

TRRA INC NEWSLETTER, 3 February 2020

NEXT TRRA GENERAL MEETING

Our first General Meeting for 2020 will be held on Monday 10 February commencing at 7.00 pm in the Nelson Room, ground floor, at Nelson Bay Bowling Club.

Guest Speaker: Deb Barker, founder of Hunter Horse Haven Inc.

Hunter Horse Haven in Anna Bay is a Not-For-Profit Charity formed to provide a rehabilitation and contractual rehoming service for unwanted horses in NSW.



There are currently more than 30 horses in care, ranging from tiny Teddy to the ex- racehorse Whitey. The Haven is heavily dependent on volunteers to assist with everything from day to day care of horses and the property, to fundraising activities.

All horse breeds are accepted, with the goal to save, retrain, rehabilitate and rehome horses who were previously neglected or destined for slaughter.

The Haven provides open family days on Sundays for adults and children to spend time with the rehab horses.

NEWSLETTER

1. Tribute to former Councillor Geoff Dingle

The Committee and Members of the Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association were very sorry to note the recent passing of our former Councillor Geoff Dingle.

Since its inception 12 years ago, TRRA has greatly valued the support and assistance provided by Geoff Dingle. Notwithstanding the fact that Geoff was a Central Ward Councillor, he was prepared to offer advice to our Association and where appropriate, actively support TRRA's representations on the floor of Council.

In times where we see locally, nationally and internationally those in positions of power exercise it for self-serving purposes, Geoff's life and service stands out as a beacon of how community service should be undertaken. Always an advocate for fair play and a strong defender of the environment, his years on Council displayed a level of integrity that was an example to all who encountered him.

To his enduring credit he remained engaged in the community until the end and will be sorely missed by many.

TRRA has forwarded its condolences to Geoff's wife and their family.

2. Port Stephens Annual Awards 2019

Port Stephens Annual Awards were announced on 26 January 2020. The winners are detailed in the Council's website article [HERE](#).

Congratulations are due to two TRRA members recognised in this year's awards:

Freeman of the Year — Lorraine Nicol

Lorraine has been described as 'a 'pocket rocket of our community — small in stature and large in energy!' Over many years, Lorraine has given her time to organise countless functions and events, fundraising thousands of dollars for Port Stephens charities. Lorraine is a past president of the Nelson Bay VIEW club, was on the founding committee for the Breast Cancer Support Group, is an active member of the Christmas Bush Garden Club and the current Chairperson of Corlette Hall and Headland Committee — to name a few.

Environmental Award — Nigel Waters

Nigel is a community champion of Port Stephens who has given his time to numerous volunteer groups including EcoNetwork Port Stephens, Port Stephens Greens, Climate Action Port Stephens, the Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association, and the recent Anna Bay 7 Day Makeover. Nigel is passionate about making Port Stephens a great place!

The Nelson Bay Civic Pride Group was nominated for an award. TRRA members Margaret Wilkinson, Judy Washington and Nigel Waters are active in this Group. The group has achieved a transformation of the CBD including rejuvenated seating and street level landscaping. Many businesses have "adopted" a garden.



3. Matters of General Interest

Gateway to the Tomaree Peninsula

At the January 23, TRRA Committee Meeting a decision was taken to give a high priority to improving the visual and environmental standard of the approaches to the Peninsula in the coming year.

Over past years members of TRRA and other community Groups have raised concerns relating to the many eyesores along Nelson Bay Road and some other approach routes to the Nelson Bay tourism strategic centre.





Unfortunately, many of the offending collections of miscellaneous junk, mushrooming billboards and unsightly commercial operations are on privately-owned rural land where the Council's legal powers to order clean-ups are limited. However, TRRA is aware that many other destination areas such as Port Macquarie, Bellingen, Kiama and Byron Bay have managed to maintain outstanding rural landscapes to be enjoyed by local residents and visitors.

TRRA will consult with Council and with other tourist destinations to develop a strategy to tackle this problem.

Parking for Nelson Bay

Port Stephens Council has demolished the multi-level Donald Street East car park which had been condemned as an unsafe structure. The site has been prepared as a temporary unsealed area for use over the holiday season but will be sealed and landscaped early in 2020.



Long-term options for further development of this site, all including public car parking, will be considered by Council.

