

Double Bay Residents' Association

Protecting Sydney's Stylish Bayside Village

14th February 2022

Dear Member

We hope you have had a restful time over Christmas and the new year. Since our last newsletter at the end of November, a number of major issues in Double Bay have kept your committee busy, and these are summarised below.

There are two matters, however, that we would like to highlight as we begin 2022.

The first is that the recent glut of development applications and other plans to 'reinvigorate' Double Bay are placing considerable strain on your committee, and we need to spread the load. Please help us to be more effective in protecting what is left of Double Bay's village ambience through volunteering to join one of our working parties focused on addressing the issues that concern you. It needn't take a lot of time, but your assistance could make a lot of difference.

The second is that our influence depends on our number of members so councillors realise that our submissions represent a large number of residents' views. Please encourage your neighbours and friends to join the association. Our 300-strong membership is growing steadily but we need it to increase significantly. May we ask each member please to recruit at least one new member before our annual general meeting in April? Completing the form on our website is an easy way to join.

Meanwhile, we are delighted to welcome Bruce Forster AM back to our committee following his return to Double Bay. Bruce is a former professor and visiting professorial fellow at the University of NSW and a qualified surveyor.

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We are also very pleased to welcome Charlotte Stanfield to our committee. Charlotte has a degree in town planning and real estate and extensive experience of transport infrastructure.

Merrill Witt resigned from our committee following her selection as a candidate in the December Council election. We thank her for her significant contribution to Double Bay and the association and wish her well for her term as a councillor.

Woollahra LGA election

We congratulate the six councillors elected on 4 December 2021 to represent Double Bay and Cooper wards. If you wish to contact them directly, their email addresses (in alphabetical order) are:

Double Bay ward

richard.shields@woollahra.nsw.org.au

mark.silcocks@woollahra.nsw.org.au

toni.zeltzer@woollahra.nsw.org.au

Cooper ward

luise.elsing@woollahra.nsw.org.au

nicola.grieve@woollahra.nsw.org.au

sarah.swan@woollahra.nsw.org.au

We have already discussed issues which concern our members with four of the six councillors and hope to be able to arrange meetings soon with the other two.

We also congratulate Susan Wynne on her re-election as Mayor and Isabelle Shapiro on her election as Deputy Mayor.

As your association is politically impartial, we did not support any particular candidates in the election. We recommended our members, however, to question candidates on the issues that concerned them the most – especially over-development – and to consider who would be most likely to support policies that will protect the residential amenity and local character of the area in which we live.

To provide residents with an opportunity to meet and question Double Bay ward candidates, we arranged a forum at the Double Bay Bowling Club at which Mark Silcocks and Toni Zeltzer spoke and answered questions. We expected 30-40 residents to attend, optimistically arranged 60 chairs and were delighted when more than 130 people arrived.

There was vigorous debate, which at times became heated, demonstrating that residents feel very strongly about many of the changes imposed on Double Bay, especially over-development. As one of the residents emailed afterwards: 'It's exciting to see so many people so passionate about local politics. It augurs well for the future'.

Development applications

Sadly, Double Bay remains a 'honeypot' for property developers and we have objected to several applications lodged during the past two months, perhaps trying to take advantage of the holiday period when many people are away.

Despite this, we are aware of 20+ letters written by members objecting to the proposed mammoth development at 19-27 Bay Street and suspect there have been many more. We are very grateful to those who have taken the trouble to write to the Council on this and other development applications.

As you are aware, the NSW state government stripped local councils of their ability to prevent over-development, with decisions now taken by undemocratic planning panels and often the Land & Environment Court. In a further blow to democracy, ten individual objections (not one objection signed by ten people) are required to ensure residents can address panel hearings, so your letters/emails, however brief, can be critical. Every objection helps.

Residents in other municipalities are also becoming increasingly upset about the over-development encouraged by the state government's planning policies and we must hope that growing pressure will lead to some moderation before the state election next year.

A list of submissions by the DBRA since the end of November is attached to this newsletter.

Road safety

For some years, your association and several members have been lobbying for changes to parking restrictions in Wallaroy Road where there are two particularly dangerous spots. We were delighted, therefore, when the Council's local traffic committee recommended the removal of two parking spaces which restricted drivers' sight of oncoming traffic. To our horror, the traffic committee's recommendation has been overturned by the Council's finance committee, and we are investigating how we can have this decision reconsidered.

Knox Street pedestrianisation

This is a very contentious proposal, supported by some residents and opposed strongly by others. Unfortunately, in our view, the consultation process has been flawed and the plans have not been communicated well. Concept designs are now available on the Council's website and the second of two pop-up information sessions will take place between 11am and 2pm on Wednesday 16 February in Guilfoyle Park. We recommend that you attend this, ask questions and send your views to our elected councillors (email addresses above) and to the General Manager at records@woollahra.nsw.gov.au.

Double Bay-Rose Bay cycleway

Members who enjoy the walk from Double Bay to Rose Bay will be aware of the plan to convert the path into a shared path, with cyclists competing with walkers and runners on the narrow stretch between William Street and the Rose Bay promenade. Work on the cycleway is due to begin in early April so, if

you would like the present plan to be reconsidered, this is your last chance to write to councillors.

You may like to read the submission we wrote in November which concluded that it would be irresponsible of the Council to progress with the current plan without further due diligence; you can access this through the Issues page of our website. We are not opposed to a cycleway, but we believe that the present plan risks pedestrian safety.

Annual General Meeting

Please make a note that your association's 2021 Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 12 April 2022. At present, we expect it to take place at Woollahra Library but, if Covid-19 intervenes, we will arrange it via Zoom and provide members with details of how to attend.

DBRA website

Your association's website (dbra.org.au) has been restructured and redesigned during recent months to provide more detailed information on who we are and what we do. We hope it will help you to keep up-to-date with our submissions and other activities and will attract new members. If you have any comments on the new site, please send them to Sascha Ettinger, who has been responsible for the upgrade, at dbrassoc@gmail.com.

Anthony Tregoning
President