



### From the President's Desktop...

The forthcoming Council election on 4 December is one of the most important since the Trust was formed over 50 years ago. Our cultural, built and natural heritage is under increasing pressure with losses and impacts escalating in recent years. We know this is in part due to State Government policies, but this is our chance to have influence over what comes next!

That is why we need strong **Independent** representatives to fight for our community values. We live in a community that cares about its environment and wants stronger protections for it. The Trust supports those candidates who have a genuine interest in maintaining the character of Hunters Hill. This must be a priority for those seeking to be elected to our Council.

## LOCAL ELECTIONS - WHAT'S AT STAKE?

- ❖ The future of our Town Hall
- ❖ Potential overdevelopment of Hunters Hill Village
- ❖ Potential for inappropriate development at Henley and Gladesville Town Centre

The Trust has responded to major proposals by Council over the course of this term and documented how our current councillors have voted on these issues. We feel this is a more reliable indicator of their views than some of the promises made at election time. Overleaf is a summary of those projects and councillors' voting records to help inform your voting choices.





## REVIEW OF MAJOR PROJECTS & COUNCILLORS' VOTING RECORDS

### Local Housing Strategy

The LHS was prepared by Council to comply with requirements for State dwelling targets for our municipality up to 2041, as prescribed by the Department of Planning, Industry & Environment and the Greater Sydney Commission.

Council took the opportunity to propose **additional** dwelling targets, including multi-storey construction, over and above those required. In fact Government targets for the LGA were quite modest and **will be easily met** by already approved developments in the pipeline.

The majority of development would go to Gladesville where traffic congestion and parking are already recognised as problematic. Forcing higher density here is inequitable. It enables even greater profit to the shopping centre owner/developer with little benefit to residents and shoppers.

The chief beneficiaries from increasing dwelling targets will be developers and not the community, unless Council retains the existing height controls when the Local Environment Plan is reviewed next year.

Examples of the current push for bigger developments are already very obvious in our municipality, as solid single houses with established gardens and trees, are replaced by multi-storey structures filling the whole site and leaving little room for green space.



One of the many houses sacrificed in the push for increased density

In spite of considerable community opposition, Council voted to adopt the LHS by 4 votes to 2, even rejecting a modest amendment put forward by Councillor Jim Sanderson to limit height restrictions.

#### Voted for adoption of the LHS

Councillors Miles, Collins, Krassoi & McLaughlin

#### Voted against adoption of the LHS

Mayor Williams & Councillor Sanderson

### Property Strategy

The Draft Community Infrastructure Plan (now renamed the Draft Property Strategy) is Council's 'blueprint' for our municipality for the next 10 years. If it proceeds as originally proposed, it will have major implications for the future character and amenities of Hunters Hill including:

1. The commercial leasing of Town Hall offices with Council's Administration moved to a new multi-storey development at Hunters Hill Village, where nos. 40-48 Gladesville Rd (three cottages, the Community Hall, and Croquet Club) are seen as a **'redevelopment opportunity'**.
2. Re-development of the current low scale, leafy entrance to the existing village for commercial space, retail and residential housing, with access via streets already clogged with traffic.
3. Development plans for Henley and tower blocks in the Gladesville Masterplan.

#### Community concerns include:

- a. No needs analysis, justification business case or financial risk assessment for the proposed developments.
- b. Failure to make concept drawings, showing potential footprint and height of development at Gladesville Road, publicly available, despite these having been seen by the Property Advisory Committee.
- c. Lack of transparency around the deliberations of the Property Advisory Committee and potential conflict of interest for the Chair, Councillor Zac Miles, whose employer's website states: *"...an alternative provider of finance to property developers and commercial real estate borrowers"* and whose association with the property industry is at best ambiguous.

Community feedback was strongly against the development proposals, but Council represented the Property Strategy unchanged, for approval at its meeting on 26 April 2021. In light of community opposition, Councillors voted (4 votes to 2) to investigate *'options and associated financial modelling'*.

As part of the Property Strategy, it appears Council has considered the \$4.75m Public Spaces Legacy Grant for Figtree Park as a means to facilitate new development (as detailed opposite) at Hunters Hill Village.

The two design Options for the Park show the remaining four Gladesville Rd buildings (*no. 48 removed to facilitate a new Park entry*), replaced by the footprints of three development sites. In spite of the Property Strategy not yet being adopted, Council seems to indicate that the fate of these buildings, and of the low-scale, leafy entry to the village, is a fait accompli. This makes a mockery of their Grant application statement to *"Maintain the character of Hunters Hill.... by protecting heritage cottages on Gladesville Road."*



Also, contrary to the Grant statement of **'retaining the croquet club'**, Option 2 removes the croquet lawn, making this Option appear more attractive. It seems an attempt to manipulate the outcome in favour of a design that better facilitates development along Gladesville Rd. This flies in the face of the community sentiment below. At **87 'Likes' and 7 'Dislikes'**, it should rank no. 3 in the Top 3 comments - but was omitted from Council's Report.

*"This is a lovely community hall that is used by a range of community groups and people. The croquet green is also used by the local high school for students to do croquet as a sporting activity. The croquet club covers the cost of preserving the natural green and it is a wonderful activity for all"*

This appears to be yet another push for a predetermined outcome favouring **'knock down and rebuild'** as the only answer to development. Good design and adaptive re-use should be the first consideration.

#### Voted for adoption without investigating further options

Councillors Miles & Collins

#### Voted against adoption until further options are investigated

Mayor Williams & Councillors Sanderson, Krassoi & McLaughlin

### Boronia Park Reserve

Our heritage park provides the community with multi-use space and open vistas, increasingly rare as Sydney rapidly grows. Sadly this will be lost.

