



**TOMAREE RATEPAYERS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC
GENERAL MEETING –Monday 14 July 2014- 7 pm –
Crows Nest Meeting Room, Nelson Bay Bowling Club**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: 30 as per attendance book

Welcome – President Terry Wall welcomed Cr John Nell and Lyn Vatner and Vicki Diemar from the Yacaaba Centre.

1. **Apologies** - John James, Nigel Waters, Peter Quirk, Peter Dundas-Smith, Bill & Christine Stedman, Helen Brady, Anna & Jeff Cordwell, Neil Flowers, Annie & Clive Howarth, Cr Geoff Dingle, Murray & Lorraine Nicol
2. **Minutes of meeting held 12 May 2014** located on the TRRA website were confirmed. Moved Fran Corner, seconded Dick Appleby. Carried.
3. **Matters arising:**
 - (a) **Yacaaba Centre Future** – Lyn Vatner, Manager of Yacaaba Women’s Information and Counselling Centre, (a service which has been provided since 1989), briefly addressed the meeting and then took questions. Lyn gave a background dating back to 2011 Census after which the State Government looked at new ways to deal with homeless people. Going Home, Staying Home initiative was the outcome with a tendering process from invited agencies undertaken. Yacaaba WICC partnered with The Samaritans and missed out. The successful tenderer was a combined submission Raymond Terrace Neighbourhood Centre and Port Stephens Family Support Service and will be known as “Port Stephens Specialist Homelessness Service. Yacaaba had not been invited to join with them in the tendering process.
The good news is that funding available has been increased by 50% from what was available previously for these types of services.

Yacaaba is now facing eviction from their community housing premises effective 31 October. Homelessness is increasing and women with children and men are living in cars. Yacaaba had been able to provide hot showers, food hampers, frozen meals and counselling for these people. Excellent support had been received from Service Clubs, Churches, community groups and other support services for the Yacaaba facility.

A Hotline has been set up which has information available. They only need to tell their story once and from that their needs are addressed.

The Yacaaba Centre Management Committee have been offered 18 months full funding. The community needs to send letters of support as further means of funding are also being pursued. The immediate need is for somewhere to move to and commercial rents will be

involved. The emergency accommodation which was available at the back of the current Centre will not be available. All assets will be transferred to the successful tenderer. The Centre has been operating with a focus on counselling services for 4 dpw with 2.6 workers with 12-13 volunteers as support.

Concern was expressed that the new service would focus less on counselling and more on homelessness. Public transport is also the major issue from both Tomaree and Tilligerry Peninsulas to Raymond Terrace.

It was noted that the donation of a property in 1989 is separate from Yacaaba Centre and is administered by another community group.

TRRA Inc will be providing a letter of support and others were urged to do likewise. We will continue to raise awareness through the TRRA website.

- (b) Tomaree Lodge & NDIS** – Update from previous meeting – Kate Washington referred to a recent opinion piece she had published in the Newcastle Herald. Her concerns relate to the perception that “one size fits all” when it comes to housing people with severe psychological and physical disabilities in group housing. Kate has been involved mainly with the Stockton Centre. However the same policy will flow through to Tomaree Lodge. Already our community can demonstrate that residents at Tomaree Lodge are part of the community with regular support and visitations. Hospital visits could end up in costing the public health budget much more than continuing to provide support in their current situations. Kate will be speaking at the State Conference to lobby for a more humane way to treat these people.

Concern was also expressed that staff currently providing services to people with disabilities are being forced to transfer to privatised services under the NDIS.

