



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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Private Members Statement

KOGARAH DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN

Mr CHRISTOPHER MINNS (Kogarah) [12.46 p.m.]:

I inform the House today of a major issue in my electorate, the proposed Kogarah Development Control Plan. The changes to the plan are causing significant consternation within my electorate; they are seen as arbitrary and without context. There is a paucity of information from the council as to why certain areas have been selected for extreme development changes and others have been let off almost scot-free. Kogarah City Council, on its city redevelopment website, insists that the proposal is designed to increase density in areas where "there is existing infrastructure to accommodate the increase in residents".

Local residents are extremely dubious of this claim when the proposal allows for seven-storey, that is 21 metres, high-rise development in residential areas along the Princes Highway that are two kilometres from the closest train station while at the same time has no new development around and directly adjacent to Oatley train station—a station on which the State Government has lavished services, commuter parking and infrastructure since its election. My great fear is that residents who live in

Carlton South are being sacrificed with a proposal for inordinately large-scale developments in their area.

There has been a genuine community-spirited rally in opposition to this plan. Locals accept that some development is needed and that St George must have its fair share. However, the New South Wales Government's malicious decision to axe hundreds of services a week from Kogarah train station while at the same time encourage major new developments is particularly galling. This Government has axed 45 per cent of train services in Kogarah—a massive and completely unnecessary reduction in public transport services to a thriving and dependent community.

The Government has conducted a pro forma and patronising community consultation which revealed universal opposition to the plan. The Government has ignored that opposition and continued unabated. Community engagement on these major changes, which will affect residents' land values and quality of life, has not been good enough—a couple of books at the council chamber, a poorly patronised website showing community maps that are difficult to read and, crucially, no community meeting prior to submissions closing. To paraphrase Edmund Burke, elected councillors only owe the people of Kogarah their judgement. Indeed, they do not have to do what the majority would like but, at the very least, they have to listen to what their electors are saying.

It is essential that a public forum is held to explain the changes and to clearly show why development is occurring in some areas and not others; our community is demanding it. The great fear of Kogarah residents is that the proposed changes will exacerbate the already chronic parking problems within the Kogarah central business district. The local chamber of commerce has reported to me that business is steadily dropping from the Kogarah High Street as locals—who want to spend their money in the local shopping precinct—are forced to go elsewhere. It is unclear how Kogarah council, which last year collected \$1.2 million in fines from local motorists, will deal with the existing parking crisis, let alone the extra load expected from massive new developments proposed around St George High School.

As a start to the process of alleviating parking pressures in Kogarah, I encourage Kogarah council to approach the New South Wales Government about acquiring the land that is currently the St George TAFE car park to be used as a multistorey car park. This approach

should take place long before agreeing to the new city plan. If the council is right and the State Government is forcing Kogarah into these changes, then the State Government must come to the party and help with the infrastructure that is desperately needed.

To allow more time for community submissions, I call on Kogarah council to extend the consultation period beyond 29 May and to conduct a public meeting to explain to the community why these areas have been rezoned. Development and increased density in an area such as St George is inevitable and, to some degree, changes will be implemented. However, councils must not be seen to pursue changes that appear arbitrary, secretive and out of place. I acknowledge the hard work of the people of Kogarah.org and their organisers for the tireless work they do on behalf of our community and I thank the resident action groups of St George for participating in the well-attended, community-led meetings.