

Sue Higginson MLC
Chair Portfolio 7 Committee
Inquiry -Transport Oriented Development Programme TOD
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

24 June 2024

Dear Ms Higginson

RE: Portfolio 7 Committee TOD Inquiry – Dr Peter Tulip evidence, 7 June 2024

Thank you for the opportunity for Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc (FOKE) to give evidence to the Portfolio 7 Committee TOD Inquiry on Monday 20 May 2024.

FOKE wishes, however, to make a complaint regarding Dr Peter Tulip's - Chief Economist - Centre for Independent Studies evidence at the Inquiry on Friday 7 June, 2024 regarding Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc.

FOKE considers parts of Dr Tulip's evidence as false and misleading, particularly his statement about FOKE explicitly wanting "**maintenance of the status quo**".

Quoting from the 'Uncorrected' TOD Inquiry transcript of 7 June 2024:

PETER TULIP: I didn't hear this morning's session, but I did hear the first day session from the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment and the Haberfield residents basically saying that supply and demand doesn't work in the housing market, that you can increase supply without it reducing the cost of housing. There is just an enormous amount of evidence to the contrary of that. I don't think that you can get any respectable economist that will agree with the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment or the Haberfield residents. There are errors out there that need to be dispelled.

CHAIR: Mr Tulip, how does that work in the current context? We have heard so much evidence that no matter what we do now in terms of increasing density through the planning system and changing zoning that the delivery won't come online in real terms, given the real circumstances we are experiencing. This is not a theoretical exercise. We have heard that supply in any form will not likely come on for another 10 or so years, in terms of the actual delivery. How do you grapple with that in this framework?

PETER TULIP: There are certainly some pockets of the housing market—a few in Sydney, and more numerous in other States—where constraints other than planning matter. Without those planning constraints, they have much more affordable housing, and prices are close to cost, so costs matter. It was just in Channel Nine news yesterday—a report in Roseville, just a few blocks from where I live. A real estate agent was saying that developers are going to be offering \$12 million for each house that they can buy near Roseville Station. Why are they paying such huge amounts of money? It is only because they want to build housing on it. It doesn't make sense to pay \$12 million for a block of land and just keep it the way it is. They have plans to change it.....

"PETER TULIP: No, on the first day you had the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment (our emphasis) and the Haberfield residents that explicitly wanted maintenance of the status quo (our emphasis), and they are the decisive political force opposing what we are suggesting. The politicians will be able to speak to this better, but they are an extremely powerful political group. They have large support within all three political parties. Defence of status quo is in fact the main opposition to what we are saying. I disagree. The

CHAIR: Sorry. I hear what you're saying

PETER TULIP: I think you are right that no experts want defence of the status quo but the public is on a different planet.

BRENDAN COATES: Some members of the public

PETER TULIP: This is why I think your inquiry can do an awful lot of good by relating expert opinion that the status quo is indefensible. That does need to be explained to the public.” End quote.

FOKE did not advocate for the “status quo” in its submission to the TOD Inquiry or in its evidence on 21 May, 2024.

Shortly after Dr Tulip gave evidence, an online video of the TOD Parliamentary Inquiry was edited and posted on Sydney YIMBY X by Phill Balding see: <https://twitter.com/baldingphillip>. The same video was also posted on Dr Peter Tulips X on 7 June 2024 see: https://twitter.com/peter_tulip

Dr Tulip's X (Twitter) 7 June 2024 post along with the Inquiry video stated “Sue Higginson and I had an exchange at today's hearing. She said no-one wanted to retain the housing status quo. I replied to her inquiry, such as Friends of Ku-ring-gai and the Haberfield Association wanted exactly that. 1/2 “”Those groups represent influential constituencies. It is true that most experts regard the status quo as indefensible. However, we are yet to convince a large section of the public of that. Inquiries like this will hopefully try to correct public misunderstandings.2/2”.

Dr Tulip lives in Ku-ring-gai, and is a Roseville resident. He is outspoken about ‘wealthy’ NIMBYs and critical of anyone objecting on any grounds to the Government's new housing policies as outlined in Sydney Morning Herald Domain articles: <https://www.domain.com.au/news/governments-need-to-care-more-about-renters-and-defer-less-to-wealthy-homeowners-think-tank-says-1089050/> and <https://www.domain.com.au/news/why-this-economist-would-be-happy-to-have-apartment-blocks-built-in-his-backyard-2-1230922/>

We wish to put on the public record that Dr Tulip's evidence about FOKE is misleading and intentionally discredits FOKE as a community organisation.

We ask that your final report makes note of FOKE's complaint regarding Dr Tulip's evidence.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Cowley
PRESIDENT