



## **A Fair and Unbiased Assessment Imperative**

Following the welcome announcement that the Council's own Development Application (DA) for the subdivision of the land surrounding the Salamander Shopping Centre has been referred to the NSW Joint Regional Planning Panel (the Panel), the Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association (TRRA) has made a formal objection to the Council regarding the inclusion of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as representatives on the Panel when it meets to assess the Application.

Chairman, Bob Young, said the TRRA considered it inappropriate to have this matter dealt with by an independent Panel which contained elected members of Port Stephens Council. The TRRA believe their involvement would be detrimental to achieving a fair assessment and decision, and they would be unable to provide any unbiased input, which is against the intention of such a Panel.

'Both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor have stated publicly their support for this proposal. They have been directly involved with councilors and council staff on the subdivision plans, and have been party to, or have an intimate knowledge of negotiations that require a positive approval of the DA .' he said.

'If we want a fair and reasonable assessment of this DA, and an outcome that considers all aspects raised by the community, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should be replaced with independent representatives.' Mr Young said. .

As all relevant material in relation to this DA must be compiled and presented to the Panel by Council, TRRA has requested Council include all its submissions, briefing notes, letters and requests in the Council documents.

Mr Young said that the TRRA also has requested an opportunity to discuss concerns about this Application when the Panel sits, which is expected to be within the next few weeks.

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