TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.
"Protecting the quality of living on Tamborine Mountain"

Assessment Manager (EPBC 2015/7588)
Referrals Gateway, Environment Assessment Branch,
Department of the Environment,
GPO Box 787,
CANBERRA, ACT, 2601

Mr. J. Noort, P.O. Box 3413,
Australia Fair,
GOLD COAST, Qld. 4215

by email: jim@guanaba.com.au

Dear Sirs,

re: Guanaba Experience Development (EPBC 2015/7588)
98-196 Guanaba Road, Tamborine Mountain, Qld.

Tamborine Mountain Progress Association objects to this development proposal and is currently appealing Scenic Rim Regional Council's approval in the Queensland Planning and Environment Court.

TMPA is a one hundred year old community organization whose formation in 1915 was mainly to help manage the newly gazetted national parks on Tamborine Mountain. Witches Falls National Park was the first gazetted in Queensland & the second in Australia (2008). Further proclaimed national parks, now collectively named Tamborine National Park, formed a ring around the plateau's convoluted escarpment becoming the key to the mountain's much valued environmental character.

Adjoining Palm Grove National Park on the mountain's eastern escarpment is the narrow, dead end, steeply sloped Guanaba Gorge

"The gorge includes substantial areas of subtropical rainforest along the creek and at high elevation. The sheltered slopes below the rainforest support high quality tall moist open forest of mixed species dominated by tallowwood and brushbox and above the rainforest there are stands of tall moist open forest of flooded gum and Sydney blue gum. The exposed ridges support medium dry open forest of mixed species dominated by white mahogany and Ramornie stringybark." (Tamborine Mountain Escarpment Management Strategy)

The land on the mountain's eastern escarpment generally is unstable (Willmott Report) and slippages occur from time to time. However, "whilst full tree cover is maintained in the gorge, the soil is likely to remain stable" (Tamborine Mountain Escarpment Management Strategy)

In 1924, to preserve the area's rich biodiversity, the residents asked the Government to resume land rights around Guanaba Creek Gorge for a further National Park but unfortunately this did not eventuate.

Continuing concern for the escarpment's preservation saw a chain of events now going back many decades. As a prelude to the establishment of a new Development Control Plan (1997), Loder and Bayly published the "Landscape Assessment of Tamborine Mountain, Final Report".

In 1997, the Tamborine Mountain Develoment Control Plan was adopted by Beaudesert Shire Council. This Plan, a more easily read document than its rewritten version of 2009, established the Escarpment Protection Area within which lies Guanaba Gorge.

The DCP stated that " ***the Escarpment Protection Area shall remain predominantly in its natural state so as to preserve the environmentally sensitive escarpment and flanks of the plateau and to maintain the scenic quality and views both to and from the plateau. Development within the designation will be limited to encourage its retention for conservation corridors and fauna and flora habitats. Any development that does occur shall have minimal potential for environmental impact on ecologically sensitive areas."***

In 1997 representatives from six Tamborine Mountain community organizations – Progress Association, Natural History Assn., Residents' Assn., Local Producers' Assn., Garden Club, & Friends of Tamborine Mountain – met to discuss dispersal of available federal funds from the first sale of Telstra for environment initiatives.

Subsequent meetings established The Tamborine Mountain Escarpment Management Strategy Plan (Watson Report) and Chenoweth & Associates were appointed to map escarpment vegetation and to survey flora and fauna (2000/2001).

The Gold Coast City Council purchased 60 ha reserve to increase the area under escarpment preservation and it also endorsed Voluntary Conservation Agreements. Tamborine Mountain is the Gold Coast's highly valued "green behind the gold" and as such plays a key role in attracting its 12 million p.a. visitors.

In 2002 the three year term of the Project Management Committee ended and the Project became Tamborine Mountain Landcare. It had attracted $266,000 from Telstra sale funds, $317,000 in kind provided by the community and $10,000 from Beaudesert Shire Council.

Some years ago, mindful of extending the area's National Parks, the State Government offered to purchase the site but was rejected because the then owner deemed the offer was too low. It was later sold to Mr. Noort at a lower price when the State Government was not in a position to purchase.

The 1994 Landscape Assessment of Tamborine Mountain, Loder & Bayly, stated that one of the areas identified by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service for future protection (GHD, 1992) was the Guanaba Creek Valley on the east side of the escarpment. . It stated that these areas of remnant bushland provide habitat for native animals and, perhaps more importantly, serve as wildlife corridors that link up to other habitat areas.

Many species inhabit the escarpment forest and bushland areas. These include rare and endangered species such as yellow-bellied gliders, Albert's lyrebirds, koalas, frogs and the protected Richmond butterfly. The escarpment has 80% of the flora and fauna found in the Gold Coast region. It is an area of national environmental significance.

