



Vincent Street
CESSNOCK 2325.

29 April 2008

To All Councillors

You are hereby notified that the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chambers, on Wednesday, 7 May 2008, immediately following the conclusion of the Corporate and Regulatory Services Committee Meeting, for the purpose of transacting the undermentioned business.

**B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER**

AGENDA:

PAGE NO.

(1) APOLOGIES.

(2) CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES.

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 16 April 2008 and Extra Ordinary Meeting held 30 April 2008

(3) MAYORAL MINUTES.

(4) COMMITTEES' REPORTS.

Report of Infrastructure & Services Committee Meeting held on 7 May 2008

Report of Strategic & Community Services Committee Meeting held on 7 May 2008

Report of Corporate & Regulatory Services Committee Meeting held on 7 May 2008

(5) OFFICERS' REPORTS

GENERAL MANAGER

18/2008	Report of the Major Projects Committee Meeting held 17 April 2008	2
19/2008	Draft Management Plan	7
20/2008	Information News Sheet	8
21/2008	Investigation by Conduct Committee	9
22/2008	Planning Reforms – Request for Contributions	10
23/2008	Land for Affordable Housing	11
24/2008	Number of Councillors	14

(6) BUSINESS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN.

(7) COUNCILLORS' REPORTS.

(8) QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

(9) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2008

MAYORAL MINUTES

DEPUTY MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 6/2008

SUBJECT: REVISED DEVELOPMENT (INFRASTRUCTURE) CONTRIBUTIONS FRAMEWORK

BACKGROUND

In October last year the NSW State Government announced its intention to implement a revised Development (Infrastructure) Contributions Framework which would reduce the amount of funds Councils could collect from developers to help build essential local facilities such as playgrounds, childcare facilities and community centres. The revised framework would also see the State Government:

- limit the types of infrastructure Councils could collect levies for; and
- take control of the developer levies from growth centre Councils, and other Councils on a case by case basis.

In response to strong objections from the LGSA, Councils and the community, the Government has made some concessions in relation to the funding of community infrastructure and has advised that it would only take control of the funds from the six growth centre Councils.

Despite this, the amount that can be collected from development levies will still be reduced and the range of facilities to which the funds will be applied will be more restricted. Further, Councils will no longer have the option to levy s94 contributions in established areas but will have to resort to the more limited contributions under 94A.

Developers have been lobbying for the revised framework for some time which if implemented will significantly benefit them through the opportunity for increased profit.

Separately to this, in November last year the Government released its *Discussion Paper on the Planning Reform Agenda* which outlined 90 recommended changes to the NSW Planning system.

The paper was put on exhibition over the Christmas/New Year break which limited the opportunity for response.

Even though 538 submissions were received, Department of Planning officials were given just a week to consider them before the draft legislation was finalised.

Local Government, in its submission, raised a number of concerns with the changes, including:

- an expanded role for private companies (private certifiers);
- the implementation of various Panels and arbitrators, controlled by the Minister for Planning, to make local planning decisions; and
- the expansion of exempt and complying development which would remove the communities' right to have a say over much of the development in their neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDATION:

Given that many of the State Government's proposed changes to planning, outlined in the Draft Exposure Bills released on 3 April, will have far reaching implications for local communities; the views of relevant stakeholders have been ignored; and that private companies and developers stand to significantly benefit from the new laws, Cessnock City Council calls for:

- a freeze on the implementation of The State Government's Draft Exposure Bills (Planning Changes); and
- the Department of Planning further investigate the ramifications for Councils in NSW.

