



## **TRRA INC NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2021**

### **8 February 2021 General Meeting**

TRRA General Meetings can now be held in the Nelson Bay Bowling Club. Our GM scheduled for 8 February will be held in the Nelson Room on the ground floor commencing at 7.00 p.m. Covid 19 limitations will still apply.



*A welcome Covid-free visitor on flowering eucalyptus*

**TRRA INC GENERAL MEETING  
Monday 8 February 2021, 7.00 pm  
Nelson Room, Nelson Bay Bowling Club**

#### **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting** (Posted on TRRA Website)
- 3. Business Arising**
- 4. Correspondence In and Out**
- 5. Business Arising from Correspondence**
- 6. Treasurer's Report**
- 7. Reports**
  - i. Kings Hill Development
  - ii. Waste Policy
- 8. Planning.** TRRA Current Issues - DAs of Interest
- 9. General Business**

**NEXT MEETING: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

## **FEBRUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER**

### **TRRA stalwart Geoffrey Basser awarded OAM in New Year's Honours List**

Geoff has been a valued member of our Committee for many years and has represented TRRA on several important community and business groups. He continues to be active on other community service organisations such as Rotary, and COPS Y (Caring for our Port Stephens Youth -see [HERE](#)).

Our President's letter of congratulation follows:

*Dear Geoffrey,*

*Allow me on behalf of all members of TRRA to congratulate you on your award of the OAM. This is a well-deserved recognition of your dedicated work for our community and a well due recognition of it.*

*We are proud to know you and work with you.*

*Well done.*

*With kind regards,*

**Ben van der Wijngaart**, President of TRRA Inc

### **TRRA commends Council for recent improvements to Nelson Bay Public Domain**

In the run-up to this year's holiday season Port Stephens Council made a number of significant improvements which have lifted the appeal of the town centre.

In recognition of these initiatives the TRRA President wrote to Council praising them for these works in the following letter, which has been acknowledged by the General Manager. Pictures of the positive outcomes conclude this item.

*Dear Ryan,*

*TRRA would like to congratulate Council for responding so positively to calls from the Civic Pride Group at the end of last year to find a solution to the tree root damage to the footpath in Stockton Street outside the Seabreeze Hotel. This has ensured the retention of the trees. This solution is an excellent outcome which retains the avenue of mature trees in this part of Stockton Street and has been much welcomed by the community and the Seabreeze Hotel.*

*We also welcome Council's completion of the installation of solar powered lights to all the trees in the core of the CBD which has lifted the ambience of the streets after dark. Spectacular Christmas lights have also been installed in the two Norfolk Pines in Apex park which enhances the link to the Marina.*

*These works together with the painting of road surfaces in Magnus and Stockton Streets and the Civic Pride gardens, have greatly enhanced the overall appeal of Nelson Bay CBD and are being received favourably by residents and visitors.*

*We realise a lot of effort went into these projects and that work and responsiveness to our Nelson Bay community is appreciated.*

**Ben van der Wijngaart**, President TRRA Inc



***Pervious insert saves tree and eliminates trip hazard in Stockton Street***



***Painted tarmac emphasises shared pedestrian zone to slow motorists***

## **Nelson Bay Height Limits**

*At the Council meeting on 13 October 2020, Councillors voted 5 to 3 to approve the changes to the Local Environment Plan (LEP) to give effect to the increased height limits for Nelson Bay town centre. This decision provides for new 8-storey zones for large parts of the town centre, and a 12-storey zone for the Bowling Club/Landmark sites*

TRRA was instrumental in retaining the current 5 storey limit for the central core of the town and securing a reduction of maximum heights from 10 to 8 storeys in the remainder of Nelson Bay CBD.

At its January TRRA committee, meeting concerns were raised in relation to the extended period that the yellow crane had remained on a Church Street building site. The Council has been asked if there are limits to the time such structures can stay on site and what, if any, checks are made on the safety of such structures.

## **Enhancement of Gateway to the Tomaree**

TRRA's initiative to address this matter was raised again in a recent discussion with responsible Council officers. A positive response was received from senior planning staff and this has been followed up directly at that level.

TRRA will also seek greater opportunities for community organisations to have an input to planning for State government projects which will have a significant impact on Nelson Bay Road.

## **Nelson Bay Smart Parking and Related Town Centre Changes**

The new smart parking scheme for the Nelson Bay town centre and foreshore has now been activated.

