

“ Enough is enough... we need to have industry professional representation in governments ”

building a voice

A new political party dedicated to strengthening the economy from the ground up has been launched in NSW with substantial support from the building design community.

The brainchild of BDAA president Ray Brown, the Building Australia Party was registered last month after gaining a formidable foundation membership base incorporating a broad cross-section of representation from within the building and design industries.

With a platform focused on housing affordability as the cornerstone of a healthy economy, the party has evolved from informal discussions over a long period among BDAA, MBA, HIA and AIA members frustrated by a local government regulatory system that they believe has been stifling innovation and lumping an unnecessary cost burden on consumers, to the detriment of the industry.

“With that in mind a few of us designers and builders have got together and decided enough is enough and we need to have industry and professional representation in governments,” party convenor Ray Brown said.

“Housing affordability is not just a profession and building industry related issue, it affects the whole community.”

Ray said there seemed to be a common thread in the group’s thinking that commonsense had been lost through manipulation of rhetoric.

“I think we can all bring to the table many areas that really need an overhaul. Reducing unnecessary planning delays and needless over-regulation will decrease building costs and make housing more affordable,” he said.

A former councillor and deputy mayor of the Hills Shire Council in north-west Sydney, Ray said he had been

motivated to act by enthusiasm for his former Rotary Club’s ethic which espoused: Do It Once, Do It Well, Build a Better Australia.

“The one thing that really does frustrate me in life is the lack of commonsense in many different areas of our industry and profession,” he said.

“Why is it that one council on one side of the road can have a completely different set of guidelines and application requirements to a council on the other side of the road? Why is commonsense not used when assessing whether certain information should be needed, rather than being required just because it is on the application lodgment matrix?”

“Why is it that a council’s planning instruments are not the rules? If it complies, then approval should be a given. If an area or a site has a peculiarity then it should be identified in a plan for the area or in an appendix to the relevant development control plan.”

Ray said that giving surety to the public in the first instance would diminish the likelihood of confrontation.

“Using ‘guidelines only’ in development control plans opens up a plethora of subjectiveness, supposition and personal opinion and, in the end, stifles innovation,” he said.

While the Building Australia Party has established its roots in NSW, it will also be seeking Federal registration with a view to expanding its influence Australia-wide.. ■

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