PRESERVING AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST GARDEN SUBURB

P.O. BOX 85, HUNTERS HILL, N.S.W. 2110

27 June 2014

Barry Smith
The General Manager
Hunters Hill Council

Dear Barry,

Re Hunters Hill Council's Draft Budget

The Trust has examined Council's latest financial budget and forecast, which leaves the Council running at a sustained loss for not only this financial year, but for each year into the future. The Trust is concerned that this will mean Council's assets will be even more exposed to future sell-off and consequently that this will impact on Council's ability to ensure the continuing preservation of Hunters Hill's unique character and heritage.

The recent sale of No 10 Cowell Street is one obvious example where Council-owned heritage has taken second place to short-term financial benefit.

This decision (and others such as the proposed conversion of the Town Hall into apartments) is an example of the financial pressure that is being brought to bear on the municipality as a result of previous budgetary decisions.

We note that Hunters Hill Council's Charter states that Council is not the owner of any assets, but merely the custodian and trustee. The Trust is concerned that Council is failing to live up to the community's expectations as the custodian of our heritage.

The Trust is also concerned about the level of expenses incurred in the payments to consultants to assess the Gladesville Shopping Village DA. Lumped together with the associated in-house costs this is a substantial amount of money. Council's draft budget includes a sum of $400,000 associated with this.

We note that these expenses will be a continuing budgetary drain as the assessment process is ongoing and will need to be repeated for each revised proposal.

Clearly the sound financial management of our Municipality is directly related to Council's ability to ensure the continuing maintenance and protection of Hunter Hill's unique character and heritage. The apparent need to sell 10 Cowell Street and the requirement to finance the ongoing assessment of the Gladesville DA are just two examples that give The Trust cause for concern in this regard.

The Trust looks forward to hearing from Council that our concerns are acknowledged and how these concerns are being addressed.

Yours faithfully,

Tony Coote

CC Councillors, Hunters Hill Trust membership