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# Oxford Falls, Review of Submissions

Prepared for Tiffany Developments

11C - 70 Alfred Street  
Milsons Point NSW 2061  
July 2008

**URBIS STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REPORT WERE:**

Director	Roberta Ryan
Associate Director	Jackie Ohlin
Consultant	Sandra Spate, Ian Hay, Hesham Raslan
Support Staff	Jill Yeomans
Job Code	KAJ 18507
Report Number	Draft V1

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## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the results of a consultation process undertaken by Urbis with relation to the proposed development of land at Oxford Falls Road, Frenchs Forest. Tiffany Developments proposes to develop these lands for a retirement living community.

The consultation process identified significant levels of resident objection to the proposed development, however many factors for objection raised by respondents related to issues or features which have a strong capacity to be mitigated. Similarly, many factors raised during consultations regarding objection to the development appeared to be related, with unresolved and long-standing concerns about development at the site.

Major issues identified by residents during the consultation process included:

- traffic and transport impacts,
- pollution concerns, particularly around water pollution (Narrabeen Lagoon) and stormwater run off,
- noise pollution concerns.

In spite of there having been extensive consultation with local residents over many years, requests were also made for more detail on the proposal. A number of respondents expressed the need for more information to be supplied to, and greater levels of consultation with residents.

We suggest there is potential to begin addressing some negatively perceived aspects of the development immediately, such as through discussion with transport service providers and the Ministry of Transport surrounding enhanced public transport provision, which is likely to alleviate concerns around increased vehicular traffic and perceived pedestrian safety and amenity impacts.

# 1 Oxford Falls, Review of Submissions

## 1.1 Introduction

Urbis was commissioned in May 2008 to undertake resident and community stakeholder consultations for the proposed development of land at Oxford Falls Road for a retirement living community. This report provides an overview of the development proposal, the methodology underlying community and key stakeholder consultations, and the results of the consultative process undertaken in June 2008.

Consultations relating to the proposal have been part of a more extensive consultation process regarding proposed development at the site, which has been ongoing since 2006.

## 1.2 Description of the Project

The Department of Planning has received an application for the Concept Plan for a Seniors Living Development and Commercial Uses at Oxford Falls. The proposal is classified as a State Environmental Planning Policy – Seniors Living development and is being considered by the Minister for Planning under part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979) as a major project. The Director General of Planning has issued requirements (DGR) in relation to the proposal which must be addressed before the application can be assessed.

The development proposal at Oxford Falls Road is proposed to include the following:

- a maximum of 400 self care 2 & 3 bedroom apartments and villas
- a maximum of 100 Serviced Apartments (low care)
- a maximum of 60 Bed Nursing Home (high care)
- Additional services/facilities
- Adequate car parking.

The proposal is planned to have a range of structures on the site which will include, residential units, small-scale retail units, recreational facilities, hospitality functions, service buildings, and health and medical facilities. The contours of the site and surrounding areas, layout of buildings, landscaping and planting schemes, and urban design features are such that these structures are not assumed to have a significant impact on views from surrounding properties.

Of particular relevance to this report is the DGRs regarding consultation. It is a requirement that in the preparation of the Environmental Assessment, consultation must take place with 'the relevant local, State or Commonwealth government authorities, service providers, community groups or affected landowners.' To date, consultation has been undertaken with a variety of actors, including service providers, community groups and government authorities, and this report provides an overview of the consultation process affecting local landowners and residents in the vicinity of the development area.

It was understood at the time of undertaking this research that the contacting of relevant State government authorities would be undertaken by those responsible for producing the relevant technical reports. For example, the authors of the Bushfire report would consult with the Rural Fire Service as identified by the DGRs.

