



TRRA INC NEWSLETTER, September 2020

October Annual General Meeting and General Meeting

In accordance with the current limitations on public meetings TRRA General Meetings can no longer be held in the Bowling Club. As an alternative these meetings will be held via Zoom on Monday 26 October commencing at 7.00 p.m. You will receive an invitation to join into the Zoom programme on Sunday 25 October.

Agendas and nomination forms for Committee positions will be circulated on 12 October to enable lodgement of nomination forms which should be received by to the Secretary 7 days prior to the AGM.

Only financial members are eligible to vote at these meetings.

Renewal of TRRA's membership fees fell due on 30 June, 2020. If you have not already paid, see TRRA website for how to pay – [HERE](#)

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

1. Matters of General Interest

Nelson Bay Building Heights

If you made a personal submission to Council on Nelson Bay building heights, you will have received an acknowledgment. It implies that Council has already addressed your concerns about the effect of high buildings on the character of the town (and invites you to respond, which we think is an unreasonable 'ask'). The reply foreshadows what the report on all submissions will likely conclude. If you disagree that they have dealt with your concerns, you may wish to say so in a reply by email, so that they cannot infer from silence that you accept that proposition.

The full TRRA submission is available from our website [HERE](#)

We also tried to persuade the Dept. of Planning that Council had not met some of the conditions that were required for the LEP and DCP amendments to proceed to public

exhibition. Regrettably, not for the first time, the Department has declined to act, effectively leaving the decision on the changes in the hands of Port Stephens Councillors.

The matter is likely to return to a Council meeting for formal decision in the next few months. This will give us all one last chance to lobby Councillors – we will advise.

Tree Management

The changes to the Development Control Plan section on Tree Management in urban areas were approved by Council at its 25 August meeting. Our comprehensive submission [HERE](#) has led to some promised changes to educational materials and the self-certification form which will have to be submitted for most planned tree removals, and we will welcome these if they are delivered.

Council has however declined to strengthen the language of the Policy, to send a clear message that the new rules (required by the State Government) should not be abused. We fear that many landowners will take advantage of the new rules to remove trees for commercial or amenity reasons even where they pose no risk. Council's monitoring and enforcement is likely to remain weak, hampered by only requiring 10 days' notice to Council of intention of felling. There is no requirement for public notification or even for notice to immediate neighbours.

Concern for the future of Street Trees on Stockton Street Footpath outside Seabreeze

Two mature Chinese Box trees are lifting pavers in the footpath and they are now surrounded by temporary barriers. Council has already removed two trees further south on Stockton Street for this reason. Members of the Civic Pride Group and the Business Chamber have expressed concern. The Business Chamber has sought advice from Council and has been advised that Council officers are looking at options to deal with this problem.

TRRA will encourage Council to look for solutions other than removal, such as inserting a flexible porous rubber surface around the trees or inserting a bench seat around the trees.

We may need to make representations on this in the near future.

Crown Land

TRRA has made a detailed submission on a draft Strategic Plan for Crown Land in NSW [HERE](#). While an overall Plan is welcome, and it contains many welcome principles and objectives, we fear that will be used as a smokescreen and excuse for increased commercialisation of public land. The contribution of Crown Land to environmental protection is constantly under threat. We have made several suggestions for changes, including an emphasis on greater transparency and accountability, using the Port Stephens Council Holiday Parks history as examples of how not to manage Crown Land in the public interest.

Smart Parking in Nelson Bay

Council has resolved to invest in a technology-based program to manage car parking in Nelson Bay. This forms part of a broader Smart Cities initiative for the LGA. The intention is to ultimately extend this scheme to other urban areas such as Shoal Bay, and also Birubi Point.

Parking in the Nelson Bay CBD and Foreshore, including kerbside and council car parks, will be subject to time limits and fees. There will be a 15-minute free period and all Port Stephens LGA ratepayers, residents and workers in the Nelson Bay CBD will be allowed to park free. This concession will be available to those who register their car with Council for this purpose. Visitors will be required to pay electronically by a phone app or at meters using a card or cash. Each space will be monitored electronically for the period of stay and rangers will check compliance via a car mounted camera capable of number plate recognition.

Any profits earned will be directed to improving the presentation and infrastructure of the town centre where the revenue is raised e.g. recommendations in the Nelson Bay Public Domain Plan.

TRRA and the Tomaree Business Chamber have raised a number of queries in relation to this initiative. In the first instance we have requested a thorough business plan, which assesses the full cost of implementation and on-going operation. This would indicate the prospective profitability. We have also raised questions as to whether the proposed charging could deter tourists and even local residents from visiting Nelson Bay, when other centres such as Salamander Bay have no limits or charges on parking. Council has stated that there is no evidence to suggest that this would result.

Council has a special website on Smart parking <https://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/smartparking>

More detailed information will be available from a Council Pop-up shop - see PSC notice below:

We 're opening a smart parking pop up shop. You can find us at 2/26-28 Donald Street, Nelson Bay. Our opening days are:

- From 30 September to 9 October during school holidays — Wednesday to Friday
- From 12 October to 31 December — Monday to Friday.

Staff will be available to answer your questions and sign you up to the park free scheme (expected from 12 October 2020).

Proposed traffic changes in the Nelson Bay CBD

One way for Stockton and Yacaaba Streets

Stockton Street south of Donald Street to Tomaree Street will be converted to one way, going south.

Yacaaba Street from Donald to Tomaree Street will be converted to one way going north.

Car parking on these streets will be angle on the western side. Parallel on eastern side.

