



By email: The General Manager, Port Stephens Council
16 September 2012]

Re: Community Information Session - Relocation of Apex Park Memorial

Dear Mr Gesling

On 12 September, representatives of Services Clubs, some members of the Residents Panel, and other community organisations were invited to a briefing on a proposal to relocate the war memorial within Apex Park at Nelson Bay.

A team of Council officers presented plans for relocation of the existing memorial to a site in the north eastern corner of the park immediately adjacent to the Visitor Information Centre building. Detailed plans and specifications were tabled for the memorial site and a small associated parcel of land. Council officers revealed that they had been given a very specific brief to prepare the plans sometime in 2010 and that the brief did not extend to consideration of a master plan for Apex Park as a whole. Apart from the Services Associations, the other interested organisations had not been consulted in the preparation of what appears to be near final plans.

TRRA Inc. and the other community organisations at the Information Session accepted the need for action to improve the functionality and safety of the War Memorial. However, these groups clearly indicated that they do not believe its relocation and design should proceed in isolation from the Masterplan recommended in the Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategic Plan.

Questioning from a number of interests present, including the relevant Parkcare Committee, EcoNetwork, TRRA Inc. and Port Stephens Tourism, revealed that the planning and design of the relocated memorial had proceeded with minimal reference to the considerable prior work on the future role and planning requirements of Apex Park as a whole. Neither the presentation nor the content of the memorial proposal, demonstrated an acknowledgement of the highly strategic status assigned to Apex Park in the Nelson Bay Foreshore Plan of Management, the Ardent Leisure Foreshore and Marina Concept Plan or the Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategic Plan. The latter was approved by PSC in April 2012. No references were made to the very specific recommendations in these documents relating to Apex Park.

By way of example, your attention is drawn to the discussion of Apex Park in the Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategic Plan which I quote:

Page 80 :

Principle 7 - Apex Park is Nelson Bay's civic and community park

Due to its central location, Apex Park is vital in the revitalisation of the Town Centre and Foreshore areas. The Park holds significance for a number of community groups such as the veterans as the War Memorial is located within the centre of the park. It has the potential to play a greater role as a civic space and to attract a range of age groups through its proximity to both the Town Centre and Foreshore, restaurants, tourist services, cycle ways and pathways, the beach and its open space features.

Key challenges

Funding is available to revitalise Apex Park however, given the redevelopment of the Foreshore remains unresolved it is difficult to prepare a design that will integrate with the Foreshore.

In addition to the above point, the revitalisation of Apex Park needs to include consideration of how access from Victoria Parade is provided, including the effectiveness of the overhead pedestrian bridge.

The Park is a key element within the wider green link that runs from Carol Rotary Park in the east, through along the waterfront to Laman Street in the west.

Recommendation	Implementation
7.1 Revitalise Apex Park.	<p style="text-align: center;">Prepare a Masterplan for the revitalisation of Apex Park.</p> <p>(In the short term) Council to work with Councillors in identifying suitable works that are essential to Apex Park, keeping in mind the long term goals of integrating the park with wider functions detailed within this Strategy. Consideration of the community consultation work to date regarding Apex Park should inform these decisions as should the design brief recommended above.</p>

Page 71: Recommendation 2.3

"In conjunction with the masterplan work for Apex Park, review the Visitor Information Centre building. Options may include:

- Opening the building up to Apex Park, and improving its relationship with its setting
- Replacing the existing structure with a more transparent structure that responds better to its setting.
- Undertaking the above and incorporating other uses, such as local area interpretation and a café.
- Identifying alternative locations for the Visitor Information Centre as raised in the 2010 Port Stephens Tourism Diagnostic Study and Action Plan. Lot 1 DP 1155736 (43 Stockton Street Nelson Bay) may be a suitable alternative location for the Visitor Information Centre. The

site is located to the West of the Nelson Bay Bowling Club and has a number of elements that suggest it may be a suitable location."

A number of speakers pointed out that the proposed location for the memorial closed off the options for opening the Visitor Centre's western façade to Apex Park which was raised as a serious possibility in the Strategy. TRRA is also concerned by the potential for the memorial as proposed (10 metres long and 2 metres high) to block the critical view corridor No. 10 identified on page 50 of the Strategy. We were also concerned that the Council officers did not consider it necessary to estimate the number to be accommodated at Anzac Day Services.

We ask that the Memorial planning team be directed to look in more detail at the various relevant strategies previously adopted by Council (cited above) and prepare a Masterplan for the whole of Apex Park before finalising the proposal. We also request that there be further consultation with all interested community organisations in the preparation of the Masterplan and in finalising the War Memorial location and design.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Washington
Chairman
Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.