

Mosman Daily

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North Sydney Mayor Genia McCaffery says we should be afraid of NSW state planning laws and how they can be manipulated to achieve corrupt ends [MD 16 April 2008]. Pity the Mayor failed to mention a decision by Justice Lloyd in the NSW Land and Environment Court the day before she made this claim about serious wrong doing by North Sydney Council [NSC].

The Judge found NSC, headed by Ms McCaffery, materially misled the public by:

- falsely claiming a report they commissioned was “independent” when it was not as the authors had an on-going financially dependent relationship on NSC for other work and NSC had “influenced” the report’s contents to make it “convey meanings favourable to” the Council,
- made false statements to the effect that they had not reduced or altered buildings densities when they had,
- failed to inform the full Council about the true contents of the objections received; and
- failed to publicly exhibit these changes in the manner required by law. The Judge accepted evidence that NSC had not put the changes in the Council webpage nor made them available in public libraries.

Ms McCaffery is famous for pointing the finger at failure of others to publicly consult, make decisions based on inadequate information, hide objections, manipulate financially dependent contractors to compromise the independence of their reports, lack of transparency in decision making, secret decision making that cuts out genuine public knowledge and consultation and lying to the public.

The Society of Heritage Owners NSW is not at all surprised that manipulation of heritage zonings was one of the key issues she got caught out on in this case. Such manipulations are common in NSW. We call on the NSW Minister for Planning Frank Sartor to immediately implement the heritage reform recommendations contained in the 2007 NSW Heritage Act Review as these will go some way towards stopping heritage corruption by NSW Councils. Any

owners of heritage listed properties or those threatened with unmeritorious heritage restrictions can also contact us at sohonsw@gmail.com for support.

Meanwhile, I am fascinated to see if the media hold McCaffery to account to the same standards of probity she repeatedly blasts others for failing to meet.

C. Hayward

Society of Heritage Owners