



State Bureaucrats ban TWT from Nelson Parade public meeting!

Clean it up



TWT on-the-spot PHOTO.

ANZAC Feature



TWT SOUVENIR FIFA WORLD CUP

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Hunters Hill Mayor Mark Bennett, right, and former mayor and Independent candidate in next month's State election Richard Quinn, left, have long demanded action on the Nelson Parade contamination project. TWT on-the-spot PHOTO.

BY OUR CIVIC ROUNDSMAN

State government bureaucrats banned The Weekly Times from a community information night in Hunters Hill's Fairland Hall last Tuesday night discussing the Nelson Parade radioactive waste contamination issue.

Property NSW bureaucrats refused entry to this newspaper at the meeting, advertised by letterbox drop as "an information night to update local residents on the Nelson Parade radioactive waste contamination issue".

The bureaucrats justified the ban as to "give residents an opportunity to raise concerns in a private environment" as well as a restriction on attendance to residents living within 500 metres of Nelson Parade.

While The Weekly Times is seeking details on any privacy requests, we can confirm that no proof of identity and occupancy checks were required for people who attended the meeting which included Hunters Hill Mayor Mark Bennett who lives near Tarban Creek.

"It is a disgrace," the mayor said.

"These bureaucrats have clearly been told to target the local media for political reasons."

'It's a disgrace' says Mayor



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Hunters Hill concerned residents called a public meeting in Hunters Hill Town Hall February 20, 2018 to demand immediate action on the Nelson Parade remediation project and requested The Weekly Times editor John Booth AM to join them in a photo shoot to promote the meeting. John Booth is pictured centre front next to Mayor Cllr Mark Bennett. Former mayor and Independent candidate in next month's State election Richard Quinn is also pictured. TWT on-The-spot PHOTO.

Mayor Bennett said no information was presented at the meeting that presented a security risk or a breach of privacy and it was attended by people from across the municipality and beyond it.

"We know there has been a suggestion to encapsulate the contaminated waste on site in Nelson Parade but the information night told us nothing we did not know already and the truth that came out is that they still don't have a program, a proposal, a drawing or a timeframe."

"What we were able to say is that this is an issue that impacts on the whole of Hunters Hill, not just an artificial area of 500 metres and I've made it clear we need a survey done with all of our residents."

Property NSW bureaucrats are under the jurisdiction of Ryde MP and Finance Minister Victor Dominello but Hunters Hill is in the Lane Cove electorate of Anthony Roberts MP, who is also the Minister for Planning and Leader of the House.

When contacted by The Weekly Times, Mr Roberts said he had no knowledge of the outrageous ban on The Weekly Times and did not support it.

Despite Mr Roberts' comment, his political opponent for the state election Richard Quinn (Ind) said the ban was typical of a state government that has a track record of secrecy.

"I strongly believe in freedom of the press but one of the hallmarks of this government has been a lack of transparency and a secrecy that has been appalling," he said.

"There will be people, including those who live within 500 metres of Nelson Parade and did not attend the information night, who will rely on The Weekly Times for coverage of this event."

He said he is not surprised by the ban.

"As mayor, I've seen for myself how this government sets one rule for transparency for councils and another one for itself."

Save Hunters Hill Municipality spokesman Phil Jenkyn OAM said the ban flew in the face of best practice.

"If you want to respect the anonymity of residents at the meeting what you do is you make it clear at the meeting that the media is present and let people know they have a right not to be quoted or photographed," he said.

"This is a standard procedure used at most community meetings."

"But to ban the local newspaper and say the information is only for residents who live within 500 metres of the site is absolutely outrageous in my opinion."

"It reveals that they can't handle a newspaper report on a community meeting and quite frankly this reflects the total incompetence of this government."

He said this issue continues to concern everyone in Hunters Hill.

"We continue to say that they will not remove the stigma or this municipality until they remove the waste."