

Dear Neighbour,

The Toowoomba Regional Council have issued a draft Highfields Cultural Precinct Master Plan.

## **This plans affects you!**

For further information on the draft Highfields Cultural Precinct Master Plan please visit

<http://www.yoursay.tr.qld.gov.au/HighfieldsCPMP>

or alternatively ask for copy of this at the Toowoomba Regional Council Highfields Customer Service branch located at Community Court.

Toowoomba Regional Council have advised all feedback regarding this draft plan needs to be in writing. They have advised phone conversations and meetings with Council **DO NOT** count as feedback. Please find attached a letter covering the key points of concern raised by the community which we ask you to please review.

If you agree with this letter and are passionate about preserving the lifestyle we all enjoy so much at Highfields, can you please sign. If this letter does not convey the thoughts, ideas or concerns you have with the plan, we encourage you to prepare a letter or email detailing these.

After signing this letter or preparing your own, please email it to:

1. Mr Heath Martin – Principal Planner – Land Use and Community. Email address: [heath.martin@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:heath.martin@tr.qld.gov.au)
2. Trevor Watts MP – Member for Toowoomba North. Email address: [Toowoomba.north@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:Toowoomba.north@parliament.qld.gov.au)

In addition, please feel free to Copy the below addresses into your email. The more people we contact, the better!

- Mayor Paul Antonio – Email address: [paul.antonio@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:paul.antonio@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Bill Cahill – Email address: [bill.cahill@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:bill.cahill@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Megan O’Hara Sullivan - Email address: [Megan.OHaraSullivan@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:Megan.OHaraSullivan@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Nancy Sommerfield – Email: [nancy.sommerfield@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:nancy.sommerfield@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Carol Taylor - Email address: [carol.taylor@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:carol.taylor@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Geoff McDonald - Email address: [geoff.mcdonald@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:geoff.mcdonald@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor James O’Shea – Email address: [james.oshea@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:james.oshea@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Mike Williams – Email address: [mike.williams@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:mike.williams@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Chris Tait – Email address: [chris.tait@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:chris.tait@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Joe Ramia – Email address: [joe.ramia@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:joe.ramia@tr.qld.gov.au)
- Councillor Anne Glasheen – Email address: [anne.glasheen@tr.qld.gov.au](mailto:anne.glasheen@tr.qld.gov.au)

We also encourage you to attend the Community Information Session on **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017** at the Highfields Village Shopping Centre. You will be able to discuss the draft Master Plan with a member of the Council project team from **8.00am – 10.30am and 12.00pm – 3.00pm.**

Thank you for your support!

5<sup>th</sup> May 2017

## Re: Feedback Regarding Draft Highfields Cultural Precinct Master Plan

Dear Mr Heath Martin

I have reviewed the Draft Highfields Cultural Master Plan released for public consultation on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and I offer by feedback regarding this plan below.

I believe this draft Master Plan could have been delivered in a way that was more transparent and informative to the residents of Highfields that would be directly impacted by it:

- The plan does not include the street names and family homes affected by the proposed 'connective tissue roads' which makes it very difficult for residents to identify if they are affected by the plan.
- Residents directly affected by 'compulsory acquisition' of their homes were not directly contacted or advised of this prior to the release of the draft Master Plan.
- The Toowoomba Regional Council also needs to be aware that many residents concerned by this plan do not have access to the internet in order to have been able to access this plan.

As a resident, my concerns with the design of the Draft Highfields Cultural Master Plan are below:

- Page 20 of the Draft Highfields Cultural Master Plan states that 'targeted discussion with stakeholders were complete in February – April 2015'. I am not aware of this activity taking place and would like to know who was consulted and what resulted from these discussions?
- The draft Master Plan contradicts itself by stating on Page 23 that "Highfields is a town that blends the natural beauty of bushland with a growing active urban centre to create a distinctive experience of the 'rural urban'. Highfields town is famous for its great streets and big gums, good coffee and bustling markets, interesting shopping and burgeoning businesses, attractive festivals and cultural events." If Highfields is well known for its great streets and big gums, why does the draft Master Plan show these as factors that will change significantly? In addition, the Town Centre does not reflect the Highfields lifestyle – the style of the design outlined in the draft Master Plan is not 'rural urban' but rather urban.
- Page 25 of the draft Master Plan identifies the plan for a 'robust grid of city streets'. I do not believe this design reflects the 'rural urban' style of Highfields.