## 1.3 Background to Aged Care Need in Northern Sydney

The development of lands at Oxford Falls Road is connected to wider issues of supply and demand for residential aged care in the Sydney region, with demand issues particularly nuanced in Northern Sydney, especially across the Warringah, Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby local government areas. The residential aged care need in Northern Sydney is disproportionate to that of most other areas within the metropolitan region; with a higher than average number of persons aged 65 and over and a significant number of persons expected to require residential aged care in future years up to 2031. By 2031, the

largest increases (measured by volume) for residential aged care living can be expected to emerge from the Hornsby (1,049 additional places in 2031), Warringah (747 additional places), Ku-ring-gai (699 additional places), Pittwater (577 additional places) and Ryde LGAs (553 additional places), with Warringah also being prominent with relation to the need for high care residential aged care, where an additional 1,007 residential aged care places will be required to cope with regionally generated demand.

In light of projected strong demand, Urbis undertook consultation with a representative selection of the community who were randomly selected via telephone survey in 2006. These workshops provided an opportunity to 'test' ideas around the provision of residential aged care in the region and allowed for a workshop to also be conducted, facilitating qualitative analysis of aged care needs and perspectives by residents of the region.

Selected key findings from this survey included:

- 95% of respondents said that the families and carers of older people living in the area would benefit from the proposal for residential aged care development at Oxford Falls.
- Older people currently living in the area were rated as potential beneficiaries by 93% of survey respondents, with strong demand for ageing-in-place.
- Families living in this area who have older relatives living elsewhere at present were seen as being potential beneficiaries of additional facilities by 85.4% of respondents.

Key overall findings from this consultation process included:

- there was widespread support for the provision of additional aged care in the area
- there were no objections identified
- the key features of this proposal respond to the expressed needs of participants during the consultation process.

It is anticipated that the mix of accommodation types, including high- and low-care residential places and the availability of facilities on site for the use of residents can contribute significantly to meeting the demand for aged care with the Warringah LGA and more broadly across the Northern Sydney region.

## 1.4 Methodology

A consultation approach was developed to provide surrounding residents with the opportunity to comment on the proposal through written submissions. A notification letter including a description of the proposal and plans was delivered to residents in the areas surrounding site, with a two week period provided for written submissions in relation to the proposal to be collated. This letter is in appendix A.

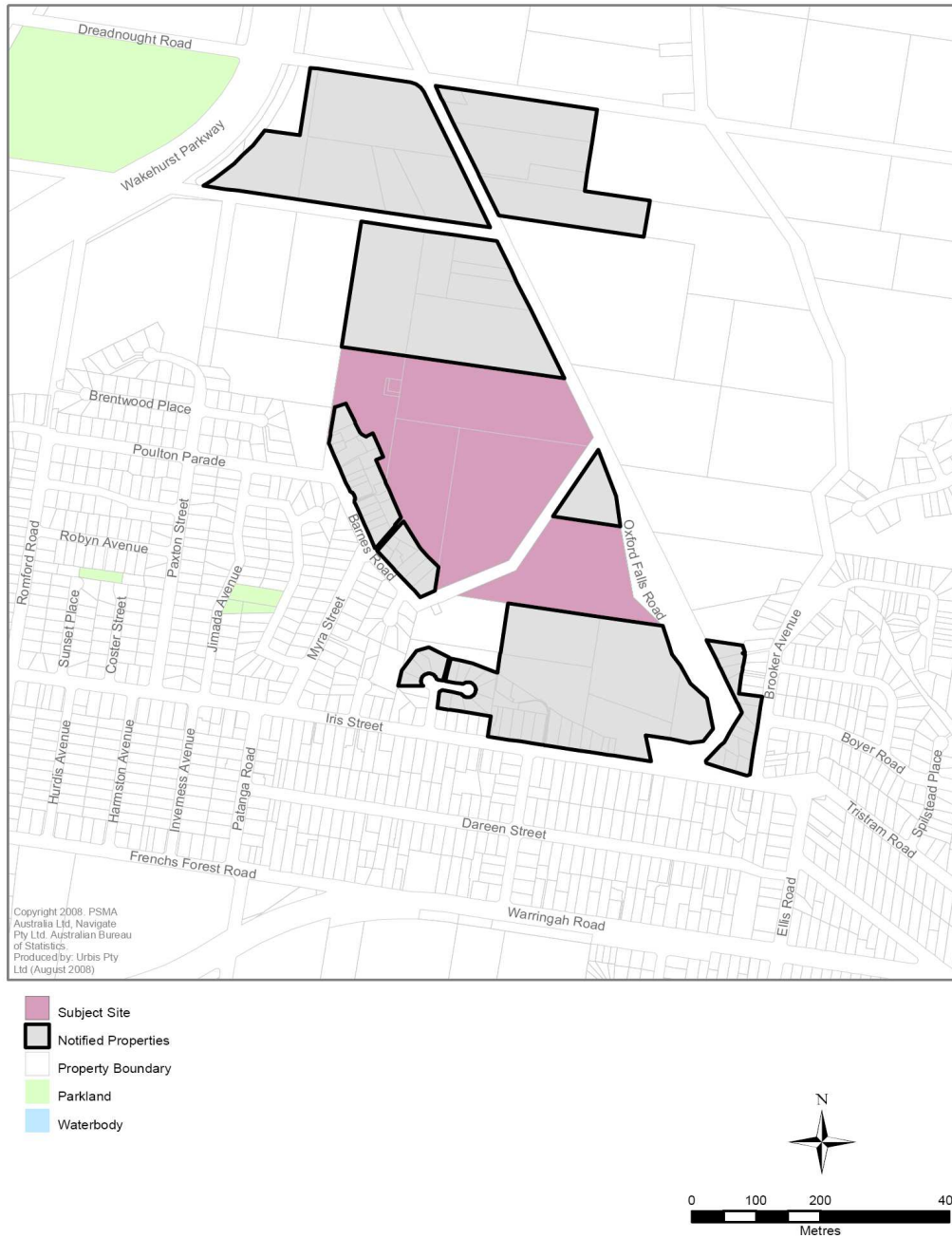
### 1.4.1 Identification of surrounding residents to be included in the consultation

Residential properties adjoining the subject site and those in the immediate vicinity who may have view lines potentially affected by the proposal were delivered or sent a notification letter. These were identified through a four step process:

- Identification of surrounding parcels of land
- Examination of contours and street patterns as a step in identifying those potentially affected
- Identification of current occupancy using aerial photos
- Site visit to deliver and make an on-site assessment of other properties potentially affected, e.g. a number of properties on Iris Street were omitted from a desk-based assessment, yet were included following an on site assessment.
- Richard Lamb and Associates (Visual Impact Assessment Consultants) identified a number of properties to potentially be at greater risk of visual impacts. These residents were offered a visit to

their properties by a visual impact assessment consultant to assess the specific visual impact on their property.

Figure 1 – Properties included in the notification



## OXFORD FALLS NOTIFIED PROPERTIES

Note there were a number of parcels which adjoined the site yet, based on aerial photos and site inspection, did not appear to have residences located on them and were predominantly bushland or heavily vegetated parcels.



### 1.4.2 Stakeholders and community organisations

Stakeholders and community organisations were identified in response to the DGEARs requirements, which included specification of “relevant community organisation(s)” and “relevant indigenous agency contact”. Consultation with the relevant indigenous agency, the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC) was undertaken in the preparation of the previous consultation report (Urbis, December 2006). For this reason, the MLALC was contacted by phone to provide an opportunity to comment on the proposal and any changes to the plans.

