

Vincent De Luca OAM
Independent Councillor for the Northern Beaches

Media Release
De Luca disgusted community gagged from Planning Meetings

Northern Beaches Council's decision to hold "local" Planning Panel Meetings that determine development applications during business hours thus preventing residents who work and have other duties during the day has been described by Independent Councillor Vincent De Luca OAM "as a deliberate attempt to stop the community from having their say on development application in their area".

"The whole point of this Panel is to facilitate the community having their say on development applications. Under the previous Council the meetings were held at night so that residents could attend and have their say" Cr De Luca said.

"In this new amalgamated Council, Council's General Manager of Planning, David Kerr confirmed they have set the time for the meetings, usually at 1pm during working hours. Residents have come to me saying they would have to take days off work to travel to the meeting and then speak and thus cannot attend and are furious with being blocked from having their say".

"How would you feel if you had a monstrosity proposed next door to you or in your street or major developments in your area like we continue to see, only to be gagged from speaking because you have a job during the day - it's outrageous".

"In an effort to ensure community participation, I moved an Urgency Motion at last night's Council meeting so that in future Staff schedule meetings at 6pm at not during working hours. Sadly, Mayor Michael Regan and his fellow political party Councillors together with his Coalition cohort, his Deputy, Candy Bingham voted down my Urgency request and stopped my Motion from being considered".

Mayor Michael Regan and Councillors Sue Heins, Roslyn Harrison, Ian White, Penny Philpott, Sarah Grattan of the Your Northern Beaches Registered Political Party together with Candy Bingham of the Good for Manly Registered Political Party voted against the Motion of Urgency while Councillors Vincent De Luca (Independent), Alex McTaggart (Independent) and Rory Amon, Pat Daley and Kylie Ferguson (Liberal Party) voted for.

"To say I am disappointed in Michael Regan and his political party mates blocking my Motion for the community is an understatement. It shows a complete disregard and arrogance towards people who work and that can't get to a meeting during the day and makes a mockery of the community consultation process Cr De Luca stated.

“Our community has a right to be heard and by having meetings during the day just gags them from being able to exercise their democratic right” Cr De Luca concluded.

**For more information please call
Councillor Vincent De Luca OAM on 0427 218 553**

**Motion of Urgency
Northern Beaches Local Planning Panel Meetings**

That this Council resolves to:

1. Note with concern that Northern Beaches Local Planning Panel is meeting during business hours, for example [at 1pm tomorrow](#), thus preventing many residents from attending such meetings and having their say on development applications that affect them and the future of the Northern Beaches,
2. Request Councils CEO to ensure that future Northern Beaches Local Planning meetings are held after [6pm](#) at night in order to ensure proper public participation and that residents, applicants and objectors can be properly heard at such meetings that are meant to hear from affected parties,
3. Requests the CEO to write to the Minister for Planning, the Hon Anthony Roberts MP:
 - (a) Requesting that the NSW Government ensure that it is mandatory for all Councils to ensure that such Panels are open and accessible to the community and that in order to ensure public participation, meetings should not be held at any Council during business hours as this prevents a large number of the community from participating,
 - (b) Requesting that the NSW review the costs of such Panel and either subsidise these panels in view of the State Government appointing members to such Panels or add as an additional fee to development applications in order to pay for such Planning Panels.
4. Requests the CEO to ensure that Agendas and associated documents for the Northern Beaches Local Planning Panel are sent to all Councillors at least three days prior to a respective meeting of the Panel.