

TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC

"Protecting the quality of living on Tamborine Mountain"

Newsletter for November, 2014

Mt. Tamborine Camping & Activities Pty. Ltd.....This Development Application for an Impact Inconsistent use of 500 acres on the eastern escarpment of the mountain (Outdoor sports, Recreation and Entertainment, Food Premises and Recreation Centre and Camping Ground (300 persons) drew 640 submissions from mountain residents who objected to the application. Overall, about 800 people put in objections. This included residents of Guanaba Valley through which the Guanaba Creek flows. These residents would also be heavily impacted by the development.

Before the submission closure date, 10th October, nearby residents on Guanaba and Kaiser Roads, and TMPA members were busy preparing and letter box dropping details of the application as widely as possible. . As usual, there was hardly enough time to inform people of a potential threat to both the lifestyle and the environmental character enjoyed by mountain residents.

Apart from being inconsistent with the planning scheme, this project has many areas which raise concern.

Tamborine Mountain Escarpment Protection zoning. Concerted efforts over the years have sought to protect this environmentally sensitive area. It is of regional importance. In the nineties, some of the first sale of Telstra was used to establish an Escarpment Management Committee which was set to function for three years. A grant of \$266,000 was received and a further \$317,000 was added as in-kind community contribution. Beaudesert Shire Council contributed \$10,000 for a Scoping Study.

Doug White was appointed environment officer and the Chenoweth flora and fauna survey report was produced. The flora & fauna of the escarpment represents up to 80% of that found in the Gold Coast region.

The Tamborine Mountain Escarpment Management Project was concluded in 2002, and morphed into Landcare.

Within the proposed development site there are eight species of threatened flora; three vegetation communities scheduled as critically endangered; ten threatened species of bird; three amphibian species classed as threatened and four species of threatened mammal. Here we find the Albert's Lyrebird, owls, platypus, the birdwing butterfly, falcons, frogs snakes, etc . It is also home to the Yellow Bellied Glider which is also found around the Tamborine Mountain Road verges, and its presence here supported the submission by TMPA to have this road heritage listed.

The subject property adjoins a section of Tamborine National Park and wildlife, not knowing boundaries, inhabit both areas. The Flora and Fauna Report stated that the Tamborine Mountain escarpment has a greater biodiversity than the World Heritage listed Springbrook National Park.

Once lost, it can never be regained.

Trails for mountain bikes criss cross the whole area. Riders who are to be transported to the upper level descend at high speed. At times of high rainfall, these tracks would send water cascading down the mountain tracks, causing erosion and exacerbating the well known slippage problem.

In other sports centres with similar activity, bike tracks widen in time due to regular usage. Spectators add to the problem. This then creates a serious weed problem. And is any self-respecting animal, reptile or bird going to hang around with all this activity going on?

The zip lines will traverse the valley over the wooded canopy. They are up to 600 m long.

Then there is the noise problem. This is a difficult area. As encountered before many times, a determined developer will produce reports which comply with regulations, such as they are, but which are not satisfactory for the enjoyable ambience residents expect.

People screaming whilst racing along the zip lines, spectators as well as riders yelling out along the bike trails – any half intelligent person would know that this extensive noise is bound to happen, Considering the large numbers required to return a profit, this is unsatisfactory.

Guanaba Valley acts as a sound shell, a sort of echo chamber. This can be attested to by residents around the rim of the escarpment where all sounds travelling upwards reach with clarity.

Then there are the unfortunate residents along Guanaba Road and Kaiser Road who will experience all this unwanted intrusion into their lifestyles by the sheer proximity of the activities.

When we were fighting the Indy style race track at the base of the western escarpment, much information about the noise problem emerged. Even cloud cover deflects sound waves downwards, magnifying the problem.

And as for bushfires - many mountain residents are aware how quickly fires race up the slopes of the escarpment. Guanaba Gorge is exceptionally vulnerable because of the nature of its terrain, plus the incendiary properties of some of its vegetation.

