

ROYAL REHABILITATION CENTRE SYDNEY SITE PROTECTION BILL

Second Reading

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) [10.23 a.m.]: I move.

That this bill be now read a second time.

The object of this bill is to protect the site of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney at Putney, which is referred to in the bill as "the site", by ensuring that Ryde City Council remains the consent authority for any application to carry out development on the site, by prohibiting the carrying out of excessive development on the site, by ensuring that satisfactory alternative arrangements are made for users of the site displaced by any development, including the Riding for the Disabled Association of New South Wales, by protecting certain buildings on the site from demolition or alteration and requiring them to be maintained, by reserving part of the site as public open space, and by requiring community consultation in relation to the carrying out of development on the site and the management of that public open space.

Ryde City Council will become the consent authority. Clause 4 provides that the council is the consent authority in relation to the carrying out of any development on the site. Clause 5 of this bill prevents the making of any declaration under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 that the carrying out of development on the site is a project to which part 3A of that Act applies, or that has the effect of making development on the site a project or part of a project to which part 3A of that Act applies. Any such declaration has no effect to the extent to which it applies to the site. Clause 6 provides that development on the site cannot be carried out except with development consent under part 4 of the Environmental Planning And Assessment Act 1979. Clause 7 of the bill provides that the only development that may be carried out on the site is development for the purposes of a detached dwelling-house, development for the purpose of a new purpose-built specialised rehabilitation facility or demolition or alteration of a building.

Clause 8 provides that proposed sections 6 and 7 do not affect the continuation of any existing use of the site for the purposes of a rehabilitation facility. Clause 9 imposes a limit on residential development on the site. The council must not consent to the carrying out of development of the site for the purposes of a detached dwelling-house if, as a result of the development, the total floor space area of dwelling-houses on the site will exceed 51 per cent of the area of the site. Clause 10 provides that the council must not consent to the carrying out of development on the site unless it has taken into consideration the concept plan prepared under proposed part 6. Clause 11 provides that the council must not consent to the carrying out of development on the site unless it is satisfied that satisfactory alternative arrangements are made for users on the site who are displaced by the development, including the Riding for the Disabled Association of New South Wales.

Clause 12 requires the council to assess each of the buildings on the site immediately before the commencement of the proposed Act and to determine which buildings are worthy of protection from demolition or alteration and which are not. Clause 13 provides that the council must not consent to the carrying out of development that involves the demolition or substantial alteration of a building that the council has determined is worthy of protection from demolition or alteration under the proposed part. Clause 14 requires the council to maintain all buildings that it has determined are worthy of protection from demolition or

alteration and that are on land reserved as public open space under proposed part 5.

Clause 15 provides for the reservation as public open space of that part of the site that is not being used as a rehabilitation facility or the subject of development consent after two years. Clause 16 empowers the owner of land reserved as public open space to require the council to acquire the land. Clause 17 requires the council to landscape any land so acquired. Clause 18 requires the council to consult the community consultative forum established under proposed part 7 on the management of the land so acquired. Clause 19 requires the council to prepare and implement a concept plan for the site. Clause 20 requires the council to consult with the community consultative forum in preparing a concept plan.

Clause 21 provides that the council must not consent to the carrying out of development on the site unless it is satisfied that the local community has been properly informed of the proposed development. In particular the council must not consent to an application for development consent unless the development application has been publicly notified in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1997 as if it were advertised development and the council has taken into account any objections received as part of that notification procedure. Clause 22 makes it the duty of council to establish an effective procedure for community consultation concerning the management of land at the site reserved as public open space and the development of the concept plan for the site. Clause 23 provides for the establishment of a community consultative forum. Clause 24 provides that the proposed Act applies despite any provision of any other Act, or of any regulation or environmental planning instrument, and that nothing in the proposed Act prevents the making of an environmental instrument that imposes additional restrictions on development on the site or on the council's ability to consent to such a development. Clause 25 provides for the making of regulations under the proposed Act.

