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Picture: Martin Lange

Chairman of the board

North Narrabeen's Cooper Chapman wowed surf judges in Japan and now he is heading for glory in South Africa.

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Revealed: 156-homes site could be for affordable housing

BANKING ON BELROSE

Robbie Patterson Kathryn Welling

OWNERS of Belrose bushland hoping to subdivide it into 156 freehold housing lots have hit back at critics, saying they would consider affordable housing on the site.

And Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council's CEO Nathan Moran said it would be open to using some of its other land to ease the northern beaches' sports field shortage.

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BELROSE

Open to affordable housing

Robbie Patterson and Kathryn Welling

LANDOWNERS hoping to subdivide Belrose bushland into 156 housing lots have hit back at critics, saying they would consider affordable housing and a solution to the peninsula's field shortage.

Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council chief executive Nathan Moran said its latest plans catered better to native flora and fauna and included residents paying a bushfire protection levy.

He said the organisation was "certainly open to affordable housing" on the Ralston Ave site and "happy to hear suggestions, recommendations and feedback."

Last week the *Manly Daily* revealed the development, which was nixed by Warringham Council in 2013, was back on the agenda.

Former mayor Michael Regan and Mackellar federal Liberal MP Jason Falinski expressed concerns over the loss of bushland and the lack of affordable housing.

But Mr Moran said they had 1000 land claims on the peninsula and the development, known as North Belrose Residential, would equal just 0.06 per cent of their land.

He said the land council – the largest landowner on the peninsula – would be prepared to turn some of its other holdings into sports fields to help fill a shortage.

Mr Moran said they have level sites that could be developed into ovals and fields, and would be happy to negotiate with the Northern Beaches Council.

He revealed the land held no cultural significance, saying Aboriginal people were free to claim crown land that was non-essential to public use under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

"Where land is of cultural or environmental value we fight lock stock and barrel to maintain it," he said.

The proceeds of selling the



Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council chief executive Nathan Moran at the Belrose site and (below) the proposed subdivision. Picture: Adam Yip

Aboriginal land council says some of its other holdings could become sport fields

I am still very gutted as to why we didn't follow science or reason and why populism stopped us from developing

Nathan Moran

freehold housing lots would go into a trust fund to help the 16,000 Aboriginal people in the council's area with affordable housing and funeral costs for years to come.

"The value of this land allows us to fund our business in perpetuity," he said.

"It is a smarter way of using our land."

A second access road would be created from the site joining to Wyatt Ave.

A track around the entire



136ha Belrose site would be built, allowing people to cycle, walk or ride horses.

Housing would make up less than 13 per cent of the site, which includes a 3000sqm public park.

"We have minimised and reduced the lot numbers (from 172) and increased size (by 50sq m) to protect the

most valuable part of this land, which is Duffys Forest," he said.

"We had Eco Logical Australia do the assessment. They identified the native species and, as a result, we amended our plan and took away the lots originally intended to be built there. I don't think we are given

enough credence for that."

Mr Moran said he was "very saddened" that despite council staff recommending the development years ago, councillors voted against it.

"I am still very gutted as to why we didn't follow science or reason and why populism stopped us from developing," he said. He also took aim at what he believed to be unfair treatment of the project. "I would hope that one day we could have equal treatment such as what is occurring at Ingleside," he said. "I am hearing no concerns about catastrophic bushfires ... How could you approve 3000 houses on the other side of Garigal National Park to our development with less concerns? I find that inequitable at best."

- » The land council is holding an Information night on Tuesday, 5-7pm, at Belrose Public School.
- » The Aboriginal Land Rights Act allows for Aborigines to claim unused crown land in recognition of their dispossession.
- » The land council plans to use the proceeds of this development to fund ongoing services.
- » A bike and horse riding track is planned for the perimeter of the 136ha Belrose site, allowing easier access into the bush.
- » The plan is before Northern Beaches Council and open for submissions until June 25

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