



## **TRRA Inc GENERAL MEETING**

**Zoom**

**Monday 8 August 2022 – 7.00 pm**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:** 29, including 10 Committee members

**Apologies:** Denis Pittorino, Gill Whitton

**Minutes of the previous meeting** (Posted on TRRA Website)

1. Moved Hazel Driver, seconded André Dussart, that the Minutes be accepted. Agreed by consensus.

### **Matters Arising**

2. None.

### **Correspondence**

3. Bill Salter mentioned TRRA submissions to Council and other correspondence with Council on rates and parking issues which would be discussed under the relevant Reports agenda items.

### **Treasurer's Report**

4. The Treasurer's report was presented. Moved Robyn Williams, seconded Sharon Grady, that the report be accepted. Agreed by consensus.

### **Reports**

5. *Parking in the Tomaree Peninsula.* John Maretich (Asset Section Manager, PSC) made a presentation describing the aims of the 'Smart Parking' system, the issues that had been assessed and the findings of the assessment. Modelling had been conducted to estimate the expected income, covering the number of spaces, occupancy rates, the percentage of non-local visitations and then reduced by a "safety factor". He described the locations being examined: Shoal Bay, Birubi, Nelson Bay, Fly Point, Little Beach, Fingal

Beach and One Mile. He mentioned that PSC benefitted from the experience of other Councils across Australasia.

6. Members raised numerous issues and asked questions:

- The potential negative impact of paid parking on tourism, including issues of time limits and cost at sites where people needed to park for longer periods. Mr. Maretich said that while Covid impacts made it difficult to assess the impact on visitors of the smart parking scheme, it seemed that parking fees were not a big deterrent for visitors, while businesses benefited from higher turnover and from infrastructure improvements funded by the scheme. Another member supported the extension of paid parking at tourist sites to support improvement of basic amenities.
- The importance of increased transparency to justify a business case, including reporting of the experience of enforcement.
- Issues concerning particular sites, including the area adjacent to Bannisters, the Wanda Beach shops, Soldiers Point and the boat ramps. Mr. Maretich said that he would look into paving and charging for parking in the area around Bannisters. He also confirmed that the road around Fly Point would maintain a bike/walking track.

7. *Port Stephens “funded future” and possible rates rises.* The Secretary clarified that Council had offered to make a presentation but that since the deadline for public submissions had just passed it had been decided that a presentation at the October General meeting would be more useful, once feedback from the current round of consultation had been analysed but before final decisions were taken. The President commended the Council on the information provided and on its consultation process although he observed that no easy way had been provided for people to express views on alternative ways to deal with the funding shortage. He said that TRRA had encouraged members to have their say but had not taken a position on the issues at this early stage. A member added her appreciation of Council’s survey and said that the Soldiers Point Community Group had acted in the same way. Another member said that it had seemed that the focus had been on the four rate rise options but she could now see that other issues were open for comment.

8. One member referred to a complaint about Council’s treatment of him. The President ruled that this matter was not an appropriate subject for discussion on this agenda item.

9. Tim Hazell (Financial Services Section Manager, PSC) said that packages had been put together for discussion purposes, but on his initial reading of the 1300 comments received there seemed to be few comments on some factors. In response to questions from members he agreed that the criteria for determining “under-performing assets” should be published and indicated that the expected annual income from smart parking was about \$750,000.

10. *Retirement Villages.* Nigel Waters reported that “retirement villages” existed under many different names and with various ownership and management models, although

generally with some common features: homesites are leased not owned – residents own only the dwelling; no stamp duty paid; rates only paid by site owner – much less in total than if similar dwellings were freehold (2022 estimate for PS = \$1.2 million p.a. less); lesser (or no) standards – construction, energy efficiency, setbacks, etc., and limited participation rights for residents. Many had been approved and operated under outdated separate legislation and special rules for Residential Parks, Caravan parks and Manufactured Homes Estates. Some were approved on rural zoned land as ‘caravan parks’. Changes to the LEP in 2013 cut off that option, but the legacy continued, e.g. recent approval of major extension to Latitude One. Some are quite isolated with no pedestrian or public transport connection to local shops and services. Although they were intended to be moveable, owners had been able to obtain waivers under the Local Government Act to allow onsite construction so dwellings were no longer ‘moveable’ in practice. While some villages had originally been developed by local private owners, they were increasingly corporatized. TRRA was now researching the situation elsewhere in NSW, State Government policy (a review in 2021) as well as whether there was a position on the part of the Local Government Association position. He expressed the hope that Council would take up the issue and emphasised that his complaints were with the model and the abuse of planning laws, not with the residents of these villages.

11. One member said that a Council planner had informed her that he had written to the State Government many times on the issue so we should ask Council for information on what they were doing. Another member said that ratepayers were subsidising these developments since the residents used all local services without paying rates. One member pointed out that residents could not be charged rates since they did not own the land, but Council should look into how to charge the owners of the developments appropriately. The President noted that the owners also paid little in terms of development contributions so there was revenue potential for Council in pursuing the matter. He thought it was an ideal issue to be taken up by the Local Government Association.

### **Planning Issues**

12. Nigel Waters reported that the planning proposal for the former Gan Gan army camp had been withdrawn. TRRA had recently made submissions on the revised ‘Planning Matters to be Reported to Council Policy’, the new ‘Communications and Engagement Strategy’ and the revised ‘Code of Meeting Practice’. He mentioned that the Bannisters redevelopment plan had been approved. There was no news yet either on a possible appeal against refusal of the development at 19-19 Yacaaba Street or on a date for the proposal for 11-15 Church Street to come before Council.

### **General Business**

13. One member reported that Charlie Elias, formerly with the Port Stephens Examiner, was now working for Bannisters which was looking to engage more with the community. Another member said that she had spoken with the Bannisters General Manager who had indicated his willingness to speak at a future TRRA meeting. Leah Anderson reported that initial interviews for the post of General Manager of Port Stephens Council had been held.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm.  
Next meeting: 10 October 2022.

Bill Salter, Secretary  
24 August 2022