

Mona Vale Rally – edited Transcript of Speeches from Speakers

MC for the afternoon, Shane Withington, stated in welcoming those gathered;

"Today is a historic day. I know that sounds a bit flowery, but today we begin the battle for the soul of the northern beaches. First let me say something else; We are not anti-development. No, we have to develop. A community that doesn't develop dissolves, doesn't go anywhere. But we want to take charge of it.

We want development where our elderly citizens can leave their homes and downsize, and have units available for them to live in the area that they know and love. So what we're looking for is something that is in Mona Vale, No. 1.

Secondly, we want our children to remain here. We don't want them to move out to whoop-whoop in order to buy a house.

And we also want Mona Not-So-Bloody-Big. We have always been a collection of villages, from Narrabeen, Warriewood, the village of Mona Vale, the village of Avalon, the village of Palm Beach. And we fought for it before.

We built this place, remember? We created this collection of villages to be the way we want. This is how we want to live our lives. And now we're faced with enormous urban development.

We've seen it down south, where 42-storeys are being discussed.

We've always been low-rise village; we built this place that way. We paid for this place, with our taxes and our rates.

That way we've got the Tasman Sea. We've got a thin peninsula that runs up beside Pittwater, and then we have Kuring-Gai Chase National Park. There's simply not the room for high-rise here. We haven't got the infrastructure.

It's just not here in Mona Vale. We're a road in and a road out.

The first thing we need to stop is, and come to terms with, is this state significance coverage. What about social significance? What about our world view? What about our open space? What about our health? What about our history? What about our heritage? We wish to conserve what we have built.

And they'll say 'you're an idiot'. Yes, absolutely, I'm an idiot, because I will fight to save the peninsula and save Mona Vale.

Of course we're going to fight for what's in our backyard, because we understand it and know it and we love it. And we're fighting for our personal well-being.

Where's the open space? Did everybody have trouble parking today? Imagine if there's 20,000 more people parking here.

We've got to protect our tree canopy.

We've always been low-rise, because we built it that way, and that's the way we want it. And we'll talk about balance today; about a balance between nature and industry, lifestyle and future proof. No one wants to talk about lifestyle, like it is a dirty word.

Oh, 'you're only protecting your lifestyle'. Too right we're protecting our lifestyle, because this is the way we built it, and this is the way we like it. And we're going to fight for it.

We will have development, good development - but we don't want to see this place ruined."

John David, Convenor of SOS Mona Vale, pointed out:

"At the start of this whole process, the government robbed us of our voice. They've taken councils out of the planning. If there is a state significant development, developers get however long they need to put thousands of pages of documents together and we get 14 days to provide a submission on the same [that's been vetoed before then].

So we have been robbed of our voice. Today you get to be heard."

There's a number of throwaway phrases that we hear all of the time.

One of them, Shane already touched on, 'you're just a bunch of nimbys and silver tails'.

Anybody who's been to Mona Vale or to the beaches of the peninsula knows you do not last long here as a 'silver tail'. If you start to do that, you get put in your place pretty quickly. So that is not true with regards to nimbys.

Shane's right, we do want, and have had development here all along. We just want it to be kept in style and in the way of the suburb that we came here for, that we love.

We need affordable housing. Nobody shakes their head around that. But this legislation is not delivering affordable housing. We know why the developers are here.

We need our eyes open and the government certainly needs their eyes open. Developers are here to put in luxury apartments that multi-millionaires will buy. There's nothing affordable about that.

Anybody who follows real estate on the peninsula, knows it's a cherished place and people want to live here. But anybody who knows about real estate here, also knows if you put \$2 and \$3 million apartments in, the value of all the property follows it up. So it does the reverse of providing affordable housing in the area, the absolute reverse."

Prior to this rezoning, this area was actually achieving its targets for growth, the targets that the state government set, we were always pulling our weight. People who've lived in this part of the world for a long time will know, it looks nothing like the suburb that it was 30 or 40 years ago. Development's been going on here all the time, but appropriate development.

Pittwater is about 'Houses amongst trees', not trees amongst houses. It's a bushland area. We cherish the environment up here.

For years, people have fought to keep this place the way it is. It's our turn now; the assault on this place never went away. It's our turn. We've got to take up the cause from those others and fight the fight now. I've heard that this is a David and Goliath fight. It just so happens my surname is David.