To: **Ordinary Council Meeting**
7 May 2008

COUNCILLOR R J PYNSENT
DEPUTY MAYOR
2 May 2008

OFFICERS' REPORT

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 18/2008

**SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE MAJOR PROJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
17 APRIL 2008**

A meeting of the Major Projects Committee Meeting was held on 17 April 2008 and reports as follows:

Committee Members present were His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Clarence OAM, (in the Chair), Councillors Bedford, Pynsent, Parsons and Troy, General Manager, Acting Director Strategic & Community Services (S Eade). In attendance at the meeting was Councillors Davey and Main, Director Infrastructure & Services, Acting Director Corporate & Regulatory Services (D Fitzgerald), Acting Manager Marketing & Economic Development (J Lorriman), Finance & Administration Manager, Management Accountant, Recreation Planner, Council's Estate Consultant (Mr A Vogan), Personal Assistant to General Manager.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 1/2008

SUBJECT: CALLING OF TENDERS FOR STAGE 4 AT HEBBURN ESTATE

Moved: Cr Bedford

Seconded: Cr Pynsent

RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Tenders be called for the remediation and construction works associated with Stage 4 at Hebburn Estate and part of Peace Park.
2. A report be prepared on the outcome of the Tender process for Council's consideration.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 2/2008

**SUBJECT: HEBBURN ESTATE - RECOVERY OF COSTS FROM AND TRANSFER
OF ALLOTMENT TITLES TO THE EXISTING TENANTS**

Moved: Cr Bedford

Seconded: Cr Pynsent

RECOMMENDATION that:

1. (a) Council charge each of the tenants the following GST inclusive price for their parcel of land:

No. 12 Date Avenue	\$94,400
No. 17 Date Avenue	\$94,400
No. 31 Date Avenue	\$94,400
No. 52 Date Avenue	\$94,400
No. 15 Date Avenue	\$81,800
No. 20 Date Avenue	\$81,800
No. 23 Date Avenue	\$81,800
No. 4 Date Avenue	\$73,800
No. 6 Date Avenue	\$73,800

No. 7 Date Avenue	\$73,800
No. 11 Date Avenue	\$73,800
No. 53 Date Avenue	\$73,800
No. 56 Date Avenue	\$73,800

(b) Council charge each of the tenants the following GST inclusive price or current market value for their parcel of land:

No. 5 Date Avenue	\$120,000
No. 9 Date Avenue	\$120,000
No. 18 Date Avenue	\$140,000
No. 32 Date Avenue	\$140,000
No. 14 Date Avenue	\$120,000
No. 22 Date Avenue	\$140,000
No. 51 Date Avenue	\$120,000

2. These prices be offered as a once only opportunity otherwise full market value of that day will be paid once title is to be transferred.
3. Basis for tenant payments and transfer of title of the allotment are:
 - i) The tenant obtain finance from a lending institution.
 - ii) Council agree to receive periodic instalment payments of the agreed amount over an agreed period of time.
 - iii) Council agree that following the payments by the tenant of an amount of 40% of the agreed total amount to transfer Title to the tenant with the balance owing being secured by a First Registered Mortgage in favour of Council.
 - iv) In the case of an elderly tenant, the agreed amount owing to Council be paid at the time that the property is sold by the tenant or should they be deceased then at the time the property is sold as part of their Estate by either the Executor or Beneficiary.
4. Council’s Seal be affixed to all necessary legal and contract documents relevant to the sale of the tenanted lots.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT NO. 3/2008

SUBJECT: VINEYARD GROVE ESTATE - REPRICING OF LOTS WITHIN STAGES 7, 9, 10 & 12

Moved: Cr Bedford

Seconded: Cr Parsons

RECOMMENDATION that:

1. The sale prices be revised as follows:

Lot 709	\$169,000	Lot 710	\$169,000
Lot 711	\$169,000	Lot 715	\$155,000
Lot 716	\$139,000		
Lot 906	\$159,000	Lot 907	\$157,000
Lot 911	\$155,000		

Page 3 – General Manager’s Report No. 18/2008

Lot 1001	\$155,000	Lot 1003	\$155,000
Lot 1004	\$155,000	Lot 1013	\$155,000
Lot 1202	\$155,000	Lot 1207	\$155,000

2. The General Manager be delegated authority to vary sales prices within Stages 7, 9, 10 and 12 by a maximum of 10%.
3. Council’s Seal be affixed to all necessary legal and contract documents.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT NO. 4/2008

SUBJECT: VINEYARD GROVE ESTATE - PRICING OF STAGE 11

Moved: Cr Pynsent

Seconded: Cr Troy

RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Sales prices for Stage 11 allotments be as follows:

Lot 1101	\$153,000	Lot 1102	\$159,000
Lot 1103	\$159,000	Lot 1104	\$159,000
Lot 1105	\$152,500	Lot 1106	\$152,500
2. Sales prices for Lots 1107, 1108 and 1109 be set by the General Manager under delegated authority.
3. The General Manager be delegated authority to vary sales prices within Stage 11 by a maximum of 10%.
4. Stage 11 allotments be released for sale after another six (6) lots either within Stages 7, 9, 10 or 12 have been sold.
5. Council’s seal be affixed to all necessary legal and contract documents relevant to the sale of Stage 11 Vineyard Grove lots.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT NO. 5/2008

SUBJECT: IDENTIFYING OF SITES WITHIN STAGE 11 AT VINEYARD GROVE FOR DUAL OCCUPANCY DEVELOPMENT

General Manager’s Report No. 5/2008 was withdrawn.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT NO. 6/2008

SUBJECT: CESSNOCK COMMUNITY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE – PROPOSED MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION FRAMEWORK

Moved: Cr Pynsent

Seconded: Cr Bedford

RECOMMENDATION that the information be noted (refer Enclosure 1 for copy of report).

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. The Acting Manager Marketing & Economic Development enquired that as the last Major Projects Committee Meeting was held in August 2007 whether the Committee would prefer more regular meetings to be held, ie on a 3-4 month time span.

The Mayor recommended that the Committee meeting again in 3 months time to provide Council with an update prior to the Local Government Elections.

RECOMMENDATION that Council endorse the report of the Major Projects Committee Meeting held on 17 April 2008.

To: **Ordinary Council Meeting**
7 May 2008

B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER
28 April 2008

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 19/2008

SUBJECT: DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Acting Director Strategic & Community Services, Mr Simon Eade, reports:

The Draft Management Plan for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2011 has been provided for Councillor's information.

The Draft Plan provides a summary of Council's proposed activities, principle policies and revenue raising proposals, and sets out strategies for the next three (3) years. It also includes performance targets.

The Draft Management Plan incorporates the Budget and Fees and Charges.

The Draft Plan must be exhibited publicly for a minimum of 28 days and Council must formally adopt the final Management Plan by 30 June, after taking into account any public submissions.

The proposed timetable for considering and adopting the Management Plan is:

7/5/08	Adopt Draft Management Plan at Council Meeting
10/5/08	Public Notice seeking Community Comments and Submissions
6/6/08	Community Submissions Close
18/6/08	Council adopts Management Plan

Submissions may be lodged at Council's offices or the Libraries at Cessnock and Kurri Kurri.

RECOMMENDATION that:

1. Council adopt the Draft Management Plan for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2011.
2. The Draft Plan be placed on public exhibition for 28 days and advertisements be placed in the local press calling for public submissions.

To: **Ordinary Council Meeting**
7 May 2008

B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER
28 April 2008

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 20/2008

SUBJECT: INFORMATION NEWS SHEET

Included in the Enclosure document is the Information News Sheet relative to:

Staff Appointments
Outstanding Questions Without Notice

RECOMMENDATION that the information be noted.

To: **Ordinary Council Meeting**
7 May 2008

B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER
29 April 2008

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 21/2008

SUBJECT: INVESTIGATION BY CONDUCT COMMITTEE

This report has been prepared by the Conduct Committee for Council's consideration as required by Clause 10.4.6 of Council's Code of Conduct.

BACKGROUND

The General Manager received requests from Councillor Besoff and Councillor Pynsent to refer Councillor Olsen to the Conduct Committee regarding his alleged threatening comments to Councillor Besoff at the Council Meeting of 21 November 2007.

The General Manager did not initially refer this matter to the Committee as he considered that the matter had been dealt with by Council at its meeting of 12 December 2007 when it determined a Censure Motion put forward by Councillor Smith. However, following advice from the Department of Local Government, he referred these matters to the Conduct Committee for consideration.

