

Mosman Daily

25.04.08

Dear Editor,

The lower North Shore and other areas in NSW are in the grip of heritage corruption emanating from a small coalition of pro-heritage anti-high density fanatics. They have demonstrably been able to pervert local planning instruments, compromise Councils and Council staff integrity, engage in exploitation of contractors who write allegedly "independent" reports and cost rate payers a fortune in legal fees. It is terrific that this serial wrong doing is now being publicly exposed in Court. Mr Lahoud should be honoured for putting his hard earned money into this court challenge that exposed such serial and thorough wrong doing at North Sydney Council.

North Sydney's Mayor McCaffery is [yet again] misleading the public when she claims the Castle Constructions decision was a mere "technical" judgement.

Mayor, your anti-high density, pro-heritage priorities are well known. They trickle down to Council staff, who all are well aware that to curry favour with you and retain their jobs, they must rig the planning system to achieve the results you want. Justice Lloyd's decision comprehensively laid bare the empty rhetoric of Mayor McCaffery's claims to want fairness, transparent decision making and lack of bias in our planning system. Or if she wants them, but only as applicable to her political enemies - not to her or her personal causes.

The Society of Heritage Owners NSW calls on the NSW Minister for Local Government Mr Lynch to sack North Sydney Council for systemic corruption and to inquire into the process where staff at North Sydney Council systematically rorted the entire planning process from go to whoa in order to dish up the results the Mayor publicly identifies are her priorities. We also call on Ms McCaffery to voluntarily stand down from the Presidency of the NSW Local Government and Shires Association as this court decisions means she has lost any credibility as a leader of NSW Councils. No NSW Councils should be modelling themselves on Mayor McCaffery or her Council.

Meanwhile, we heartily congratulate the majority of Mosman Councillors who voted to get rid of that glorified seagull perch - otherwise known as the Edwards Beach shark net - and ignored the calls from Mr Quint from the NSW National Trust to retain it for historic and other reasons.

The NSW National Trust has no legal power to heritage list anything. Items they insist are heritage have been refused heritage listing by the NSW Heritage Council, yet members of the NSW National Trust continue to harass the owners of such properties with repeated attempts to heritage list their properties.

The Society of Heritage Owners NSW calls on the NSW Minister for Planning to implement immediately all the recommendations in the recent Review of the NSW Heritage Act, which will go some way toward halting local government planning corruption. We would also like a state law enacted here as was the case in Tasmania to stop any organisations, other than the statutory bodies established for this function, from purporting to heritage list or classify any items. The NSW National Trust should not be permitted to sow the seeds of confusion by continuing to "heritage classify" items.

C. Hayward

Society of Heritage Owners