This bill empowers Ryde City Council and the people of Putney and Ryde with their own destiny. This is a significant issue in my local area. Two major protest rallies have been held, one with 1,200 people at Putney Public School in late 2005 and more recently a large public rally in Ryde outside the electorate office of the Deputy Premier. Almost 3,000 people have signed petitions opposing the overdevelopment and thousands of people have taken part in public demonstrations because of their concern. I pay tribute to and acknowledge the wonderful work of the Coalition Against Private Overdevelopment [CAPO], which is incorporated under the Putney District Progress Association, to fight the overdevelopment. The Coalition clearly speaks for the association, the community of Ryde and the Lane Cove electorate. This proposed overdevelopment sits on the boundary between the electorates of Lane Cove and Ryde. Lines marked on a map do not stop large amounts of traffic, particularly on Morrison Road, where the traffic levels are well above acceptable levels.

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted.

Debate resumed from 2 March 2006.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) [10.02 a.m.]: It is with great pride that I once again today stand shoulder to shoulder with my residents and community in protecting my electorate from gross overdevelopment. As I stated last week, we have more than 2,500 signatures on petitions opposing this overdevelopment and thousands have marched in my electorate and other electorates protesting against this proposal. I must pay particular tribute to each and every one of those people in Putney and surrounding areas who have supported our plight in an area that is becoming the target of more and more overdevelopment. The area is already suffering from extensive infrastructure and traffic problems. So far it has been able

to maintain an appropriate level of housing. However, once again, we are confronting a proposal from a greedy developer to turn one of the most magnificent areas of Sydney—in fact, of the country—into something reminiscent of the inner city.

I pay tribute particularly to Rolf Clapham of the Coalition Against Private Overdevelopment [CAPO], Graham Clift, Ted Webber, Susan Macgregor, Eleanor Chaine, Simone Chaine, Rona Agnew, Simone Galvin and Kylie Rennie for their assistance and leadership in this matter. I am proud to stand by their side and with the community, because this is a battle we cannot afford to lose. There is one thing a government cannot do—we cannot do it in Sydney—and that is create more open space and land. If this development goes through under Minister Frank Sartor, we will see the destruction of a magnificent community.

I will briefly go through some of the issues that I will be dealing with at a later date. Increases in traffic and collector roads as a result of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney [RRCS] residential development must be eliminated. I share the community's strong position that there should be only entry and exit portals from any residential development via Victoria Road and onto the local road system. The proposal put forward by the RRCS will significantly increase traffic movements by approximately 3,000 to 4,000 movements a day on already overloaded local and collector roads. According to Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] guidelines, Morrison Road, which is a collector road, is already carrying more than twice the acceptable traffic volume. The RRCS traffic plan does not take into account the systematic traffic problems that already exist in the area.

These problems were identified more than six years ago by the local residents' group Concerned Residents for Traffic Control. As a result, the City of Ryde Council commissioned the Geoplan Traffic Study 2001. That study included major community input and consultation. The RRCS plan also ignores the effect of other major apartment developments, particularly at Meadowbank, that are impacting on the Putney area. This development will affect not only the people of my electorate but also those in surrounding electorates. The medium density proposed by the RRCS plan is unacceptable and should be reduced to low density as indicated by the City of Cities Plan, which was announced by this Premier. We have always maintained that the development should adhere to the guidelines in that plan. The plan specifies that the character of 80 per cent of Sydney's suburbs should be maintained. Victoria Road and the suburb of Putney are not designated as a development corridor within the plan.

If the RRCS development is approved as currently proposed, it will contravene the plan and be totally at odds with the wishes of the more than 2,000 people who have signed petitions opposing it. It will also lead to displacement of Riding for the Disabled, a voluntary service that has become an integral part of the local community. A few years ago, a book was published entitled *It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us*. Thousands of local residents, supported by CAPO and me, have warned that Putney is that village and that it is going to be destroyed. If that occurs, residents—not from my electorate but from surrounding electorates—will be very unforgiving.