And I went, well, that works, right? And I always say to people, do you remember how that turned out? So if people think this is a useless cause, let's just see, right? Every month that goes by, as we hear more from our experts who are sitting down here, we learn that when you get into the weeds of these things, Mona Vale has unique limiting issues that no amount of money will change. By the way, Paul Scully said you'll get dollar zero for infrastructure. You build them and then we'll maybe talk about infrastructure.

We already know the infrastructure, the sewerage, right? The water, right? The rapid transit system. We've got a bus service. We don't have a rapid transit system.

We'll never get a train up here. We'll never get new ferries. The only way in and out of this place is two streets, that are clogged up right now.

I will tell you a little statistic. 11,000 odd people are residents in Mona Vale. On a daily basis or a weekly basis, however, Mona Vale services some 67,000 people because it looks after a lot of the surrounding area. That's why the place is clogged.

On a planning map, it looks like nobody lives here. It's a dinky looking place, but the reality of being here is that the place is straining already. If 35% of the re-zoned area is developed, it will double the population of Mona Vale. That's our village ground to a halt. We already know it struggles right now.

At school time and so on, people can't get their kids to school, it clogs up every morning as the parents are getting their kids to and from school. And that's just with our dinky little, apparently nobody living here suburb, right? There is, geographically speaking, nothing the state government can do to overcome those problems.

So, as an analogy, I'm a bus driver. If I have a bus, and let's say everybody seated is a resident of Mona Vale, and everybody standing is a resident of Mona Vale, and the bus is full, if I drive up to a stop and I have people waiting at the stop, it is unsafe for me to let them get on my bus. But what the state government wants me to do is to tell people to shove back and to squeeze more people on the bus. Fair enough analogy, right? Our issues around the evacuation routes for, in the case of bushfire, we've had bushfires.

Many people here will remember 1994, right? The only evacuation route for people north of here, Barrenjoey Road, the only other way after that, Mona Vale Road. In 1994, the fire jumped Mona Vale Road and it closed. So, you shove a whole lot of people into this area, you increase risk of property loss and loss of life. And the government is saying, well, just go

ahead and do it. Shove more people on your bus, right? There's nothing they can do geographically to fix that.

We back onto bushlands, which we love. But we are susceptible to bushfire risk. It's just the thing. At one of our meetings a couple of weeks ago, unfortunately, he couldn't be here today, we had Greg Mullins, who fought his first fire at Terrey Hills when he was 13, beside his dad.

Greg Mullins AO AFSM is a former Commissioner of Fire and Rescue New South Wales.

He predicted the fires that were on the south coast in the summer of 2019-2020. He was warning Scomo for six months before that, that that was going to happen. They ignored him. Greg came and said, all the conditions that occurred at that time are happening right now. A lot of undergrowth is growing as we've been having a lot of rain, and the potential for a very dry summer, as recently recorded in the La Nina we'll have this coming summer.

So, the conditions for that to occur again are percolating right now, and he has suggested that we will have a major bushfire event, hopefully not the same as the south coast, but in the early new year. If the evacuation routes do clog up because of overpopulation, there's only one place we'll be looking to; the beach, and they want to put more density into the area. I say they've either been conned by the developers or they've made a terrible mistake. I said to Chris, you've made a mistake with us. So, that's the message we're going to take, but what we need right now, the reason for this rallying song is we need numbers, folks.

"What we need is support from the community. Now, I know people can't make it to meetings. A lot of people wanted to come today, but they've got kids' sport, other commitments. Everyone has busy lives and careers to get on with, I get that. But what we need is support.

If you have not signed up for SOS Mona Vale updates, go over and give us your name and your email address so you can get on to our newsletter, and you'll hear about the meetings, and you'll hear the results of that. And there is so much of an assault on our suburb right now, that you need to be kept up to date with it. Our speakers today are going to talk to you a little bit about the worst of some of these things that we hear about, all right? I wrote some things over there, which there's a sign in front of.

We've got a petition online. It's a change.org petition.

[at: <https://www.change.org/p/sos-save-our-suburb-mona-vale-govt-says-yes-to-8-storeys-residents-say-no-join-us>]

When you sign that petition, it costs you nothing to do it.

At least your suburb is recorded, so I can say to you that there are some, I think we're knocking on the back door of 1,800 signatures on that right now. The vast majority of those

are from people in the local area. You can sign that petition, nothing, you do it in five minutes.