CONDUCT COMMITTEE

The Conduct Committee consisted of Mayor, Councillor Clarence OAM, General Manager and Mr Mallik (Mallik Rees Lawyers). The Committee met at 3.00 pm on 13 February 2008 in the General Manager's Meeting Room and in accordance with Clause 10.4.4 of Council's Code of Conduct, resolved to engage Mr John Peedom to make enquiries into the allegations regarding Councillor Olsen's conduct and to report back to the Committee.

The Committee met again at 11.30 am on 17 April 2008 to consider Mr Peedom's report.

Mr Peedom's determination on the two allegations and his conclusion that Councillor Olsen did not commit the breaches of the Code of Conduct alleged against him were noted.

It was determined that the report should be received by the Committee and be referred to Council for consideration. A copy of the report is provided in Enclosure 1.

RECOMMENDATION that Council consider Mr Peedom's report.

To: **Ordinary Council Meeting**
7 May 2008

B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER
30 April 2008

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 22/2008

SUBJECT: PLANNING REFORMS - REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Included as Enclosure 1 is a letter from the Local Government Association of NSW/Shire Association of NSW requesting a contribution from Council towards the campaign against some of the State Government's proposed changes to the planning system.

Council is requested to contribute an amount of \$1,334.07.

This amount of money could be provided for in the next quarterly budget review.

RECOMMENDATION that Council contribute \$1,334.07 towards the Associations' campaign against some of the State Government's proposed changes to the planning system.

To: **Ordinary Council Meeting**
7 May 2008

B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER
1 May 2008

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 23/2008

SUBJECT: LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Council at its meeting of 17 October 2007 considered General Manager's Report No. 52/2007 and resolved that:

- “1. Council agree in principle to the sale of up to nine (9) blocks of land at Hebburn Estate Weston to Compass Housing Services Co Ltd at a discounted rate, for the purposes of affordable housing.
2. A further report be submitted for Council's consideration after the Hebburn Estate budget is revised and negotiations with Compass Housing Services finalised.”

The following has taken place since that time.

1. The budget for Hebburn Estate has been revised and has been the subject of a briefing to Councillors. The calling of tenders for Stage 4 of the Estate is the subject of a recommendation from Council's Major Projects Committee to this Council Meeting.

Development costs per lot is approximately \$62,000.

2. A revised cash flow budget has been prepared and has also been the subject of a briefing to Councillors. This budget provides for the development of Stage 4 of Hebburn Estate in 2008/2009 with further stages to occur in years 2010 and 2011. Projects are able to be brought forward or moved back depending on Council's financial position at that time.
3. Further discussions have taken place with Compass Housing and they have indicated the following:
 - i) The funds they have received from the State Government need to be spent within 2 years.
 - ii) To deliver the proposed development they require two (2) parcels of land equivalent in area to three (3) and two (2) residential lots respectively.
 - iii) Their preliminary proposal involved seven (7) accommodation units on the three (3) lot parcel and four (4) on the two (2) lot parcel.
 - iv) They would be prepared to pay up to \$63,000 per lot.
Note: Compass were advised that this was the approximate cost of development per lot in Hebburn Estate in earlier discussions.
 - v) In order to meet the timeframe in regard to expenditure of the grant funds, a commitment from Council to provide the land is required as quickly as possible.

Earlier discussions between Compass and Council Officers had centred around five (5) lots in the proposed Hebburn Estate development being made available for affordable housing. A plan is included as Enclosure 1 showing the lots discussed and included as Enclosures 2 and 3 are the preliminary plans developed for this land.

The lots shown in Enclosure 1 are included in Stage 1C of the Hebburn development and at this stage will not be developed for a number of years. This timeframe will not allow Compass to meet their requirements regarding expenditure of the grant funding received from the State Government, even if Council were to commit to providing the land.

In order to address the timing issue, the possibility of the three (3) lot parcel being developed separate to the remainder of the Hebburn Estate development has been considered given the location of this parcel. An amendment to the current development consent would need to be submitted and approved, however, preliminary enquiries indicate that this may be possible without the significant expenditure required to develop the whole of Stage 1C. It should be noted that under the draft Comprehensive LEP this land is proposed to be zoned R2 which would not permit medium density housing. It would be possible to amend the proposed LEP to zone this parcel R3 if Council were supportive of the proposal.

