

Saving lives comes second

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COUNCILS should not subsidise building approval and inspection services to undercut private certifiers while slashing services such as beach safety patrols, says the Association of Accredited Certifiers.

It says rather than increase fees Taree council has provided \$93,000 to subsidise its building control department to maintain its market share while removing paid lifeguards from its beaches next Christmas to save money. It says guards have saved 51 people from drowning in recent years.

Other councils are offering discounts and faster processing of plumbing applications to home builders who do not use a private certifier in contravention of federal competition policy, says the association's president, Craig Hardy.

"How can a council ignore the principles of competitive neutrality and use general revenue to prop up a poorly performing business unit at the expense of an essential service to save lives?" he said.

Harvey Grennan