



10 November 2020

PSC2005-2795-012

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Council

## **Subject Information and Direction Signs on Road Reserves Policy**

Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association (TRRA) has a very strong interest in maintaining and improving the urban and rural landscapes in our LGA.

In 2020 we have identified as a high priority the need to improve the visual standards and general presentation of the Gateway to the Tomaree Peninsula. Central to this is the control and management of the various approach roads to our area such as Nelson Bay Road. We have commenced detailed discussions with Planning Officers on the initiative.

### **Exhibition of the Proposed Revised Policy**

TRRA has on a number of occasions raised concerns about the approach taken by PSC in presenting proposed policies in their Website and other exhibition outlets.

In the case of the website, the reader is presented with a heading **Public Exhibition** which at this time has three items listed but not “Information and Direction Signs..... To access this document it is necessary to select the heading Public Exhibition which is not user friendly when the intuitive action would be to select from the items below the heading.

Our other major concern is the absence of any introductory remarks and the need or reasons for revising the policy. Of equal concern is the absence of any indication of the actual deletions and/or additions which are usually included in Agenda notes for council meetings. These used to be highlighted in yellow. The only alternative is a time consuming line by line comparison with the existing Policy wording or a reference to the minutes of the council meeting where the proposed policy changes were considered.



In this case the only apparent revision appears to be in clause 2.1 where the title of the policy is amended to remove the reference to “Advertising Signs”.

For members of the public who do not monitor Council meeting proceedings there is no guidance as to extent of amendments.

### **Comments on the Draft Policy Document.**

Much of the content referring to standard directional signs to assist wayfinding is unchanged and entirely acceptable. The size and lettering format and colours are logical and not intrusive to the landscape. The range of sites and services included is sensible.

It is the cumulative impact of advertising which has the greatest impact on our roads and landscape.

The Information and Direction Signs in Road Reserves Policy in clause 2.3 refers to **signs within the road reserve only and does not relate to advertising on private property or in Council Recreation Reserves”**.

This combined with the removal of the reference to Advertising Signs from the title is inconsistent with the fact that **“Advertising Structures”** are explicitly included as being within the scope of the Policy. If the advertising structures are included there should be consideration of the impact of such structures (and their completed sign) in any approval process .

Another concern relates to the control of signage **mounted on trailers** which are often located on private land adjoining the Road reserve. Controls in this situation appear to be defined through SEPP 64 which states:

#### **Advertisements on trailers parked on (or visible from) roads or road related areas**

- (1) A person must not display an advertisement on a trailer parked on a road or road related area.
- (2) A person must not display an advertisement on a trailer parked on land other than a road or road related area, but visible from a road or road related area, except with the consent of the consent authority.
- (3) Subclauses (1) and (2) do not apply to:
  - (a) an advertisement that is ancillary to the dominant purpose of the trailer, or
  - (b) an advertisement on a trailer parked by or on behalf of a public authority in the exercise of its functions.
- (4) In this clause, **road**, **road related area** and **trailer** have the same meanings as in the *Road Transport Act 2013*.

TRRA's observance is that much of the proliferation of advertising signage is mounted on trailers which are on the road reserve or on private land in full view of the road. Frequently they are grouped with several other fixed signs. It also appears that Council is the responsible authority and this should be emphasised in the policy.

In TRRA's view it is advertising which is the main signage impact on the roadscape. The policy should therefore include a commitment to ensure compliance. The trailer problem suggests insufficient inspection and compliance action.

Regards

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