



The Hon. Shelly Hancock MP  
Minister for Local Government

9 July 2019

Email link <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/our-minister/minister-local-government>

RE: Woollahra Municipal Council (WMC) – Councillor Anthony Marano

I write in my capacity of president of the Darling Point Society Inc., a community organisation with approximately 200 members dedicated to the preservation of heritage and the environment. We are lucky to live in a harbourside suburb with several beautiful green parks much enjoyed by residents and visitors, yachtsmen, sports people, football players, picnics, children and older people and pets, all enjoying the park and its peaceful green space and the local fauna.

Woollahra Municipal Council has for 2 years now been planning to erect a skateboard park in Rushcutters Bay Park and we, working together with other groups, have been fighting to stop them. Whilst we fully understand young people need recreational space, the park belongs to all and erecting a skateboard park means it is an area dedicated to only a small group with sometimes unfortunate results. There are other areas in the municipality which would be suitable for this purpose.

A community survey was conducted by WMC and the results not made public but we were told that there was 91 against the skate park and 56 in favour. Because it is such a small percentage WMC decided to ignore the result. In particular Cllr Anthony Marano has been extremely vocal acting as the helmsman for the project, pointing to the Darling Point Society committee present at an important WMC public meeting to approve the project, and calling us “18<sup>th</sup> century creatures with parasols and crinolins”. The motion was passed to build the skate park.

The defunct Office of Environment and Heritage passed a 12 month interim heritage order (IHO) on the park stopping WMC from touching the park until January 2020. WMC has not passed a motion to uplift the IHO so that they can start building asap. The building requires a layer of red clay to be laid on top of the tree roots and the open space and then a layer of concrete has to go on top of that. Total area covered similar to an Olympic swimming pool. No actual plans or documents have been supplied by WMC. or its appointed contractor.

There ensued a flowing exchange of email with the mayor Peter Cavanagh and Clr Marano, using language totally unbecoming public representatives. All this is available if required. A complaint was filed by the Society against Clr Marano.

We request you investigate Clr Marano for the following reasons:

1. Residents say the IHO should remain and WMC recent decision to have it uplifted is dangerous.
- 3 The grounds for overturning the Order given by council are spurious.
- 4 WMC's public consultation was flawed.  
see also <http://www.altmedia.net.au/skatepark-saga-continues/141022>
- 5 A petition of 1,600 signatures against the project was tabled in Parliament on 26 June 2019 and we received an extra 500 emails opposing it.
6. Objections mention: loss of green space, noise factor above 65db, parking problems, loss of fauna, possible invasion from undesirables from Kings Cross, drugs, lack of safety, no CCTV cameras planned, no security planned on site, toilets remote from the site to name only the most obvious public safety issues.
7. WMC's own Plan of Management is seriously questioned.
7. No Heritage Impact Statement on public exhibition.
8. Objectors' independent arborist's report shows trees are threatened.
9. No exact size of facility supplied
10. The Environment and Protection Act not referred to in council's decision
- 12 The new Minister for Open Spaces, Robb Stokes, has not approved the skateboard structure proposal.
13. Considering half the park, ie Sydney Council side, is already heritage-listed, it is highly likely the whole park should also be.
14. Council is bullying objectors:  
see <https://www.domain.com.au/news/rushcutters-bay-park-skate-complex-proposal-heats-up-councillor-attacks-opponents-as-old-people-with-nothing-else-to-do-858963/>
15. Clr Marano's offensive comments have had a most negative impact and are contrary to council's code of Conduct. The Society is receiving complaints, emails, letters and calls demanding what to do to stop this man from uttering anymore offensive statements. There are quite a large number of young residents and young families in the area, as the demographics have changed steadily over the past few years.

In addition to deleterious statements to the press Clr Marano was interviewed on the 2GB on Wednesday 17 July 2019 Breakfast Show again repeating his offensive statements.

Code of Conduct

source: [https://www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/195760/Code\\_of\\_Conduct\\_2018.pdf](https://www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/195760/Code_of_Conduct_2018.pdf)

The following sections are breached:

- 3.1 (g)
- 3.4
- 3.6
- 7.19 communicating material that is offensive or abusive
- 8.3 b

22 We seek your support in this matter as it cannot go on any longer. The reputation of WMC is at stake.

Thank you for your consideration

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Darling Point Society

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