



**TRRA Inc GENERAL MEETING
Monday 3 August, 2020 – 6.30 pm
Minutes**

The meeting was held by Zoom in view of Covid-19 restrictions.

Attendance

19 persons.

Apologies

Geoff Basser

Previous Minutes

Moved: John James, **Seconded:** Chris Peters that the minutes of the General Meeting on 10 February 2020 be passed. **Agreed** by consensus.

Business Arising

None.

Correspondence In and Out

None.

Business Arising from Correspondence

None.

Treasurer's Report (posted on the TRRA website)

Moved: Ben van der Wijngaart

Seconded: Chris Peters that the Treasurer's Report be passed. Agreed by consensus.

Reports

Climate Change Policy. A submission was sent to Council that their climate change report was:

- Too narrowly focused
- Little recognition was given for reduction of emissions.
- Emphasis was on mitigation and management rather than prevention.
- A target needs to be set for emissions.

Gateway to Tomaree Peninsula. A detailed proposal had been sent to Council for achieving enhancement of gateways to Port Stephens. It has been planned to discuss the issue at the regular meetings between TRRA and the Mayor to see what could be done, but this meeting is repeatedly postponed by the Mayor and requests to set a date for a separate meeting with planners devoted to this issue have not yet succeeded. TRRA Executive will continue to follow up.

Nelson Bay Parking. TRRA had made a submission to Council on the “smart parking” initiative, drawing attention to the need for a business case, including analysis of the likely impact on businesses within Nelson Bay town centre, and calling for genuine consultation with the community. Members pointed out that while Council claimed to have consulted, the panel which it consulted did not include representatives either of the Tomaree Business Chamber or TRRA. The initiative was still notionally open for comments, but Council had already authorized the General Manager to sign a \$500,000 contract for it without public tender, claiming an exemption from the requirement on grounds of urgency. Councillor Arnott had sought unsuccessfully to postpone implementation pending community consultation and to require protection of users’ privacy.

Council withdrawal of advertising from local press. The decision to stop advertising DAs in the local press had been taken not by Council, but by the Mayor and General Manager. It was pointed out that changes to local government legislation had allowed this to happen but had not required it. TRRA’s submission on the issue had been ignored, despite the efforts of some Councillors. The Media Liaison Policy now on public exhibition confirm Council’s downplaying of the use of the local press.

Future of Tomaree Headland. With the hospital site soon to be vacated, concerned local groups had now taken the steps to formalize as the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Inc. (THHG), bringing together the organizations formerly meeting as Friends of Tomaree Headland and the Tomaree Museum Committee. The Worimi Land Council had not yet been approached pending the outcome of its ongoing appeal against the refusal of its land claim there. THHG had presented at Council and was proposing to develop a Master Plan for the site, ahead of the departure of the last residents of Tomaree Lodge. It was noted that security at the site had recently been upgraded, with 24 hour security staff and camera surveillance.

Nelson Bay Now. The Chair explained that Nelson Bay Now had been suspended by mutual agreement. If the situation arose where it would again be valuable as a vehicle for combining the interests of a range of local groups it would be revived.

Crown Land Review. Submissions are invited by the State Government on the State Strategic Plan for Crown Land. This is the first such plan for Crown land and

represents an opportunity to change the way Crown land is managed for the benefit of the communities of NSW over the next 10 years.

Planning

Nelson Bay town centre. The changes currently on exhibition represent the final stage of the decisions made by Council in 2018 concerning the town centre. While most of the changes on exhibition were welcome, TRRA and its members strongly object to the changes that would allow 8 and 12 storey buildings and those allowing a floor space ratio (FSR) of 3:1. If buildings are ever built to the new height limits, the character of our town will be irrevocably changed for the worse. Council had stubbornly refused to recognise that the market has consistently demonstrated that high rise apartment buildings are not the way to revitalise the town and the documents on exhibition failed to even mention the more than 2000 submissions in 2018 – 90% of which objected to major increases in building heights. Members were encouraged to make a submission, by 14 August, using the submission guide prepared by TRRA to assist them.

Tree management. The period for submissions on the “tree moratorium”, which reduces protection of trees by allowing households to self-assess the justification for removing trees, has passed. TRRA objected to these changes and will lobby Councillors on the matter when it comes back before Council.

Harvey Norman, Taylor’s Beach. The period for submissions has closed. TRRA was not opposed to some development of this land but considered that it should be more sensitive, including with regard to preserving koala habitat. It seems that three Councillors are willing to call the DA up for discussion in Council, which at least will provide for a debate, although the outcome of it is very uncertain.

Lure Apartments, Nelson Bay. The proposal, to convert two-thirds of the apartments in this complex from short-term letting to permanent occupancy, reconfiguring the layout and size of the units (from 58 down to 33 units) was being assessed. In principle, conversion to permanent occupancy should be supported.

Sand Quarry, Anna Bay. Objections had been raised at the meeting of the Joint Regional Planning Panel, regarding the impact on koala habitat and the effect of additional truck movements, to no avail. Similar objections had been raised by local groups, with support from the State Member for Port Stephens and from Councillor Arnott, concerning the expansion of the **Brandy Hill Hard Rock Quarry**, also to no effect. It seems that mining interests are being satisfied regardless of any negative impact.

Other DAs. Mentioned were: 57-59 Stockton Street, for which no objections had been raised; 118A Soldiers Point Road (a seniors development behind the Soldiers Point Bowling Club), which was proposing to build higher but covering less area in view of the hard rock that had been encountered, making excavation difficult; the Soldiers Point Marina, whose proposal to build a health club over the old slipway was being opposed by a local residents’ group; and the Gan Gan Army Camp, where it was reported that the developers had hired a consultancy firm to make a

submission on the Housing Strategy with the aim of facilitating their proposed development.

Local Strategic Planning Statement. Changes to the draft version were mostly minor. Planners had resisted lobbying from developers for more pro-growth language and endorsement of specific sites for new housing. The changes included: a small clearly defined Greater Newcastle boundary; and promoting Medowie to an 'emerging strategic centre'.

Housing Strategy. The staff report following exhibition of the draft strategy was quite balanced. While most of TRRA's comments were not taken up, the report did not favour developers. Key points included: "lifestyle villages" should be within walking distances to villages or near to a bus stop; a requirement for earlier Flora & Fauna assessment in planning processes; the Rural Residential Policy will be repealed; new housing opportunities will be merit based and not forced; and an annual report of land supply and dwelling production is to be prepared.

General Business

None.

Annual General Meeting: Monday 26th October 2020, probably via Zoom.