At its meeting on 10 December 2019 Council resolved to support a Notice of Motion moved by the Mayor to:

1. Investigate the installation of **SMART Parking** at Birubi Headland and Shoal Bay CBD Precinct/Foreshore.
2. Continue community consultation in Nelson Bay around the installation of **SMART Parking**.
3. All SMART Parking in Port Stephens be free for residents, rate payers and employees of local businesses. Time based restrictions to apply.
4. Invest the funds raised from SMART Parking back into the precinct where the funds are collected.
5. Invest the funds into the following projects (but not limited to) – public domain, improved/increased car parking, place activation, marketing and advertising, landscaping etc.
6. Each precinct shall have its own reserve to manage funding.

SMART Parking was supported by the Independent Citizens Parking Panel report and public consultation was undertaken through a Drop-In session in Nelson Bay late in 2019.

TRRA made a submission to Council raising a number of threshold questions which it felt should be addressed before proceeding to the detailed design of Smart Parking.

These included:

- What is the business case for SMART Parking if a significant portion of cars park are to be free?
- Is there potential to divert customers from Nelson Bay to Salamander Bay and other places where there is free parking?
- Will the Smart Parking charges discourage visitors from coming into Nelson Bay Business precinct?
- Are there examples of SMART Parking schemes succeeding in other comparable tourist destination hubs?

Lagoons Estate

Council recently advised of a recent resolution of a long term dispute with the Lagoons Estate (Dowling Street) landholders, see [HERE](#).

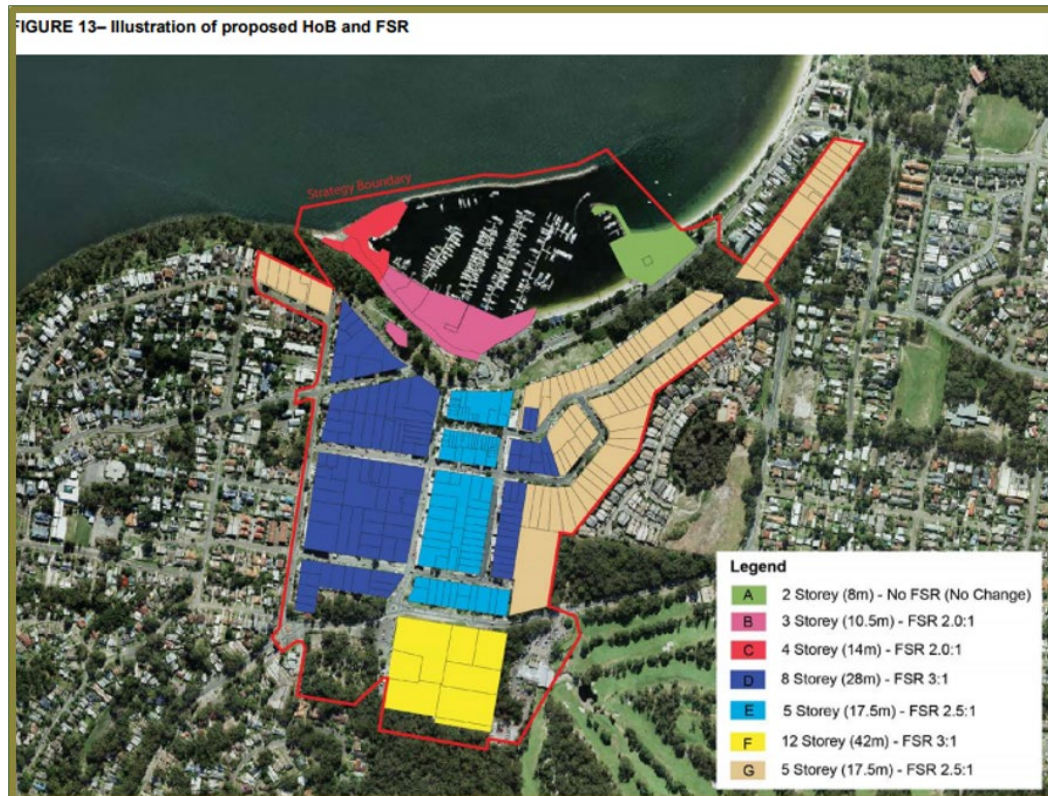
TRRA had previously expressed concern over the mounting legal and other engineering costs being accrued by Council in relation to this matter. The latest release included the following statement:

Since 2002, the cost to ratepayers has been \$7.15 million on public drainage works, settlements and legal costs, with an estimated \$2 million to be spent on future public drainage works.

TRRA would welcome more details on the \$2 million to be spent on future drainage works and on the capacity of these proposed works to deal with future run-off volumes.

Revision of the Port Stephens Local Environment Plan (Proposed Nelson Bay Height Limits)

Council's proposed new height limits for Nelson Bay town center were submitted to The NSW Department of Planning as a "Planning Proposal" in April 2019. This was a necessary step to obtain a "Gateway Determination" which will authorize Council to enter final consultations on the draft Local Environment Plan. These steps are required to give formal effect to the Council's proposals for new 5, 8 and 12 storey zones in the Nelson Bay CBD.



The Department requested additional information which Council provided in July 2019. The Department's Determination may include instructions on the conduct of consultations.

Advice from the Council is that The Department of Planning is still assessing their planning proposal.

In the meantime, TRRA notes how Council is prepared to use relatively open-ended exemption rules to pre-empt the formal change by approving developments that even exceed the new limits – as it has done at 1 Yacaaba St.

The Future of Tomaree Headland

TRRA continues to participate in important initiatives relating to the future use and protection of heritage assets on Tomaree Headland. President Ben van der Wijngaart is a member of the NPWS Tomaree Walking Track Advisory Group and Geoff Washington represents TRRA on the Friends of Tomaree Headland.



TRRA and the Friends of Tomaree Headland are calling for a comprehensive masterplan for the future use and improvement of the Headland including the Heritage protected Tomaree Lodge site.

The Friends' vision statement for this iconic site is [HERE](#). The Friends have succeeded in gaining assurances from the NSW government and the opposition to keep the site in public ownership.

Attempts are being made to engage the government in discussion of the possible future uses and responsibilities for management of this site which is yet to be vacated by the remaining lodge residents.

In recent weeks, another interest group has emerged as the promoter of a Tomaree Museum Project which has many similar characteristics to the Friends' vision, but is focused entirely on a museum. The Friends are in communication with representatives of this group with a view to achieving a united approach on this initiative.

4. TRRA Membership Drive

The TRRA Committee concluded that a concerted effort was needed to increase TRRA membership. A sub-committee has been established to devise a strategy to promote TRRA within the community and to more actively recruit members. Suggestions on this would be welcomed by the convenor of this sub-committee Robyn Williams at membership@trra.com.au.

5. Planning Update

Harvey Norman Taylors Beach DA

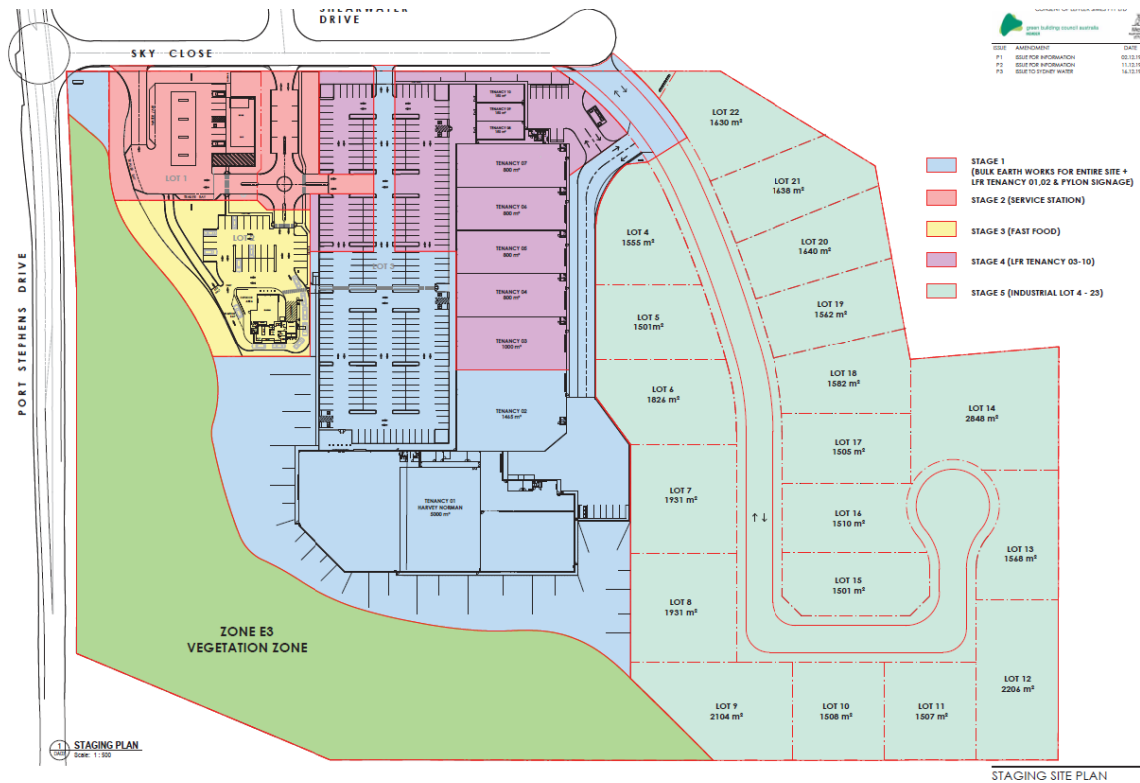
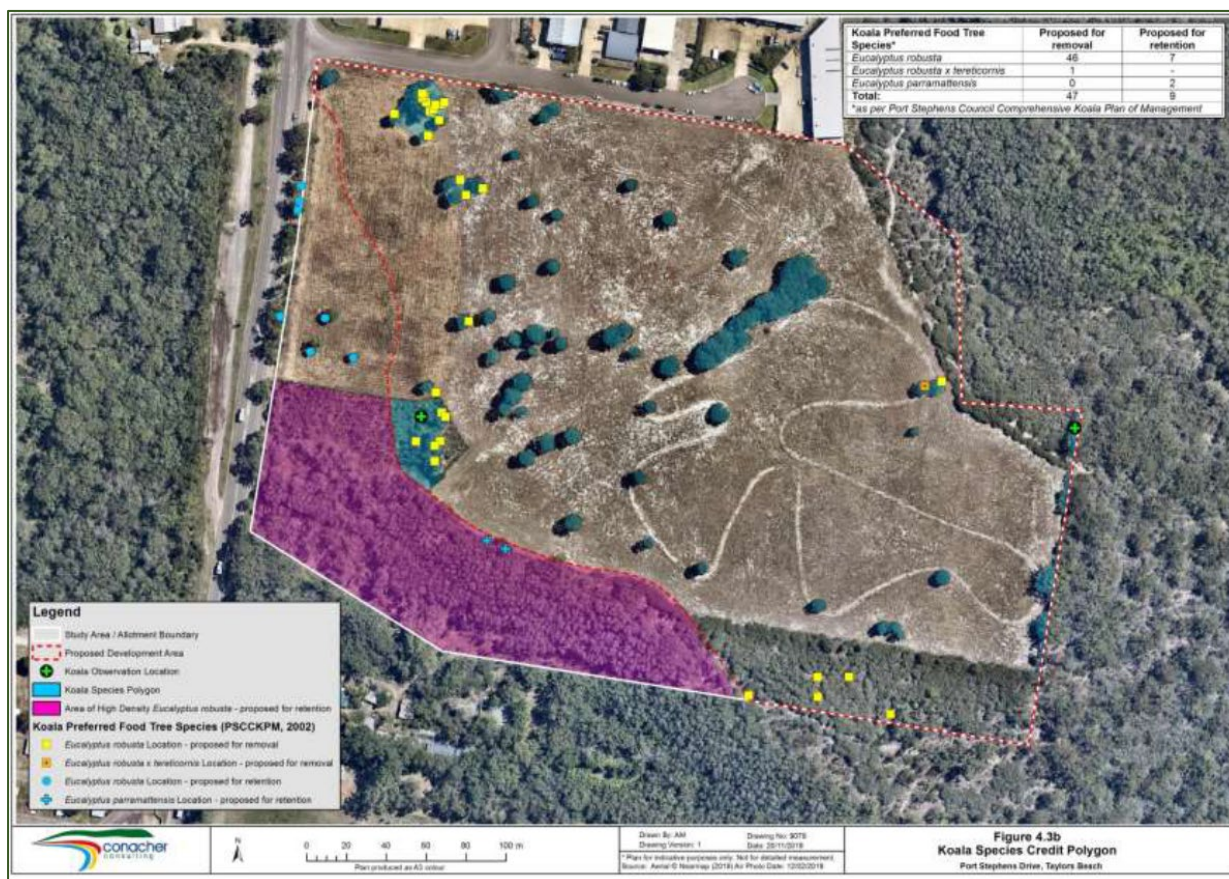
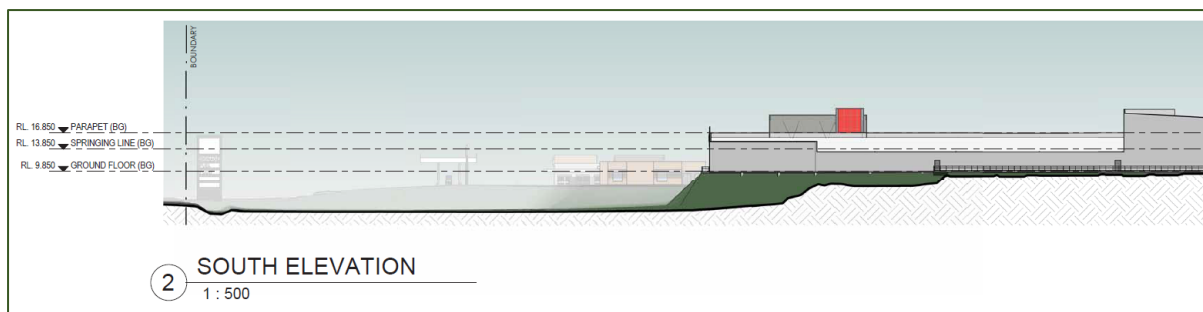


