

Councillors

The concept of mountain biking and zip lines in one location is exciting and popular. I note that ski areas of Victoria outside of the ski season are being used for mountain biking and the ski chalets are being used for accommodation. This is good news and should be encouraged. So what is the difference between this and the application currently in front of us. The answer is quite simply location.

It has been said that we should be guided in our decision making by the Planning Scheme and I agree with this sentiment. This application has been submitted as an Outdoor Sports, Recreation and Entertainment development.

The Tamborine Mountain Zone Code is very clear where this type of development is consistent. This application is for a precinct known as the Tamborine Mountain Escarpment Protection Precinct and in this precinct, this type of development is not consistent and for a very good reason.

The Escarpment Protection Precinct has been recognised as a special area by our Planning Scheme and the Scheme is very clear on what types of activities are appropriate. Some of the activities deemed appropriate are: agriculture, bed and breakfast, food establishment and reception centre, forestry and tourist cabins. All of these activities would promote tourism especially when combined with nature walks and guided tours. Activities which could fit the eco-tourism title.

Why is the Escarpment protected? The Escarpment was the subject of a Federal Government funded study to assess the value of the escarpment and ways to protect it. Two reports were published in 2001 which found that the escarpment was unique in terms of natural offerings which needed to be protected.

Specific Outcome O1 of the Precinct states that development must demonstrate that it is low impact and can protect and maintain the nature conservation, scenic amenity and landscape character values associated with the Escarpment. This is what Eco Tourism is all about and this development does not achieve this.

This development contradicts all of the allowable uses because it proposes a high volume, high traffic, entertainment business that will cater for many people at a time with activities like camping for 300 people, 4WD activity, mountain biking, 5 zip lines and a 102 car park. This is not low impact.

The report outlines in detail the Desired Environmental Outcomes and how this proposal complies. I have a different interpretation of the outcomes. The outcomes state that the landscape character of the shire is identified, protected and enhanced and that development is of a scale, form and intensity appropriate for the locality. I disagree with the views expressed in this report. The proposal does not comply with many of the outcomes.

The report goes on to attempt to convince me that the overall outcomes and specific outcomes of the Tamborine Mountain Zone Code are met by this application. I disagree with the report and I wish to outline 4 outcomes:

Overall Outcome 001 states that development is ecologically sustainable and is designed and **located** to protect and complement the existing natural environment, semi-rural character and scenic amenity values of Tamborine Mountain. This development does not.

Overall outcome 002 states that development provides that tourism activities are concentrated in **recognised tourist areas** or otherwise located so as not to adversely impact on the amenity of the area. This development does not.

The main body of the report makes no mention of Specific Outcome 47 which was a specific submission objection. This outcome states that development ensures that tourist facilities are located on roads **other than those which function primarily as residential/rural residential access roads**. This development does not do this. Kaiser Road, the access road to this development, is a narrow, no through road providing access to rural residential properties.

Overall outcome 58 states that the development is at a scale, form and intensity which is intended for development in the zone and is consistent with the reasonable expectations of residents of the zone. This development does not.

I could discuss many more but time does not permit.

An Inconsistent Development can still be approved but it has to demonstrate local support and local need. Neither have been proven in this application. Local support is lacking and all the activities are available either on the Mountain or within a reasonable driving distance.

This application has impacts which in my view cannot be effectively managed. These are environmental and noise. The impact on flora and fauna cannot be controlled effectively by conditions unless the activities are banned and noise is noise. This area is a natural amphitheatre and noise travels. No condition on noise can be effectively monitored to ensure that residents will not be affected.

Last month we refused a Consistent Development and the report stated that "Council has a responsibility when considering new developments to maintain the existing amenity and protect the residents from worsening impacts arising from the non-compliant proposal." This statement applies to this application as well.

The Sustainable Planning Act states that we should be guided by the Planning Scheme unless there are sufficient grounds to justify the decision despite the conflict. This report has outlined a number of reasons why we should go against the Planning Scheme but I reject most of the reasons because of the factors I have raised above. I would love to debate further these issues but the time allowable for this speech will prevent this.

So, I am bound to vote against this application and I urge other councillors to do so also.