



22 October 2020

The Hon Rob Stokes, MP  
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces  
GPO Box 5341  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

I am writing to express concern about the progress of the NSW Government's plans for incorporating local character into Local Environmental Plans (LEPs). Currently the approval pathway for local councils to ensure that local character is appropriately considered under their Local Environmental Plans is unclear.

The Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) is an association of eleven local councils in the area south of Sydney Harbour, covering central, inner west, eastern and southern Sydney. Together, our member councils cover a population of about 1.7 million, one third of the population of Sydney.

As you will be aware the Discussion Paper – Local Character Overlays was exhibited in February 2019. Prior to this the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment undertook extensive consultation with local councils to raise awareness of the importance of protecting local character, especially where significant uplift is planned. After following the Government's lead, many Councils are now well advanced in developing Local Character Areas to be introduced into their LEPs, supported by Local Character Statements that have been produced in accordance with the NSW Government's published *Local Character and Place Guideline* (2019).

On 10 July 2020, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment advised SSROC that there is currently no statutory mechanism to insert local character clauses or maps into LEPs (Ref: MDPE 20/1930). There is also no timeframe for this to occur.

I am therefore seeking your assurance that the long-awaited model clause will be exhibited and/or legislated as a matter of priority. This is now needed as part of supporting the work of Councils to deliver the housing indicated in their GSC-assured LSPs. It is also necessary to build community trust in the planning system and the strategic planning process that Councils wish to champion.

To discuss this query further please contact Ms Helen Sloan, Acting General Manager, SSROC Secretariat on (02) 8396 3800 or Mark Nutting Strategic Planning Manager also on (02) 8396 3800 or myself on (02) 9911 9916.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Faker', is positioned above the printed name.

Councillor John Faker  
**Mayor of Burwood Council**  
**President, Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils**