



Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.

Fresh ideas on offer for Council

A full house of more than 240 people heard from 7 candidates for Port Stephens Council last Tuesday evening at the Nelson Bay Bowling Club, at a forum hosted by TRRA.

"We were pleased to hear support from most candidates for greater transparency and opportunities for community input including reinstating webcasting of Council meetings" said TRRA President Geoff Washington.

Four of those aspiring to become Mayor, and all the lead candidates for East Ward, outlined their vision and answered questions from and the audience. Four of the seven are 'first time' candidates, offering to bring new blood and fresh ideas.

"It seems clear that there is a reaction to the secretive style of retiring Mayor Mackenzie and his supporters, who have frequently rammed through controversial initiatives, often against professional staff advice." Mr. Washington said.

In a well-mannered discussion, most candidates agreed with each other in response to the concerns of questioners, and committed themselves to a more inclusive and co-operative style. However, "there were clear differences in approach to Nelson Bay height limits and the future of the Tomaree Lodge site" said Geoff Washington.

The clear message from the audience was in favor of enforcement of height limits which maintain the character of Nelson Bay town centre and the retention of the Tomaree Lodge site for public uses.

The Mayoral candidates declared what preferences they will be recommending to voters. "Once again how you use your preferences will determine the election outcome: more of the same or a fresh start" said Mr. Washington.

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