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ASSURANCE REVIEW NEEDS TO FOCUS ON STATE GOVERNMENT PLANNING POLICIES

The City of Ryde has called for the Greater Sydney Commission's assurance review into planning in the Ryde LGA to focus on unfair planning controls imposed by the State Government on the Ryde community.

At the request of NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, Greater Sydney Commission Chief Commissioner Lucy Turnbull will conduct an assurance review into the Department of Planning's work in the Ryde LGA, with a particular focus on the Macquarie Park Investigation Area.

Despite not knowing the terms of reference or being officially informed of the review, Council is specifically calling on the commission to investigate the State Government's Priority Precinct Program, which has increased the capacity of dwellings in the area to 15,000.

This has resulted in massive residential developments such as Lachlan's Line and Ivanhoe Estate being granted approval by the Department of Planning and Environment without the appropriate infrastructure and amenities to support them.

The review also needs to look at unfair housing targets set by the commission itself for the Ryde LGA. The State Government-backed Greater Sydney Commission has forced the City of Ryde to develop strategies to provide 7,600 new dwellings in the LGA by 2021, whereas Hunter's Hill has a target of only 150. Council has called for lower targets, but has been ignored by the State Government.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said: "This assurance review, whatever that means, is another desperate pre-election stunt by a local Liberal MP Victor Dominello. He's running away from his Government's over development record in Ryde and trying to blame everyone but himself."

Cllr Laxale, said claims there was a "disconnect" between Council and the Department of Planning and Environment about planning decisions in Ryde LGA were wide of the mark.

"The only disconnect evident here is between Mr Dominello, the State Government and the Ryde community," Cllr Laxale said.

"The City of Ryde has had a range of unfair planning policies forced onto it by the State Government and has been working extremely hard to work within these policies in the face of extreme community anger.

"The State Government approved the Macquarie Park Priority Precinct despite only 30 per cent community support. They tore down the Ivanhoe Estate and will increase dwellings from 259 to 3500 and they pushed ahead with Lachlan's Line (2700 units) despite fierce backlash from residents.

“On behalf of the community, the City of Ryde has been calling for the State Government to change its approach to planning in the Ryde LGA and abandon the government’s priority precincts in our LGA, but this has been met with silence.

“This is the same State Government that wanted to impose the Medium Density Housing Code on the City of Ryde.

“The code – deferred until 2020 after the City of Ryde campaigned against it – would have meant more than 10,000 low density lots in the Ryde LGA would be available for development into two storey flat buildings under the State Government’s changes. This could result in an additional 60,000 residents in our low density neighbourhoods.”

Clr Laxale said the review also needed to look at the NSW Government’s failed decision to take the ability to approve development proposals away from Councils and into the hands of independent planning panels.

“It is not just a fluke that this decision to take away the democratic voice of local government has coincided with so much overdevelopment being approved in the Ryde LGA. In the last four years, 64 per cent of all dwellings approved in Ryde have been through the State Government and these stacked planning panels,” he said.

“The State Government has allowed these planning panels to act as rubber stamp factories. They’ve approved over 10,000 dwellings in Ryde since 2011 despite significant objections from the community.”

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