

# Gun range anger

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Hill Top residents are calling for an inquiry into moves by NSW Minister for Planning Frank Sartor to by-pass local planning laws regarding the proposed Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex.

The Hill Top Residents Action Group (No Gun Club) has gathered more than 800 signatures calling for a commission of inquiry into why Mr Sartor has gazetted new regulations allowing him to circumvent legislation intended to limit his powers to single-handedly approve state significant developments.

The group wrote to Mr Sartor in October pointing out that amendments to the Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation passed in July, 2007, prohibited him from continuing to deal with the complex.

Action group spokesman Julie Cook said the regulations were quietly amended on November 17, allowing the Minister to still consider any rezoning for a development contrary to council zoning if the planning process had started before July, 2007.

"Once again, Mr Sartor is riding roughshod over small communities," Mrs Cook said.

"He has performed some incredible legislative gymnastics to pave the way for this project to go ahead while the local community has been ignored.

"We are calling on the government to abandon this inappropriate development and find an alternative suitable site for the shooting complex."

The group also plans to take a case to the Ombudsman claiming public land has been transferred to shooters' clubs "without due process or approval for any development."

The State Government excised 1000 acres from the Bargo State Conservation Area for the \$4million shooting complex, which will include two pistol ranges, rifle, range, shotgun range and 20-bay indoor airgun range.

The Department of Planning recently announced that it would extend operating hours to seven days a week and some evenings and to increase overall car parking to 180 cars.

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