Residents and worker permits can be arranged online at <https://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/live/resident-services/roads/parking-in-port-stephens>.

Council responded positively to a submission made by TRRA and the Business Chamber with objections relating to a proposal to change many of the existing time limits (from 1 hour to 2 hours and eliminating some 15 minute zones). However, recently erected signs in the CBD indicate that new parking time limits have been extended to a 12 hour period from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm.

Some affected retailers and restaurants consider these limits to be negatively impacting their businesses and representations to Council have been made via the Port Stephens Business Chamber. This situation again seems to have arisen due to inadequate consultation with those directly affected.

## **Progress with Major State Initiatives**

The December Newsletter reported on several major State-level projects which are in the planning / assessment stage.

These include:

- Fingal Bay Link Road
- Nelson Bay Road Duplication
- NPWS Tomaree Coastal Walk

There is no further progress to report at this time. TRRA will maintain a watching brief of these key projects and report any significant developments in our future communications.

## **Planning Matters and DA's**

No respite over the holiday period – TRRA has made 4 submissions, on a variety of matters.

A proposal for a **3 storey apartment building at 10 Tomaree Rd, Shoal Bay**, drawn to our attention by several locals, is 43% over the 9m height limit for the area. We have objected to the use of the 'variation' policy (LEP Clause 4.6) that was controversially used to approve two high rise buildings in Nelson Bay town centre.

Closer examination showed a number of other problems, which all arise from attempting to overdevelop a small site. TRRA believes that major variations in height should go through a wider process of reviewing LEP controls for an area – rather than being ad hoc decisions for specific sites. We also think that Council should enforce height limits and other standards as an incentive for site amalgamations that could support better designed buildings.

Separately, we made a submission in mid-December on Council's overall **policy on Clause 4.6 variations**, which we think is far too permissive and almost invites developers to apply for exceptions to any standard, including height controls, anywhere in Port Stephens.

In January, we have also made submissions in support of concerns raised by the Soldiers Point Community Group about two DAs – for the **Soldiers Point marina** and for **Council owned land at 2 Bagnall Avenue**.

The marina is seeking to build a **'clubhouse' on the site of the slipway**. Council has made a mess of this for over a year, allowing the applicant to mis-identify the land parcels involved. This has meant that the requirements for consultation over aboriginal heritage and environmental impacts have had to be changed repeatedly. This has caused a great deal of confusion and extra work for community organisations. Concerns also remain over the traffic and parking implications – the applicant asserts that the club will only be open to existing berth holders and therefore generate no extra traffic, but this does not seem credible.

Council is now seeking a **4-lot subdivision of its land at the corner of Bagnall Avenue** and Soldiers Point Road (south of Eckersley Park), rather than proceeding with the 8 unit development for which they have already given themselves approval. Concerns remain over the access and traffic implications at this busy intersection. In the meantime the prematurely disturbed site continues to be unsightly and residents have had to complain about the poorly maintained 'temporary' fencing.

TRRA has welcomed the proposed installation of a **large battery, set behind KMart** to complement the solar panels on the roof of the Salamander Centre – we support well designed and planned renewable energy investments. We are also pleased that the substantial **solar farm at Cabbage Tree Road** has been approved.

Also at the Salamander Centre, we have regrettably had to object to a **proposed gym next to the new Medical Centre** across the roundabout from Kmart. The large industrial 'shed' that will house it and 3 other tenancies will create an unsafe narrow corridor for the public pathway through to the housing area off Worimi Drive. This building appears to have been approved without any public notice or consultation, under a little known Covid19-related relaxation of planning laws by the State Government last year. This seems to have taken even Council by surprise. However, it is Council itself which in 2015 approved the layout of the lots which creates the problem – giving itself an extra lot to sell or lease, at the expense of an attractive path through a landscaped reserve which it exhibited at the time. We have urged Council to at least now make sure the path is made safer.

In other planning news, the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) took the unusual step just before Xmas of deferring a decision on the concept plan for the first stages of the **Kings Hill 'new town'** north of Raymond Terrace. At a public meeting by Zoom on 22 December, the Panel heard from five local environment groups about the likely impact of the residential estate on the habitat of several threatened flora and fauna species. 200 hectares of koala habitat will be lost in what are only the first stages of this huge development. It was a pleasant surprise that the Panel deferred their decision pending new independent ecological advice, and that there will be a further public meeting and opportunity for comment when this is published.

Geoff Washington  
TRRA Media Officer