

## Press Release - 4<sup>th</sup> August 2006

### Newcastle City Councillors vote for the alienation and the privatisation of Nobbys Lighthouse and headland

Newcastle City Council has given the green light to the alienation and privatisation of Nobbys headland.

We must remember that we are dealing with Nobbys and the Macquarie Pier public land, open space coastal landscape, the icon of Newcastle that should be open to all.

The new development will completely build out the view and enclose the lighthouse with just the lantern showing over the top. It is not just any lighthouse, but the only one of its kind and the oldest surviving light on the Australian coast.

Unless you are a paying customer seated behind the glass to see the view you will have to walk up stairs on top of the new restaurant building proposed. Do you think that our Councillors could have managed to think of the effect of the private vehicles on the pedestrian convict built breakwater? Do you really think that a bus is going to travel up to the lighthouse on the hour and only then? The people of Newcastle have got to shake themselves out of their complacency. Parks and Playgrounds Movement call on the Greens Councillors to rescind the motion at next week's Council meeting.

God help Newcastle – It is reminiscent of the Blackbutt Vote in August 1966 when Newcastle Council voted to put a Motorway through Blackbutt Reserve. It took ten to twenty years to Save Blackbutt and get the expressway on the Western side of the Lake. But we did it and we will have to do the same to save Nobbys.

The important matters that must be resolved are:

1. The area should be in the hands of the National Parks Service or Historic Houses Trust (All have been transferred to Parks service in NSW except Nobbys) Why? The Port Authority have no need for the site now as all needs are met by wireless helicopter and radar. They only need to visit for maintenance.
2. Public access must be the criterion. Public Access to the summit and public access to the Macquarie Pier. There is no traffic management report on the expected traffic for the manager (New Cottage) and staff to run the proposed motel. –Don't forget the proponent said it could be up to \$400 per night. No convicts or aborigines (I suppose) would have had that sort of money.
3. The proposal has never been exhibited in a public way, Council's exhibition process could only be described as an 'under the counter' exhibition. The Parks and Playgrounds Movement had to chase it up to even get a look at it. Just lots of publicity hype in News and TV.
4. There was no Heritage impact explanation given to councillors. The Commonwealth Listed Lighthouse is so totally impacted there needs to be some sort of explanation.
5. The corrupt activities of the former Manager Glen Oakley and his actions re the breakwater and Headland (Macquarie Pier) need to be exposed. See ICAC website.
6. Council should have raised the matter of their Plan Of Management for the area – Parks and Playgrounds Movement understands that the Council Officer dealing with the Development Application said it did not apply. This is (of course) nonsense - it did apply. It was a duly developed Plan Of Management with public input and a public exhibition with all stakeholders informed at each stage.
7. The port authority advertised for expressions of interest in May 2003 the criterion was laid down in their documentation. No new buildings only adaptive reuse. The two garages could have been removed

they don't have much value. They need not have new structures built over them. And the existing cottages could have been remodelled to café and careers residence etc.

8. The current DA is over development of a very sensitive heritage site and will lead to traffic problems on the pedestrian Macquarie Pier.

9. Council could have referred the matter to the Commonwealth Minister to seek guidance on the impact of the Commonwealth heritage item (Nobbys Lighthouse oldest surviving light on the Australian Coast and the light that replaced the Convict coal fired beacon that was the first light on the coast.

10. Greens should call a public protest meeting to set up a group to lobby the Ministers and to research and publish works on the convict and aboriginal heritage of the site for placement on the National Heritage List.

Nobbys is the iconic and spiritual heart of Newcastle and the Region.

It deserves better.

Doug Lithgow  
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Freeman of the City of Newcastle