

# TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

"Protecting the quality of living on Tamborine Mountain"

## NEWSLETTER - December, 2013

Well, it is nearly Christmas, and so far nothing has been heard of the **Gillion Appeal** court decision. If nothing comes in the next few days, it will be February at the earliest before we get any news.

The **Pure Mountain** (Bateke Road) appeal in the Planning and Environment Court is slowly getting under way. Unlike Gillion, no restrictions are in place for this operation, but nearby residents should contact council if apparent irregularities occur (operation at night, two tankers on site at the same time, etc.)

**Key Resource Areas** - The Quarry Action Group's report has already been circulated. To say this outcome is galling to the residents who came for a peaceful rural lifestyle across the south of the shire would be putting it mildly. Both state and local governments had refused to engage in discussions..

Only two councillors out of seven declared a position on this issue – both Tamborine Mountain representatives were firmly against the KRA's. Mayor Brent stated that the SRRC submission reflected "the view of the community" even though no consultation or engagement occurred.

These mine sites are spread across the southern part of the shire. The comment has been made....."would John Brent himself trash Boonah?" .....

**Other councils** also have problems. Take for example, the long winded saga about a cruise ship terminal at the Broadwater on the Gold Coast. This project was promised some financial assistance from the State Government if GCCC voted to accept the whole package of an integrated resort – The Broadwater Marine Project (casino etc.). Deputy Premier Seeney sent a scathing letter to GCCC ordering the Councillors to vote in support of the BMP or see it dumped. Media comments have suggested GCC Councillors no longer supported the package - obviously people of sterner stuff. More recently GC Mayor Tate has been looking at a Bilinga site for the elusive cruise ship terminal.

The interplay between State Government and Councils (even tame ones) is indeed interesting. It is of no comfort that we have a develop-at-all-cost State government when considering the future of the huge underground **water extraction operations** occurring on Tamborine Mountain. One local resident was amazed to receive a bottle of Tamborine Mountain water with her snack on an Emirates flight a few weeks ago. There are about eight other major water extractors besides Gillion and Pure Mountain. What happens after Gillion and Pure Mountain cases are resolved is anyone's guess.

**Nature Conservation Act amendments.** Categories such as "scientific" national parks have been replaced with "special management areas". Commercial "uses" of protected areas now conflict with the long standing purpose of the Nature Conservation Act, i.e. the "conservation" of nature. Public participation rights have been removed.

The State government's opening up of national parks to virtually everything including commercial ventures suggests an astonishing lack of understanding of what a national park is. Fifty one million people visited a national park in Queensland in the past year, escaping urbanization, taking stock and revitalizing. They can't all be the rabid "far left greenies" in the gun sights of the current government.

Inventing "innovative new ways to use our rainforests" puts one in mind of how today's **Gold Coast** evolved. Initially visited by loads of people just for the beaches, the GC now is being touted as the Theme Park Capital of Australia.

Our sadly neglected national parks are being lost as a key component, especially in the Gold Coast region, of S.E. Qld's valued assets. Every overseas traveler today is familiar with the effort made by tours in many countries to parade the green/environment credentials of the various areas. "Green behind the gold" ???

The attached **one page submission from TMPA** to the parliamentary committee objecting to the major dismantling of the Nature Conservation Act was designed for simple people, perhaps on the thick side.

Also attached is a reply letter from the **Shadow Minister for National Parks.**

The poor old environment is being targeted on the Federal level also. Word was received yesterday that the **Environment Defenders Office (Qld)** and indeed all Environment Defenders Offices in the country have had their Federal funding cease as of the 17th December.

This is particularly devastating news for Tamborine Mountain. This office of environmental lawyers has over many years provided advice and assistance to local residents (free of charge) in their efforts to retain an environment based community. They have helped TMPA to source lawyers prepared to act at greatly reduced costs in many of the court battles we have had. Court requirements frequently change and even just checking the best way to present multiple Co-Respondents in our recent water cases required only a phone call to this office in Brisbane for expert up to date advice.

