

EcoNetwork

UPDATE

July 2008

'Sustainable is Attainable'

The Draft Nelson Bay 2030 Strategy....a constructive response.

This is a guide only for people making written comment to the Port Stephens Council – Deadline 17th July 2008.

If we start from the premise that none of our towns and villages would qualify as 'sustainable', we should be able to visualize the enormous challenge and responsibility that this Draft poses for all of us.

Together, consultants, council, business and resident communities have to get the planning right by first setting a sustainable strategy and secondly, a staged implementation process towards a final stage achievement by or before 2030.

Our use of 'holistic' and 'sustainable' affirms and pre-supposes an inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of these terms towards best practice outcomes. Such achievement for the Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore demand also, the beginning of a long-term funding process to avoid quick-fix solutions, adhoc, compromised planning and implementation.

EcoNetwork welcomes the Draft 2030 Strategy as a beginning. There is much to be supported in this Draft over a whole range of desirable directions and proposals, among which are the following:

THE POSITIVES

- The Draft correctly identifies the natural topographical context of the Town Centre in a small amphitheatre from Kurrara Hill in the south, elevations east and west, down to the Bay foreshore –(p13,14,16,41,45)
- A future intensification (increased densities) of the built environment which also projects new commercial directions and opportunities – (10,28,37,42,66 to 69,74)
- An eventual transformation through increased densities in new dwellings and increased resident population – p5,7,23,25,27,66)
- An expanded economic hub for business, job and career opportunities –(p55,57,59)
- Improved building design and architecture – (p7,38)
- More open spaces for improved public amenity – (p49,50)
- A new pedestrian friendly amenity / town –p29,30)
- Improved pedestrian connections and flows to and from the Town Centre and the Foreshore –(p8,31)
- The widening of Stockton Street to improve the north/south town vista to and from the foreshore – (Figure 15)
- Other numerous positive features, projections and proposals are advanced in pages 10 to 60.

THE NEGATIVES

- As with all concepts and visions, this Draft contains its grand ideas and proposals, some perhaps more elusive than are projected in this Draft.
- Other than the long-standing Yacaaba Street extension to the Teramby Rd roundabout, there are no further convincing proposals about how to better connect the town centre to the foreshore
- Should the Yacaaba St extension occur how, on reaching the Teramby Rd roundabout, would pedestrians safely cross to the foreshore?
- The absence of a comprehensive Traffic Management Plan tends to unravel all the positives
 - * such a plan as Traffic Management must accompany any focus on town and urban planning, this is a failing of the Draft

THE NEGATIVES (continued):

- * a demonstrated 'desire' (Figure 12 – p11) to maintain traffic congestion and ignoring the town centre gridlock that occurs on long-week-ends and holidays
- * proposes continued vehicle access into Stockton Street from Victoria Parade, which causes the gridlock and fails to acknowledge a need to sacrifice 12 Stockton Street parking sites that would facilitate and help create a viable pedestrian access to and from the foreshore
- * **The Draft proposes** an additional traffic intersection in the Town Centre, with the proposed extension of Magnus Street westward, (see Figure 12 – p11)
- *The pedestrian amenity proposed is in contradiction with traffic proposals that will continue to surrender our streets to vehicles in the form of increased traffic flows and parking
- * Multi-storey car park on Victoria Parade. How do people then access the foreshore across Victoria Parade? – (p11)
- Twenty four hour, seven day trading. Experience has clearly demonstrated the many downsides to the radical extension of trading hours, particularly those related to hotels and alcohol outlets and the potential for anti-social behavior in general.
- This community cannot be dismissed as portraying Nelson Bay as 'simply as a sunny day, beachside community – (p7)
- We can do without Nelson Bay being portrayed as "the Capital of the Tomaree Peninsula".

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain a strong emphasis and visual identification on the natural amphitheatre and topographical features of the Nelson Bay coastal basin
- Regenerate the initially projected 'holistic' approach for comprehensive and sustainable outcomes
- A Development Control Plan that applies strict sustainability criteria, design and architectural appeal – (p53)
- Design and architecture that avoids visually intimidating impacts and which embraces the aesthetics and natural amenity and outlook of the Town Centre and Foreshore of a bayside town
- An early as possible Local Environment Plan (LEP) that, with its statutory powers, can support and sustain a Town Centre/Foreshore DCP in the event of legal challenge
- Site specific DCP's for the Seabreeze Hotel and Donald Street East Car Park locations, without which taller buildings would not qualify
- Review the capacity of Section 96 of the building code to undermine the height code of a DCP
- Review and clarify the potential probity issues arising from Council as land-owner, developer and consent authority
- A holistic Traffic Management Plan that will include:
 - + a designated 40k zone for the Town Centre and Foreshore
 - + appropriately located traffic calming measures
 - + upgrade of Dowling Street as a town centre and foreshore by-pass
 - + closure of the left turn from Victoria Parade to Stockton Street to prevent current peak-time gridlock in the Town Centre
 - + eliminating the proposed additional intersection of a Magnus St extension westward – (Figure 12 – p11)
 - + traffic lights can be avoided through a holistic Traffic Management Plan – (p31)
- The return of Nelson Bay's Section 94 contributions to help fund a 2030 Strategy
- A Town Consultative Committee of 14, representing business, tourism, environment, residents, Department of Lands, councillors and council's planning department.

The Public Exhibition time for this Draft expires on Thursday 17th July 2008. All letters and comment should be addressed to: **The General Manager Port Stephens Council PO Box 42 Raymond Terrace 2324.**