

Our Reference: 6041#465.MG.kp

The Hon, Paul Scully MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
Via [Minister's Portal](#)

13 December 2023

Dear Minister,

APPIN REZONING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSURANCE REGARDING BUSHFIRE RISK

The NSW Government's decision to accelerate rezoning of Appin for 13,000 additional homes is due to come into effect this month. Council recently resolved to again write to you to highlight Council's position that housing development in Appin is premature without a fully funded, binding infrastructure delivery plan linked to the delivery of housing.

Council is meeting and exceeding our housing targets, has ample zoned land in Wilton ready to support the NSW Government's push for more housing, and remains firm in the view that given the enormity of the infrastructure gaps in both growth areas, any development in Appin should occur after Wilton and not before 3036, unless binding funds to fully meet the infrastructure needs of both areas can be guaranteed. The demand for infrastructure is already stretched in Wollondilly, with developers in Wilton struggling to access essential services such as water, waste water and roads so that houses can be built. This is what is holding up housing delivery in our Shire and there is a real risk that the development at Appin may further slow delivery in Wilton as the two growth areas compete for limited infrastructure funds. Any growth at Appin will face similar challenges, such as its current lack of a water infrastructure plan and these needs have to be addressed early.

A binding plan for utilities and basic infrastructure is needed before development occurs, and despite multiple requests from the elected council and repeatedly raising concerns, we remain in the dark as to what this plan will look like, how it will be funded and how our community can have certainty, that it meet our needs and will be delivered in a timely manner linked to the delivery of binding housing thresholds.

It is well known that Wollondilly has limited road infrastructure to support the growth expected. There are key corridors that are the responsibility of Transport for NSW and we are aware of the cost burden that this places on an already overcommitted agency. The lack of commitment to upgrade roads supported by plans and funds will see our existing and future residents placed at risk should the road infrastructure not be provided early.

Appin, and the Wollondilly community more broadly, has a long history of suffering from significant fires. Whilst we appreciate that mass evacuation is not a strategy generally encouraged by the RFS, there is significant community concern around the capacity of the existing infrastructure to facilitate this should it become needed, with both Councils HAEMS study and Walker Corp's Bushfire Evacuation Traffic Study showing that in such a situation it would likely take in excess of 8 hours for Appin to be evacuated.

My council seeks assurance from the RFS as the responsible agency that appropriate infrastructure will be in place at every stage of the development, *based on confirmed and funded infrastructure for the Appin area* and that such infrastructure *allows for reasonable evacuation times and sufficient access to firefighting water* such that there is not an unacceptable risk to life during an emergency.

Until this and the other significant infrastructure issues with Appin are resolved we ask the government not proceed further with this rezoning due to potential unacceptable risk to life.

Council is seeking your commitment to prioritise the wellbeing and safety of our residents, including the investment and delivery of key supporting infrastructure such as roads should it proceed with plans for housing in Appin. We want certainty that our community is safe. I attach a copy of Council's resolution.

I look forward to your response. For further information please contact Council's Director Shire Futures, Martin Cooper on 02 4677 1100 or Martin.Cooper@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely,



Matt Gould
Mayor of Wollondilly Shire

CC: Federal Minister for Environment and Water, The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, The Hon Paul Scully MP
Minister for Western Sydney, Deputy Premier NSW, The Hon Prue Car MP
Member for Campbelltown, Greg Warren MP

RESOLUTION 344/2023 28 November 2023

That Council:

1. Prior to the Appin (part) Precinct rezoning coming into effect in December 2023, write to Premier Chris Minns, Planning Minister Paul Scully, Western Sydney Minister Prue Car and Member for Campbelltown Greg Warren, noting:
 - a) Councils long held position that any development in Appin is premature due to a lack of basic enabling infrastructure
 - b) The precedent set by development in the Hawkesbury being scrapped owing to risk to life from flooding
 - c) The precedent of significant development in Ingleside on the Northern Beaches being scrapped due to the risk of the area being “exposed to extreme to catastrophic bushfire risk, as well as concerns about the ability to evacuate the precinct safely in a bushfire event.”.
2. That the correspondence should note the following:
 - a) That despite repeatedly raising concerns, the elected council has still not been consulted with, nor provided any details on a binding infrastructure plan for Appin.
 - b) The long history of major fire events impacting Appin and the wider Wollondilly area.
 - c) Evacuation times from Appin as listed in HAEMS and the October 2022 WSP Australia report for Walker Corporation, Bushfire Evacuation Traffic Study (Project No PS120530) and the inherent risk to life that a rezoning will bring with it.
 - d) The complete lack of any suitable water infrastructure plan currently.
 - e) Request that the RFS be asked to assess the bushfire risk based on confirmed and funded infrastructure for the Appin area (instead of notional future infrastructure that lacks a clear delivery plan) and provide written assurance that this infrastructure allows for reasonable evacuation times and sufficient access to firefighting water during every stage of any development so that in the event of a bushfire there is not an unacceptable risk to life during times of emergency.
 - f) That until such time as the RFS gives the assurances in point E that there is sufficient infrastructure is in place, the NSW government not proceed with the rezoning due to potential unacceptable risk to life.
3. That correspondence is also sent to Tanya Plibersek MP, Minister for Environment & Water, noting the above and Councils further concerns in relation to:
 - a) koala population and their listing as endangered in NSW under the EPBC Act.
 - b) increasing risks to human life due to climate change during bushfire
 - c) EPBC Act requirements to promote ecologically sustainable development
 - d) That the Cumberland Plain Woodland are a critically endangered ecological community and the first listing under the Commonwealth.
4. That all correspondence listed above form part of media release from Council.