

Double Bay Residents' Association

Protecting Sydney's Stylish Bayside Village

Dear Member,

4 December 2021 – a critical date for Double Bay

The Woollahra LGA election on 4 December will have a critical impact on the future of the municipality, and especially Double Bay, Edgecliff and Darling Point.

The Double Bay Residents' Association is politically impartial so we can communicate with, and try to influence, councillors of all parties on the issues which concern our members.

One of the main issues is over-development, on which we have heard a number of contradictory messages during recent weeks. We therefore recommend our members to meet candidates, ask tough questions and think deeply about who is most likely to support policies that will protect the residential amenity and local character of the area where we live. As we have already advised, there will be an opportunity to question candidates on their policies at a

CANDIDATE FORUM AT THE DOUBLE BAY BOWLING CLUB, KIAORA ROAD MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER 6PM

The forum is open to all residents – whether or not they are members of the DBRA – so please encourage your neighbours to come too. A cash bar will be available and there is plenty of parking in Kiaora Road.

The forum will be an opportunity to question candidates on any issue which concerns you, including traffic congestion, parking, night-time noise in the town centre and the proposed cycleway to Rose Bay.

What candidates have told us

We have sent each candidate for Double Bay and Cooper wards a questionnaire asking their views on the key issues which members have raised with us. To date, only Luise Elsing, Nicola Grieve and Mark Silcocks have replied and their answers are attached.

If we receive further replies before the election, they will be circulated.

Woollahra Local Housing Strategy

On 25 October 2021, Woollahra Council voted to approve a local housing strategy for the municipality which implicitly approves a huge uplift in density at Edgecliff and along New South Head Road between there and Rushcutters Bay. A motion by some councillors to amend the strategy to take into account the fact that the Woollahra LGA had already exceeded new dwelling targets set by the state government was lost, with councillors voting along party lines.

Equally concerning was the general manager's admission at the 27 September Council meeting that state government funding of \$4.75million for the pedestrianisation of Knox Street is tied to increasing development capacity in Edgecliff. While our association welcomed plans to create a pedestrian plaza in Knox Street, subject to resolving all local residents' concerns, we are very unhappy with the state government incentivising local councils to accelerate approval of development applications and rezonings to facilitate further development.

The local housing strategy endorses a state government policy to increase the number of new dwellings in Woollahra and follows the government's autocratic approach to development, stripping councils of their powers to approve or reject development applications. This has played into the hands of property developers with the result that Double Bay has become a 'honeypot' for inappropriate development.

As this is a complex issue, we attach an email to Gabrielle Upton, our state member of parliament, from Luise Elsing and Mark Silcocks which explains the situation as they see it. This letter refers to the Council's unanimous resolution to ask the state government to withdraw its housing target for Woollahra and asks Ms Upton what she is doing to protect local residents' interests. She replied 'I will continue to advocate the best possible outcomes for the residents of the Vacluse electorate' but addressed none of the concerns raised in the email.

In fairness, we should point out that some Liberal councillors dispute the letter's reference to the housing strategy implicitly approving a 26-storey building at Edgecliff. As there is uncertainty about the implications of the housing strategy approval, no doubt many of our members will want to hear from candidates exactly what their position is on this.

We suggest that, in deciding which candidate to support on 4 December, residents should consider who will be most effective in pushing back against the state government's autocratic approach to planning.

The Double Bay-Rose Bay cycleway

The Double Bay and Rose Bay Residents' Associations have prepared a paper which questions the rationale for the proposed cycleway on the footpath from William Street, Double Bay to the Rose Bay promenade and along the promenade. This has concluded that:

- The width of the shared path between William Street and the Council chambers is not in line with Australian and international best practice, risking pedestrians' safety.
- The width of the bi-directional cycleway on the promenade is not in line with Austroads' guidelines, so may risk the safety of both cyclists and pedestrians.
- The Council did not commission a report on pedestrian safety before deciding on the present plan.
- It would be irresponsible of the Council to progress with the current plan without further due diligence.

Our report has been sent to Council election candidates asking whether, if elected, they are prepared to initiate:

- An independent, comprehensive and transparent road safety audit, as suggested to us by Transport for NSW.

- Further due diligence so any plan which is adopted is in line with Australian and international best practice guidelines and in the best interests of walkers', runners' cyclists' safety.
- A reassessment of the current plan and transparent consideration of other options for a cycleway along New South Head Road.
- Further detailed consultation with residents on the options.

If you are interested in reading the paper, you can find it on the Safety and Traffic Issues page of the Association's website. Alternatively, ask us and we will send you a copy. If you agree with our conclusions, please raise the issue with candidates to reinforce your opposition to the current plan.

Road safety

Your association frequently approaches the Council to address safety issues in Double Bay and on nearby roads. Earlier this year, following our requests to the Council's local traffic committee, parking was prohibited on a dangerous junction between Wallaroy Road and Wallaroy Crescent where visibility was limited. At our suggestion, the committee is currently reviewing parking arrangements further up Wallaroy Road where visibility is also impaired.

Our suggestion that the Kiaora Road crossing outside the post office should be moved away from the junction has been considered, but rejected as unsafe. We are pleased to report that Transport for NSW is at last investigating other ways to improve the safety of this dangerous crossing.

If there are other road safety 'black spots' you would like us to raise with the Council, please let us know.

Anthony Tregoning
President

Double Bay Residents' Association Inc
PO Box 1684
Double Bay 1360
Tel: 0414 932 818
Email: dbrassoc@gmail.com