Nearly one hundred years ago the **Progress Association** was established principally to help manage the newly gazetted national parks which our forefathers had the vision to establish. Unless one came down in the last shower, one knows that “approving with conditions” (as in the Nature Conservation Act Amendments) does not work in the face of determined cashed up developers seeking inappropriate change. Now the curtailing of EDO expert support to communities such as ours makes the future look even grimmer.

On the recent three day garden club trip, the tour bus driver graphically described a flight over a vast area of central outback Queensland heavily pockmarked with mines.

.....As a letter writer to the Courier Mail observed of the future – a dying reef, dead Australian animals and a giant state mining dust bowl.

### **Tamborine Mountain State School handicapped parking**

In March this year, Scenic Rim Regional Council voted five to two to refuse an application for one additional disabled car park at the Tamborine Mountain State School in Long Road. The application was supported by the school principal and the local police. Council refused this application at its March meeting, stating: *“further, conversion of existing car parks to disabled parking bay would result in the depletion of the already limited number of spaces available for other vehicles. As a result, it is possible that it could generate pressure for the provision of additional spaces for general use at the locality.”*

All this is based on DTMR guidelines which require one disabled space per 100 car spaces. The council calculation was based on a school population of 525 students and 60 staff. The 60 staff were allocated 42 car spaces and Council’s figures came up with a total of 88 available car spaces (which included one disabled spot).

Cr. Nigel did a lot of ground work and came up with a report which supported one additional disabled car space (cost to Council, \$20). He increased the staff car space requirement to 56 and counted all the parking places around the school and came up with 312 formal and informal car spaces, including the TMSS sports area (market) across the road.

He also found that some children were being transported to and from school by their grandparents, some of whom have disabled stickers. Two disabled car spaces were clearly required and easily manageable.

Cr. Nigel presented this report to the last meeting of Council, this time with further support from the Principal and the P & C Association. Council voted five to two to reject this application.

When Cr. Nigel was elected in April 2012 to represent his electorate, he quickly established a **Finance Sub-Committee** of Councillors. Over time, this has more or less evaporated, as only one other Councillor, Cr Nadia (herself an accountant), has been invigorated enough to show interest.

Not easily daunted (“it’s easier than dodging bullets in Northern Ireland”), Cr. Nigel has continued doing his best for his and other divisions, and more recently has been looking at ways to help Council prune spending, with a view to keeping rates down. This activity resulted in a barbed put down by Mayor Brent in both local papers *“it is not the role of individual councillors to try to micro-manage Council’s budget bottom line to achieve a politically expedient and populist outcome”*.

Mayor Brent reported that it is his responsibility to bring down a budget. Councillors are given barely enough time to read the report, let alone compile any informed comment if they so wish.

In the early days, power was divided fairly evenly between bureaucrats and elected representatives. Prior to amalgamation, in the old Beaudesert Shire Council, Councillors participated widely, particularly in local matters where Mayor Joy Drescher left matters “to the local representative”.

**So, whatever happened to “Local Government??** ..... local Government elections, then the cost of running a Councillor for each division, etc. - one could well wonder why bother with this expense at all.

**VIP’s** \_\_\_\_\_ Tamborine Mountain seems to have been closely connected to vice regal personages. Our Governor General’s mother lived on the mountain and was a member of the Progress Association. And from current rumours (Courier Mail and Larry Pickering) our next State Governor is likely to be Rob Borbidge (Chairman, at least in 2010, of John Penglis’ Cedar Creek Winery, Hartley Road).

This Association, and indeed the mountain, has lost one of its most dedicated and quietly achieving stalwarts, **George Fisher** who died recently. As co-editor of the Tamborine Mountain News (together with Eve Curtis), George stuck to a firm editorial policy and a vision for the mountain, with regular production of editorial comments gently guiding residents to information closely affecting their chosen lifestyles.

Never one to hold back, George was always quick to pen appropriate carefully chosen words to politicians of all persuasions endeavouring for better outcomes for all. He tried to make this a better place for everyone.

Loved by all, he will be greatly missed.

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**On behalf of the Management Committee, I wish all members, supporting friends and all your families a safe and happy Christmas, with best wishes for a productive and healthy 2014 !!!**

**Jeanette Lockey, Pres. TMPA**

