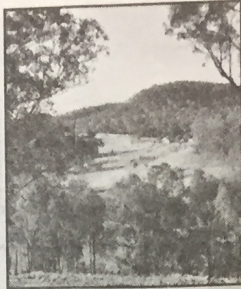


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## Fury at building ban plan

By KATHERINE DANKS

PROPERTY owners stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars under a controversial proposal by Cessnock City Council.

Its draft Cessnock Local Environment Plan, 2008, includes a plan that would strip the building rights from some blocks smaller than 40.5ha.

Wollombi Real Estate agent Steve Annis-Brown said some land owners would be unable to build anything more than a shed on their properties if the changes went through.

"The thing is that people bought these blocks of land with a legal entitlement to be able to apply to build on them," he said.

"They paid a price reflecting that entitlement so now if that entitlement is taken away then obviously the value of their block of land is diminished substantially, and I mean by 80 per cent.

"If you can't build on a block of land, the land is really of no value for any other use or purpose."

Mr Annis-Brown yesterday addressed more than 200 local residents about the proposal at a meeting organised by the Wollombi Valley Progress Association.

Wollombi resident Kevin Butterworth said:

"We are the first community [in the council area] to get a hold of this and try and do something... now action will be taken."

The council will accept public submissions on the draft plan after it goes on public exhibition in late February or March. A decision is expected by

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