this zealot minority. But despite this unholy assessment, I think that the concept of low-density suburban sprawl will live on in the hearts and minds of ordinary Australians. The average Aussie likes a three-bedroom brick veneer on a quarter-acre block with a front and back yard”.

Forced high-density and health

A February 2006 report by Professor Bart Cummings shows a key factor in people’s happiness is the density in which they live. A study of 4 million Swedes provides some insight into this. It found that the rates for psychosis were 70% greater for the denser areas and there was a 16% greater risk of developing depression. We now know why in past decades high-rise developments were also called suicide towers.

Yet the high-density policy persists.

Communities continue to fight overdevelopment in such diverse localities as Ryde, Ku-ring-gai, Bundeena, Ettalong and Toukley

Planning Minister Frank Sartor has announced horrifying legislative changes which will allow him to override democratically elected local councils. Without any limit or justification, he will be able to appoint a planning administrator or panel to carry out a Council’s planning functions including setting controls and giving consent. The Council then must reimburse the Government for the remuneration, costs and expenses!

It is ironical that when Frank Sartor was Lord Mayor of Sydney he produced a publication called “Unwanted Legacies” which decried the manner in which the Land and Environment Court overrides the wishes of the community as it enforces Department of Planning densification policies.

Is Planning Minister Frank Sartor of 2006 the same man as Lord Mayor Frank Sartor of 2001? He no longer seems concerned about developments that contravene the wishes of the community. We wonder why.

The fight must go on!

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Tony Recsei, President