It makes a big difference. Last thing, we've got a number of these state-significant disasters on the table right now, right? We get just 14 days to make a submission. You don't need to be a neighbour of those things to have to make a submission.

If you are a resident of the area, you're entitled to put in a submission. My view is every one of those should have hundreds of submissions. Most people who are members of the suburb, you know right now what you want to say, right? You don't have to be technical and say to each of you, the windows are too high and the doors shouldn't be there and the garbage bins will be here.

You don't have to do that. The neighbours around those things will take care of all that stuff. But you could write a one-page submission today, this afternoon, and have it ready.

Have it ready. Have your say. They took our voice away. It's one of the few ways we get to have our voice back. And they will know that the community are watching them. Not hard to do.

Write it. No urgency on it. When the 14-day little tiny period comes up, you just go to the portal and you submit it.

If you want to know how to do that, you have to come to a **meeting on the 22nd**. And then write a letter to Jacqui or to your local councillor. Inundate Jacqui with letters. She's our member, our MP for Pittwater. I've asked her on many occasions, 'how do we empower you?' By sending those letters to Jacqui, you are giving her the tool that she needs to go and have a say in Parliament for us. Whoever our local member is, they need to be empowered, but they also need to know that they are accountable. We want them to look after us. They're elected for that purpose.

"We've got 770-odd people as members of our little group. We started with 69 in October 2025, so it's growing fast. There's a lot of concern in the area, it's growing fast, but what every single one of you who are here today can do for us is gather the next month and find one other person, and we'll double the size of our group in a month.

"There's an election in March. It's one of the very few times when politicians pay attention to us. We're looking at every way we can to encourage them to correct their mistake. We get to 1,100, we get to 10%, they'll be paying more attention. We get to 5,000, they will not ignore us. We can swing an election with 5,000 people.

Thank you. Thank you. That's all I've got to say."

Independent MP for Pittwater Jacqui Scruby:

"We need to send a clear message that Pittwater is against the inappropriate development being pushed not only by Labor, but also the Liberal Party, Nationals and Libertarians.

Although we successfully fought off 4 of 5 of our villages earmarked for low and mid-rise development, Mona Vale was declared one of NSW's 171 low and mid-rise town centres. However, it's not only low and mid-rise development that is a concern but also 'state significant developments' which also override local planning controls.

To be clear - I am staunchly opposed to the state-led, developer-led planning being imposed by the Minns government, in *partnership* with the Liberal Party. That's right – the opposition is not opposing Labor on this issue, but doubling down and supporting these policies. That's why it's even more important to mobilise community and have our voices heard.

The Minns government's major planning policy is developer-led and state-led planning that takes away community voice. Minns has taken the Liberal's State Significant Development process and turbo charged it with low to mid rise areas, including Mona Vale as well as the Housing Delivery Authority which accelerates housing projects over \$100m.

That's why community mobilisation is so important.

This is a David and Goliath battle where community pressure must increase and be sustained to reverse the 'housing at any cost' policies of both parties.

As outlined in the recent *Four Corners* investigation 'affordable housing' is a furphy, particularly in areas with expensive housing like Pittwater. It's a Trojan horse for exceeding height limits without delivering housing that's actually affordable for our key workers and risks achieving a net loss, rather than an increase in housing.

I recently organised for the Premier to meet with John David of SOS Mona Vale, to directly hear our community's concerns - but the reality is— both leaders of the major parties (and the Libertarians) are doubling down on pro-developer housing, supporting developers and ignoring community voices so we need to up the fight.

Even in recent sitting periods I supported the Member for Wakehurst's bill to prevent development in bushfire areas. Instead of supporting this sensible position, both major parties doubled down on their 'development at any cost agenda' and voted down the bill, showing their support for developments like Lizard Rock to go ahead without the risk of being stopped by RFS advice stating the bushfire risk is too high.

As I continue to be a lone voice in Parliament against these reforms, I encourage everyone to join with me and others who are fighting these reforms."

The Pittwater MP was *one of only four MPs out of 93 who voted against these reforms in the Legislative Assembly.*

Ms Scruby currently has a '**Oppose the Planning Reforms**' petition running at:

[Oppose the Planning Reforms - Jacqui Scruby](#)

Angus Gordon OAM

Former Pittwater Council General Manager and Coastal Engineer Angus Gordon spoke about infrastructure, pointing out the capacity of Warriewood Treatment Plant [for sewerage] had reached capacity years ago and there were still 1000 residences in Pittwater that were not connected to water and sewerage lines.

