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## EcoNetwork – Port Stephens Inc

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President: Dr Bruce Pease

Secretary: Nigel Dique

Treasurer: Roger Yeo

PO Box 97 Nelson Bay 2315

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Mr Peter Gesling  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2012

### Apex Park Revitalisation & Memorial Relocation

Dear Peter

It has been brought to our notice that the saga of the Nelson Bay Plan and the future of Apex Park, is yet again at the centre of controversy.

We express in the following, our concerns and proposals for an improved process and sustainable outcomes:

1. As a long-term participant in the 5 year consultation process, it is disappointing that EcoNetwork had been over-looked, not informed and not invited to participate in the September 12 Council/community 'consultation'. We wish to be informed why this was possible.
2. Kindred participants have informed us that it was not as projected, a consultation on the future of Apex Park, but a briefing on an already advanced, but at the time, a generally unknown proposal to relocate the war memorial to the eastern end of the Park.
3. We have been further informed that the 'consultation' was attended by, other than Council staff, around 15 people some of whom heard second-hand about the meeting and most of these hadn't been informed of the proposal to relocate the war memorial. Unfortunately and if correct, this indicates a disdain for proper democratic process.  
Where indeed, is the oversight of Council/Community relations?
4. We had been led to believe, following years of participation relating to the future of Nelson Bay and the saving of Apex Park from 4/5 storey development, there would be a complete revitalisation of Apex Park preceded by a Master Plan and full community consultation and input.
5. Instead, we are now being presented with an adhoc development proposal that averts proper process and a serious Park Plan. This, it seems, is also a direct contravention of Principle 7 of the Nelson Bay Plan and as projected for Apex Park in a Master Plan to guide its revitalisation.

We hereby express our deep disappointment in the manipulative method of 'consultation' and the unacceptability for the proposed location of a static and permanent monument in that eastern section of the Park that has the capacity, accessibility, and holds the most promise for vastly improved general public use and amenity.

We consider the war memorial to be an important addition in community uses and strongly recommend that:

2.

- The western section of the Park to be redesigned to better accommodate an elevated memorial just metres from its present site, to face south and surrounded by redesigned topography and elevated surfaces providing vastly improved vision, access and amenity, including shelter beneath the existing trees.
- That the Council embark immediately on a holistic Master Plan for Apex Park toward its much needed redesign and revitalisation – to also include an improved public amenity:
- Provision for a small coffee outlet at the eastern end from the existing tourism centre that would include a Nelson Bay historical and interpretive display with indigenous, early settlement, mariner background, and other heritage activities such as fishing and tourism – with appropriate seating, shelter and landscaping. But of course guaranteed with a proper and comprehensive community consultation and input process.
- That there be an immediate cessation of the memorial relocation and to be put on hold to permit the public consultation we propose and so the public may be adequately informed and consulted through input to a holistic Master Plan for the entire Park.

We would appreciate an early response to these proposals and the early convening of community representatives to help compile a plan for our highly valued Apex Park.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Dique- Secretary

Darrell Dawson – Acting Co-ordinator.

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