



Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.

Monday, 9 April 2018

Council 'surrender' on variations

Council is proposing a policy that completely surrenders any intention to enforce compliance with development standards anywhere in Port Stephens, says the Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association.

The policy is a key agenda item for discussion at a TRRA general meeting at the Nelson Bay Bowling Club on Wednesday, 18 April at 7.00pm.

TRRA raised the alarm on Council's proposal for an Exceptions to Development Standards policy, which sets out how Council would consider applications for variations from standards such as building height and density.

"The draft policy was only advertised within the context of the Nelson Bay Strategy, even though it will apply everywhere in Port Stephens, and to any development standard," says TRRA spokesperson Nigel Waters.

"When TRRA pointed this out, the draft policy was belatedly advertised separately, but with only a week left before submissions were due on 4 April.

"Our concern is that the draft policy does not include any serious criteria for approval of variations, or follow State Government guidance that variations should only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

"Port Stephens Council's proposal amounts, in our view, to a complete surrender. It more or less invites developers to apply for major variations such as the more than doubling of the height limit for the Church Street apartment tower in Nelson Bay, which Council approved in 2017."

Mr Waters said that if adopted, the policy would open the door for developers to 'push the envelope' in any location in Port Stephens, and make it almost impossible for Council to enforce its own standards.

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