



Friends of Callan Park monthly meeting

Meet the candidates (for Leichhardt Council elections)

Monday 1st September 7pm

Writer's Centre, Callan Park

(come in at the Cecily St traffic lights and follow the green signs)

What's Frank Sartor up to?

'No news is good news' is usually true. But it is less certain when used in connection to a Minister for Planning like Frank Sartor. When he goes quiet, he could be up to something.

And he's gone very quiet about his plan for the Sydney University takeover of Callan Park. There's been nothing but official silence in the six months since public submissions on the plan closed. Despite a number of inquiries by FOCP, Sartor's office is saying nothing, nor is the NSW Department of Planning..

As far as we can find out, the Department of Planning has finished its assessment of the plan. The local press says it's "dire". Any other judgement would be hardly be credible. The plan requires lifting key protections in the Callan Park Act, an increase of at least 50% in the floor space of buildings, demolitions, six-storey buildings, 5000 to 20,000 students, the blocking off of public open space, the ruin of the central valley, traffic and parking headaches, and so on. It would be a bonanza for developers and their bankers who would build and operate the campus buildings. The plan would deny use of the parklands for mental health facilities.

So what's happened to the Planning Department's assessment? Rumours are circulating that the minister's office and bureaucrats are massaging the report and delaying its release until after the Council elections. The only conceivable motive for this delay is to minimise the swing against the Sartor plan in the elections. [continued overleaf]

Which is why the meet-the-candidates on Monday 1st September is important. Continued opposition from Leichhardt Council will help put paid to the Sartor-University plan to ruin Callan Park. Hope you can come.

Next leaflet – volunteers wanted

The Friends have circulated a questionnaire on Callan Park to candidates in the Leichhardt Council elections. We expect to collate the results this week and will circulate them widely soon after. If you can help with the letter-boxing then please phone Hall Greenland on 0408 643 786. We will then deliver a bundle and map to you – or arrange for you to pick them up. Usually an area takes 45-60minutes to cover.

Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor

A delegation from the Friends will meet the new V-C of Sydney University, Michael Spence, on Tuesday 26 August. Our main concern will be to ask for information about the latest stage in any university planning to take over Callan Park, as well as conveying community opposition. There will be a full report to the next meeting of the Friends on Monday, September 1. We will also put a report up on the website www.callanpark.com as soon after the meeting as possible.

Quotes & statistics

It is estimated up to 75% of homeless people aged 18 years and over have a mental illness, and, of these, approximately 29,000 people are affected by a severe mental illness.

- spokesman for federal health minister Nicola Roxon,
in a letter declining to intervene in re-opening
Callan Park mental health facilities [29 July, 2008]

Planning Department spokesman Paul Seale said the land use plan was still “under consideration” and refused to clarify whether it had been handed over to Planning Minister Frank Sartor’s office.

Inner West Courier, 5 August 2008

It is understood that the Planning Department’s assessment of submissions to the Callan Park land use plan is so dire that the minister is finding it difficult to proceed with the plan. The spokesman said he was unable to confirm whether the assessment was with the minister or the department.

Inner West Courier, 19 August 2008

Vale Issy Wyner 1916-2008

Issy Wyner, the veteran Inner West campaigner who died recently, initiated the first campaign to save Callan Park land from being sold off to developers when he was mayor in 1989-90. That initial battle was won. There have a number of battles since – and Issy was in them all. He was in the front row of the public meeting at Balmain Town Hall on July 7 last year to protest Frank Sartor’s proposal to hand over Callan Park to Sydney University. For Issy, Callan Park was important as public open space and as a facility for mental health treatment. I can recall Issy and his comrade Nick Origlass warning, in the wake of the Richmond Report, that Rozelle hospital should not be closed because the necessary community accommodation and support services for people with a mental illness were not being provided. That was in 1984. We’re still waiting.