

ADI Residents Action Group
PO Box 4134
WERRINGTON NSW 2747

Tuesday 18th January 2005

The Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Emergency Services

Re: ADI Site St Marys Development - Risk of Bushfire

Dear Minister,

The ADI Residents Action Group is carefully monitoring the development of the 1545 ha ADI Site at St Marys by Lend Lease to ensure the best possible outcome for the residents and the natural environment of western Sydney.

As you may be aware 902 hectares of the ADI Site has been earmarked for a proposed Regional Park and approximately 50 hectares is set aside for Regional Open Space. 5000 houses are proposed to be built in three suburbs (Eastern, Western and Central Precincts). There is also 68 hectares of land zoned for industrial use.

We write to you with specific concerns that the current development (see attached map) if allowed to proceed will result in an unacceptable risk to human safety due to incidences of bushfire spreading from the proposed Regional Park (bushland) to urban areas (housing). You will note from the map the highly irregular bushland interface, that road access to the Central Precinct is through bushland and that there appears to be islands of urban development surrounded by bushland.

You would be well aware that researchers from Macquarie University have released new data on this subject and have found that some 500,000 properties across Australia are at risk of burning down in bushfire due to their proximity to bushland, that home destruction at the forest edge is 60% and that the maximum distance at which homes can be destroyed is up to 700 metres from the forest edge.

Minister we urge you to take into account the new information presented by Macquarie University with the result being that the Rural Fire Service re-assess the 35 metre Asset Protection Zones (APZ) it has allowed Lend Lease. A 35 m APZ is inappropriate in a post Canberra world. An APZ of 100 m should be a minimum for all new developments with such massive bushland/urban interfaces as exists with the ADI Site development.

Currently DEC are drafting a Plan of Management for the Regional Park. This POM will include fire management strategies to reduce fuel loads within the Regional Park and for ecological purposes, but obviously due to the risk of fire escaping to urban areas controlled burns will be on a small scale and for ecological reasons spaced over several years. Therefore fuel loads within the Regional Park can be expected to remain high.

The proposed 5000 house development with its 20,000 population will see an increase in the incidence of arson within the Regional Park. Lend Lease are pushing for an unfenced Regional Park with unrestricted public access (this is their sales pitch) and this is of huge concern to our group. Of concern is that DEC will allow an unfenced Regional Park and due to its insufficient resources will be unable to properly staff or police the Regional Park leaving the door open to anti social behaviour such as arson.

Minister Lend Lease has commenced clearing vegetation to build the first houses. We urge you to liaise with the Minister for Planning and the Environment to address our concerns urgently. The NSW Planning Instrument (SREP30) zoning the ADI Site, gazetted in January 2001, is still to be amended following the former owner of the ADI Site, the Federal Government, increasing the size of the Regional Park in November 2001. We believe that amendments to SREP 30 are due once DEC finalises the conservation boundaries through its Regional Park Plan of Management process. Therefore there exists an opportunity for the NSW Government to ensure that 21st

century bushfire solutions are incorporated in the planning instrument for the ADI Site. In the interim the NSW Government must urgently review the size of APZ's approved by Blacktown Council for Lend Leases Eastern Precinct.

Minister Lend Lease are to make a massive profit from this development. They will oppose any increase in the size of APZ's as it will result in a reduction in the overall size of land they can develop. The NSW Government has a moral and ethical duty of care to protect its citizens and this must be the case. The NSW Government owes no duty of care to protect the financial interests of Lend Lease.

A small delegation from ADI RAG would avail itself to meet with you in regards to this matter. I can be contacted on **0431 222602**. We look forward to a response to this serious matter at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,



Geoff Brown
Convenor
ADI Residents Action Group