

NBC – Public Forum NRA presentation, Tuesday 23 March 2021

Good evening Mayor and Councilors

My name is Gavin Butler, President of the Newport Residents Association.

I want to follow on from the address from Simon Barlow who independently started the Save Robertson Rd Facebook page and brought Robertson Rd's future to attention of so many people.

The Newport Village Masterplan, commissioned in 2006, was put together with considerable community input and consultation and formally adopted in 2014. It sets down a template for how Newport is to evolve, so that development can serve the community NOT constrain and dehumanise it. The Newport Masterplan has been integrated into the DCP.

Pittwater Council initiated numerous aspects in line with the Masterplan template which have enhanced the village.

Now it needs the community focal point addressed: Robertson Rd.

One of the unfortunate factors for Newport is the main road is also the main shopping strip, so it cannot become a safe focal point for the community and it was this reason that Robertson Rd was identified in the Masterplan as the "community hub", to be turned into a pedestrian plaza.

The plaza metamorphosis has been on the books for all this time.

Recent property purchasers cannot argue that they did not know it was coming. Not to factor this into their purchase would be a lack of due diligence in their decision-making.

We understand the legal processes that quite often lead planning proposals to end up in the Land & Environment court and Council's reluctance to incur legal costs. However, the suggestion by Simon Barlow to pull all the interested groups together, including council, gives the opportunity to minimize those legal challenges and allow the council to 'stick-to-their-guns' to enable the objectives of the Newport Masterplan to be achieved.

Councilors, save the village by removing any uncertainty regarding the community hub. IMMEDIATELY take action to execute the Masterplan, by converting the key element, the parts that NBC controls: the roadway and footpaths.

As our environment continues to become more crowded, there are more, essential, matters – like climate change – where action can be left until it is too late to have the required effect. This Council has taken actions on climate change, within the limited scope it has to influence a global challenge.

Our village is now at a crux, where it is very much within this Council's sphere of influence to take decisive action. Please take the lead, now, in delivering on the community commitment of the Newport Village Masterplan: enact the formal process to turn Robertson Rd into a community plaza. If not commenced now, it will never happen.

Thankyou.