Having been part of the team that designed the original plant he knew that although an ocean outfall further out to sea had been part of the original scheme, this did not happen and as a result, when the system was overloaded, the pipes are opened and untreated waste is allowed to flow into the sea.

“you’re swimming in it”.

Greens Pittwater Councillor Miranda Korzy

Hello everyone!

I’d like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land, the Garigal people, and pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

I’d also like to thank John David for organising this rally and for the many meetings preceding it, as well as everyone who has turned out today to save Mona Vale from unfettered development.

Now first up, I’m going to give you a number. **7,647**. 7,647. That’s the number of private homes on the Northern Beaches that were empty on Census night, August 10, 2021. That translates into **7.5 per cent** of all Northern Beaches dwellings.

Now if that doesn’t surprise you, how about the number for NSW? That’s **nearly 300,000** (299,524) or **9.4 per cent** of all dwellings. More than the population of Hobart (255,250).

And for the whole of Australia: **that’s a bit over a million** (1,043,776) or **10.1 per cent** of all homes across the country, empty.

Ok, so we can say that perhaps some of those homeowners were on holiday or in hospital on census night but the Australian Bureau of Statistics does check to ensure that the right people are associated with the right dwelling.

Other research (by economist [Dr Lyndall Bryant](#), from the [Queensland University of Technology, School of Economics and Finance](#), The Conversation, October 7, 2024) has examined the census figures for the number of homes with empty bedrooms in 2021.

That was 3.2 million with one spare bedroom, another 3 million with two spare rooms and 1.2 million with three spare bedrooms or more. That’s **13 million empty bedrooms across the country!**

So what we’re looking at here is a surfeit of spare bedrooms and empty homes in Australia whilst experiencing a housing shortage.

Now if we go back to the 7,647 empty dwellings on the Northern Beaches and compare that to the number of new dwellings the NSW government told council we needed to provide - that was 5,900 over the next five years.

Council's **draft Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plans, which went on public exhibition last Monday, in fact cater for that extra 5,900 homes**, with growth focused on Frenchs Forest and Brookvale. We'll see blocks of units there with close to 3,000 dwellings of perhaps 25 storeys or more, leaving Pittwater largely unscathed under the council's plans.

Those plans are based on technical studies that investigated a large range of issues such as geotech stability, biodiversity, and hazards.

Residents have been consulted several times over on aspects of the drafts - along with this important final exhibition.

By contrast, the NSW government's Low and Mid Rise Housing changes - which I'm loath to call reforms - have been imposed on the community and council. They are simply written into a SEPP (or State Environmental Planning Policy) which overrides the council's planning powers.

They ignore the fact that across the Northern Beaches, we already have **7,647 empty homes** - more than the state government's previous target of 5,900. In fact with the Low and Medium Rise changes, there are no targets. The government just seems to have a policy of squeezing in as many as they can.

So within 800 metres of Mona Vale, the new government rules allow terraces, townhouses, and two storey blocks of units to be built in areas zoned R2, and with affordable housing, anything up to nine stories in R3. But it's a developers' bonanza and we're already seeing plans for buildings of greater height than that submitted to the govt as State Significant Developments.

The rules also ignore the fact that Mona Vale is exposed to flooding and bushfire risks. During the 1994 bushfires, every road out of Pittwater was cut by flames at one time or another. With Ku-ring-gai Chase on our doorstep, the area is potentially exposed to ember attack - the main cause of housefires during bushfires. And with increasing temperatures, council staff are concerned about the potential for an LA fire scenario on the Northern Beaches.

Meanwhile, planners tell me DAs already approved in Western Sydney are stalling because developers are turning to the North Shore and Northern Beaches where they can make higher profits because of higher land values.

So what is this all about? Amongst the biggest donors to political parties are the property and construction sectors. (I note that NSW Greens take no corporate donations.) Property developers are banned from making donations in NSW but the state's bans and strict

donation caps don't apply to federal campaigns. So funds raised under looser federal rules can sometimes support broader party infrastructure that indirectly benefits state branches.

