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The General Manager
Hornsby Shire Council
PO Box 37
Hornsby NSW 1630

27 November 2016

Dear Sir,

OBJECTION TO SOUTH DURAL RESIDENTIAL PROPOSAL

I wish to object to the proposal before Council to rezone 240 hectares of native bushland at South Dural and impose 2,900 houses and apartments in the area. The area includes creeks and gullies and significant areas of forest which support a rich variety of native animals and birds.

The council proclaims itself to be "The Bushland Shire". As a resident (at Cherrybrook), I place enormous value on this quality of my chosen neighbourhood. After little more than 200 years of modern settlement, Australian society has reduced the natural bushland of the country to a tiny percentage of its original area. I thought I was living in a community that understood the importance of preserving everything we can of what is left.

I am asking Councillors to live up to our motto. Once the native habitat of this land at South Dural is "developed", that is, destroyed, it will be gone forever. I say to Councillors that you have an obligation to protect the precious little of native bushland that we have left. This is for the sake of the locality – the trees, the animals and the birds in this particular area, but it is also to preserve the overall bushland qualities of the shire. And I think we also have a responsibility to the wider community of Sydney to show that we value the natural environment, and that this is something that we stand for.

If councillors cannot say "No" to a development that is as destructive and gratuitous as this one, I don't see that it has the capacity to say "no" to anything that any developer wants. I do not see this proposal as serving the interests of anyone except the few people who will make money out of it. Please tell me that this is not what Council now stands for.

The arguments that were put by the various speakers at the public meeting at Cherrybrook on Saturday 26th November 2016 showed me that many better-informed people than myself have examined this proposal and its many impacts very carefully. For example, clearly the local roads are at capacity already and this proposal will have a further, significant, negative impact on traffic.

However, I do not think that this proposal can be "saved" by fiddling at the edges. It is a massive project and its primary cost to the community will be the loss of the natural environment at South Dural. I believe that Council has to say "No" to this proposal in its entirety.

I was born in Sydney and I am now 66, so I have seen the massive extent of the encroachment of the city on the natural bushlands around the city. We can no longer afford to let "a little bit more" be

sacrificed to housing, and pretend that it is still okay. I am told that this particular parcel of land is the habitat of a powerful owl, and that a powerful owl requires about a thousand hectares for a territory. It is no longer okay to say this does not matter.

I am also told that this parcel of land is actually contiguous with the National Park further downstream, so it is a wildlife corridor. I think this is the kind of thing we have to take on board as a community, and say we are committed to preserving it. Otherwise, it's like Joni Mitchell said fifty years ago: "We took all the trees and put them in a tree museum, and charged the people a dollar and a half just to see them". Let us not be like that.

It is no longer okay to say we can "trade it off" for a little park somewhere with some tube-stock from a plant nursery and a cheer squad for the opening ceremony. We are dealing here with a healthy, viable habitat that contains forms of life (a forest of blue gums, ironbark trees, and possums, and powerful owls, and a host of other plants and animals) that are both extraordinary and irreplaceable. This area is a great gift in a city that is spreading rapidly and becoming more densely urban.

I think there is much at stake in this decision of Council. Please decide to protect what is really valuable for the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.