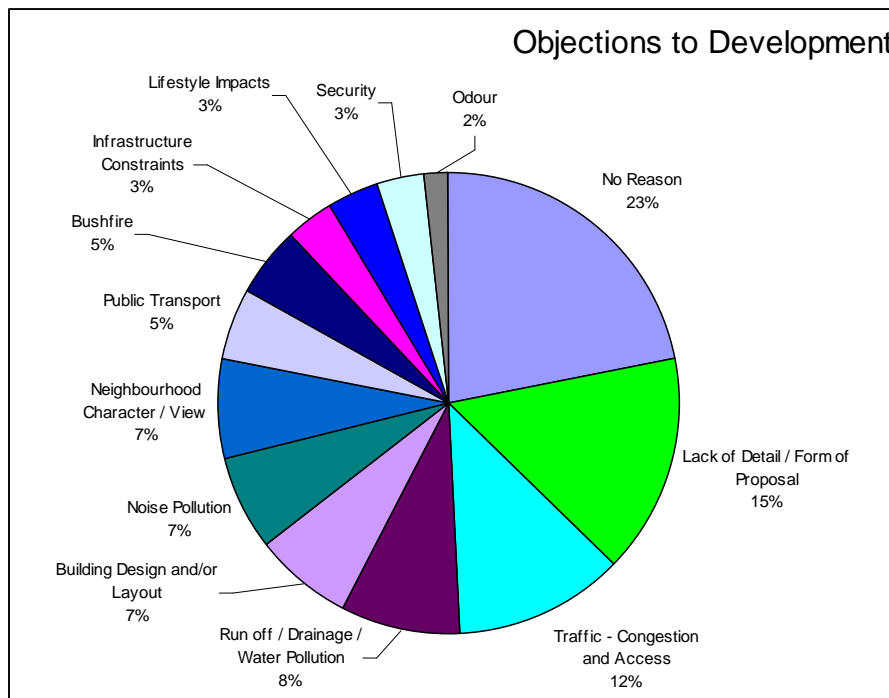
During the preparation of this initial consultation phase, contact was also made with community organisations in the area (National Seniors Association, Northern Beaches Branch, Oxford Falls Action Group (OFAG), Oxford Falls Progress Association (OFPA)) with an invitation to provide written submissions. See letter in appendix B.

## 1.5 Consultation Responses

During June 2008, Urbis undertook community and key stakeholder consultations in the area surrounding the proposed development. The majority of respondents (22) were resident in the suburb of Frenchs Forest, with other responses received from Oxford Falls (5 responses) and Beacon Hill (3 responses, the balance of respondents did not specify their address of residence. An overview of the issues identified by respondents is provided in the table below.

It should be noted that many of the responses (at least eight) appeared to be *pro-forma* based and reiterated concerns expressed in previous consultations.

Table 1 – Overview of Objections – Responses by Category



The following is a summary of issues expressed in submissions received by Urbis.

### 1.5.1 Scale

At least four respondents expressed concerns about the scale of the development, that:

- the size of the proposed development is too large, and that the proposal is an overdevelopment of the site.
- in order to compensate for areas of the site where construction is not permitted, proposed buildings are too big.
- the proposal is unlike previous small scale aged care developments which are more integrated into the local area.

### 1.5.2 Character of the area

Four submissions suggested that the development is out of character with surrounding development, including comments that the proposed development is:

- out of character with the semi-rural nature of the area.
- out of character with existing one and two storey dwellings on large blocks.
- negative impacts on visual amenity for existing residents, including buildings overlooking existing properties.
- Two submissions suggested negative impacts on the bushland surrounds and semi-rural lifestyle of existing residents.

It is noted that one of the responses provided in support of the development by a local resident raised the issue that view lines would unlikely be affected significantly by the development.

Impediments of the lifestyles of local residents by the development seem unlikely for a number of reasons. To date, focus groups on aged care accommodation by Urbis have indicated a desire for integration between the proposed aged care development and activities that cater to a broader demographic of residents, facilitating community building and shared recreation opportunities. Integration on site of activities for younger people and families as well as opportunities for residents to engage with their own families, grand children and so on was seen as important. Suggestions included a children's playground on site or co-location with a child care facility. Close proximity of intergenerational services would need to be carefully managed as there was recognition within the workshop group that extended possibilities for interaction of this nature may not be for everyone.

### 1.5.3 Planning guidelines

At least three submissions indicated that:

- the proposal contravenes Council's LEP.
- the proposal contravenes Metropolitan Strategy guidelines.
- the proposal does not meet SEPP requirements.

At least nine submissions expressed concern about the form of the proposal, including the detail provided.

### 1.5.4 Noise

Four submissions indicated that noise was a significant concern, including:

- increased noise levels particularly at night from the proposed dancing and live shows, restaurant and retail.
- sound resonating particularly due to location in a valley.