Stephanie Tran for Michael West Media earlier this year reported that AEC disclosures show the major political parties reported \$417.2 million in donations in the 2024-25 financial year, up by 58 per cent from the \$263.7 million after the 2022 election.

Meriton Properties for example, in 2024/25 donated **\$620,000**, with \$100K to Labor and the rest to the Liberals.

I'm not going to expand on how donations can influence the big political parties, but I'm 100 per cent sure that this government's development strategy is designed with the interests of property developers rather than ordinary people at heart. Putting up an eight-storey block of units in Mona Vale is bound to deliver a higher profit than one in Bankstown. And what's the bet that the \$6 million unit by the beach in Mona Vale is bought as a holiday rental or weekender and is empty half the time anyway?

However, I'm going to suggest a couple of solutions. A number of countries have introduced levies for properties that remain unoccupied for long periods. These include Ireland, Canada and in fact, in Australia, in the state of Victoria. I believe that these would be preferable to increasing density in places like Mona Vale.

Additionally, Australia is unusual in that we live in six major cities concentrated on the coast. Europe and the US by contrast have hundreds of cities with less than 1 million residents. We no longer need a large industrial workforce in Sydney, and for most people it's a tough place to live and commute. So I believe we should be decentralising and governments funding infrastructure such as transport connecting to these places, along with education and health services.

One of our local economists, Shane Oliver, has told me that he believes this sort of decentralisation needs 20 years to work. He cites the example of Seattle, with about 800,000 residents, where the US government built railways and good roads a century ago, and which is now home to the headquarters of Amazon - Retail, Starbucks, Microsoft and until recently Boeing.

Finally, Demographer Simon Kunstenmacher told councillors at a local government conference two or three years ago that young people, once they have kids, don't want to live in units anyway. So they then move out of Sydney, up and down the coast and into the hinterlands where they can have houses and gardens like they did growing up.

A few weeks ago I was in Canberra and dropped into the Museum of Australian Democracy, at Old Parliament House. I was impressed to see galleries devoted to the many activists who've fought governments over bad laws. Rooms filled with paraphernalia and colourful banners calling for women to have the right to vote, amongst many other causes.

The right to protest is a democratic right and we are joining a long tradition gathering here today, as Pittwater residents have done many times in the past, to demonstrate against bad government planning. I call on the NSW government to listen to the community and to look at the numbers.

Thank you.

Simon Dunn, President of Protect Pittwater, and son of the first Mayor of Pittwater Council Robert Dunn, stated:

“ I'm taking you back in a bit of a journey of history. Back in February 1985, I don't know who remembers that year, this hall was packed because a number of Mona Vale and Pittwater residents groups had sprung up in protest to the idea of having a ten-storey building built in the centre of Mona Vale. That had gone through fairly quietly under the Warringah Council just before Christmas in December 1984.

To see so many people turn out here today and take an interest in the suburb and the planning disaster that's about to hit the suburb is very encouraging, to know that people still care. My late father would be very encouraged to know that the legacy he left, of trying to fight for the environmental, beauty and precious nature of Pittwater is still alive and strong here, as evidenced today.

I grew up in Newport. When that protest was going on in 1985, I was about nine years old. At the end of my cul-de-sac in Newport, we still had a couple of horses in a paddock. That's what Newport was like back when I was growing up there.

So, I wholeheartedly agree with what other people have said about we're not opposed to development. There's been a great deal of good and smart development through Pittwater over those years.

In particular, the original plans for Warriewood Valley and the respect that was given to the creek corridors and the planning around that, but then Angus Gordon, as the General Manager of Pittwater Council, had some wonderful ideas. And, of course, state governments successively tried to push back on those plans that Pittwater had come up with largely themselves, trying to double each time, each five years, the density.

At the moment I still live in Warriewood Valley, and have, thanks to good planning, a nice back yard, albeit a small one for the kids and the dogs. That is the thing that young families do want. And bringing more units to Mona Vale and high rise is certainly not the housing that we need.

When thinking of the next generation coming through, my teenage kids, it's not something that's going to really keep them in the area. Of course, we know it won't be affordable. They wouldn't be able to afford it anyway.

What is to be learned from that history is it was the community coming together, sparking those community groups, that actually led to the formation of Pittwater Council and breaking away from Warringah.

