



Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc. General Meeting

How High? Community faces critical decision on Nelson Bay building heights

2017 is shaping up as a critical year for the future of Nelson Bay, with a Council Discussion Paper due to go on exhibition in February making a case for a complete relaxation of height controls in Nelson Bay town centre and surrounding ridges.

Now in the draft paper, reviewing the 2012 Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore Strategy, adopted by Council in December 2016, it is suggested that in order to attract investment, much higher buildings be allowed anywhere in an extended town centre – with 7 storeys (24.5m) *as the starting point*. Heights above that would be allowed if approved by a supposedly independent design panel, but with *no maximum limit*. Examples are given of four sites, including the Council car park at Donald St West, where redevelopment would only be commercially viable if buildings of at least 8 storeys were allowed, according to economic modelling, but this is of course dependent on the inputs and assumptions in the model, which has not been released.

The model suggests that the Council owned Donald St East car park site would not be 'commercially viable' even at 17 storeys (60 metres). This invites the question – **how high is Council willing to go?**

The Discussion Paper covers many other important issues, including design standards, public spaces and infrastructure, and parking. It provides a good opportunity for the community to re-visit the 'vision' for the future of Nelson Bay agreed and adopted in 2012, but never actively pursued by Council.

Council is proposing only four weeks consultation on the Discussion Paper once it is published. Interested parties have called for this to be extended, as experience shows that it takes time to activate community interest.

Council planners will present to a General Meeting of Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association on Tuesday 21 February at 7pm at Nelson Bay Bowling Club (the views from which will be affected by any change in town centre height limits!) – the meeting is open to the public and TRRA will welcome anyone with an interest in the future of the town.

Further Information is available on our website <http://trra.com.au>

Media Contact:

Dick Appleby

TRRA Media Officer

media@trra.com.au

Phone 0418 206 625

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