It would not be feasible to develop the two (2) lot parcel at this stage without significant expenditure and as such an alternative location was identified.

Included as Enclosure 4 is a plan showing two (2) lots in Lightfoot Street Cessnock owned by Council which are of sufficient area to accommodate the requirements of Compass. The land has not been identified for any community purpose and importantly is proposed to be zoned R3 under the Comprehensive LEP which would permit with consent the type of development proposed. Compass have indicated that this land would be suitable for their requirements.

If Council is supportive of progressing its involvement with Compass in regard to the provision of land for affordable housing then a number of actions are required.

- i) Submit an amended application to subdivide as a separate parcel the proposed three (3) lots on Cessnock Road in Hebburn Estate.
- ii) Cost the works required by any conditions of consent if approval is granted to the amendment and assess the impact of these costs on Council's cash flow budget.
- iii) Investigate the actions required to amend the proposed Comprehensive LEP such that medium density development would be permissible with consent on the subdivided parcel.
- iv) Advise Compass Housing that subject to satisfactory resolution of items (i) to (iii), Council is prepared to sell the three (3) lot parcel of land in Hebburn Estate and the two (2) lots in Lightfoot Street Cessnock to Compass Housing for the provision of affordable housing.

The price per lot will need to be negotiated after final costings are determined, however, it is likely to be about \$63,000.

It is anticipated that any contract would be subject to development consent being obtained by Compass for their proposed developments.

If Council is not supportive of progressing this matter then Compass should be advised accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION that:

1. The following actions be undertaken:
 - i) An amended application be submitted to subdivide as a separate parcel the proposed three (3) lots on Cessnock Road in Hebburn Estate.
 - ii) If approval is granted, the costs of creating the land as a separate parcel be determined and the impact on Council’s cash flow budget be assessed.
 - iii) Investigations take place into actions required to amend the proposed zoning of this three (3) lot parcel to allow future medium density affordable housing.
2. Council advise Compass Housing that it is prepared to sell land at Hebburn Estate Weston and Lightfoot Street Cessnock to Compass Housing for the provision of affordable housing subject to the following:
 - i) The satisfactory resolution of actions outlined in Recommendation 1.
 - ii) Agreement on the price per lot to be negotiated.
 - iii) Development consent being obtained by Compass Housing for the affordable housing developments.

To: **Ordinary Council Meeting**
7 May 2008

B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER
1 May 2008

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 24/2008

SUBJECT: NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

The Minister for Local Government, Mr Paul Lynch, has advised that Councils will be given an opportunity to reduce the number of Councillors elected at this year's Local Government Elections.

Amendments have been made to the Local Government Act 1993 to provide the opportunity for Councils to reduce Councillor numbers without having to resort to holding a Constitutional Referendum. A resolution must be passed by Council outlining its intention and then a public notice be given providing 21 days for submissions to be made. If after considering submissions Council determines to proceed with the reduction in Councillor numbers then application must be made to the Minister by 30 June 2008. The Minister has stressed that this opportunity to reduce Councillor numbers without a Constitutional Referendum is for a limited time only.

Cessnock City Council currently has four (4) Wards of three (3) Councillors plus a popularly elected Mayor, making a total of thirteen (13) Councillors. Section 224.1 of the Local Government Act provides that Councils must have at least five (5) and not more than fifteen (15) Councillors. The preference is that there be an uneven number of Councillors.

While cost is not the only factor to be taken into account when considering the desirable number of Councillors, the draft 2008/2009 budget provides for an amount of \$18,760/ Councillor. This covers Councillor fees, mobile phone, fax, conferences etc.

If Council were of a mind to consider reducing the number of Councillors then the simplest way would be to reduce the number of Councillors per Ward to two (2). With the popularly elected Mayor this would make a total of nine (9) Councillors with subsequent cost savings of about \$75,000.

It was not previously permissible to have less than three (3) Councillors per Ward, however, the current amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 now make this possible.

Council can also now alter the number of Wards but not where this would result in no Wards, without a Constitutional Referendum. This would require public exhibition for a period of 28 days and require consultation with the Electoral Commission and Australian Statistician and is a more time consuming process.