That's why I'm here today, on behalf of Protect Pittwater, which I'm now the president of. The last few years, we've been running a campaign to advocate under Section 215 of the Local Government Act to bring back and reinstate Pittwater Council.

The reason I think that's important in this context is that Pittwater Council was formed with environmental values at its core as part of its mission statement. The whole instigation of it was that community being unhappy with the planning decisions that were being made further south. Not as far south as in Macquarie Street, as seems to be happening now, but down in Dee Why.

Without that community spirit, without that willingness to take pride in the backyard and not worry about people calling us nimbys and to actually think of the lifestyle and the enjoyment of the area for future generations, we wouldn't have had Pittwater Council.

We're in a campaign at the moment to bring that back so that we have a council who will advocate strongly for the protection of Mona Vale and other particulars in this context, but also put those environmental values first and be willing to go up against this state development planning tools, to be able to actively protest against them, to actively object wherever possible, and to really push back against the pressures that are coming from Macquarie Street.

We're gathering signatures for people who'd like to see Pittwater Council reinstated. That proposal had an initial 4,000 signatures given to the Minister for Local Government. Thanks to Jacqui for organising a meeting with him for us to hand those over last year.

Since then, another 3,000-odd signatures have been added, which will give us enough, the Minister says, for him to seriously consider sending that to the Boundaries Commission.

Along with that, we've got a very hardworking committee who are putting together a very robust business case to show how Pittwater Council can be more than viable standing on its own. But today, I think the main cause is to be spreading this message really showing the state government that we're really not happy with this and that this won't go away.

Liberal Candidate for Pittwater in the 2027 State Election, Michael Gencher:

Thanks for everybody who has spoken. I can just say everything they said, plus what I'm about to say. To be perfectly honest, we have a state housing problem. It is a state housing problem.

For those of you that know me, you know my 5 kids. I would like the three younger ones to stay a little longer, in fact, to have the life for their kids that they've had here.

The Liberals do support housing reform. And this is statewide policy. But let's not ignore the truth that the Liberal support for the housing reforms have not been unconditional.

They are contingent upon growth and infrastructure and services to match and keep pace with development. And the other big contingency was community consultation. Not tick of the box, not after the fact, but working with the community.

So it's very important that you do understand that the Liberal approach, the Liberal party hopes to represent the state, hopes to represent Pittwater, but the support for housing reform is statewide, and certainly the intent, and certainly Labor itself, is not being true to its word in regards to these reforms.

So one, support for housing. Yes, absolutely. I support housing.

Planning is something else. And what we have here is not planning. Drawing circles on a map is not planning.

We used to have the Greater Cities Commission, which did a lot more than taking a text or two to a whiteboard and deciding, this is where it is. That's gone. But the opportunity to plan properly is not finished.

It is disappointing that the Minns government has gone down this path.

John mentioned that Chris Minns is agnostic about where the targets, where the numbers come from. I don't think that's actually being honest.

Chris Minns has an election, there's a state election in eight months' time. He wants to go to that election saying, we have delivered, or we're about to deliver, or we've approved this number of homes. That's where the agnostic nature of it comes.

He doesn't care where it comes from, as long as he can say that number. And we are being gaslit. We are the victims, we are the number that is making up that campaign promise.

My approach, is let the state set the targets. And as Simon has mentioned, as Miranda has mentioned, as Jacqui has mentioned, council plays a role in this now. I have great faith in the current council, Northern Beaches Council.

Let the state set the targets, and let the council plan the controls, and let the community decide how to achieve those targets. We cannot have a Macquarie Street doing it for us. Those circles on the map do not work.

The third point is we require infrastructure to keep pace with growth.

Infrastructure has gone backwards across every category under the Minns Government. So we're not keeping pace, we're falling behind, but still, Paul Scully is still approving, checking, and allowing these SSDs to proceed. Before I get to my next point, I just want to, if I may, a show of hands, who here is not from Mona Vale?

Well done. Thank you. Are you concerned about your village, and you should be, because the SSDs are a runaway train. Those of you who are not from Mona Vale, thanks for coming.

This is not about creating other campaigns. Let's focus on Mona Vale. Those of you, tell your neighbours, tell your friends, I think we all know what is coming if we don't stop this.

We need to stop Minns Government. Let's grow this campaign.

Four, and this has been covered by everyone, [we need] planning that reflects people.

