



Newport Residents Association Inc.

PO Box 1180
Newport Beach NSW 2106
President - Gavin Butler (gebutler@aapt.net.au) 0409 395 102
Hon. Secretary - secretary@newport.org.au
Hon. Treasurer - Kyle Hill 0412 221 962
www.newport.org.au

13th July 2016

Mr Dick Persson,
Administrator
Northern Beaches Council
725 Pittwater Road,
Dee Why NSW 2099

Dear Mr Persson,

Re Submission re Proposed Independent Planning Assessment Panel - North

We refer to our submission of the 30th June and wish to add to our comments contained therein. We had published the proposal for the NBIAP – North on our web site and in response to that we received an e-mail from Emeritus Professor Peter Webber -Town Planner & Architect which we would like to commend to you. We copy hereunder Professor Webbers comments;

'Dear Gavin,

Selena has just been discussing with me the proposed 'Independent Planning Panel' for the new Council, and has referred me to the Residents Assoc submission. I have served and am continuing on a number of panels and have very strong views about how they should work.

- 1. Firstly these panels should not have 'decision-making' powers, which if one is committed to democracy means that decisions should be made by elected councillors, or delegated to staff if they so determine. We elect Councillors to represent our values. All the Panels on which I serve work this way, and work very effectively (North Sydney Council, Newcastle, Botany, St. George etc). We work closely with the Council staff, who always appreciate the expertise of the panels. And only rarely do Councils not take our advice, often with good reason, sometimes because they can be more aware of local social/community issues than visiting panellists. That said the State Government appears determined to withdraw powers from Councils and have determinations made by these independent panels, and there are unfortunately now a lot of them around. (And of course for larger, over \$20 million developments, all decisions are taken out of the hands of our elected representatives) Whilst these Panels mostly have good expertise and make the right decisions, and include some of my colleagues whom I know and respect, there are some unfortunate cases where clearly unjustified and/or uninformed decisions have been made – without the public being privy to their discussions.*
- 2. If the current interim management insists on going this way I agree with what you have submitted on behalf of the Residents Association, -i.e. essential to include*

community representatives, and ensure that the proceedings are open and transparent, so at least it will be a quasi-democratic process. If it must be a Panel of this sort, design and landscape skills are critical, so that the right local residents who also have those skills ideally could be member(s) of the interim panel.

- 3. The Panels should essentially be design review panels, not 'planning panels'. The proposed panel should be renamed. Most that I know are 'Design Review' panels (North Sydney Council has a 'Design Excellence Panel) It must include architectural and landscape architecture expertise, and doesn't really need 'planners', unless they have demonstrated design expertise. Planning advice can and must be given and available from expert Council planning staff, but it is the design outcome that is critical. The Council planners should provide separate advice to Council and make clear if they are not in agreement with any recommendations of the Panel.*

Hope that helps and good luck with it,

Peter'

We believe these comments from an experienced and highly regarded Architect & Town Planner who sits on a number of council panels should be taken into consideration.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the development of the assessment panel.

Yours faithfully,

Gavin Butler
President