### 1.5.5 Traffic, access and pedestrian issues

At least seven submissions drew attention to concerns regarding expected traffic increases, including:

- extra traffic particularly at already congested intersections such as Dreadnought Rd and Wakehurst Parkway and Oxford Falls Rd and Iris St.
- increased bus traffic along Warringah Freeway and other main arteries due to increased numbers of workers travelling to the area during and after construction.
- safety of pedestrians in Oxford Falls Rd particularly between Iris St and the proposed resort, as there are no dedicated footpaths and very narrow verges in some areas and high volumes of traffic in peak periods. This road is currently used by students of Oxford Falls Grammar travelling to and from school.
- the use of the shared driveway at Barnes Rd for access to the site.
- the seeming incorporation of Barnes Rd as part of the proposed site.

Workshop participants recruited by Urbis in 2006 had identified the importance of easy access to and from the site by persons resident in the development, and for others to be able to come to visit or to access other services, including access to services on site by members of the community. This would require high levels of pedestrian security and amenity, rather than any compromise of these.

With relation to traffic and transport impacts, it appears unlikely that development in the region would have the same level of impact on traffic as existing nearby developments, such as the Grammar School, which are more likely to generate intense bursts of traffic activity during morning and afternoon peak periods. The nature of the development as a residential community, which contains a number of facilities on-site and provides for private transport opportunities for residents including dedicated buses, is likely to reduce the need for private vehicle use, and there are unlikely to be conflicts between traffic movements at the Grammar School and the retirement community.

The lack of public transport and distance from the local shops to the site were mentioned as a necessary consideration for the development. Public transport itself was identified as a priority by the workshop group. There was a suggestion that a single bus could be spread across the multiple areas of the site to ensure residents' connectivity to each of the care levels and services; this bus would then in turn need to connect to areas outside of the site. The proposed shuttle bus in part would respond to this although this needs to be coupled with access to other forms of public transport which service the development.

### 1.5.6 Infrastructure

Concerns were expressed about the adequacy of infrastructure for the proposal including:

- The stormwater system; sewerage; power supply and water supply.
- Social infrastructure such as public transport; public parks and community facilities.

### 1.5.7 Safety and Environment

Three respondents raised issues relating to safety and environmental factors, such as proximity to native bushland and potential bushfire risk.

Run off, water pollution and drainage issues were also identified by five respondents as issues of concern with relation to potential development.

- Submissions suggested that the area surrounding the development is prone to bushfires and flooding, and concerns were raised regarding the difficulties of evacuating the area in such events.
- Run-off from the proposed resort would increase run-off into the creek increasing the risk of flooding. Environmental impacts were suggested as the end of Oxford Falls as a buffer zone between urban areas and the Garigal National Park, and destruction of habitat for native fauna and flora.

Bushfire and emergency access for this site was raised as an issue, particularly due to the aged and frail nature of some of the residents. It was suggested that bushfire evacuation management protocols developed in consultation with the local fire authority would largely respond to this.

Preservation of the natural environment is highly valued and mentioned as a priority, and it is unlikely that the development will encroach into environmentally sensitive areas or affect water catchments where they exist. Opportunities exist for water sensitive design including the utilisation of water recycling and rain water tanks.

#### 1.5.8 Consultation process

- Eight submissions noted that they did not receive the notification circulated to nearby residents; the majority of these submissions raised a lack of sufficient detail provided to residents.

#### 1.5.9 Support for the proposal

- One submission supporting the proposal indicated that it would have little impact on the beauty of the valley, noting degradation of the area due to past land uses.
- One submission indicated no objection to the proposal as long as pedestrian/cyclist safety issues along Oxford Falls Rd were addressed.

### 1.6 Conclusion

The consultation process highlighted some level of opposition by residents against the development. A significant number of respondents also highlighted that they have identified their concerns toward the development during two previous instances of community consultation, which indicates that views toward the development may be well formed, long-standing and difficult to address.

It is noted that there is a stronger tendency for persons opposed to development to express their opinion during processes of community consultation as opposed to residents who are neutral to or supportive of site development. There were some indications of residents using *pro forma* responses and there were also indications that submissions were received from properties outside the original catchment area for the development, suggesting that they may have been invited by other residents to comment. One response was also received from the Oxford Falls Action Group.

