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# MEDIA RELEASE

## NSROC COUNCILS KEEP IT LOCAL

The mayors of the seven member councils of the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) joined widespread protests against the State Government's proposed changes to current planning legislation. At a meeting held at Willoughby Council on Tuesday 22 April, the mayors of Ryde, Hornsby, Willoughby, Lane Cove, North Sydney and Ku-ring-gai Councils, as well as a councillor from Hunters Hill Council, agreed on a range of local and regional actions as part of the Local Government and Shires 'Keep it Local' campaign against the proposed changes.

The actions include writing to residents alerting them of the changes, putting up banners and posters in prominent locations, handing out leaflets at train stations and shopping malls, advertising in local papers and council newsletters, holding rallies and creating displays in council reception areas and civic facilities. The objective of the campaign is to educate residents about the changes and urge them to petition their state members not to support the planning bill in parliament through the [www.Keepitlocal.org.au](http://www.Keepitlocal.org.au) website. The actions will be implemented in the next few weeks as it is anticipated that the changes to the planning legislation introduced by the Planning Minister, Frank Sartor, will be put before parliament for a vote in early May.

The Mayor of Willoughby Council and President of NSROC, Pat Reilly said that the legislation had to be defeated as it would further concentrate power in the hands of the planning minister at the expense of communities. "I think many people have no idea what the Minister is trying to do" he said. "If they are warned about what he is trying to slip through parliament then they would march in the streets" he added. "Once again we have the Planning Minister giving himself more power and taking away the right of the community to have their voices heard."

The Mayor of Hornsby Council, Nick Berman, said he needed to get his residents across the proposed changes because they would mean private companies would have a much greater role in assessing and approving development. "The Planning Minister seems ready and willing to do what ever the development industry wants" he said. "He is deliberating strengthening the hand of developers so they can do more construction with less scrutiny. I don't think that's what the community in Hornsby wants" he added.

The Mayor of Lane Cove Council, Ian Longbottom, condemned the proposed changes as a further demonstration that the Planning Minister was contemptuous of local democracy. "Local Government and its community is best placed to determine what happens in local neighbourhoods. The changes strip the power from local communities and individual residents as well as absolving developers from making a fair contribution to the infrastructure necessary to enable sustainable growth."

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