



IT'S ALL ABOUT FUNDING!

Whilst plans appear to be forging ahead for the revitalisation of the Nelson Bay and Port Stephens foreshores, the big question regarding funding, and implications of private sector investment in this process, remains unknown.

At this month's general meeting of the Tomaree Ratepayers & Residents Association (TRRA), 80 local residents, including three Councillors, raised many interesting issues. They posed some hot questions to guest speaker Keith Southall, from the NSW Department of Lands, regarding the Nelson Bay and Port Stephens foreshore developments.

Mr Southall delivered an informative presentation of the foreshore management plans which have been jointly initiated with the Port Stephens Council. Whilst there were many questions regarding a range of issues such as parking, high-rise development, use of Bagnalls Beach, commercial fishing rights, and maintaining the unspoilt natural beauty of the Tomaree area, the biggest question remained unanswered - 'how will these projects be funded?'

Keith outlined the vision for the redevelopment and the parameters of his department's input and control over the projects. He explained that, to date, there was no allocated funding from either government or council to achieve the vision that has already been adopted.

In response to questions about actual funding, Keith spoke about seeking partnerships with the corporate sector to fund the developments. There were many concerned comments and questions regarding the private sector being invited to invest, and exactly what the terms of these arrangements might be, and whether there could be a conflict of interest. These questions were not satisfactorily answered.

The TRRA will be following all of these issues closely and has formed a sub committee to deal specifically with the foreshore plans. Interested residents are invited to join the association to help ensure these plans do benefit all of the Tomaree community.

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