As a resident, my concerns with the Draft Highfields Cultural Master in regards to Compulsory Land Acquisitions and Road Upgrades are below:

- Page 12 of the draft Master Plan states that there 'is an existing fabric of disconnected streets and this needs to be addressed. The plan states these 'have a negative impact on social cohesion, safety, legibility, flexibility in land use, development redundancy and other effects that will be investigated.' It also states "the bespoke cul-de-sacs mean that local trips are unnecessarily convoluted and perceived as distant, pedestrian and bike options are not possible." As a resident I do not believe this is true and I feel the quite cul-de-sacs actually contribute to social cohesion, safety and flexibility in land use. Residents are certainly able to walk and ride in our streets and this is something you all enjoy.
- Page 24 of the draft Master Plan details plans to "Extend Clarke Road to the New England Highway by adding two small additional connections and provide improvements to the streetscape and amenity". The map associated with this plan is unlabelled and does not show that it will in fact be Stringybark Street and associated cul-de-sacs that will be affected by this plan.
- Page 26 of the draft Master Plan details that "Small, carefully considered additions provide the 'connective tissue' to make a more cohesive fabric of streets with the town centre and its adjoining context". Again, the map associated with the plan is not labelled and does show the streets, cul-de-sacs and homes that will be affected by this plan.
- This draft Master Plan involves the compulsory acquisition of **12 family homes**. None of these home owners were contacted directly by Toowoomba Regional Council to advise them of the compulsory acquisition of their homes or what this process involves. Council has advised fair market value will be offered to these home owners, or they are welcome to sell their home in the meantime. The concern is with what will see Council view as fair market value, and that these homes would be rendered almost unsaleable should the final Highfields Cultural Master Plan include the proposed connective roads. Adjoining properties would be similarly affected in value and

amenity. As it stands with these properties listed on the draft Master Plan, their value and saleability have already been greatly affected.

- The reason we purchased in this area is because we want to enjoy a quiet lifestyle in a low-traffic housing area. Changing long established low density housing and roads would negatively impact on our quality of life and community atmosphere.
- Many children use these quiet streets and cul-de-sacs to play and ride their bikes. By turning these streets into main roads they would no longer be safe to do so.
- Increase in traffic and noise would negatively impact on residents.
- Kuhls Road Football fields are primarily a water retention basin for flood mitigation. By modifying these, there would be negative impacts on surrounding properties.
- Environmental impacts of the removal of trees and vegetation.

While I support the development of facilities and services in the Highfields area, I do not believe that this should come at a cost to the existing way of life enjoyed by so many residents. Big blocks, quiet streets and trees are highly sought after and are viewed as the traditional Highfields way of life. I believe there can be a way to incorporate the development whilst still preserving the traditional Highfields model. Afterall, isn't the Toowoomba Regional Council's motto 'Rich Traditions, Bold Ambitions'.

I believe the protocol for upgrading roads to manage the expected increase in traffic should focus on current through roads and the management of these eg Highfields Road, Reis Road and Cawdor Road. As a viable solution to the projected increase in traffic outlined in the draft Master Plan, Reis Road is a through road and a large development is already underway on the North side of this. This road could be upgraded to manage the future growth of Highfields by upgrading it's intersection with the New England Highway.

I ask that you please consider the full impact of this draft Master Plan on the existing community and remove the 'connective tissue roads' and compulsory land acquisitions from the final Master Plan. In addition, I feel the extension of the consultation period to 7<sup>th</sup> July will still not allow sufficient time for thorough community consultation. This extension was also not effectively communicated to the community. This lack of communication was identified at the Community Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> May and has not been addressed by Council.

Yours sincerely

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(Name)

.....  
(Signature)

.....  
(Address)

