



## COMMUNITY OPINION IGNORED IN NELSON BAY BUILDING HEIGHTS DECISION

Chairman of Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association, Geoff Washington, commenting on the Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategy adopted by Port Stephens Council's on 24 April, said that "TRRA is very disappointed that the majority of Councillors chose to ignore a clear community consensus which opposed provisions which open the way for excessive building heights".

A variation clause inserted by planners at the last minute will open the way for 7 storey buildings across the town centre, 9 storeys in the vicinity of the Bowling Club and 6 storeys on the Fishermens Co-op site. Additional height will be added by increasing the maximum height per storey from 3 to 3.5 metres.

Mr Washington questioned whether the Councillors who supported the motion understood that the outcome could potentially result in increases from the present 15 metre limit to 24.5 metres (63%) in the town centre and from 15 metres to 31.5 metres (110%) at the Bowling Club site. "We are relieved that commonsense prevailed in respect of the Marina precinct most of which was excluded from the two storey bonus allowance and would remain at a maximum of three storeys".

Councillors were well aware of the results of the recent Hunter Valley Research Foundation survey of community, business and visitor opinion which confirmed an overwhelming preference for restraint in building heights and protection of Nelson Bay's views and its natural setting. Their action, in ignoring these HVRF findings and arguments presented by TRRA and EcoNetwork, stands in the way of full local endorsement of what otherwise is an acceptable blueprint for the future of the town.

The community welcomes the Strategy's proposals to improve the quality of design across the town, landscaping, pedestrian access, signage, improved parking and traffic management and for better connection between the foreshore and the CBD. Recommendations for retention and improvement of Apex Park and other foreshore open spaces are strongly supported.

Mr Washington said "the community recognises that, apart from the excessive height provisions, the Strategy now offers a vision for revitalisation of the town and a vibrant and successful business core in Nelson Bay",

Geoff Washington  
Chairman TRRA  
Phone: 4981 3916  
Email: [chairman@trra.com.au](mailto:chairman@trra.com.au)

27 April 2012