

Mosman Daily

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I see Councillor Pearson has suggested an investigation into how North Sydney Council, Council staff, Councillors and Mayor McCaffery got themselves into the situation where such comprehensively damning findings have been made against them in the Castle Construction case.

I can save them a mint in fees in commissioning a private consultant to tell them the answer. Mind you, not that so called "independent" external reports commissioned by North Sydney Council are of much use if you read what Justice Lloyd of the NSW Land and Environment Court had to say about how their contents are manipulated or how consultants are hired with on-going dependent financial relationship with the Council they clearly would not wish to disturb by, for example, including information Council is not inclined to what to hear.

The problem with North Sydney Council is simple - its fanaticism. It trickles from the Mayor down, just as a fish rots from the head.

Mayor McCaffery is a fanatic about doing whatever is available to stop higher density living, increasingly imposed by the state government to try and accommodate the tens of thousands of extra people flowing into Sydney each month. The state government has needed to impose such things on Councils to overcome the most outrageous manipulations and abuses by Councils to avoid carrying out their duties properly. As the Castle Constructions case so amply demonstrates.

Any tool is seized upon by fanatics to secure their goals. Fraud and rorting of local government discretionary heritage powers is one of the most common these days. It is no coincidence that it was manipulation of due process resulting in secret down-zonings of busy CBD locations like Walker Street, coupled with heritage abuses, that was exposed by Justice Lloyd.

Staff at North Sydney Council know full well what Mayor McCaffery's agenda is on high density and heritage and their future depends on pandering to them. McCaffery ruthlessly pursues exactly the same agenda in her role as President of the Local Government and Shires Association, including NSW Council's being given the power to impose criminal and other stiff financial sanctions on owner's of heritage properties they claim fail to abide by their heritage rules.

I certainly have sanctions I would like to consider impose on a Mayor, Council staff and Councillors who so thoroughly and strategically rort the planning rules. It starts with the NSW state government sacking North Sydney Council for incompetence, appointing administrators to manage the Council and discipline any staff found to have been key players in these abuses and for McCaffery applying the same probity standards to herself that she in the past has insisted other leaders in the same situation follow - she should step down as President of the NSW Local Government and Shire Association unless and until she and her Council are exonerated on appeal. Anyone heading the states peak representative body for Councils is

unfit to hold that office if they lead a Council engaging in the nefarious practices identified by Justice Lloyd.

C. Hayward

Society of Heritage Owners