(c) Updates from Secretary on Other Matters Arising

Secretary Margaret gave a verbal report and asked members to seek further details from the TRRA website:-

- (i) **Yacaaba Street extension** – approved without commercial development included (now to be developed into open space) Also approved without pedestrian access across Victoria Parade – This was not an option which was on public exhibition. Further review to take place of the pedestrian issues raised by some Councillors.
- (ii) **Access to Information & Copyright** – Background is currently being prepared on this ongoing issue. A submission will be sent to the Minister for Local Government and to the Ombudsman
- (iii) **Referrals to Ombudsman & ICAC** – Several examples of perceived breach of acceptable process have been identified. Further submissions are being prepared. Information provided to ICAC remains confidential.
- (iv) **Seniors Living Soldiers Point and Oasis Walkway** – Secretary spoke at length about the response received from Council regarding the **non** inclusion in the conditions of consent for the 100 Unit Seniors Development of a designated right of carriageway through the Bowling Club development where the proposed Oasis Close walkway meets the Seniors Living development (currently owned by Soldiers Point Bowling Club). If not addressed, this could lead to a repeat of September 2013 when the Oasis Close right of carriageway was closed off by a

resident and the bloated expenditure on the proposed elevated walkway to solve this could very well be a waste of ratepayers funds. A detailed summary and the full text of the Council response is on the TRRA website. Inclusion of the Oasis Close walkway at No 1 priority on both the Works Plan and Section 94 and 94A plans was out for public exhibition until 16th July. Members were urged to comment and request that the walkway project be placed into holding pattern until such time as the right of carriageway/designated access through the proposed Seniors Unit development is sorted out.

- (v) **Coles Supermarket Alternatives** –TRRA has not progressed this issue as the Business Association and East Ward Councillors have taken this on. Woolworths' answer appears to be that there is a supermarket available at Salamander with talk of bus services.

- (d) **Soldiers Point Marina – Our Success** – Colin Howard, TRRA Vice President and President of the Soldiers Point Community Group told us of the various steps taken in succeeding in having the Soldiers Point Marina expansion knocked back by the Joint Regional Planning Panel. Several grounds for the knockback included insufficient information, impact to the environment (threatened species, Aboriginal culture and Heritage, visual impact), non compliance with state and local planning policies, site suitability and public interest. The SPCG had successfully used the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) a legal service to obtain important documentation. He thanked TRRA for the support given through the process and at the JRPP hearing. Colin's talk will be posted on the TRRA website.

A vote of thanks to Colin Howard and his team was moved and carried by acclamation.

In answer to a question about funding for the EDO, Jean Armstrong advised that the lawyers are working on a reduced budget of about 25% compared to what they used to. Now takes 2-3 weeks for answers rather than the previous days. This is a valuable legal service.

- (e) **Samaruai Update** Dick Appleby has this on watch and drew members' attention to the previous posts on the TRRA website. He has been adding updates to the original article as they come to light. Further news is expected in the next few weeks about Council's potential plans for the resort. Costs have been huge already and with interest payments is costing ratepayers at least \$4,000 per week.

- (f) **Any Other Matters Arising** - NA

4. Treasurer's report Treasurer Denis reported a balance of \$1409.00 Moved Dick, seconded Geoffrey Washington that the report be received and noted. Carried.

5. Correspondence In and Out - Register tabled. Moved Dick Appleby, seconded Geoffrey Washington that the correspondence be received. Carried.

6. Current Issues/Information Sharing

- (a) **Crown Lands Review** - Geoffrey Washington had taken the running on commenting on the White Paper review of Crown Lands and a copy of his excellent submission has been posted on the TRRA website. It could be 3-4 months before this progresses to the next stage of consultation/implementation. There is concern that this review could lead to

responsibility being given solely to local councils, particularly Port Stephens, given that their demonstration of capacity to manage such land and budgets has not been clearly demonstrated to us in the past. There are also proposals to dispose of Crown land for financial gain without due consideration to its true value to the people. Tomaree Lodge is a good local example.