The main reasons for objection to the proposal included:

- **Lack of detail and form of the development proposal** (nine respondents); while residents objecting to the development expressed 'lack of detail' as a general reason for their views, some noted, for example, that the use of terms such as 'adequate' and 'maximum' did not provide a full indication of the extent of facilities, services or works associated with the development.
- **Traffic and transport impacts** (seven respondents), including but not limited to congestion on Oxford Falls Road, pedestrian safety concerns and the cumulative impact of development in the valley alongside continued expansion of the Oxford Falls Grammar School.
- **Noise pollution** (four respondents); was identified with relation to the operation of facilities at the retirement village, including potential operation of a restaurant on the site. Location of these facilities could make best use of noise attenuation provided by surrounding buildings on the campus, tree and vegetation cover and the siting of development in sympathetic areas with relation to slope.

Other reasons provided for objection to the development included public transport (availability), run-off and drainage issues (including potential water pollution of the Narrabeen Lagoon), and issues around bushfire risk and compatibility of the site with aged housing.

There may be potential to explore communication strategies around the development, in particular, methods and means of communicating with local area residents about the social and economic benefits surrounding the proposal, and the ways in which impacts, many of which remain perceived, may be

addressed and perhaps mitigated at a very early stage in the development process (eg: through site design/master planning, road and pedestrian network planning). There is also potential to engage with public transport providers, including Forest Coachlines and Sydney Buses regarding the provision of additional bus services in the region; to this end, consultation with the NSW Ministry of Transport and individual operators is recommended.

It is apparent that many of the factors cited by respondents as a means for objection are likely to be capable of mitigation, including traffic impacts, noise and water pollution concerns and public transport constraints. Many other issues identified appear to be subjective, including arguments regarding neighbourhood character and lifestyle impacts. Interestingly, one respondent in general support of the development provided an overview of the history of the area as a loam quarry which existed in a bare state with exposed red gravel sands some thirty years ago; improvements to the area were achieved through development and improvements to the condition of open space. It is important that the proposed retirement village development continue in this tradition, by providing improvements to the quality and quantum of facilities available in the area, and providing quality housing options that maintain, if not lift, the standard of residential desirability.

# Appendix A      Notification letter: surrounding residents and stakeholder organisations

## A.1.1 Notification letter, residents &amp; organisations – page 1



GPO Box 5278 Sydney 2001  
Level 21, 321 Kent Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

Tel: +612 8233 9900  
Fax: +612 8233 9966

info@urbis.com.au  
www.urbis.com.au

Urbis Pty Ltd ABN 50 105 256 228  
Australia • Asia • Middle East

16 June 2008

Dear Resident,

**Community Consultation: Oxford Falls Retirement Resort**

Urbis is undertaking community consultation in relation to a concept plan for the proposed development of a Retirement Resort at Oxford Falls on Oxford Falls Road (see location map attachment A).

The proposal being assessed by the New South Wales Department of Planning as a Major Project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979) and is currently at the concept plan development stage. The NSW Department of Planning Director General's Requirements (DGRs) for the proposal has required that consultation be undertaken with adjoining residents. In response to this requirement, Urbis is undertaking community consultation on behalf of the proponent, Tiffany Developments. We would like to provide an opportunity for your household, as a surrounding resident, to comment on the proposal.

**Proposal**

The proposal is for a retirement resort which is proposed to include:

- a maximum of 400 self care 2 & 3 bedroom apartments and villas
- a maximum of 100 Serviced Apartments (low care)
- a maximum of 60 Bed Nursing Home (high care)
- Additional services/facilities (see Attachment C)
- Adequate car parking

See Attachment B for plans of proposed scheme. The proposal is in the design development stage and will be informed by the outcomes of the consultation and is likely to be subject to some relatively minor change.

**Buildings, design and layout**

The proposal is planned to have a range of structures on the site which will include, residential units, small-scale retail units, recreational facilities, hospitality functions, service buildings, and health and medical facilities.