A great deal of effort by many people over a long period of time has sought to preserve the rich biodiversity of Guanaba Gorge.

Bike trails (29 km) and 4WD tracks (16 km) criss crossing the site will fragment wildlife habitat with the resultant serious reduction in the area's biodiversity. Professor W.F. Laurance from James Cook University, an expert in Rainforest Ecology and Conservation Biology has stated that fragmentation of natural habitats plays a major role in reducing biodiversity and that decisions made today that diminish the integrity of forested areas will become more marked in years to come.

He also stated that this development proposal would seriously fragment the remnant vegetation on the site with the 10 metre wide tracks and the bicycle trails dividing the area into smaller sections greatly extending edge effects. He added that the associated noise, light and movement would also affect the behaviour of animals.

Apart from the threats from fast thrill seeking bike riders, these tracks and trails open areas for the movement of predators such as foxes and feral dogs creating further dangers for wildlife .

Open tracks invite colonization by weeds with can overtake native species. The Tamborine Mountain Escarpment Management Strategy, 2001 states that the site is noteworthy for the absence of weeds.

Guanaba Gorge includes some of the most spectacular landform occurring in the escarpment region. This deep and forbidding gorge is the upper catchment area of Guanaba Creek which flows east to the Coomera River and out to the ocean near South Stradbroke Island.

Tamborine Mountain experiences heavy deluges of rain fairly regularly. In June 2016 the mountain received fifteen inches of rain in a 24 hour period. Downhill tracks, especially the 10 m 4WD tracks ferrying riders back up the slopes, would become awash with silt and sediment and as advised by a water expert this would be carried via Guanaba Creek and be visible in Moreton Bay two days later. This high volume carriage of rainwater would smother vegetation adjacent to the tracks, and in time increase the width of the trails. The average slope, Guanaba Road down to Guanaba Creek is 22 degrees.

The suggestion of economic need cannot be sustained. All activities can be located either on Tamborine Mountain or close by. Some are free of charge. Businesses on the mountain have long been established to cater for the one million or so visitors it receives each year. Surveys have shown these visitors arrive mainly for the natural environment – a relaxed country style break from the pressures of urban living. A large self contained amusement park/ restaurant etc. will impact negatively on established businesses.

Concerns in the local community about responding to the preliminary documentation required by the Federal Department of Environment spring from many intimidatory Facebook listings as well as a widely publicized encounter Mr. Noort had with a New Zealand group opposing a development there. Highly incensed, the group tracked Mr. Noort to Australia & notified this Association and the Beaudesert Times *(Attachment)*. The chairman of the Trust found "the content *(of an email)* disturbing, inappropriate and offensive and believed the author would be unfit to manage a tourism venture".

After receiving six strong expert reports, this Association, with the formal support of over 200 residents lodged an Appeal against Council's decision to approve this sporting venture. In all, 566 local residents submitted Properly Made objections whilst 21 locals supported it.

Our Cardno Report on Ecology Issues of the Guanaba Development is attached.

To preserve the biodiversity of the escarpment we urge the Department to reject this proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Jeanette Lockey,
President,
Tamborine Mountain Progress Association

P.O. Box 106, North Tamborine, Qld., 4272

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BEAUDESERT Times (/)

Tamborine Mountain developer tight lipped on claims he sent abusive email

By Susie Cunningham Nov. 26, 2015, 10 a.m.

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The site of Guanaba Experience on Tamborine Mountain.

THE developer behind proposed mountain bike park Guanaba Experience is remaining tight lipped on claims he sent an abusive email to opponents of a development in New Zealand.

The chairman of the Wanaka/Hawea Reserves Trust claims Jim Noort sent a vitriolic and abusive email after the group put a notice in their local paper the Upper Clutha Messenger against a proposed water sports facility on the Lake Wanaka foreshore.

The message, which the group forwarded to the *Beaudesert Times,* includes crude suggestions

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and expletives about the opponents.

News Business

Mr Noort would not confirm if he sent the email and said he had nothing to say on the matter.

"I've got nothing to say – it's another country, what does it matter," he said.

Wanaka/Hawea Reserves Trust chairman Alan Cutler said the email was unjustified.

"Apart from the crude language what disturbed me about Mr Noort's email was the totally unjustified attack on our group," he said.

"I find the content disturbing, inappropriate and offensive and believe the author would be unfit to manage a tourism venture.

"I was disturbed to see that a person that expresses himself in such a manner would be given permission to run a tourist business in a valued natural area, and that he would be allowed to be around children in an unsupervised role."

An appeal (http://www.beaudeserttimes.com.au/story/3437578/appeal-stalls-bike-park-development/) led by the Tamborine Mountain Progress Association against the Scenic Rim Regional Council's approval of Guanaba Experience was lodged in late September and is ongoing.

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