

2 August 2026

I wish to object to SSD-88004956 for the proposed redevelopment of Lourdes Retirement Village, 95–97 Stanhope Road, Killara.

This proposal should be refused.

In retrospect, the approval of the original Lourdes Retirement Village in 1983 on land immediately adjoining Garigal National Park exposed elderly residents to a significant bushfire risk. Since then, our understanding of bushfire behaviour, climate change, extreme fire weather and the challenges of evacuating vulnerable aged care residents have changed dramatically. Rather than repeating and intensifying that planning decision by substantially expanding the facility, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure should recognise that this location is fundamentally unsuitable for accommodating a much larger population of elderly residents who would be at risk during a major bushfire emergency.

The proposal would significantly increase the number of elderly residents living in one of Sydney's most bushfire-prone locations. As climate change continues to drive more frequent and prolonged heatwaves, extended droughts and more severe bushfire weather, the likelihood of major bushfires affecting the Garigal National Park surrounding East Killara and East Lindfield will continue to increase. These bushfires have the potential to generate intense flame fronts, radiant heat and ember attack that could rapidly threaten the Lourdes Retirement Village, placing its vulnerable elderly residents at unacceptable risk.

Having frequently travelled along Arterial Road between Lindfield and Killara, I am familiar with the topography surrounding the Lourdes Retirement Village site. The development is situated above steep, heavily vegetated valleys where bushfires can rapidly intensify. During severe fire conditions, flames, radiant heat and ember attack can be funnelled upslope, creating an intense flame zone that would directly threaten the retirement village. The site's elevated position above this escarpment makes it particularly vulnerable to bushfire attack.

The proposal fails to adequately recognise the foreseeable dangers posed by bushfire in this location or demonstrate that older vulnerable residents could be safely protected or evacuated during a major fire emergency.

Evacuation of the retirement village during a major bushfire is extraordinarily difficult and dangerous. Stanhope Road, the site's only access road, would likely become gridlocked with residents evacuating from East Killara and East Lindfield along with emergency vehicles, including NSW Rural Fire Service appliances and ambulances. The combination of severe traffic congestion, extreme heat, dense smoke, ember attack and rapidly approaching fire fronts would create chaotic and life-threatening conditions, placing elderly residents—particularly those with dementia, limited mobility or complex care needs—at an unacceptable risk.

Environment and Biodiversity Impacts

The proposed expansion of Lourdes Retirement Village would have significant and irreversible environmental impacts because of its immediate proximity to Garigal National Park and its location within an important bushland interface.

The scale and intensity of the development would increase harmful edge effects on the adjoining Garigal National Park, including the spread of weeds, increased stormwater runoff, artificial lighting, noise, domestic animal intrusion and greater human disturbance. These impacts would progressively degrade the ecological integrity of the adjoining bushland and reduce the conservation values of Garigal National Park.

The proposal requires the removal of numerous mature native trees, including hollow-bearing trees that provide essential nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for birds, mammals and reptiles. These mature trees have developed over many decades and cannot be replaced within any meaningful ecological timeframe. Their removal would diminish the site's tree canopy, biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

Construction activities and the ongoing intensification of overdevelopment would fragment and degrade wildlife habitat adjoining Garigal National Park. The proposal would disrupt wildlife movement corridors relied upon by native fauna and increase pressure on threatened species recorded within the locality, including the Powerful Owl and the Eastern Pygmy-possum, Swift Parrot and other threatened species. Increased lighting, noise, traffic and human activity would further reduce the suitability of the surrounding habitat for these sensitive species.

Final statement/ concluding words.

Please refuse SSD-88004956 Lourdes Retirement Village, 95–97 Stanhope Road, Killara.

It is too dangerous.

This is reinforced by what the [United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said during a press conference on 31 July 2026:](#)

- *We have already endured a summer of extremes – record-shattering heat domes; apocalyptic wildfires raging in Spain, France and far beyond; thousands of lives lost in the scorching conditions.*
- *El Niño is strengthening – adding fuel to a planet already on fire.*
- *At the same time, World Meteorological Organization's outlook shows that through October, nearly every land area on Earth is expected to be hotter than normal.*
- *Taken together, that risks shattering every seasonal record – and driving even more severe effects worldwide.*
- *The verdict is clear: the climate crisis is in overdrive.*
- *Hospitals and power grids under pressure.*

- *And while extreme heat is a global crisis, those who have done the least to fuel it are paying the highest price Older persons*

Yours sincerely

Janine Kitson