



## Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.

27 September 2018

### Still too much high-rise in latest plan for Nelson Bay

At Tuesday's Port Stephens Council meeting there were forceful reminders of the overwhelming local opposition (over 95% of the 2600 responses) to doubling building heights in Nelson Bay town to ten storeys, as recommended by staff.

President of Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association (TRRA), Geoff Washington, said that the community is very disappointed that Council effectively ignored its clearly expressed concerns. "The message finally got through to enough councillors to ensure we have at least been spared the prospect of 10-storey towers north of Dowling St." Council accepted a last-minute amendment to adopt height limits of 5 storeys in a central corridor and 8 storeys across most of the rest of the town centre.

Mr Washington stated that this outcome remains wholly inconsistent with the visions and objectives of the 2012 Strategy which the Council still claims to be implementing. He said "TRRA does not agree that incentives to build high-rise residential units will revitalise business in Nelson Bay. Experience suggests that 70% of these are likely to remain vacant for most of the year".

"We agree with the business community that the emphasis should be on the Delivery Program's proposed improvements to the public domain, parking and traffic management, which we welcome".

"Even the latest plan, which would allow 8 storeys across much of the town centre and very high density (floor space ratios), still has the potential to destroy the coastal town character of Nelson Bay forever.

In Council's own words 'It is critical that the wooded ridge and headlands that surround the Bay will be visible and not eclipsed by buildings' and that to ensure design excellence 'Building height should provide due consideration to human scale'.

"We are not convinced that the promised changes to the LEP will guarantee that these 2012 Strategy objectives can be met." said Mr Washington "High rise buildings will also inevitably result in overshadowing and wind tunnels" he added.

Mr Washington said "Since the Council meeting, TRRA has heard from many residents concerned for the future of Nelson Bay and the implications of Council's decision for all other areas in Port Stephens, such as Shoal Bay and Salamander Bay."

"TRRA will explore all avenues to achieve better outcomes for Nelson Bay that reflect the principles adopted in the existing 2012 Strategy, and the overwhelming weight of community opinion" said Mr Washington.

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