



## TRRA INC UPDATE AS AT 19 APRIL 2015

### **SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS REQUIRING 21 DAYS NOTICE TO MEMBERS**

Following discussions with the Australian Taxation Office late last year the TRRA Inc Public Officer identified changes to our Constitution required to comply with ATO requirements. These changes were endorsed by our TRRA Committee for presentation to members via the required special resolutions. Our membership fee, currently \$5, has been discussed many times and the TRRA Committee seeks your support to set this at a more realistic fee of \$10 per person per annum. This fee is proposed to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015. The background paper containing the special resolution recommendations is attached. The Constitution adopted by TRRA Inc in 2012 [HERE](#)

These special resolutions will be presented to members at the commencement of our General Meeting scheduled for **Monday 11 May 2015 commencing at 7 pm** in the Crows Nest of the Nelson Bay Bowling Club. A report of our activities to our members is long overdue. Hence we fully expect that most of this general meeting will be taken up with giving members an update and seeking your feedback, as well as considering the special resolutions. If this changes, you will be notified.

**OPTION TO VOTE VIA PROXY** – As the passing of special resolutions requires the approval of 75% of the current financial membership and we fully recognize that many of our dedicated and financial members are now unable to attend evening meetings and that many head north in winter, we are offering our financial members the opportunity to vote via proxy. A form for this purpose is attached. Please sign, tick the boxes and email a scanned copy back to [secretary@trra.com.au](mailto:secretary@trra.com.au) or post to The Secretary TRRA Inc, P O Box 290, Nelson Bay prior to 5 pm on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015

**ANOTHER IMPORTANT DIARY DATE: PLANNING FOR PEOPLE – NEXT SUNDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – 2 PM AT TOMAREEE COMMUNITY CENTRE** - TRRA Inc fully supports Econetwork in bringing together this community forum to improve planning in NSW [HERE](#) Sand mines are firmly on the agenda!

### **MISSING FROM OUR LOCAL MEDIA – THE STORIES BEHIND THE STORIES!**

Despite a particularly busy and challenging time, our TRRA Webmaster and Media Officer Dick has been busy posting articles, opinions and links to newspaper articles relevant to our local issues and which don't always appear in our local media in any great detail.

*It's timely to remind everyone that you have the option to tick a box to receive notification when something new is posted on our website. [www.trra.com.au](http://www.trra.com.au) That's the best way to keep up to date.*

It would seem to me at least that Port Stephens Council and the Mayor have a well honed publicity machine churning out easy to print stories without too much investigative reporting going on behind the scenes by our local journalists. Understandably so.... to some extent – the Examiner Office in Nelson Bay is closed and there are only 2 journalists writing the news for our only local paper.

The most recent examples of these relate to

- Council's much lauded **financial position** and yet there is still a \$29M (and rising) asset maintenance backlog and a "shaky" surplus. See our detailed report [HERE](#)
- The conversion of **Samaurai Resort to "camping" and with the name change TreEscape**. At least the cumulative loss of between \$15 and \$19M was reported in the "official opening" article. More enlightening detail is available on our website through The Naked Truth series [HERE](#) TRRA Inc firmly believes these decisions have been flawed and the trend continues.
- **Overkill on 7 Councillors (plus Managers) heading to Darwin at ratepayers expense** for the Local Government Conference. ....This is not the first time for "these 7" – previously it was Hobart [HERE](#) (At least the Newcastle Herald did cover this [HERE](#))
- **Reclassification of Boomerang Park** at Raymond Terrace with the potential for this proposal to spill over to our area and result in takeover of public parks. It also raises the issue of what projects miss out to fund all the suggestions from our Mayor as publicized in the Examiner [HERE](#) . *A website report will be prepared shortly to tell the real story!* In the meantime, as well as the reclassification proposal, the size of the proposed Men's Shed **needs some serious questioning** – A tin shed 48m x 30 m on a public park? What an eyesore ...and...Who pays for that?? What other major projects miss out on funding should a dip be made into ratepayers' funds.....particularly when the reclassification proposal will be strongly opposed (as evidenced by recent Letters to Editor)... and this is where most of the funds to pay for this project are to come from? A most unfair "carrot is being dangled" in the Raymond Terrace community ....and it can be used in the same way elsewhere. If you think this won't affect the Tomaree Peninsula, then think again! Seniors housing is an emotive reason that will get used
- **Shoal Bay Ugly Enclosure [HERE](#) and Apex Park Additional War Memorial** – TRRA Inc has expressed concerns about some of the Council approval processes which appear to be excluding a large section of the community from consultation. Legislation is being used relating to Exempt developments on public land which effectively excludes public advertising and in turn excludes the general public from commenting on what actually appears in our public areas. *Be very clear that TRRA does not object to the organizations involved*, it is the Council process that is of major concern. Countless hours of consultations between large sections of business and community took place to come up with a plan for Nelson Bay CBD and Foreshore, including Apex Park. Council officers are to be congratulated for now putting together the long overdue draft **Masterplan for Apex Park** which should guide what happens in Apex Park in future. We understand this draft could be available at the end of this month. We have however no timeframe for when this is likely to be considered by Council.

**REPORT ON OUR MEET THE CANDIDATES FORUM [HERE](#), ELECTION COMMENT [HERE](#) AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ICAC [HERE](#)** are all excellent articles on our website and not to be missed. Hot issues [HERE](#) Grab a cuppa, settle back & click! We hope it motivates you to act!

## **COUNCIL MEETINGS .....NOTHING HAS CHANGED!**

After not attending Council meetings for nearly 12 months, TRRA Inc (and many other community organizations) was represented in the public gallery at Council's meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015. **Nothing has changed!** Insults were directed at individual Councillors by the Mayor and the usual 7-3 vote pushed through yet another building on a **flood mound (described as earthworks!)** despite clear refusal recommendations from Council officers!