In answer to questions from TRRA, it was acknowledged that delivery trucks to Woolworths could be a problem turning from Donald to Stockton – the implementation team is considering this. The possibility of a one-way scheme forcing more through traffic into the core of the CBD and onto Victoria Parade was raised. It has been considered by the Traffic Committee but was not seen as a problem. (No mention of the overall NB strategy having been considered).

Shared use of Magnus and Stockton Street North of Donald Street

The plan is to paint road surfaces and add stripes to signify shared zone.

Much of the CBD road network will be resealed soon.

109 Foreshore Drive, Salamander Bay

At the council meeting on the 11 August, Clr Nell moved a motion to reclassify the council-owned land at 109 Foreshore Drive from “Operational” to “Community” which would have prevented the sale of this block of foreshore reserve being offered for sale. This followed a similar motion by Clrs Nell and Arnott in 2018 which was defeated, despite a strong community desire to protect foreshore reserves from alienation. Unfortunately, at this Council meeting once again the motion was defeated and the “operational” classification remains as does Council’s option to sell the land.

Port Stephens Council Climate Change Policy - Adoption of Policy

Adoption of policy Item 3. Council Meeting, 8 September [HERE](#)

TRRA welcomes this new Policy and the improvements recommended in response to submissions. **We urge Council to be more ambitious** by setting specific targets, and by expressly adopting a leadership role. The Policy is narrowly focussed on Council’s own operations. Council needs to lead the whole community in addressing the climate challenge. Action to address climate change can be a ‘win-win’ for the environment and the local economy – it can generate local jobs to help in recovery from the COVID19 crisis. We support the call from Climate Action Port Stephens for Council to join the Cities Power Partnership <https://citiespowerpartnership.org.au/>.

Tomaree Headland Heritage Group Inc. (THHG)

THHG, in accordance with the suggestion of the Hon.Gareth Ward, Minister for Families, Communities, and Disability Services is liaising with his Department of Communities and Justice on the processes for determining the future use of the Tomaree Lodge site.

THHG is also exploring opportunities to apply for grants to assist with researching the history of the Tomaree Headland heritage assets and the planning which is envisaged to give effect to the Group’s vision for its future.

Streets as Shared Spaces - NSW DOP New Initiative

Port Stephens council has successfully applied for grants under this state scheme for funding to:

- Improve the cycleway and footpath around Fly Point to Little Beach, which would see the pedestrian/cycleway widened and separated from vehicular traffic by flexible markers, and
- Provide temporary widening of sections of footpath in Magnus and Stockton Streets to encourage additional dining and seating facilities

Revised Council Policies on Reporting DAs and Planning Proposals and on Access to Information are Currently on Exhibition

TRRA will be making submissions to Council on revised policies on reporting of DAs and Planning Proposals, and on Access to Information, both of which we think mean less transparency.

TRRA Inc. Proposal for Achieving Enhancement of Gateways to Port Stephens and the Peninsula



On 18 September, members of TRRA and Leah Anderson from the Tomaree Business Chamber and Destination Port Stephens met with Council staff to discuss the TRRA proposal for a joint project to address the poor state of the 'Gateway' to Nelson Bay. In April this year TRRA had submitted a detailed 'Project Brief' (Terms of Reference) for such a project.

The representatives at that meeting had aimed to get agreement on that Brief and an understanding of the engagement on a joint planning process to pursue that initiative. However, Council representatives argued that Council was already engaging in extensive information gathering for projects that would have a direct relevance to the Gateway initiative.

Our representatives did obtain an agreement from Council staff that they supported an holistic project to address the Gateway issue. However, an answer to the key question on how and when the community groups represented at the meeting would become involved in launching this project was interrupted by a sudden degradation of the Zoom connection. Council representatives undertook to communicate a response to this question by email. We await their response.

PSC Port Stephens Place Census

TRRA members are encouraged to engage by completing this online survey - see details below and link to survey (in green).

- Help make your neighbourhood a better place to live, work and shop
- Get involved in the biggest place census ever undertaken in Port Stephens.

[Take our survey \(External link\)](#) and tell us what you value about your town and how you would make it better.

The first part of the survey asks you about your **ideal neighbourhood**, and the second part gets you to **rate your neighbourhood**.

The results from the survey will give Council a clear way to prioritise investments and make sure it is delivering works that align with what the community values.

The survey is open until Sunday 4 October.

Have your say on the Tomaree Coastal Walk draft Master Plan

The draft master plan and draft Review of Environmental Factors (environmental assessment) are being exhibited together to provide people with a clearer understanding of the Tomaree Coastal Walk project and the information necessary to enable stakeholder feedback. To view the Draft Masterplan and make comment see [HERE](#).

TRRA will be represented in a Zoom meeting of the NPWS Reference Group on the Tomaree Coastal Track on 1 October. If members have any matters they would like to be raised please email details to our representative for this meeting, Geoff Washington media@trra.com.au.

2. Planning Update

New Commercial Estate at Taylors Beach

Council has approved a major DA for \$25 million of works at 60 Port Stephens Drive (a Harvey Norman store and other retail premises, 24/7 servo and fast food outlet and 19 vacant industrial lots). 21 objections were received including from TRRA and PS Koalas, raising some concerns and arguing for changes to the layout for better environmental outcomes. This DA was called up for Council's consideration but regrettably Cllrs Abbott and Dunkley withdrew their support for the call-up so it was approved by officers without any of the objectors being notified or having an opportunity to argue their case.

Geoff Washington
Media Officer