The contours of the site and surrounding areas, layout of buildings, landscaping and planting schemes, and urban design features are such that these structures are not assumed to have a significant impact on views from surrounding properties. This specific aspect of the proposal, visual impact, will be subject to a comprehensive visual impact assessment prepared by an independent consultant, and recommendations regarding the design will be proposed accordingly.

**Traffic**

A comprehensive and independent traffic analysis has been undertaken by Colston Budd Hunt & Kafes traffic consultants. This found that:

- Currently there are satisfactory or better levels of service on the main intersections (Warringah Rd and Ellis Rd; Wakehurst Parkway and Dreadnought Rd; and Oxford Falls Rd and Dreadnought Rd) which vehicles accessing the site will use.

Community Consultation: Oxford Falls Retirement Resort

## A.1.2 Notification letter, residents &amp; organisations – page 2



- The proposal would have a large number of people on the site who are not working and significantly lower activity on the roads when compared to standard medium density development, e.g. the RTA finds that aged care facilities generate 0.1-0.2 vehicle movements per hour per dwelling.
- The surrounding network will be able to cater for traffic generated by the development with intersections continuing to operate at satisfactory or better levels of service during peak periods. Average delays would increase by some 1-3 seconds per vehicle. (Note: this analysis has been based on a previous version of the proposal which had a significantly higher number of units, thus the traffic impacts will be substantially lower than estimated here.)

#### Planning and development requirements

In order for the proposal to be granted consent a wide range of statutory planning and environmental protection standards must be met. These cover the following aspects of the proposal:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Bushfire impacts   | • Provision of public services and infrastructure                                 |
| • Impacts on water quality, natural watercourses and riparian areas, soil and water management | • Subsidence,   |
| • Threatened species and corridor values   | • General environmental risk analysis Site suitability                            |
| • Riparian protection and asset protection zones   | • Development context   |
| • Heritage   | • State Environmental Planning Policy (Seniors Living) 2004 (SEPP Seniors Living) |
| • Drainage and flooding  | • Design, visual impacts and design quality principles                            |
| • Cumulative impacts   | • Environmental and residential amenity   |
| • Waste management   | • Social and economic context and   |
| • Remediation of the site  | • Traffic impacts (operational)   |

The Department of Planning is obliged to undertake a thorough assessment of the proposal against key standards in these areas prior to granting consent.

#### Where to from here?

This is the first of at least two rounds of community consultation in relation to this proposal. After the development application is submitted to the Department, it is a statutory requirement that the proposal be exhibited for 30 days, during which time submissions are able to be made directly to the Department. Exhibition will happen further down the track, after this round of consultation, and after this concept plan proposal is submitted to the Department of Planning.

At this stage, we are providing an opportunity for residents to comment on the proposal in writing. Any comments and points raised during the consultation will be referred to the relevant member of the project team and will be able to be addressed appropriately. Responses will be compiled into a consultation report which will be submitted as part of the planning documentation with the application to the NSW Department of Planning.

Responses should be submitted within 15 days of the date at the top of this letter (i.e. by Tuesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of July) to the address provided below.

