

Sent: Friday, 2 January 2009 5:04 PM

To: Peter Gesling (peter.gesling@portstephens.nsw.gov.au); Bob Westbury (bobwestbury@bigpond.com); Clr Bruce Mackenzie (bruce.mackenzie@portstephens.nsw.gov.au); Clr Daniel Maher (daniel.maher@portstephens.nsw.gov.au); Clr Frank Ward (fdward@bigpond.net.au); Clr Geoff Dingle (gedtrain@internode.on.net); Clr Glenys Francis (glenysfrancis@ozemail.com.au); Clr John Nell (ja.nell@bigpond.com); Clr Ken Jordan (ken.jordan@portstephens.nsw.gov.au); Clr Peter Kafer (peter.kafer@portstephens.nsw.gov.au); Clr Sally Dover (sallyd@nelsonbay.com); Clr Shirley O'Brien (shirley.obrien@portstephens.nsw.gov.au); Cr. Steve Tucker (steve.tucker@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)

Cc: Darrell Dawson (econet@nelsonbay.com)

Subject: Proposed Rezoning : 100 Salamander Way



Mr Peter Gesling
General Manager
Port Stephens Council
PO Box 42
Raymond Terrace 2324

Dear Mr Gesling

Re: Lot 21, DP 1044009 – Salamander Way

The Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association (TRRA) attended the recent workshop on the Salamander Way development options and following discussion of the implications of the various options for the future use of this site. We submit comment on the proposals for consideration by Council.

In considering options for the future use of this important site TRRA found difficulty in assessing the matter in the absence of an overall strategic plan for the Tomaree Peninsula and the Port Stephens LGA. Accordingly, we urge Council to give priority to the completion of the Futures Project which we hope will define the desirable framework for future development in our area, including the baseline environmental constraints necessary for sustainable development, targets for accommodation of additional population settlement, the market requirements of possible new settlers, the role and scale of business centres, especially Salamander shopping/administrative precinct, employment opportunities and future transport networks.

To take decisions on sites such as 100 Salamander Way in the absence of this framework would only perpetuate the ad hoc nature of our development which has led to the dysfunctional operation of many aspects of the Peninsula's urban structure. We would not like to see a repeat of the excessive supply of apartment units which remain unsold and/or largely unoccupied in the Nelson Bay CBD.

In this regard, we note that the decisions on Council's landholding at 100 Salamander Way are closely linked with the future of the much larger Crown Land parcel to the south, extending to Nelson Bay Road. We believe that this whole area needs to be subject to a comprehensive plan and not dealt with piecemeal.

Starting from this broader perspective, TRRA would urge Council to have regard for the following key planning principles:

1. The whole area, including the Crown Land component, has very significant environmental values such as extensive wetlands, the koala and other wildlife habitats, the natural visual entry corridor to Nelson Bay and water supply aquifers. There are also major indigenous cultural interests. Planning decisions must be taken with reference to thorough assessment of these values.

2. With forecasts of the impact of global warming, rising sea-levels and water-tables dictate a need to adhere to the precautionary principle where wetlands and flood prone lands are involved.
3. The Lower Hunter Regional Development Strategy envisages more intense development in the proximity of key business centres to meet modern planning objectives which discourage reliance on motor cars and minimize servicing costs. The Council's site is relatively accessible to Salamander Shopping Centre and other administrative, educational and recreational facilities. It represents an opportunity to proactively encourage higher density residential development linked to these facilities by high quality walkways and cycle paths. There are creative, livable solutions for medium density housing which should be investigated. Nevertheless, it will be important to gauge the preferences of the market, as there seems no point in forcing housing configurations for which there is no demand.
4. As a greenfield site there is an opportunity to attempt to influence an overall urban design concept and to require acceptable standards for landscaping, public spaces and facilities such as children's playing areas. Should the planning extend to the Crown Lands, the scale may require provision for neighbourhood shopping and community facilities such as child minding, schools, playing fields and tennis courts.
5. As the development would starting with a clean slate there would be an opportunity to incorporate state of the art technologies for energy efficiency, waste water management and management of rainwater and run-off.
6. Consideration needs to be given to adequate road access for public transport, particularly buses.

TRRA understands that significant areas of the site have been the subject of sand mining and so have a degraded biodiversity value. We would urge council to focus on these areas for rezoning for residential development.

We also ask that Council take full account of concerns which have been expressed by the current residents of Salamander Way whose amenity may be impacted by the proposed development.

With application of the above principles, TRRA regards this site as having potential for future urban development and would be pleased to participate in future consultations as to its extent, configuration and urban design.

Yours sincerely

Robert Young
Chairperson
Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association.