Figure 12: Staging Site Plan

The proposed \$25.8M Harvey Norman development at 60 Port Stephens Drive Taylors Beach, although welcome by many in the community, raises several environmental concerns. TRRA made a submission questioning the scale of the development which will require extensive earth works and a steep retaining wall facing Port Stephens Drive of approximately 5 to 7m in height along the entire length of the development. A small section of the development is zoned E3 which will be protected however there are approximately 28 koala trees marked for removal.

TRRA believes that following the devastating bush fires over recent months and the history of removal of koala habitat across Port Stephens over the past 10 years we cannot afford to remove any more trees. A small reduction in the number of proposed lots from the original planned 22 and a slight increase in the buffer zone along the western side of the development would reduce the extent of earthworks and a significant saving of important koala habitat that is listed as preferred or buffer within the Port Stephens Koala Management Plan.

The increase in traffic that will eventually be generated by the development raises concerns about the already unsafe koala crossing through the existing east/west corridor on the southern boundary of the proposed development along with night lighting. The Wallum Froglet, Southern Myotis and the Squirrel Glider will also be affected.



Latitude One Development

A planning proposal to effectively spot rezone land adjacent to the existing approved 270 lot development to allow another 170 lots on rural zoned land was approved by Councillors on the 10th December to forward to the Department Planning. TRRA wrote to Councillors prior to the council meeting objecting to the process and subsequently to the Department regarding Council's approval. We have been informed by the Department that they have undertaken an adequacy review and found a number of matters requiring further clarification. The Department and TRRA awaits Council's response.

21 Fullerton Cove

A similar proposal at the Seniors Living 'Lifestyle Village' at 21 Fullerton Cove to develop another 124 lots on rural flood prone land. The developer argued that it was 'substantially the same development' but TRRA has questioned this on a number of grounds, particularly when the proposal is to increase the average lot size from 80 m² to at least 220 m².

Soldiers Point Marina

The approval of the proposed expansion of the marina at Soldiers Point has been placed on hold with the Planning, Industry & Environment Department requesting more studies on Aboriginal assessment and consultation.

2 Bagnall Ave Soldiers Point

The proposed Council 8 townhouse development at 2 Bagnall Ave has progressed to the stage of Council calling for tenders for their construction. The local community and TRRA have opposed this overdevelopment of the site prior to Council approving the DA in April 2018.

2 Jessie Rd Anna Bay

The DA for the Irukandji Shark & Ray Centre for a tourist facility and marine conservation centre to relocate to the previous Council owned site at 2 Jessie Rd Anna Bay was approved on the 24/12/2019. Construction has already commenced with the urgent requirement for the centre to move out of their existing facility.

31/31A Leonard Ave, Shoal Bay

The proposal to build a 10-dwelling residential flat building at 31 Leonard Ave Shoal Bay in 2016 has generated strong local community opposition and TRRA have made a number of submissions objecting to the development which has undergone a range of modifications over the years. Council finally approved 5 townhouses for the site, although consent is conditional on the developer gaining permission from neighbours for a drainage easement which they have not been able to negotiate to date.

Geoff Washington
Media Officer