Oxford Falls Retirement Resort  
c/o Urbis  
GPO Box 5278  
Sydney NSW 2001

Community Consultation: Oxford Falls Retirement Resort



A.1.3 Notification letter, residents & organisations – page 3



Yours sincerely,

  
Roberta Ryan  
Director

A.1.4 Notification letter, residents & organisations – page 4



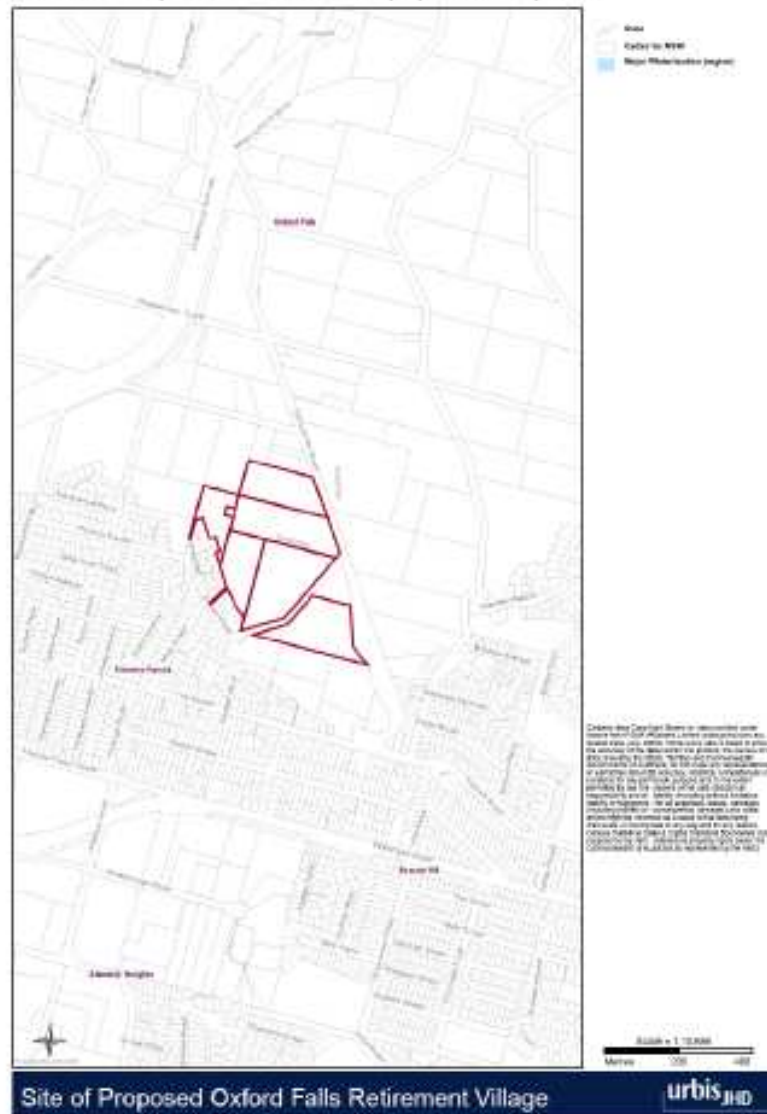
GPO Box 5278 Sydney 2001  
Level 21, 325 Kent Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

Tel: +612 8233 9800  
Fax: +612 8233 9865

info@urtes.com.au  
www.urtes.com.au

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Attachment A: Map of site and surrounds of proposed development



Community Consultation: Oxford Falls Retirement Report

## 1.6.1 Notification letter, residents &amp; organisations – page 5



## A.1.5 Notification letter, residents &amp; organisations – page 6



GPO Box 5278 Sydney 2001  
Level 2, 321 Kent Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

Tel: +612 8233 9900  
Fax: +612 8233 9965

info@urbis.com.au  
www.urbis.com.au

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**Attachment C: Proposed facilities to be provided on site**

Key features of the proposed development include:

- Medical centre, including on-site pharmacy;
- Serviced office;
- Overnight accommodation for visiting relatives and friends;
- Retail centre comprising mini supermarket, hair and beauty care, ATM machine, fitness/diet centre, multi-purpose store including news agency, postage, dry cleaning/laundry service, books, video hire, tours and travel agency including full time entertainment and travel agent, theatre bookings;
- One licensed restaurant, bistro and barbecue areas, take away food shop, Internet coffee shop;
- Gymnasium that can also be used for dancing, entertainment, live shows;
- Heated indoor swimming pool;
- Craft workshop;
- Full time resident caretaker and full time estate manager;
- Full time on-site security, including video surveillance and emergency call services;
- Club house and lounges, library, billiards room, lecture theatre;
- Full time handyman and several permanent gardeners, and a green and hothouse for residents to participate in gardening;
- Two buses, with at least one permanently used to shuttle residents between the resort and shopping destinations;
- Two full sized and one half sized tennis court;
- Several recreation spaces distributed across the site including lounges, libraries, card rooms, lecture theatres, games rooms and "clubs with bars";
- Level walking route of about one kilometre around the centre of the site;
- Bicycle route along the perimeter and crossing the site

Community Consultation: Oxford Falls Retirement Resort