



TRRA NEWSLETTER - 30 January 2018

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Welcome to 2018. This promises to be a year of great challenge to Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc. First up, we will need your full support to object to Council lifting the lid on building heights in our town centre – A Battle we Must Win. Map with proposed percentage increases [HERE](#)

CHANGE OF PUBLIC MEETING DATE ON BUILDING HEIGHTS – NOW TUESDAY 6TH MARCH – 7 pm

At our meeting with the Council officers we were informed that the earliest date for exhibition of the revised review would be 21 February.

Accordingly, it was necessary to change the date for our Public meeting to early March to allow people to read the exhibited material. The Nelson Bay Bowling Club was able to offer 6 March in their Auditorium and we have accepted.

This event needs to be planned and publicised. ***We need member assistance with organising and spreading the word.*** Invitees will include the Mayor and all Councillors, local community groups, State government representatives and the media. As in the past we will be requesting a presentation by a member of Council's planning staff. We are also considering an invitation to an expert from planning and/or development specialists to address the meeting.

CALL FOR DONATIONS – FIGHTING FUND – With the increased costs of maintaining our website, TRRA will need further financial assistance from members and the public to cover advertising and other expenses we expect to incur to organise the public meeting on building heights. A bank transfer is the easiest option: Bank details: Newcastle Permanent BSB 650000 TRRA Account No 98429840. (Include your name) or post to TRRA at P O Box 290, Nelson Bay 2315.

FOOT SOLDIERS NEEDED – We urgently need assistance with, first up, publicising the public meeting and raising public awareness of the building heights issue.

Please contact any Committee member if you can assist. It could be encouraging petition signing, leaflet drops or designing publicity material. All offers are welcome as some key TRRA Committee members had already planned trips or are not free to help.

DIARY DATES: TRRA General meeting – Monday 12th February at 7 pm in the Crows Nest at Nelson Bay Bowling Club. There are a number of other current matters that will be of interest to members, including the Mambo wetlands land/DA issue; the future of Tomaree Lodge, a draft Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan, and various DA updates.

Further TRRA General Meeting Dates 2018 (Note the variation in nights) [HERE](#)

Everyone is welcome to attend TRRA meetings and further notification will be sent.

REMEMBER: Our special Facebook Page “Save Nelson Bay from High Rise” would like to have many more followers. To increase our reach, **please invite your local friends to “Like” or “Follow” the page and “Share” any articles we post.** This is the most instant way to get our message out quickly and to a wider audience.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE OUR LAST UPDATE? (of 31st December)

Over the past few weeks there has been some important activity especially relating to Council’s “Progressing the Nelson Bay Town Centre & Foreshore Strategy - A Revised Implementation and Delivery Programme” – their **shorthand for which is ‘draft delivery program’**.

Recent Meetings

16 January Meeting with Jeff Bretag (PSC Strategic Planning Co-ordinator) and Stephen Crowe (PSC Communications Section Manager)

This meeting was to discuss a paper prepared by Nigel Waters which is a Critique [HERE](#) of the current stage of Council’s Review of the Nelson Bay Strategy in which the ‘draft delivery program’ was approved for public exhibition by PSC on 12 December 2017. The Critique was sent to the Mayor and General Manager before Christmas and found its way to Council’s planners, who requested the meeting to respond.

Our Critique queries the logic of the ‘draft delivery program’ which superimposes what the TRRA Planning Sub Committee considers to be a **whole new strategy on the existing 2012 Strategy.** **The main thrust of the new strategy is lifting the lid on building height controls across the entire business centre of Nelson Bay,** which we have pointed out **conflicts with the Objectives and Planning Principles adopted by council in the 2012 Strategy.**

The Critique also identifies significant inaccurate and misleading content in the ‘draft delivery program’ which in our view leads to several false assertions and conclusions in support of the perceived need for relaxation of height restrictions.

Our Critique **concludes that the Review paper endorsed by Council is incoherent and not fit for purpose.**

The officers accepted that there were errors which needed to be acknowledged (by annotation). They were less inclined to accept our identification of false assertions or misleading conclusions and responded with an offer to provide an additional explanatory document which would support their material. **Our conclusion was that this would be no more than “a spin and sales job”.**

We suggested that public exhibition of the 'draft delivery program' even with the annotation of the errors has the potential to damage the reputation of Port Stephens Council.

23 January meeting with Mayor Ryan Palmer and Councillors Sarah Smith and Glen Dunkley

The Mayor arranged this meeting in response to our request for an opportunity to discuss our Critique paper. Geoff Washington, John James and Nigel Waters represented TRRA.

A full and frank discussion covered the key issues raised in the Critique. Mayor Ryan and the other two Councillors acknowledged that there were inaccuracies which needed attention before exhibition. They reiterated the view advanced by Council officers that TRRA's criticisms and its opposition to lifting the lid on heights was based on a small unrepresentative group position. They claim to have received widespread support from a silent majority which favours the need to free up the height restrictions to encourage redevelopment of the town and revitalise its businesses.

The TRRA representatives asked for details of where these views are coming from and the answer was from individuals who would have been unlikely to respond formally via a submission!! TRRA drew attention to the strong opposition to the proposed increased height limits expressed in the last round of submissions received in March 2017 (and acknowledged as such in the report to Council on 12 December). We also drew attention to some concerns which have been raised by real estate and developer interests. We suggested to the Mayor and Councillors that they engage with those interests to gauge their views and to test out whether the market for high rise apartments in Nelson Bay would support the highrise solution being proposed.

The Mayor and Councillors appeared to understand our points about the desirability of a more fine-grained approach to height limits to preserve the character of the amphitheatre topography and to share views. However, **the Mayor gave no undertakings to achieve this outcome.** **We will need to do more to convince him of the arguments in support of maintaining the views to the wooded hill backdrop to the town.**

The Mayor and Councillors emphasised that they saw this latest document as a means of stimulating discussion in the community and that where necessary, there would be further changes to be made following the exhibition and other consultations.

The Mayor agreed that the exhibition period of 28 days was too short and appeared to accept our suggestion of an extension to 6 weeks.

TRRA advised of its intention to hold a public meeting on the Review document in March and invited the Mayor and Councillors to attend.

We have included some links to previous documents about this ongoing and longstanding issue on the TRRA website www.trra.com.au Please use the Search facility as our website is “works in progress”.

What else?

We have introduced our organisation to the new councillors and continued to comment on the agenda items of interest to the Tomaree Peninsula. Members have attended Council meetings at Raymond Terrace and we look forward to reinstatement of webcasting. Our Planning Sub Committee members have Development Applications on watch and an update will be given at our meeting on 12th Feb.

TRRA has, through its Associate membership of the Tomaree Business Chamber, Nelson Bay NOW and Econetwork, maintained an effective liaison with other community organisations and business interests on the Peninsula.

RECOGNITION OF TRRA COMMITTEE MEMBER AT PORT STEPHENS AWARDS

We were pleased to see one of our TRRA Committee members Geoffrey Bassar, awarded a Port Stephens Medal at the recent Australia Day Awards. As well as TRRA involvement, Geoffrey has been active in Rotary and on the Committee to improve Mental health services for Port Stephens Youth (COPSY). TRRA also received a nomination and we acknowledge whoever submitted the nomination. Some Committee members attended well organised functions at Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay.

We look forward to continued member support and assistance.

Geoffrey Washington
President
Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc
30 January 2018