The RRCS consultant reports do not take into account the 1,500-plus new dwellings that have been recently constructed at nearby Meadowbank and the numerous developments under consideration. Together with the RRCS development, these will have a major impact on local schools and social infrastructure. Public transport will be taken to the brink. According to local residents, it is already at the point of no return and this will push it over the edge. As a result, the New South Wales State Government and the taxpayers will be forced to pay for the additional infrastructure. If an excessive RRCS development goes ahead, CAPO, the

community and I believe it will be a case of privatised profit and socialised costs—and I emphasise that point.. This is unacceptable in good governance and it must not be allowed to happen.

As I previously stated, more than 2,000 people have signed petitions confirming their opposition to the RRCS plan. Prior to CAPO's involvement, a number of residents, with very significant support from other local residents, lobbied local and state authorities about numerous traffic and overdevelopment issues, in some cases as far back as 1998. Many similar groups are operating in surrounding areas. These groups have widespread support and they will not go away. The concerns of these thousands of residents must be addressed. I reiterate: This is totally outside the guidelines of the Premier's City of Cities Plan.

The community has been very reasonable throughout this fight against greedy overdevelopment. It is happy with a 2A level of development. The developer could make a sizeable profit from that scale of development; it would maintain the status quo in terms of the level of housing and it would not have an adverse traffic impact. As I said, the traffic volume is already above RTA guidelines. A 2A development is reasonable. The State Government must examine this issue. I throw out a challenge to the Minister to visit the site to see for himself the problems that already exist because of the inadequate road infrastructure. This development is ill conceived and totally out of character with the area. If this development goes ahead it will destroy my community, and it will destroy the community of Putney and surrounding areas of Ryde. I place on record the comments of Mr Rolf Clapham, the President of the Coalition Against Private Overdevelopment [CAPO]. Rolf is an outstanding citizen who, in conjunction with his committee members and members of the community, has fought very hard in his opposition to this overdevelopment. He stated:

I am amazed at the arrogance of the RRCS board. They were given an opportunity to meet with the residents to resolve this issue. Instead, they have resubmitted their proposal which still includes a massive 900 dwellings, and even increased the 757 units in the six-storey towers to 798 units. All this on a site that local authority guidelines suggest is suitable for only up to 200 residential homes consistent with the character of the area.

This overdevelopment is creating a huge public backlash in the Putney and Ryde areas. Australians are pretty easygoing, but you can push them only so far before they react and respond in such a manner that I think will have ramifications throughout Sydney. This is not the only group or community that is fighting overdevelopment. It is overdevelopment based on a number of flawed processes. It is outside the Premier's City of Sydney Plan. What is the point? The Premier might just as well tear up the plan for all the use it is.

It is stupid to contemplate an additional 3,000 to 4,000 people on top of the large residential development that is already taking place in Meadowbank and Rhodes. Sydney's infrastructure just cannot handle it. A lot of that area was developed for returned servicemen. As the honourable member for Epping knows, many soldier settlers moved into the area and very few people owned a car. We are not talking about Cherrybrook, or the planned suburbs of the north west, the west and the south west; the roads were not built to accommodate such a large volume of traffic. A number of retirement villages, nursing homes and schools are located in the area, and there are already an overwhelming number of vehicle movements.

There have been a number of car accidents and accidents involving pedestrians. With the additional vehicle movements each day on the local roads, it will not be long before there is a fatality. This is one of the most horrific developments I have seen in my time in this House and during my service in local government. It is ill conceived and ill thought out, and it must

not go ahead. If this city is to follow reasonable planning procedures, the only answer to the developer should be, "No. Go away and come back with something reasonable that fits in with the community, and abide by good and effective planning." Once again, I stand shoulder to shoulder with my residents to protect our community from this overdevelopment. Our job in this House is to protect the people who have elected us. I look forward to continuing this debate at a later date.