The matter is one for Council's consideration and determination.

RECOMMENDATION that Council consider whether it wishes to reduce the number of Councillors at the 2008 Local Government Elections.

To: **Ordinary Council Meeting**
7 May 2008

B R MORTOMORE
GENERAL MANAGER
1 May 2008

BUSINESS OF WHICH WRITTEN NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

NOTICE OF MOTION

It is my intention to move at the meeting of 7 May 2008 the following:

Motion

That Cessnock Council not appoint any new Directors until after the Department of Local Government has completed its inquiry and Cessnock Council has responded to it.

Rationale

The issue of governance and staff management feature prominently in the terms of reference for the Departmental Inquiry under s.430 of the Local Government Act 1993. The adequacy of management and governance at Cessnock Council is clearly an issue which some members of the community and the Department believe should be looked at more closely. Therefore the Inquiry may have findings and/or recommendations for Cessnock Council for future action regarding these issues which could influence the choice of skills in Directors. Therefore the Council should not make these appointments until the Inquiry has made its recommendations.

Sgd: Clr James Ryan

Date: 29 April 2008

NOTICE OF MOTION

It is my intention to move at the meeting of 7 May 2008 the following:

Motion:

Given that: Many of the State Government's proposed changes to planning, outlined in the Draft Exposure Bills released on 3 April, will have far reaching implications for local communities; the views of relevant stakeholders have been ignored; and that private companies and developers stand to significantly benefit from the new laws, Cessnock Council calls for:

- A freeze on the implementation of The State Government's Draft Exposure Bills (Planning Changes); and
- A Parliamentary Inquiry into the NSW State Government's Draft Exposure Bills (planning changes).

Rationale

In October last year the NSW State Government announced its intention to implement a revised Development (Infrastructure) Contributions Framework, which would reduce the amount of funds councils could collect from developers to help build essential local facilities such as playgrounds, childcare facilities and community centres. The revised framework would also see the State Government:

- * limit the types of infrastructure councils could collect levies for, and;
- * take control of the developer levies from growth centre councils, and other councils on a case by case basis.

In response to strong objections from the LGSA, councils and the community, the government has made some concessions in relation to the funding of community infrastructure and has advised that it would only take control of the funds from the six growth centre councils.

Despite this, the amount that can be collected from development levies will still be reduced and the range of facilities to which the funds will be applied will be more restricted. Further, councils will no longer have the option to levy s94 contributions in established areas but will have to resort to the more limited contributions under 94A.

Developers have been lobbying for the revised framework for some time, which if implemented will significantly benefit them through the opportunity for increased profit.

Separately to this, in November last year the Government released its *Discussion Paper on the Planning Reform Agenda*, which outlined 90 recommended changes to the NSW Planning system.

The paper was put on exhibition over the Christmas/ New Year break, which limited the opportunity for response.

Even though 538 submissions were received, Department of Planning officials were given just a week to consider them before the draft legislation was finalised.

Local Government, in its submission, raised a number of concerns with the changes, including:

- An expanded role for private companies (private certifiers);
- The implementation of various Panels and arbitrators, controlled by the Minister for Planning, to make local planning decisions; and
- The expansion of exempt and complying development, which would remove the communities' right to have a say over much of the development in their neighbourhood.

These views were shared by many other industry and community bodies.

The Draft Exposure Bills were released on 3 April 2008, and despite the wide ranging concerns expressed by councils, the community and other stakeholders, were not amended to reflect the concerns of relevant stakeholders. The strongly opposed revised developer levies framework was also included in the bills.

The laws will:

- * add more layers of red tape and cost ratepayer's millions of dollars to implement;
- * take decisions away from local communities; and
- * impact on councils' ability to provide crucial services.

Yet the Government has only exhibited the draft laws for 3 weeks before it intends to pass them.

Many of the laws will benefit private companies and developers.

As a result there are questions over the motivation for the Government's changes to the NSW planning system, which are being rushed through and with disregard to the views of communities, councils and other stakeholders - who will have to live with the implications of the changes.

Sgd: Clr James Ryan

Date: 29 April 2008