Council's DA to locate an oversized 'Sports & Community Facility' between Ovals 1 & 2 has now been approved by the Local Planning Panel. Despite the successful amendment by Councillor Sanderson to reduce the footprint, it will require removal of mature native trees to satisfy the determined ambition of the Rugby Club to site their clubhouse here.

This outcome was facilitated by the revision of the Plan of Management in 2020 which contrived to detail the location, scale and design of the building within the Plan. The approval of the DA by the Local Planning Panel then became a formality. This went against the overwhelming preference of the community to upgrade the Grandstand and locate new facilities alongside.

The funding of \$1,500,000 in NSW Government grants, also intended for other purposes, will now be used for the Club. Their 20 year licence with its peppercorn annual rent, will burden ratepayers with ongoing heavy maintenance costs while leaving the heritage Grandstand un-renovated.

**Voted to adopt Plan of Management:** Mayor Bennett, Councillors Miles, Collins, Krassoi, McLaughlin & Sanderson (after amendments)

**Voted against adopting Plan of Management:** Councillor Williams

### Gladesville Reserve

Council was granted \$2M from NSW Government to upgrade the playing field at Gladesville Reserve.

Some sporting interests propose conversion to synthetic turf to increase their usage, but residents are concerned that this will severely limit access. A fenced off plastic surface would disadvantage the local population and visitors by preventing other uses such as picnicking, jogging and dog walking. It will also be harmful to wildlife.

An analysis by Councillor Jim Sanderson found that Council would have approx \$1,000,000 to spend on improving other facilities, if natural turf is used, and recent improvements in natural turf are now allowing increased usage. Maintenance of artificial turf would require a sinking fund, funded in part by outside bodies paying premium rates to use the playing field, as its surface will need replacing every 10 years and shock pad every 25 years.

The problems of synthetic playing fields are acknowledged in a recent report to the NSW Government and include:

- Synthetic surfaces are hotter; they raise surrounding air temperatures, and may even be unusable on hot days.
- Greater rates of injury from abrasion.

**Voted to seek further information prior to adoption:** Mayor Williams & Councillors Sanderson, Krassoi & McLaughlin

**Voted against seeking further information:** Councillors Miles & Collins



**Preserving our heritage**

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**Why not join us?**

and help swell the number of voices speaking up for our unique municipality

**Become a member:**  
[www.huntershilltrust.org.au](http://www.huntershilltrust.org.au)

**Renew your membership:**  
Single/Family membership \$30/\$50

Payment by bank transfer to CBA Bank  
BSB: 062000 Act No: 16211909  
Acct Name: Hunters Hill Trust

### The Heritage of Hunters Hill

Available at Hunters Hill Post Office  
HH Museum and Lost & Found Department  
Alexandra Street, Hunters Hill

*We acknowledge the Wallumedegal of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of all land and water of the Hunters Hill local government area and pay respect to their elders past, present, and emerging.*



**Boronia Park - mature trees will be felled and the view across to the Grandstand will be obliterated by the two-storey building**



## COUNCIL ELECTIONS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### YOUR PREFERENCES WILL DECIDE THIS ELECTION

Three of the newly-formed Independent Groups (including a mayoral candidate) have no previous history on this Council. This could appear to offer diversity, although we don't yet know where these new groups will direct their preferences - or if indeed they are truly '**Independent**'. Check 'How to Vote' cards for preferences as Groups will suggest theirs by giving voting directions for another Group or candidate. Cards may not be handed out at the polling booth but you can view them online from 22 November at the Electoral Commission's website <https://elections.nsw.gov.au/>

Preferences will make a major difference as to who comes out the winner, so if you are unsure as to where your chosen Group will be directing their preferences, just number **ALL** the Group squares **ABOVE** the horizontal line on the ballot paper in the order you wish, starting with your no. 1 choice. By doing this, in the event that your chosen Group is not successful, you can be sure that your preferences will flow to your second, then third choice and so on.

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#### Mayoral candidates

There will be a separate ballot paper for the Popularly Elected Mayor. The four candidates are Ross Williams, Richard Quinn, Zac Miles and David Guazzarotto. Again, number **ALL** four squares in order, starting with your no. 1 choice, to ensure your vote goes where you want it to.

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It is critical for our municipality to be well managed and directed during the next term. We must elect a Mayor and Councillors whom we can trust to tread a careful path and make the right planning decisions for our heritage and environment. Bear in mind the Local Environment & Development Control Plans will be reviewed next year and **Council could permit greater height and density of development**. So please discover what each Group and Mayoral Candidate **really stands for** and vote for those whose values you share.

## THE LOSS OF OUR TREES

With the ravages of climate change front of mind we have been assessing the cumulative effect of Development Applications resulting in the removal of trees (see our story in the *December 2019 Journal* on our website) [www.huntershilltrust.org.au](http://www.huntershilltrust.org.au)

**Just in the last 12 months, at least 68 mature trees** have been removed, following the loss of **147 during the previous two years**. This is taking a terrible toll on our environment and the pictures below taken in 2011 and 2018 show the serious impact this is having on our suburbs, gardens and tree canopy (contrast this with North Sydney Council who have just announced their plan to give 300 Jacaranda trees to Kirribilli residents).

Statewide our trees are under threat. A Mirvac development proposal to build 600 dwellings on the IBM site adjacent to Cumberland State Forest in West Pennant Hills was vigorously opposed for many years, with over 4000 submissions against. This was eventually approved and the existing award-winning IBM buildings will now be demolished with up to 1,253 trees to be clear-felled.

These contentious planning decisions, giving precedence to building jobs, particularly during Covid, are paradoxically short-sighted when governments everywhere are now acknowledging the climate and species extinction crisis we're all facing.



Barons Crescent 2011 (left) and 2018 (above)