

## Newsletter ..... June, 2014

**Commercial water extraction**.....Both Power Parade and Bateke Road proposed industrial sized water extraction commercial enterprises have closed operations. However, the unnecessarily lengthy Gillion Pty. Ltd. court case did take its toll of the local residents, not only by threatening the amenity of their leafy residential street, but by also having an adverse effect on surrounding bore supplies.

In an unfortunate reminder of past practices, the Power Parade site is still issuing a raft of irritations for the neighbours. These include the water pump being left on 24/7 with water continually dribbling out of a hose & being wasted. Then there is regular very loud music disturbing even the nursery business at the rear..... A pretty unhealthy attitude towards people living in the street.

Gillion Pty. Ltd. is now buying its aquifer supply from the water extraction business on the corner of Holt and Hartley Roads. The Gillion tanker over-nights at the Power Parade address and with sightings of several vehicles there, this site is apparently being used as a truck depot.. No doubt further road repairs to Council owned Hartley Road will be sheeted on to ratepayers.

The remaining commercial water extractors continue to roll their tankers day and night and on all roads. Some have approval for a “Minor Public Utility”, indicating local supply only. TMPA is still waiting for a reply from Dept.of Main Roads regarding the outcome of a report on tanker usage on state controlled roads on Tamborine Mountain. This was due out at the end of 2013, and one wonders if the subject is too hard, and DTMR is stalling.

Council is still deciding what to do next.

### **T.M. escarpment & two approved development applications**.....

Most people are familiar with elevated Tamborine Mountain and its “green” flanks, much of which is currently in a conservation category. Here is found most of the 80% of the flora and fauna of the region. Even the most unenlightened know there are lots of birds and stuff here. It gives the plateau its green environmental tinge.

Following up on resident rumours, our two Councillors eventually discovered that a “castle” B & B on the western escarpment had been approved by Council bureaucrats. Councillors were not informed and neither had the questionable application come before Council itself.

As the application was higher than the 8.5 m restriction in the Plan, the planners applied a second approach labeled “Specific Outcome”, which states “the development should be low rise and has a visual bulk and architectural scale consistent with development on nearby land”.

This then allowed a subjective “roughly OK” decision to be made. True, the height doesn’t compare with Soul or Q1, but the building is shaping up to be the tallest in the shire .....and decorating our western escarpment.

This proposed development site has limited access. The entry is at the bottom of the Goat Track, near the lights. Also, this whole area is well known as a severe fire hazard zone, with deaths recorded in the past.

Meanwhile, on the eastern escarpment a similar decision by the same process was made by the planners, again stamped & finalized before Councillors were briefed. An opportunity for a better outcome for all concerned, simply by moving the building site by a matter of metres and thereby conforming to the height restriction, was missed by the planners.

**In both cases**, decisions by the planners show an unhealthy bias towards development applications which appear to breach the Planning Scheme. This has been a consistent practice which ignores the value most mountain residents place on the character and ambience of the area in which they have invested.

Furthermore, in both these cases the relevant Tamborine Mountain Councillors were not informed of the questionable applications before bureaucratic decisions were finalized. Not surprisingly, all other Councillors beside our two ticked off the planners’ actions. To say all this has made our two Councillors unhappy is an understatement.

When local representatives, both with long experience in community affairs, priorities and problems, are regularly bowled over in decisions pertaining to their turf, **the term “Local Government” becomes meaningless.**

There has been no indication so far that either upper Council bureaucrats or off mountain Councillors have made any effort to work out just what has made Tamborine Mountain “different”.

Perhaps this can be explained in the perceived difference between the two Tamborine Mountain Councillors who seek to represent their community’s views, and other Councillors who appear to consider themselves selected celebrities in Council to put forward their own personal views. (I was thus enlightened by former Deputy Mayor, Dave Cockburn, and that “his job was to take responsibility for making decisions for people”.....) Nothing appears to have changed.

### 3.

#### **Incremental creep.....**

Outside Council planners and environmental lawyers etc. over the past 20 years or so have readily understood long term undesirable outcomes (for the residents) by stretching planning decisions beyond strict guidelines (in most cases). This approach was confirmed by earlier mayors of Noosa & Port Douglas.

Furthermore, outside planners have warned that this small scenic plateau should be viewed as a whole. There is no place for tunnel vision.

Yet, this is exactly what has been occurring for too many years now. Whilst most local people have a broad whole-of-mountain sense of place, Council planners do not and frequently disregard comments from residents who do not live immediately adjacent to a subject contested site. Also, there are thousands of written submissions in Council's records documenting the community's values of mountain character and ambience. Planning reports (some influencing court decisions), show these values are being ignored.

Too many people in our secretive Council are embedded in comfortable well-remunerated positions and there is no incentive to strive for a better outcome, at least for Tamborine Mountain.

#### **The Draft Planning Scheme**

The Draft Directions Paper, March, 2014 with 35 pages, proved to be a one size fits all document. The Regional Map on its first page shows Scenic Rim divided into three regions – (1) Tamborine Mountain, Beaudesert, Rathdowney, Canungra etc. in one bundle, (2) Boonah, Kooralbyn, Kalbar etc. in bundle two and (3) the far west.

A large number of categories are examined with state and local government requirements listed. Tamborine Mountain is mentioned, on page 8, .....”The Scenic Rim Region comprises.....the principal urban centres of Tamborine Mountain, Beaudesert and Boonah”.

There is to be no Tamborine Mountain zone which we have in the current scheme. And there is the distinct impression an internationally significant locality such as Tamborine Mountain is being air brushed out sight in the new Scenic Rim Plan.

Many people put in submissions regarding the draft Directions Paper, and a broad community view of lifestyle expectations and mountain character has had some result. Good work everyone. (*TMPA submission is attached if anyone is interested.*)

So now there has appeared a very small glimmer of light. Consultant planners (employed by Council) who are drawing up this scheme will have further (unscheduled) discussions on Tamborine Mountain regarding values for “residential” areas as this applies to Tamborine Mountain. That is, are our residential areas different from, e.g. Greenslopes or Ashmore? We will need to clearly explain.

The Planning Scheme will contain reference points which can be opened to show any distinctions between the different communities/areas. This is where further discussions re “residential” will fit in. No other areas where local differences may exist have yet been identified.

So will the new Plan entice any lazy, less talented planner to think outside the square? We wait with bated breath.

*Tamborine Mountain itself is of far greater value to the State. It is a regional asset & plays a large part in the broad tourism landscape as a relaxed quaint, country style place with significant environmental values. And one of the four pillars of the Newman Govt.’s economic strategy is tourism. Someone there needs to listen.*

Now if only we can do something about our water problems

Residents can nudge the process along by ringing Council and Department of Main Roads, Nerang, to complain about any problem which is worrying them. Whether it be visitors frightened on our mountain roads by the large tankers, high speed tankers traversing school zones, unheeded school zone restrictions or being faced with higher rates due to Council needing to regularly fix its haulage route roads, etc. The same goes for Dept. of Main Road, Nerang.

Meanwhile, our smaller “country style” shops are stocking a wider variety of goods. Newspapers are now available at the Main St. bakery, and 4 Real milk can also be obtained at Foodworks and Tastebuddies. Fresh vegetables are available at the Green Shed and at Bungunyah. Also check out the Fisho.

Jeanette Lockey,  
President, TMPA

TMPA Directions Paper submission attached