I'll tell you a very quick story. I moved here from Canada in 1991. My first week here, I had my very first rugby game in Rats Park, and I got a concussion.

In that day, I had my little Mazda, and my head was hurting, and I didn't know where I was, and someone said, just go to Mona Vale Hospital. So Rats Park, Mona Vale Hospital. So I got my little Mazda 323, and I put my Gregory's, everyone remembers Gregory's? For the younger ones, happy to discuss it after, but I put it on my lap to go find Mona Vale Hospital.

I didn't realise I had it upside down because I was concussed, and I went for a drive up the area and fell in love with it. It is beautiful. That's what we want to keep.

We are special. That doesn't mean we don't change. That doesn't mean we don't grow.

That doesn't mean we don't fix housing, but we retain what we have, and who better to do that than the community and the council with local planning controls.

My fifth point is scrutiny. Proper scrutiny.

Right now, SSDs are signed off without, I believe, any scrutiny.

We need parliamentary scrutiny. We need scrutiny of the community, which is actually being listened to.

We need proper scrutiny. What needs to happen now? This needs to keep growing. The Pittwater community, and John, I'm not being political.

Drop your politics here. We love where we live. We want it to change, and how we achieve that is working together.

Yes, I do want to represent Pittwater, but this is about building a campaign. We have to know exactly what it is we're asking for and demand [in] a campaign. This campaign is about better planning.

To the Minns government; stop gaslighting us. Don't make us the ones who make up the numbers.

This is a special place. Apply the intent of the housing reforms that is supposed to fix a problem and not create more problems. “

Parry Thomas, Save Mona Vale Hospital campaign leader:

"Thank you, Shane. I got the message about keeping politics out and I just said, I'll swear you're bullsh!t.

And the reason I said that is because this is politics. Accept it, work within it, and fight it with all you can. And I'm going to say, from my experience, which is now many, many years, one of the key things I've learnt is I've become an absolute cynic about this whole system.

The system's corrupt and it's... (applause interrupts) Political parties are anathema to democracy. (applause interrupts) And I've actually never, ever sat with a politician, and Jacqui, I'm pulling you out of this because we haven't had this discussion, but I've never sat with politicians or bureaucrats who, when discussing strategies, discussing policy, discussing legislation, have ever asked the question, is this in the interests of the citizens of our state? (applause interrupts) Never.

It's always been in the interests of the financiers, the opportunity for the next job as a politician, the bureaucrats and the property developers very often.

You know, you've got to live a campaign, you just can't visit it occasionally. It's got to become part of you.

You'll be denigrated, you'll be absolutely publicly crucified if you stand up and fight them. They hate being fought. Vested interests and those you're campaigning against will be well funded and will organise opposition community groups.

So, it wouldn't surprise me that a pop-up group will support the development of Mona Vale. We had this a lot in the hospital where doctors who had vested interests, and by vested interests I mean bought land at French's Forest, formed community groups with other people to try and denigrate our standing elections. The other thing is you're up against consultants these days.

Consultants whose only interest is the vast billing they can achieve by working for government. And you're up against them because there's no one left in government who's capable to make any rational judgement. (applause interrupts)

From the time I started being involved in government in my business life I dealt with a lot of government departments over a long while throughout Australia.

The reality was there were some great people in those departments. I even did a job for Angus once and there were great people in that organisation.

We used to criticise public works. I remember my dad criticising public workers and counting leaners the shovels. The reality is public workers have talent and skill and knowledge and everything you need to provide infrastructure and services to the country.

They decided to privatise everything so sold everything off.

They privatised their responsibilities out and we gave it all to consultants. So there aren't even people in government, in bureaucracy these days, who are capable of deciding what's needed let alone coming up with a plan to get it.

And they absolutely outsourced planning.

They gave it away. Who do you think makes these decisions? Who do you think makes the state's significant decisions? They're property developers. (applause interrupts) You've got to fight them, you've got to fight them hard, you've got to get angry, you have to be angry about it, you've got to get active, you've got to participate in campaigns or just get out.

If you can't do that you can't achieve anything. The big problem in Australia is we're apathetic. You know, we love our country, we love our beaches, we love our environment but we kind of struggle to get off our backsides to participate.

We love our community, we love our friends, we have children, adult children, young children, but our children who have no time. So we geriatrics have to be the people who step up and consider their future. And that's what you're doing here.

