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Shoalhaven City Council
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SUBMISSION RE AGENDA ITEM CL25.418

Department: Communication & Community Engagement

Approver: Andrew Constance, CEO

VRRRA is a longstanding incorporated CCB, which reformed in November after a 6-month temporary suspension due to lack of a committee.

VRRRA recognise that a review of the CCB mechanism is necessary as the version of the VRRRA we are replacing was a good example of a dysfunctional CCB that had not fulfilled its role for the past 8-10 years. Of note Council did not act on complaints or appear to have a monitoring process on the efficacy of Vincentia's CCB.

We do not support the proposed cessation of CCBs as outlined. We argue reform needs to address compliance of the CCB Guidelines.

The CCB Guidelines - adopted 26/7/2005 and reviewed 1/12/2024

<https://doc.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/DisplayDoc.aspx?Record=pol08/438>

Clearly outlines the purpose, roles and responsibilities of CCBs, the support from Council and the CCB Council engagement.

The guidelines warn of the importance to be sufficiently diverse to protect against being taken over by a special interest or single-issue group.

Unfortunately, these practical, explanatory guidelines are meaningless when there is no mechanism to enforce any of the safety measures described. Surely this is important when voluntary-run groups are operating in the capacity of liaison with community and council - to ensure they are effective, and the community is informed and suitably represented.

The alternative engagement models mentioned of Project-specific groups, and Thematic Advisory committees, risks removing genuine local community input if the representatives on these groups are not part of a community consultative body. We argue the most impactful ways people can partner with Council to influence decision making and shape their lifestyles is by CCBs contributing to infrastructure working groups, social planning projects, and thematic advisory committees.

A well run functional CCB that is adequately manned can establish its own Project specific groups.

Vincentia Ratepayers and Residents Association

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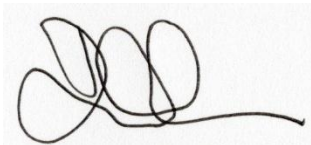
What is significant about the CCB Guidelines and its importance in this current argument of scrapping CCBs is the Statement of Purpose, where it states:

“The Shoalhaven is recognised as one of the most beautiful, yet sensitive, areas in the state. Consequently, **Council and the community are faced with the challenging responsibility of accommodating an acceptable and sustainable level of growth, whilst protecting the inherent natural qualities of our area.**”

This is a constant conflict – determining developments that are not at the expense of our natural environment. We argue that CCBs would be more in tune with the natural qualities of our area, and the development needs of their community.

In conclusion, VRRRA do not agree with the abolition of CCBs, we recommend Council highlight the need for CCBs to meet the Guidelines and introduce compliance mechanisms.

Yours truly



David Pursley

President

VRRRA

Via Email and cc all Councilors