

Letters to the Editor

Email: editor@tweedecho.com.au
 Deadline: Noon, Tuesday
 Letters longer than 200 words may be cut and pseudonyms are not acceptable.
 Please include your full name, address and phone number.

No to Macca's

In response to the letters of Peaches and Kirra (November 24) I am adding my voice saying no to McDonald's.

It's well over time to take stock and make decisions for the health of our people and region. Every one of these fast food outlets encourages negative eating habits. As a grandmother I look in dismay at this type of food being the 'norm', and the difficulty for mums keeping up healthy eating choices against a tide of such absolute rubbish.

I am asking our council to look ahead, say no to McDonald's and applaud and support home-grown wholesome small business. Let's move away from the mind-numbing chain mentality and embrace creative people looking to make positive contributions for the betterment of the whole.

Lyn Wade
Uki

Real Nowhere Man

Tony Abbott - Leader of the Opposition to everything.

Roma Newton
Kingscliff

The cost of gas

Gas prices are way down and the market remains uncertain but it's all the way with CSG in America according to BHP Billiton chief executive Michael Yeager.

In its bid to sell the languishing US shale gas expansion market to its investors at a recent briefing (*Sydney Morning Herald*, November 15), Mr Yeager acknowledged that gas prices were at half the levels needed to generate returns, and the quantities of water and chemicals used in fracking, seismic activity, aquifer protection and general air and noise pollution were a problem; but like any snake-oil salesman worth his salt, Mr Yeager crooned that 'investors could be comfortable

continued overleaf

Questions for council over Hastings Pt approval

■ Cr Skinner's reported comments to local ABC radio following the approval of the non-compliant mega-home at Hastings Point in defiance of the Development Control Plan adopted by council would probably have his pro-development cohorts wishing he had not broken the code of silence.

'I don't support the DCP,' snorts Cr Skinner. Well, councillor, you're not required to agree with a minute in council, but once adopted, you are expected to uphold it.

'They have existing use rights,' he claims.

Have you even read the DA, councillor?

The DA clearly requests approval for a multiple-dwelling block of units to be converted to a single-dwelling house, which is not existing use, but is in fact a change of use.

Existing use is the most abused privilege of any planning regulation, and is used far too often by consent authorities who cannot otherwise justify non-compliance.

In an attempt to stem this abuse the NSW state government introduced changes to 'existing use' regulations which were gazetted in March, 2006.

These new regulations provide that where a change from existing use to another use is requested, then all relevant requirements of that authority's LEP and DCP must be applied.

This proposal also fails to meet the 'minor modification' or 'lesser environmental impact' requirements to qualify for existing use rights.

'It's not a demolition,' exclaims Cr Skinner, so again I ask, has he read the DA? The roof will be completely removed, the walls will be completely removed, and there will be nothing left standing above ground zero. Only the concrete slab will be utilised in part of the new foundation.

The DA declares it to be

a demolition, any observer with a reasonable grip on reality would recognise it as a demolition, so, Kevin, I will say this very slowly for you: it is indeed, a d-e-m-o-l-i-t-i-o-n.

Most alarming of all is Cr Skinner's closing statement 'You will probably see more applications for similar types of things'. Is that an invitation for developers with non-compliant proposals to jump on the bandwagon, or a guarantee that they will have your automatic approval, or worse still, a 'heads up' that deals are being done?

Arrogance mixed with ignorance makes a deadly cocktail for the sustainable development of any community, and electors of this shire must be getting very anxious for the opportunity in 2012 to pour this cocktail down the sink.

However, the damage that might befall this shire in the interim could be irreversible.

John Mulligan
Kingscliff

■ So it appears that an LEP (Local Environment Plan) and a DCP (Development Control Plan) are not needed in the Tweed Shire. Also we don't need the experience and qualifications of the planning department either. This would save lots of ratepayers' funds, many hours and costs by the residents of the area who have put time and effort into drafting such legislation into being for the good of the general population.

If we did, then the director of planning and a building surveyor would have paid attention to their experts and to the text of the DCP and applied it in relation to the latest development approval in Hastings Point. A building that does not comply with the DCP in seven major ways (12 metres longer and one metre higher than it should be, just to name a couple).

They did not! Instead they overrode planning controls to form their own unjustified opinion, confusing council-

lors along the way.

There appears to be no explanation for this approval, other than the planning de-

partment's contempt for the residents' efforts.

S Hing
Hastings Point

And questions specifically for Cr Holdom

■ Dear Dot, Since first meeting you some years ago, we held some faith that you would fairly represent us locals in our efforts to safeguard our community and environments.

We have witnessed your council dealings over these years and the recent action of yours in voting for the 26 Coast Road Hastings Point development against our DCP is tantamount to treason.

You know the efforts we as Hastings locals have applied to gain our DCP; how on earth can you disregard this safety net of ours?

As a people's representative you have lost all credibility.

We have noted in the past your dismissive 'you don't understand' response to criticism - a defensive response you would be best to let go of.

Your role as a councillor is a total disappointment, for you are the front-runner as to why, on a local level, representative democracy is non-existent.

Barry Anderson
and Bev Larsson
Hastings Point

■ Can anyone tell me what, if anything, Cr Dot Holdom stands for?

It was this lady's promise to 'keep them honest' that attracted me, and I'm sure many others, to vote for you at the last council election.

There was also a belief that you were not complicit in the corruption attributed to the 'puppets of the developers' which led to the dismissal of the previous councillors and therefore you should be returned by the electorate.

However, after watching you jump the fence like an Olympic hurdler for the past three years, you now appear to be firmly ensconced in the Three Amigos' camp, and it also appears the councillor credited with leading you down that mine shaft of dismissal in 2005 is now your mentor and 'new best friend'.

Dot, there is nothing honest about abandoning the principles of the very building regulations you helped to adopt, and fearing the outcome of a Lands and Environment Court appeal is

a lame excuse for abandoning one's principles.

It is the councillors' responsibility to uphold compliance regulations; they do not have the ability, or the right, to preempt court decisions.

If council compliance regulations are legal and the planning assessment is competent, there should be no need for any consent authority to cower in fear of litigation.

Your supporters from the last council election might well ask themselves why you appear to have thrown your lot in with the developer's disciples, and the answers to that question could draw some very unsavory conclusions.

So, please Dot, do not align yourself with any self-serving factions who display contempt for regulations that do not suit them or their masters.

You could hold the key, so make sure it opens the right doors for the future of this shire, keep your promise to the electorate and help keep the bastards honest.

Margaret Bergan
Kingscliff

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