

Doug Darlington

From: Vereker, Gina [GAVereker@wyong.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Thursday, 21 July 2011 3:46 PM
To: Doug Darlington
Cc: Whittaker, Michael; Kenyon, Maxine
Subject: RE: WSC'S HOUSING STRATEGY

Hi Doug,

I apologise for not getting back to you sooner, but I have been chasing some specific information from staff within other Council departments. However, I can advise that the extract you have highlighted from your TEPCP Executive Meeting is actually quite inaccurate. Consultation was in fact a key part of the development of the WSC Housing Strategy.

In summary,

- A Wyong Shire Affordable Housing Reference Group was established at the beginning of the project to advise on both the process of preparing the Strategy and the design of the Strategy. The Group comprised representatives from 17 different stakeholder areas - State government, non-government organisations, community organisations and business.
- 2 community consultation meetings for the broader community and 9 targeted focus groups were held to canvas perspectives on design, supply and management of affordable housing.
- Approx 100 people attended these consultations.

The focus groups involved the following areas:

- Aged, disabled and mental health sector
- Supported accommodation assistant program services
- Developers and planning consultants
- Department of Community Services
- Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service
- Department of Housing
- Residential park residents
- Residential park owners and managers
- Homeless early intervention Habitat program
- The draft Strategy was placed on public exhibition for a period of 4 weeks from 10 October 2007 to 6 November 2007. Copies of the document were sent to 18 stakeholders working or involved in housing. Overall public comment was favourable. 2 submissions were received.
- The Strategy was adopted by Council on 23 January 2008.

With regard to your request for a Senior Council Officer to attend your next Executive meeting on 2 August, the ownership of this Strategy is with Council's Community Development Unit. I have therefore referred your request to Maxine Kenyon, Council's Director of Community & Recreation Services to nominate a staff member to attend. Should you also wish to discuss any issues relating to the processing of applications for affordable housing, I will ask Peter Fryar to attend as well.

Regards
Gina

Gina Vereker

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Environment and Planning Services

Wyong Shire Council

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From: Doug Darlington [<mailto:doug@darlington.id.au>]
Sent: Wednesday, 20 July 2011 4:33 PM
To: Vereker, Gina; Whittaker, Michael
Subject: FW: WSC'S HOUSING STRATEGY
Importance: High

Hi Michael and Gina

I refer to my email below of 7 July 2011.

TEPCP would appreciate your advice please as to our request that a Senior Council officer please attend our next Executive Meeting on 2nd August, 2011.

Regards
Doug

Doug Darlington
Secretary
The Entrance Peninsula Community Precinct



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From: Doug Darlington
Sent: Thursday, 7 July 2011 12:13 PM
To: 'Gina.Vereker@wyong.nsw.gov.au'
Cc: 'MWhittaker@wyong.nsw.gov.au'; Anne Rowland; 'Vivienne Soo'
Subject: WSC'S HOUSING STRATEGY

Hi Gina

The purpose of this email is to request that a Senior Council officer please attend our next Executive Meeting on 2nd August, 2011 to discuss how Council is implementing its housing strategy. TEPCP is very concerned about the lack of affordable housing in Wyong Shire and the provision of it in appropriate locations. The following is an extract from our Executive Meeting held on 5th July 2011.

- 4.1 WSC's Housing Strategy On 8th June, 2011 wrote to WSC expressing concern over the adoption of "Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy For Wyong Shire" without community consultation. This strategy has a direct bearing on the Local Environment Plan (LEP) now being prepared by Council.
ACTION: Secretary to request Council to please provide a senior officer to discuss the Housing Strategy with TEPCP Executive at our next meeting on 2nd August at 4:00pm.

I have attached a copy of our (unanswered to date) letter dated 8th June 2011.

Your assistance in this request would be appreciated please.

Regards
Doug

Doug Darlington
Secretary
The Entrance Peninsula Community Precinct



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08 June, 2011

Michael Whittaker
The General Manager,
Wyong Shire Council,
PO Box 20,
Wyong 2259

SUBJECT: **"PROMOTING CHOICE: A LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY
FOR WYONG SHIRE"**

Dear Michael,

TECPP wish to draw your attention to the above strategy as being flawed, as we do not believe that it has had any input from the broader community. It would appear that TEPCP or any other Precinct Committee was consulted or informed about the existence of the above strategy. In the Mayor's and your message to the community in the Wyong Shire Council Strategic Plan, 2011-2015, you state:

"Council will keep the community at the forefront of every action and decision we make in relation to enhancing the quality of life in the Shire."

These words have a hollow ring to them when you read "Promoting Choice: A Local Housing Strategy for Wyong Shire" which identifies how the Council can support and encourage developers and others to provide housing for the community.

It would seem therefore, that the community was deliberately excluded from consultation on this document by Council, who took the view that the establishment of a "Wyong Shire Affordable Housing Reference Group" was sufficient. The Reference Group that comprised representatives from 17 different stakeholder areas across the business sector (including developers), State government departments and non-governmental and community organisations to advise on both the process of preparing an local housing strategy and the design of the strategy itself was sufficient.

The strategy states: ***"Consultation was a key stage in the design of the Housing Strategy. In order for Wyong Council to prepare a strategy that could be implemented effectively, it was important to consult with people who are experts in the broad field of affordable housing as well as the people who experience in their private lives the lack of housing choice in the Shire and the issues that come with it."***

It seems as if from the beginning Council thought the wider community (including TEPCP) could not be trusted to support the strategy. It is dated January 2008 and was released over the Christmas holidays when it went would not be noticed by the community.

Wyong Shire does have a well educated and articulate community, yet this document reeks of an elitism that considers the authors knew what was best, because the community were not *"experts in the broad field of affordable housing or people who experienced in their private lives the lack of housing choice"*.

It is noted that the authors took the view that: *"Often there is community resistance to medium and high density developments and the Councillors should take more of a leadership role in promoting the importance of well designed, appropriately located and socially mixed medium and high density dwellings"* It appears that this biased view of community opinion on influenced Council not to put this document on public exhibition for comment before adoption.

TEPCP only became aware of the strategy when we started researching Council documents that would aid TEPCP in it's strong objection to DA 308/2011, a development put forward under the "SEPP Affordable Housing". TEPCP is well aware of the dire shortage of affordable rental properties in our Shire and recognises the need for careful planning to ensure a housing strategy encourages developments of rental housing in areas that ensures they are close to transport and services. TEPCP does not believe this strategy has a recognised the need for these and other important criteria be included.

A major concern of TEPCP is that this strategy is being used in the development of Wyong Council's new LEP and other planning instruments. This letter is not intended to address these serious concerns TEPCP has with the strategy, but to draw your attention to the fact that it is a flawed document because it lacked broader community input into the housing strategy for Wyong Shire.

In conclusion, TEPCP would suggest that the inclusion of the wider community as a major stakeholder in the strategy development stage, would greatly assist in the acceptance of proposed housing developments further down the track. The omission of the wider community, can only result in strong opposition.

Yours Sincerely



Douglas Darlington

Secretary

The Entrance Community Precinct Committee

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