

Annual Report, 2019-2020

The activities of the Progress Association during the past year were severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic which struck in force in March. The monthly general meetings were suspended till further notice and the ongoing usual business was then dealt with on line by the management committee. Normal general meetings were held from September to March and two on line management committee meetings were held in May and July.

The outstanding occurrence during the year would surely have been the announcement of the Moratorium on Water on Tamborine Mountain by the Minister for Natural Resources, Dr. Anthony Lynham. Covering a whole year, this now supports the scientific study being undertaken by QUT, with DNRME contributing a further \$25,000 for this work.

The Moratorium was triggered by a succession of fruitful informal meetings in Brisbane between the Minister's Chief of Staff and TMPA members Julie Wilkinson, Amanda Hay and Jeanette Lockey. The Department of Natural Resources followed up by touring key sites on the mountain and holding meetings with Scenic Rim Regional Council, commercial water extractors, water carting operators, Coca-Cola Amatil representatives, QUT representative and key personnel from the bottled water industry.

The Minister advised TMPA that the Moratorium on new bores will restrict the construction of new bores, allowing time for the Queensland University of Technology to provide better science upon which to base any future management options.

The Minister further acknowledged the work that the TMPA is doing with the dissemination and coordination of valuable information to the community of Tamborine Mountain.

Dr Lucy Reading and her PhD student Lisa Bagger Gurieff are carrying out this research here. Dr Reading has indicated this work will be finished early in 2021, and that she will be continuing this work herself.

In July, TMPA members Amanda Hay, Julie Wilkinson and Jeanette Lockey met with State member, Jon Krause, to discuss water supply to locals during times of drought. During the past dry summer two off mountain businesses offered to supply local water by relying under emergency conditions on Section 166 of the Planning Act. This was much needed water by residents whose tanks had run dry. However this was not sanctioned by Council. This should be an avenue to be followed in future droughts.

On the general front, an increasing level of resident dissatisfaction has been surfacing across the shire. Council meetings are now accessible on line and the level of performance is there for all to judge. Surfacing again is an old hoary chestnut which sprang to life after the amalgamations of councils. This is that councillors should be seen as a team, all chirping the same tune. This is confronting to residents who come from different communities and who want to see their issues debated in council by their representative. Residents also want to see the proper processes followed.

Basic Councillor Conduct Codes exist in all councils. It is only in Scenic Rim Regional Council that the conduct codes are considered draconian. We currently have the absurd situation that a dispute regarding some insignificant misstep by retired Councillor Nigel Waistell is still being fought over in the Supreme Court.

Under the Act, councillors can change SRRC draconian policies at any time. However it appears singing to the same tune is a safer and less demanding place than working independently for their particular areas.

Council responses to a number of issues have been disappointing. There was the unsatisfactory response to the mountain's water shortage during the summer drought. Then, in a long list of development applications for a house, tennis court and cabins (Eagles Retreat Place), council failed to pick up the developer's sleight of hand whereby one development application overlapped another to wipe out a koala habitat requirement.

The new Planning Scheme which came out in March was generally disappointing. It is a one size fits all document with small inserts scattered throughout that apply to Tamborine Mountain. It is highly doubtful that a complex development application could be assessed according to mountain values by searching and actually finding small buried notations.

Despite our efforts to convince Council that increasing the mountain's population would threaten its unique character, the new addition of Dual Occupancy was left in the Planning Scheme. There had been a public review of the Scheme in September with additional restricted comments available in October. However, our submissions that Dual Occupancy would further erode the mountain's semi-rural character remained unheeded.

Tamborine Mountain being buried in a one size fits all document is one instance where further evidence indicates that the well known brand "Tamborine Mountain" and its unique character are being air brushed out of existence. The long held historic local name "Geissmann Oval" was nearly lost to the bland "North Tamborine Park" but for concerted objections by residents with TMPA input. There are other examples which support this view.

Submissions were made by TMPA objecting to development applications in respect of Pethers (ten extra cabins), Eagles Retreat Place (koala habitat problem), Coles Earthmoving (industrial activity on a residential site) and a Service Station at Tamborine (on flood prone ground). And the convoluted Hyacinth case is back on the books again. The developer's company is challenging the approval given by Beaudesert Shire Council, planners and Warren Moreton's companies to a 2004 variation of a 1990 Special Facilities approval.

Other matters

TMPA wrote to Greg Hunt, Federal Minister for Health and our Federal member Scott Buchholtz in regard to the inappropriate Modified Monash Model (MMM) urban designation for Tamborine Mountain. That this model was unable to properly evaluate the rurality of this area was of major concern not only to Tamborine Mountain residents, but to the residents of the large catchment area which it services. Unfortunately the Ministers were not able to over rule this bureaucratic decision.

Hilary Furlong continued her TMPA presentations at the Zamia theatre. A full house listened to the power point presentation by the QUT researchers checking the health of our aquifer. The screening of the film "2040" also drew a good public response. In October, Julie Wilkinson organized a talk by the President of QLGRA, Colin Hewett, mostly about the rating system, but this quickly enlarged to a robust and lively debate of many shire interests. Mayoral candidate Tom Sharp took part in the discussions.

Thanks to the efforts of Debbie Lindemann and Michael Smith, a contract was made with Scouts Australia to supply bins free of charge for collection of certain containers. This was approved by the government Scheme ID for a Containers for Change programme. There has been a steady build up of funds which, in line with TMPA policy, are being distributed to the community. Donations have gone to Coleman Square Kindy, U3A and Historical Society.

TMPA has also made donations to the Environmental Defender's Office, the EDO Animals in Danger campaign and the SEQ2 Border Ranges group, Wild Mountains.

A project for The Men's Shed to produce possum, native bee and butterfly boxes for TMPA saw these products go to many happy gardening people.

As a result of a boundary review by the Queensland Electoral Commission the Golf Course Estate was moved into Division One. There is still a small segment of Division Two remaining at the south end of the mountain. TMPA put in a submission by Amanda Hay.

In March the COVID-10 pandemic played havoc with our local government elections. A Meet the Candidates meeting was organized, this time by the Chamber of Commerce on March 15th. A two week period before election day was set aside for pre-election polling to spread out voter contact. However, due to the worsening situation, all electioneering was scrapped for the second week. This meant how to vote cards were not handed out and people generally rushed in and out of polling booths as quickly as possible. Councillors elected for Divisions One and Two were Derek Swanborough and Jeff MacConnell.

Broader activities of TMPA were suspended after March this year due to the pandemic and lockdown requirements. There is no indication of when this situation will change.

Sadly, we lost five long time central members of TMPA – Stewart Chalmers, Peter Wilson, Hannah Braun, Madelaine Jantos and David Rankine. These people made significant contributions to TMPA activities and it reminded many of us that we are in our twilight years and unfortunately not too many young people are stepping forward for community service.

I would like to thank the members and everyone else who has supported TMPA's activities over the past year. Thanks go the Management Committee for its continual input especially during this difficult year – Jennifer Peat (Secretary), Amanda Hay (Treasurer, David Sandiford, Debbie Lindemann, Hilary Furlong, Lesley Sandiford, Roly Lindenmayer and Stewart Wright.

On a final note, we are losing our long time hard working secretary Jennifer Peat after several decades of intensive core TMPA activities. Battling through a number of complex but important TMPA court cases, Jenny's careful attention to detail and her dogged determination saw us weather extremely difficult situations which would have stumped most people. We all wish her well in this new phase of her life.

Jeanette Lockey,
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Tamborine Mountain Progress Association

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