You know, the comment about planning was interesting. Over the past 25 years, billions of dollars, billions of dollars, have been given to political parties in donation that we don't know who it came from.

It's not small amounts of money. The Centre for Public Integrity, they did an analysis and, you know, the hidden money of political parties donations. And while it is illegal in New South Wales to donate, for property developers to donate, there are many ways that can occur in the background.

Many ways, and it still does. You know, when we took on... Let me talk a bit about hospital, because it's very relevant here.

One of the things we found is that every piece of information we were given or provided by health in those days was incorrect. And in a lot of cases, it was outright lies. And the reason the objective had already been set.

The end result had already been set. And all we were was a pain in the ass trying to stop them doing what they wanted to do. Now, what did they do? First of all, wanted to sell the land but we ran a protest and then that was safe.

They wanted to privatise it. This was the beginning of that push for privatisation of health. You ended up with a privately run hospital that had less public facilities, less public services and less public beds than you had before they started. At the same time, population was growing significantly, way beyond what they told us they'd grow, way beyond, and it's going to grow even more with what's happening now.

They completely ignored the fact that we are a location that is holiday-loaded, the numbers of people who come here during holiday periods, I bet that's not talked about anywhere in

planning, and used the services, have got to be paid for. So, while they've done that, we're a catchment for this hospital by the way, health in this area of around about 300,000 people. When you add the actual catchment for Northern Beaches Hospital, it goes to almost 400,000 because it moves west. By putting it there, it was all about taking pressure off Royal North Shore and not giving us any services. Now, Sunshine Coast, what did they do? They did it differently. What they did differently was they built a university level tertiary hospital, level six tertiary hospital co-located with a private hospital.

There are people who want private-public, people like them for sure. However, all the other hospitals they had, they actually regenerated.

They have five public hospitals. They have three or four of them delivering acute services, i.e. theatres, emergencies, in their catchment area. Their catchments have been physically broader, but numbers it's around 400,000.

They kept them. What did we do? Yeah, we bulldozed them. If you drive out of this area, head over towards Randwick way, you pass four or five Level 5 hospitals on the way.

The people at Palm Beach are driving as far as that hospital as if they lived at Bondi to go to that hospital. That's the stupidity of this system. And you talked about the need for infrastructure; you needed an acute hospital at Mona Vale before this crazy development is even considered.

(applause interrupts)

The other thing I wanted to talk to you about was marching on Macquarie Street with Shane - the thing he taught me was that you've got to have mongrel in this game. And you not only have to have a mongrel, but you can't afford to get embarrassed or feel silly about what you do.

You have to get out there, you have to hit them where I cannot stop you hitting them. The things we used to do, I mean, the numbers we pulled in Hyde Park and dragged down Macquarie Street, that we had; people in coffins in the front part of the house.

You've got to do what gets attention. And that is absolutely true. You've got to do it with the people and the numbers. It's a numbers game. Numbers influence people.

We put 6,000 into Rat Park for a Mona Vale Hospital rally. We were preparing another rally, I think it was 2005, 2004, 2005, preparing another rally. We were going to fill Brookvale Park. That was our objective. And about a week before that rally was due to start, Craig Knowles came out, who was the then Minister for Health, and made a public statement and a guarantee, which they lied about, that they would save Mona Vale Hospital, they would not change, they'd upgrade Mona Vale, upgrade Manly, and keep those two hospitals in addition to whatever else was done.

Now, of course, that was leading up to an election. You're leading up to an election, apply pressure.

The other point that's really important here is, while we have Jacqui who's absolutely on our side, on your side, she's not beholden to any political party. She's only beholden to you.

The rest of them are beholden to the political engine of which they're a part of. Now, I'm not saying they're bad, I'm just saying they have obligations to the party over their community. They shouldn't, parties aren't part of our constitution, Parties are created for power. So, you need to be able to put pressure on places where the local member is vulnerable. Now, that means, go find some Labour seats that are as pissed off about this as you are, and get them involved in the process.

Make sure they turn up at Macquarie Street. Fill Macquarie Street. Now, everyone's going to try and stop it.

They're trying to stop everything. They've muted council powers, they've muted ICAC. They even make it harder to do your protest rallies, but you can do them.

Make sure you do them. Make sure you do them, and we'll do everything we can to help them out there. So, thank you, thank you everyone."