



## Fact Sheet – Fighting Developments

### About Red Tape Busters

In May 2000 Red Tape Busters commenced and our Director Shane Bowering instantly won praise from people around the country for taking on the bureaucrats. Since that day we have been highly successful in beating the bureaucrats and representing our clients to Councils, Government agencies and as consumer advocates. At Red Tape Busters we also have a proud history of being regarded as specialist grant writers, tender writers, job application writers and we also provide specialised assistance to businesses and non profits via organisational development and support services. We are lucky enough to now have clients all over Australia and even internationally.

### **Fighting Developments**

Fighting inappropriate local developments is a stressful and difficult task. Most residents get tangled in the emotional turmoil of the situation and try to battle the proposed developer or Council themselves. This is fraught with failure. Following are some tips that might help residents in these battles:-

***More is Better*** – the more people you can get to join the cause and raise concerns to fight the development the better. Councilors and Councils are highly susceptible to public pressure.

***Process*** – Councils have clearly defined processes regarding all developments and the approval process and residents need to make sure that Council follows the prescribed process to the letter. If Council does not follow the process completely this will give residents an ability to challenge the development.

***Rules and Regulations*** – Councils must ensure that all developments meet prescribed rules, regulations, by laws, legislation, town planning requirements and building standards. Residents need to make sure that the development

complies with all of these requirements. If it doesn't – the residents have an avenue to stop the development.

***Right to Information (RTI)*** – residents must access all documents, reports, internal and external communications etc that Council and maybe even the State Government have in relation to the development. It is difficult to argue a case with Council unless you have all of the information Council has. Many RTI searches will turn up interesting facts including at times internal Council communications admitting they have got it all wrong or reports from Council staff saying they don't support the development yet Council approves it anyway. This is vital. You might find some real gems of information to support your case here.

***Document*** – residents need to document everything by keeping records of what is happening with the development – taking videos, keeping diaries etc. This can help show up errors, poor workmanship and/or flouting of Council/town planning requirements. Residents must also ensure all their concerns are raised with Council in WRITING and that they make sure that Council respond in WRITING. It is very easy for Council to forget conversations or misrepresent facts if it is not recorded and documented.

***Lobby*** – residents as a group need to strongly lobby their local, state and federal members demanding action. The elected members are there to represent YOU – make them earn their money and your vote! The group needs to raise the same concerns – a divided group singing different songs will be easier for Council to ignore. Residents should also lobby the State Minister responsible for Local Councils – the Minister has a vested interest in how the Council is operating.

***Appeal*** – all developments are subject to differing appeal processes either through Land and Environment Courts, Supreme Court or through an independent Tribunal. If residents are concerned their voices are not being heard they need to ensure their rights are considered in the appeals process.

***Media*** – the local media is a powerful tool for residents. Generating interest in the issue via the local print, TV and radio media is really important to raise the profile of the issue and also generate a groundswell of popular opinion. Remember politicians need votes if they think an issue will cost votes they will sell their grandmother!

If you follow these guiding principles then the battler has a real chance of stopping encroaching development.

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*Stand up for your rights and don't give up!*

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