

# Hobart Not Highrise pushing for new vote on maximum building heights for CBD after upheld code of conduct complaint

It was a huge topic of debate last year and now Hobart Not Highrise is pushing for new vote on maximum building heights for the CBD after an upheld code of conduct complaint.

Jessica Howard, Mercury - August 15, 2020

This report in the print edition is headed:

## **Building Heights bullying** Spotlight on Zucco conduct

The 'red' text below is added by HnH as comment.  
The 'bold' was added by HnH to the original article.

**HOBART City Council should bring back the debate on absolute building heights as an alderman's "bullying and harassment" may have influenced the vote**, says the head of lobby group Hobart Not Highrise.

Hobart Not Highrise president Brian Corr lodged complaints against aldermen Simon Behrakis and Marti Zucco over emails, Facebook posts and media releases relating to discussion around the planning application for the redevelopment of the Welcome Stranger Hotel in July last year.

**The code of conduct panel's** report was tabled at the council meeting on Monday night and it **found Ald Zucco had bullied and harassed Mr Corr**. **Read this report, particularly pages 17, 18 & 19.**

In one instance, the panel found **Ald Zucco used the terms 'racist' and 'fascist' "loosely in debate"** and "failed to show respect to those community members who had contributed to public debate on the Welcome Stranger application."

"The panel finds in the **10 incidents** cited in the complaint, Ald Zucco had several times been unfair, has caused offence or embarrassment, has **harassed a member of the public by repeated public attacks on him** and has failed to show respect," the panel found.

Mr Corr said he felt vindicated by the decision and while the process was "drawn out" he found the code of conduct panel "professional and thorough."

"People expect their elected members to be civil and treat them fairly – Zucco didn't do that," he said.

Ald Zucco said he would "always condemn racism in a forthright manner no matter what." **The Code of Conduct Panel found that neither HnH or Brian Corr had said, or written, anything that was 'racist or fascist'.**

“The council must review its policy on racism,” he said. **Ald Zucco provided the Code of Conduct Panel with a definition of 'racism' and 'fascism'. The Panel, using his definition, found that he had been 'racist and fascist' and that neither HnH nor Brian Corr had been.**

“As this matter is in the hands of lawyers, there is nothing more I can say at this point in time.” **We need to know the total costs that Ald Zucco has incurred – cost of legal advice so far, the cost of the Panel (3 members plus secretariat), and the cost he's now talking about – in a long legal process where the Panel did everything to ensure that both sides were given plenty of time to ensure 'natural justice'.**

**In August last year, elected members voted 6-5 against a maximum building height of 60m in the Hobart CBD.**

**Mr Corr said HNH believed the building heights debate should be brought back for a new vote because the process had been concurrent with the Welcome Stranger debate.**

**“With a decision this badly tainted, it really should be done again to restore the public’s confidence in the council’s decision-making process,”** he said.

Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds said elected members had received about 250 emails urging them to reconsider the heights vote, but said the issue would be part of the Central Hobart Precinct Plan, which had been delayed slightly by the pandemic, but would allow for public input.

Meanwhile, the complaint against Ald Behrakis was dismissed.

He said the case was “yet another example of the need for the current code of conduct process to be abolished.”

“As it stands, it serves only to frustrate the time, attention and resources of democratically elected local government representatives,” he said.