

V.O.W.W.

Voice of Wallalong and Woodville
Including Localities of Rural West Ward



We would like to challenge the opinion piece written by local developer Jeff McCloy on 15th September 2023.

On the 23rd August 2023, Commissioner Bish, following a hearing in the Land and Environment Court, handed down her decision on the Kings Hill Development Concept Plan. The case was brought before the Court after the proposal to develop 517ha of land to the north of Raymond Terrace was previously rejected by the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Planning Panel and a conciliation hearing failed.

As with any such court cases, local residents and community groups are invited to make submissions to the court. There was not a “placard – waving environmental greenie/ environmental activist” in sight. All submissions, including those from the proponent, are thoroughly scrutinised by highly qualified professional staff including ecologists, scientists, engineers and government department officials.

The Commissioner visited the site and then conducted the court case which any interested party could view via video link.

Jeff McCloy, a prominent developer in the Hunter area, stated in an article he wrote to the Newcastle Herald (15th September), that the process of development had been high jacked by a bunch of greenies. Not only is he misguided, but it is an insult to the Commissioner and on the integrity of the Land and Environment Court.

Commissioner Bish found that the proposal did not satisfy several government Acts, but added that the site was “not suitable for the proposed (and future) development” and “not in the public interest.”

Developers such as Mr McCloy should abide by the ruling without resorting to the generalisation that everyone is a greenie and hell bent on stopping development.

Mr McCloy’s opening words in his opinion piece states that “change is all around us”. Yet he resists it with the kind of developments he proposes.

Developers must present more sophisticated models for housing developments, that are more in keeping with current expectations, that actually consider the surrounding environment and conserve biodiversity, limit climate change affects, prevent heat sinks, and are more in keeping with social expectations and based on scientific and engineering expertise rather than economic rationalisation alone.

Community groups know only too well the urgent need for housing but we also respect the need to properly consider how and where that housing is to be provided, with appropriate infrastructure assured.

We don't find it surprising that journalists and politicians are now listening, as "these people" (the term used by Mr McCloy) are now in the majority and are concerned for the health and well-being of future generations.

Margarete Ritchie
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21st September 2023