

Newsletter.....November, 2019

Gillion Pty. Ltd. (Power Pde).....commercial water extraction

As published in local papers, Council was unsuccessful in claiming costs for Gillion's third attempt at legitimizing its commercial water extraction business on leafy, residential Power Parade. By the time the third development application was being disputed in the Planning & Environment court, Council had run up a sizeable sum of ratepayers' monies.

As this third attempt was acknowledged by senior counsel as having little chance of success, Council's QC entered a substantial submission claiming recovery of costs for Council. However, Judge Morzone in a judgment on 4th October, 2019 decided not to approve Council's claim for costs.

<https://archive.sclqld.org.au/qjudgment/2019/QPEC19-044.pdf>

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This is disappointing. We have an unknown aquifer. Many bores are going deeper to access water. And whilst the surface pockets of aquifer replenish quickly after good rain, it takes approx. 26 – 100 years to replenish the deep ancient water which has seeped through the layers of basalt.

Whilst commercial extraction is inconsistent in the planning scheme, that's not to say this can't be overturned in the future given different circumstances, people and planning policies. A further deterrent would have been beneficial to the community.

Water generally

Because this is an issue which seriously concerns many people, several groups are now operating trying to help better manage this precious resource.

The Save Our Water group started off earlier in the Gillion days, when we needed to enlighten residents (through our media) of the nature of our aquifer and raise funds for the long court cases. This group is still functioning and updates can be found on its website SaveOurWater.

Tamborine Mountain Plastic Free has started up with the aim of making this area plastic bottle free. This has been successfully set up in other communities. So far about eight refill stations have been installed in businesses here where you can refill your own bottle for \$1. For further information you can find TamborineMountainPlasticFree on Facebook. We understand it has a fast growing number of supporters.

Tamborine Mountain Residents' Action Group. This is another Facebook group which is currently collecting signatures on a petition to Minister Anthony Lynham, MP, and Jon Krause, MP, for the government to apply the State Water Act 2000 to limit or prohibit commercial water extraction during water shortages.

This hasn't been lost on Gold Coast Mayor, Tom Tate (of all people).....

"Cr, Tate wants the State Government to clarify its position on water mining, how much water is being ripped out of the Gold Coast, and how much money, if any, companies are paying to take it."how can they take the water out of the mountain (Springbrook) if we need it? Nobody can tell me how much these companies are paying.....If they are getting water for nothing then this must stop because there is no benefit to the community.....We need to conserve our water up there and let Mother Nature have it.....If we take water out of the ground it means it is less moist and drier. Dry ground, plus a hot sun just increases the fire danger...." (Mayor Tom Tate, Gold Coast Bulletin, 26th Sept. 2019)

Couldn't have put it any better !!

Draft Planning Scheme

The Draft Planning Scheme was first put out for public consultation in December, 2018. Council looked through all the submissions and a decision was made in July. Amendments were then made to the Plan and these were opened for a second round of public responses during September. So now these new submissions are being scrutinized by Council, with maybe more amendments being made before submitting the final Plan to State Government for approval. *(TMPA submission attached)*

Unlike the earlier Plans (1983, then 1997, subsequently re-written in different format in 2007), this one came to us top down. That is, it didn't start from including a widespread assessment of residents' aspirations, rather a draft Plan was initially compiled by consultants hired by Council mainly using State government guidelines before being put out for public consultation.

In some respects the draft Plan has some positive aspects and has endeavoured to include local values, but overall it falls short of a set of guidelines which adequately protects the character of the mountain.

A deferral pending a review of any further sub-division is welcome but the new category of dual occupancy, although modified slightly, remains in the draft plan. This is the equivalent of sub-division of a lot. The 2007 Planning Scheme regarding sub-divisions sets out the absolute limit for Tamborine Mountain, so dual occupancy can be regarded as circumventing this by stealth.

As a result of increased tree felling and vegetation clearance, the inclusion of a Vegetation Management Overlay is a step in the right direction. This will now allow Council to step in to take action when the State fails to respond to illegal activity due to lot size, such as has happened on Main Western Road.

SRRC has decided not to use the Local Area Plan methodology. This approach may be applicable in other parts of Scenic Rim but because Tamborine Mountain has special and unusual values, the Planning Scheme has a definite meaningful and practical use. The outcomes for this particular location are unquestionably helped by the application and careful use of a Local Area Plan rather than a methodology applicable to any other part of the shire.

What we will now have is a one size fits all Planning Scheme. However, throughout this document there are numerous notes which modify its use according to the specific area. The bits that modify the basic text and which relate to Tamborine Mountain are scattered right throughout the Plan.

Now what could possibly go wrong ???

Containers for change

This year TMPA embarked on a new enterprise which has been earning us regular small sums of several hundred dollars. As TMPA does not accumulate funds, this money will be distributed amongst mountain organizations.

A contract with Scouts Australia to supply bins free of charge has been made and an approved Scheme ID for a Containers for Change programme (a Qld. government initiative) has been obtained. Consequently two bright red bins are stationed at the IGA shopping centre and are monitored and changed regularly. This bank balance has grown nicely and we are about to start handing out some modest cheques.

Possum, bee boxes

As we are an area rich with all sorts of critters, we decided to pamper some of them with up market housing. Accordingly, with the splendid services of The Men's Shed the following have been built and are currently being distributed:-: 16 possum boxes, 6 butterfly boxes and 5 bee blocks. Thank you Men's Shed.

Living on Tamborine Mountain

Once again the Progress Association has put together a pamphlet which introduces people, especially newcomers, to life on the mountain. This will be distributed via real estate agents and at other venues. It covers some mountain background plus sections such as consideration for wildlife, water awareness, tree removal and invasive plant species.

Next Zamia afternoon

This is scheduled for **Saturday, 23rd November, 2 – 4 pm**. As this is the last event for the year, we thought it might be nice to have a casual open house, refreshments and a chance for our members and any other interested persons to drop in for a cuppa, a red/white, and a chat.

As the Association's central activities usually involve only a handful of people this is a chance to have a happy pre-Christmas function where people can drop in, spend a convivial hour or two and catch up with friends or those with similar interests.

Hope to see you Saturday week - all welcome.

Jeanette