- (b) Precedents Being Set** – Secretary Margaret reported on several recent Council decisions which set undesirable precedents for the future.
- (i) Karuah Men’s Shed** – Listed to be presented to the Ombudsman. Concerns about ownership of land, state of building and the several pages in the Council business papers recommending it not be approved, yet it was. There is a website entry with the details
- (ii) Boomerang Park – Conversion of Public Land to Residential**
This is out for public exhibition at present with comments closing tomorrow. We should be concerned at the precedent being set of taking over a public park and this could lead to other public parks receiving a similar fate.
- (iii) Repealed Section 94 Funding** – Individuals are set to receive funding in the current list of repealed Section 94 funding in the Central and West Wards. Sets an undesirable precedent, particularly as the allocations have no relationship to their original intent of Section 94 (ie, infrastructure needed after a subdivision is completed).
- (iv) Football Club Carnivals** – Inconsistent funding as identified in articles in the Examiner. There does not appear to be a policy relating to such sponsorships.
- (c) Reclassification of Land Adjacent SP Marina – Hearing of 3rd July** In the absence of Nigel Waters overseas, the Secretary Margaret had presented the points made in Nigel’s submission to the hearing. Margaret provided a background to these reclassifications which relate back to the Open Space Strategy of 2007. There were 10 other small lots up for reclassification. The 2 small parcels of land adjacent to Soldiers Point Marina were only advertised to immediate neighbours last year. Our concerns related to safe public access, “illegal” zoning into “General Business”, the low cost of the lease costs (\$4,500 pa) and whether this should be retrospective. We questioned why Clippers Anchorage have been able to use this public land for so long without reimbursement and why they have a fence that discourages public access
- (d) Business Association Breakfast** – Dick Appleby reported on the recent business breakfast attended. He commended the current President Denise Sharpe on the job she seems to be doing singlehandedly. They have taken up the garage site as an issue and been in contact with the owners. The owners have only agreed to board up the building and tidy up a shed. There is likely to be a delay on redevelopment due to the storage tanks. Police have concerns about the proposed October AGM of the bikie group which had their meeting here last October. The fresh food market previously held in Magnus Street is being moved to Apex Park with the first market proposed for Saturday 9th August. The Blue Water Country and Blues Festival over the June long weekend was successful – People still came despite the rain.
We have found it valuable for TRRA to work with the Business Association.

7. Future Operation of TRRA Inc

- (a) **Membership subscriptions due 1st July** - Members were reminded to pay the Treasurer.
- (b) **Committee nomination forms for AGM – 8th September** We will need nominations for several positions on the TRRA Committee if the Association is to continue.

8. General Business

(a) Parking for Local Ratepayers – Input Required on Experiences Elsewhere

The item was late on the agenda. One example we will be following up is the Manly Council model as presented by Geoffrey Washington. Concerns were expressed about the cost of parking when spending the day at Tea Gardens travelling via the ferry.

- (b) **Graffiti Update** The drive of the late Keith Brabham in establishing and driving the Port Stephens Graffiti Action Team was acknowledged. A display of recent graffiti attacks, particularly in the Little Beach, Shoal Bay, Nelson Bay areas was put through on a slide show and members were extremely disappointed that this is happening. On the other hand, the work of the Graffiti Action Team volunteers was commended. The policy is for graffiti to be removed immediately. The GAT are meeting with the Police officers to negotiate with them a way forward to bring to order or arrest the young gang tagging nightly. 850 tags have been reported to Police since last July.

Generally agreed that education was important and school education officers are being contacted. Schools are being tagged as well. The promotion of spray art by Port Stephens Council Youth Worker was of concern as there is a feeling that this just leads onto graffiti in public places.

A reward for apprehension is also being proposed by Cr Dover.

The work of the Graffiti Action Team was acknowledged by acclamation.

- (c) **Understanding the Council Customer Request Management (CRM) System** Due to the limited time, Secretary Margaret will provide details of how to report things to Council via council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au Council has a reactive rather than a proactive approach to maintenance.

- (d) **EIS on New Joint Strike Fighter** – Kate Washington alerted members to the public consultation which will take place relating to the EIS.

Meeting closed at 9.15 pm

NEXT MEETING: Monday 8th September – AGM and Election of Office Bearers

NOTE: TRRA Inc is holding bi-monthly meetings during 2014. For information in between our meetings, our website is the best point of reference. www.trra.com.au