There will be up to 300 campers, with camp fire sites. The developer's website indicates that alcohol will be served in the restaurant area.

There are other problems as well – groundwater, toilet facilities, traffic to name a few. All the requested sporting facilities are available on Tamborine Mountain or within easy driving distance.

Another concern is that for an outlay of approx. \$1.6m, the project needs large attendances to make a significant profit. Other such complexes have required government funding for continuation of activities. If the project goes belly up, we are left with a degraded large site, ripe for even further unwanted development.

It is expected the matter will come before council about February or March.

The mountain's water issues.

Nothing further has come to light regarding the Power Parade (re-) application.

Although it is unlawful, some water is being drawn at the Bateke Rd site. Council is currently endeavouring to get firm evidence in order to take action.

Reports have come in of tanker sightings at the south end. Please report to our Councillors any such sightings, and particularly at Bateke Road. Also night encounters.

Questions are being asked “how come we are still seeing tankers, especially during the night”. Council is still endeavouring to check compliance with conditions that have previously been granted.

As TMPA did not get a satisfactory reply from Council last August (attachments to Annual Report), we are writing again so see what is happening in this area.

Nigel, in his report in the paper, has stated that water extractors are functioning legally. (That is, if they are adhering to the conditions they have been allowed.) This is correct. Due to the Council edict that a Councillor cannot criticize Council once a decision has been taken, our Councillors cannot enlarge further on this matter.

As mentioned in earlier Newsletters, Council officers at various times (roughly a decade ago) approved commercial size activity applied for by water extractors who had only a Minor Public Utility permit. By no stretch of the imagination can the excessive amounts of extracted water permitted, or use by the 28,000 litre giant tankers fit the understanding of a permit for a Minor Public Utility. None has anything more than a Minor Public Utility permit. Unfortunately, here the horse has bolted, and Council is unlikely to pursue the matter. Best bet now is adherence to the compliance conditions.

Many people remember the media gag applied during the last session of Council. To questions asked whether Nigel (and Nadia) have to get what they write vetted by Council's communications (spin) department – the answer is no. At least this is an improvement from the time Derek Swanborough was reported to the CMC for unsuspectingly including the words "Council is seeking legal advice" in an earlier article. It is not clear if media releases by other Councillors are either written or vetted by the communications department (still there) as before.

Other happenings.....

Thunderbird Park has applied for a "lease subdivision". We'll investigate what this means.

St. Bernards has gone back to court to adjust a previously sanctioned court condition regarding its re-development approval.. This currently stands at access units (26 tourist cabins/lodge), existing motel, an additional 123 units, shops (2 tenancies), commercial/professional and consulting services (3 tenancies), tourist business, caterer's room, caretaker's residence etc. plus sewerage treatment works.

TMPA originally objected to the development proposal, and acted as co-respondent (together with many residents) in the subsequent appeal. As this was the third case we had on the books at the same time – the others were Hyacinth & the supermarket in the wrong place – we had finances only for expert water advices. We did manage to get the cabins pulled back further from the creek.

Hyacinth on Long Road, opposite the school, went back to court to reduce the 43 subdivision lots won by Council which spent \$36,000 fighting for the unusable tiny lot subdivision.. The court has now approved a more manageable subdivision of just 19 lots. People are noticing that work is now being carried out there. This was an expensive useless face saving exercise by Council, seen also as an opportunity to close down TMPA and the T.M. News. Predictably, TMPA had appealed this unusable subdivision which carried high risk to potential buyers, but lost this part of the case on a technicality.

For those who follow the fortunes of the mayor, (former owner/director of Bunny Bites Food) – he has told the Supreme Court in Hobart that he didn't think forgery of his signature was anything to report to police. The matter concerns a \$1.4m claim a creditor is suing for. (ABC News and front page spread in the current Beaudesert Times))

If anyone spots a rain cloud lurking nearby, please do a rain dance or something.....

Jeanette