As TRRA Inc predicted when the first precedent was set in June last year, there has been a flood of similar DAs pushed through against pages of dot points for reasons for refusal recommended by Council officers. Cr Le Mottee invariably has to declare a pecuniary interest. Later I'll put together a more detailed report on these for the website as our local media does not seem to be giving this too much of a mention. Aside from the precedents set to stop this continuing, public safety is the key issue and the potential for future legal costs is another. The Mayor hasn't seen houses disappearing down the river going past the Junction Inn at Raymond Terrace ...so that seems to make it OK!

**The Council Agenda!** There were 25 agenda items with over 250 pages (plus another 111 pages in attachments – 19mb download!) for each Councillor *to read, absorb and decide between 5 pm on Friday and the Tuesday meeting.* TRRA Inc has always maintained that the change in meeting cycles which for some items may streamline approval. However for others, more consideration and consultation should take place and more deferral to the next meeting recommended.

It's no surprise at all that most agenda items received little attention. For example:

- They still continued to ignore advice from the Minister for Local Government as recent as December 2014 and resolved to **remove business units from financial reporting.** Our submission [HERE](#) was ignored by all Councillors. Another approach to the Minister from TRRA and to our newly elected MP Kate Washington will be taking place.
- Scant attention was given to the **Community Engagement policy and guidelines**, and yet this will guide how consultation takes place with us all in the future.
- **Sustainability Review for Strategy & Environment Section** (Item 3) received only minor attention. We will be looking at the detail on this review as the environment has often been "left out in the cold" by this current Council. Questions were raised by one Councillor and quickly dismissed by a series of insults from the Mayor! Democracy in action? .... NO!
- The Voluntary *Planning Agreement for the Fisherman's Bay* (Landcom/Urban Growth) DA at least identified that there is a deficiency in the plans of the community facility which everyone will need to keep on watch in the future to ensure that the community is not shortchanged.
- The letting of tenders for civil works and the promotion of the sale of 33 Residential lots at 3 **Tarrant Road** (adjacent Recycle Centre & new sports grounds) TRRA Inc and the local community will have the **environmental issues "on watch"** as construction begins.
- The Councillors who spoke about the adoption of the long awaited **dinghy policy** did not appear to have read some significant amendments relating to designated areas.

*\*All this really highlights that Councillors are dependent on you, the ratepayer and resident, to actually send an objection or your comments when these proposals are advertised. Very few comments are received to exhibited documents. We cannot depend on Council officers and Councillors to always be acting in our best interests. The sting is often in the tail when policies are implemented!*

At the meeting we also heard that we will be *one hardworking East Ward Councillor down* over winter this year with leave of absence being granted to Cr John Nell from 8<sup>th</sup> June until 10<sup>th</sup> August.

### **INTEGRATED PLANS AND FEES FOR 2015 – WHAT’S TO HAPPEN NEXT?**

The above\* leads to highlighting that you have until 30<sup>th</sup> April to send comments or objections to the 240 page document currently on exhibition which will guide what happens at Port Stephens and how much you will be charged in future for services and the like! The advertisement occupied a very small space in the Examiner of 2<sup>nd</sup> April. TRRA Inc has tried unsuccessfully to have Council break these documents down into smaller downloads to assist with transparency. The best option is probably a visit to the local Library to view the hard copy!

The Works Plan [HERE](#) is one extract (up to 2017-18 only) which outlines the planned capital works projects. **Have your say on this before 30<sup>th</sup> April.** Note that *some* of the 2014-15 projects are on a separate carryover list (not included)

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLANS** – Thanks to a huge effort from the TRRA Inc sub committee a comprehensive 8 page submission [HERE](#) has been submitted on these important plans which will guide development in the area for many years to come. Let’s hope Council takes ideas on board.

### **LOCAL TRAFFIC WARNINGS**

#### **Mackas Sand Access Road on Nelson Bay Road and Pauls Corner Roundabout**

The alternate sand road access *is now in operation on Nelson Bay Road.* If you happen to be approaching the Pauls Corner roundabout and see a distant truck heading towards the roundabout, slow down – it will probably be taking up two lanes and bring the traffic from Nelson Bay/Tilligerry to a halt at the roundabout to do a U turn. Then..... further on Nelson Bay Road, if you are following a sand truck.... Slow down at Cows...t” corner! I followed one yesterday and fortunately slowed down as I had anticipated the truck would be exiting Nelson Bay Road. (No blinker, no nothing!) Certainly seems to be potential for future rear end collisions for the unknowing who might be speeding!

**Sandy Point Road/Keel Street/Bagnall Beach Road Roundabout** – Black spot funding work is to begin shortly. Locals were well aware to treat this roundabout “with respect” (P platers were the slow learners!) Plenty of safety fences were knocked out by sliding vehicles – particularly in the wet! “The fix” is to realign and make it a *one lane* roundabout and this also “temporarily fixes” the pedestrian crossing immediately after the roundabout opposite KFC for school children – long overdue.

One is however left to wonder what happens when/if Council starts to move the sand hill behind the shopping centre (as per previous plans for Big W). With the access road from that sandhill area being via a new road running parallel to Rigby Centre and exiting Bagnall Beach Road adjacent KFC, **picture a sand truck doing a U turn at the changed roundabout?** Short term gain perhaps! Hope to see you at either the Planning meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> and/or at our meeting on 11 May.

Thanks

Margaret Wilkinson

Hon Secretary TRRA Inc

19.4.15