

THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL

3 Columbia Court, Baulkham Hills NSW 2153
PO Box 7064, Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153

Telephone +61 2 9843 0555

Facsimile +61 2 9843 0409

DX 9966 Norwest

Email council@thehills.nsw.gov.au

www.thehills.nsw.gov.au

ABN No. 25 034 494 656

21 March 2016

Planning Institute of Australia
Suite 404, Level 4
32 York Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: Ms Marjorie Ferguson

Dear Ms Ferguson

Re: NSW Council Boundaries Review

I refer to your generic letter forwarded to General Managers dated 15th March 2016. I am somewhat surprised and bemused by your correspondence. In the 10 years that I have been General Manager at the Hills Shire Council, I have not on one occasion received any representations from your Institute as to how it may help or support Planners in Local Government. No doubt as with many other developer/planning based associations, most of the time is spent appeasing the whims of developers without considering the impact on Local Government communities or staff involved in day to day operations, whether they be assessment of DA's or strategic planning.

Whilst my Council has been to the forefront of the Reform Agenda and been pro-reform, the statements in your correspondence in terms of the role of Planners I find patronizing and condescending as if I as a General Manager would not know or understand those issues.

In terms of the role of the Planning Institute of Australia, on the second page of your correspondence, it would appear to me that you are somewhat attempting to usurp the role of a more appropriate organisation in this regard being DEPA.

Where was your institute in such activities supporting Local Government planning officers when Local Government and its staff were expected to clean up the mess left behind by many private certifiers or as a minimum to do their administrative duties because they can't even keep a filing system?

When planning officers were faced with the challenges of the affordable housing SEPP, which was neither wanted nor accepted by many Council's or the community, on no occasion have I seen the Planning Institute lobbying the Government for removal of this SEPP. SEPP 65 has resulted in developers in many cases not only over developing sites, but providing product which could only be regarded as little boxes in a row and will do nothing in many situations to provide family type dwellings at an affordable price going into the future and minimize the economic disbenefits of the urban sprawl. There is no support from the Planning Institute of Australia.

In terms of the heading in your correspondence called 'Role of Planners', well hello I am the General Manager and your correspondence seems to imply that I have no understanding of the role of planners.

As indicated above, in terms of the role of the Planning Institute then what you have set out would seem to be more in tune with the charter of DEPA or some other employment organisation.

In conclusion, your correspondence indicates that you would be happy to offer your support to assist Councils. I could make a longer list than those raised above, so where have you been all these years that I have been General Manager at The Hills Shire Council?

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dave Walker', written in a cursive style.

Dave Walker
GENERAL MANAGER