

## 6.1. Vale John Woodward

John Thomas Woodward was born in Watsons Bay on 1 November 1934. He was educated at seven different schools in Sydney, finishing at Christian Brothers, Rose Bay.

In 1959, John Woodward completed a Bachelor of Laws at University of Sydney and, later, a post graduate degree in Town and Country Planning. He was a solicitor and partner at Currie & Currie until 1974.

John Woodward was a keen sailor and member of the Vaucluse Yacht Club. He skippered 'Flying Dutchman' to win the VJ Amateur Sailing Association, Commonwealth Championship of 1952-53 and was Senior Club VJ Champion in 1953-54.

John Woodward was elected to North Sydney Council as an Alderman representing Kirribilli Ward in 1965 and served until 1972.

During his time on Council, he served as Deputy Mayor and then Mayor of North Sydney from December 1971 to December 1972.

John Woodward was elected to North Sydney Council at a time of great change. The Warringah Expressway, which had physically divided the municipality and reduced the population through demolitions, was nearing completion. The Cumberland County Council had been replaced by the State Planning Authority in 1963 with accompanying diminution of local government powers over planning.

The increase in medium and high density residential flat buildings and the loss of heritage buildings fuelled resentment and led to the growth of the 'resident action' movement within the area. Council itself was increasingly divided over the issue of over-development.

John Woodward voted early on to defend established building codes against non-compliant applications. In 1966 he pushed to investigate Council establishing community services along the lines of recent reforms at Lane Cove and was commended by his colleagues. That year he moved a motion against the removal of any living tree unless it created a traffic or safety hazard. That motion was lost.

By the 1970s the groundswell of feeling that Council would not, or could not, forestall rapid overdevelopment led to a community push for a more representative and responsive Council. At a byelection in 1970, Robyn Read Hamilton was elected on a resident action ticket of resident. At the 1971 Council elections resident action candidates were successful with more women elected, including the future first female Mayor, Carole Baker.

In the Kirribilli Ward John Woodward swapped preferences with Robyn Read Hamilton and Phyllis King who both opposed over development (see How To Vote, **attached**). In a letter to his electors at that poll, John Woodward laid out his achievements and commitments:

- No approvals of multi storey buildings on foreshore land since 1965;

- Engagement of Town Planning Consultants in answer to State Planning Authority's Sydney Regional Outline Plan with a 'freeze' on home units approved before 1971 so that the consultants could reassess zoning;
- Encouraging more local shops and local resident parking; and
- Ban on Sunday and night time building work.

John Woodward left Council in 1974 and took the skills and interests he had developed in town planning to Commonwealth and State Government agencies. He served as Assistant Director of the Department of Urban and Regional Development, Canberra and as a senior advisor to NSW Premier Neville Wran from 1976-1979.

Between 1980 and 1993 John Woodward served as Chairman of Commissioners of Inquiry for the NSW Department of Planning and Environment from 1980-1993. He authored (or co-authored) over 55 reports covering planning and environmental enquiries conducted in NSW during that time including:

- A recommendation not to proceed with the F2- Expressway (Stage I – Beecroft to Ryde), but which ultimately became part of the M2 Hills Motorway
- Objections to a conservation order for The Royal Automobile Club of Australia
- A controversial and unsuccessful application for the relocation of a Bayer pesticide plant in Kurnell.

Between 1993 and 1996, he completed a further three environmental based inquiries as Commissioner of Inquiry for the Commonwealth:

- Commonwealth Commission of Inquiry, Shoalwater Bay Capricornia Coast, Queensland, Australia;
- Commonwealth Commission of Inquiry, East Coast Armaments Complex Point Wilson, Victoria; and
- A proposal for future use of lands at Lucas Heights: Lucas Heights mediation / Sutherland Shire Council and Waste Service NSW.

In 1999 he completed an assessment into the amalgamation of the South Sydney, Randwick and Botany Bay councils.

In later years, John Woodward lived in Tokyo and passed away there on 6 August 2022.

**I therefore recommend:**

1. **THAT** Council acknowledge John Woodward's contribution to North Sydney and NSW, particularly, his legacy of a commitment to strong environmental sustainability and excellent town planning.
2. **THAT** Council write to Mr Woodward's family expressing sincere condolences.
3. **THAT** Council commemorate John Woodward's contribution by planting a tree with a commemorative plaque in a suitable location to be decided in consultation with Mr Woodward's family.

**COUNCILLOR ZOË BAKER**  
**MAYOR**