

Newsletter.....October, 2013

Gillion Pty. Ltd. - This application for industrial size water extraction on leafy Power Parade is listed in the Supreme Court for 6th November. It is likely to last one day. However, it may take a while for a verdict to materialize. The three judges will be looking at whether Judge Robertson in the Planning and Environment Court followed correct procedures to produce his judgement which disallowed the Gillion appeal in that court (May 3rd). The verdict will rest on technicalities and from our experience other factors can come into play. As so much is riding on this single decision, we await it with baited breath.

A better outcome was reached for the times the Gillion tanker (879QRE) can traverse Hartley and Long roads. Earlier, the 8-8.30am and 3-3.30pm haulage times clashed with much of the peak period school times. In court, Gillion agreed to abide by the listed peak school time zones of 7 – 9am and 2 – 4 pm. and the tanker has not been using the designated Hartley Road route during these periods.

Bateke Road - Pure Mountain Pty. Ltd.'s application for expansion to similar size operation as Gillion was recently refused by Council. No appeal has been lodged so far, but it is generally felt that any decision is dependant on the probable outcome of the Gillion case.

Meanwhile all other tankers are operating as usual, including through the night. The Gillion tanker is not using the Tamborine Mountain Road, and has some time restrictions in place.

Hyacinth site - several people have enquired about recent activity on the Hyacinth site. Apparently the receiver of the property applied to the court to reduce the approx. 40 small lot subdivision down to 19 lots. This is more acceptable, but up two lots from an earlier expectation. With court approval, the developer does not have to apply to Council for subdivision approval, but development on each of the lots will need Council building approvals. They are all about a quarter of an acre in size. This provides only limited space for individual septic requirements, etc. The whole Hyacinth site is divided into three lots – two large ones and one smaller one where the subdivision is to take place. The original plan was to pipe secondary water from a bore on one of the big lots (closer to the Curtis Falls area). Pipes were already laid to the 40 individual small lots, but as the larger lots may eventually have different ownerships, this set-up is now not practical.

Key Resource Areas - This is the inclusion of very large areas of the shire as potential mining sites in the Draft State Planning Policy. It effectively removes “scenic” out of Scenic Rim. The residents are not happy either as their land is locked into a long period of uncertainty. Council is occupying a comfortable neutral position, with only the two Tamborine Mountain councillors publicly objecting to expansion of quarrying at the two greenfield sites. The rest of Council is still sitting on the fence.

Further worrying the residents is a recent state government action. In an effort to expand its Barrow Quarry at Mt. Cotton, the developer has been at loggerheads with the community there. Although the expansion has been rejected by the council and court several times, the State Government has now “called it in”. This means the State Government makes all decisions about the quarry expansion and overrides the local council (& residents).

“Call in” powers were originally enshrined in State Government laws for limited use only, such as the building of a major arterial road etc. (1990’s). Over time the boundaries have gradually been widened till today this is being used by State Government to put its preferred stamp on a wide variety of development applications. Open the door a crack and the inevitable happens.....

Nature Conservation Act Amendments - This Act, in place for about 60 years, enshrined as its cardinal principle the permanent preservation of natural values. The Amendment allows eco-tourism applications into National Parks to be examined without regard for either the cardinal principal or a reasonable alternative. Recently, publicity has been given to the State Government’s tempting financial support for a venture into Lamington National Park.

TMPA as well as the T.M. Natural History Assn and other mountain individuals contributed to the 203 submissions received by the committee for the Queensland Parliament. Bearing in mind that the powers up there tend to have advisers who provide what they want to hear, TMPA's submission concentrated more on the potential economic loss. ("Greenies" aren't the flavour of the month at the moment.)

The changes in the Bill will allow for uses which aren't "ecologically sustainable" in protected areas. Given that national parks are less than 5% of Queensland, this unacceptably threatens biodiversity. (*Environmental Defenders Office*)

A report by the committee was made to Parliament by 9th October. Not surprisingly, this report (just made public) recommends that the Amendment Bill be passed. Its 92 pages contain many recommendations for amendments within the Bill. However, history has consistently shown that no level of "high end regulations" can avert the inevitable incremental creep – the legacy the State Government will leave of the quality of its stewardship of the country's national treasures.

Queensland Local Government Reform Alliance - This was formed in the aftermath of de-amalgamation attempts across the State. Whilst four councils were lucky enough to break off from their regional yokes, many others were not so lucky. Except for the major city areas, the State is full of small communities, each with valued distinct characteristics. Many were in sound financial positions only to have their nest eggs appropriated by over arching regional councils. They are now complaining that required services and infrastructure are not forthcoming.

The regional councils are now firmly entrenched with staff basking in elevated positions coupled with appropriate remunerations. There is an expansion of bureaucrat numbers befitting large corporations. In Scenic Rim it appears we now have more chiefs than Indians. Even the Local Government Association of Qld (an unelected group of advisers) which was previously against amalgamations now finds itself in a more comfortable position and supports the change.

As the State Government has put the kibosh on further de-amalgamations, the Alliance is making a heroic effort to encourage Councils to work better.

Meanwhile the Alliance is supporting a group of petitioners in Stanthorpe who are requesting the government to "*facilitate a referendum that enables communities to return to natural boundaries, or create new boundaries, or adopt other means, to recognize local authority based on community of interest and reflect commonly held beliefs about community and identity, local amenity and service, re-empowering communities*". It doesn't hurt to keep letting the government know people are not happy. On information received, during our previous Council's administration, when Mayor Brent sought to remove Tamborine Mountain from Scenic Rim shire, he was told boundary changes were not likely to happen within the next couple of administrations. So any continuing public display of dissatisfaction might encourage state government to do a better job next time.

Scenic Rim Planning Scheme.... Council for the past four months has been compiling research data for the major land uses within the region. This is in preparation for a new Scenic Rim Planning Scheme by 2016 which "protects environmental and social values and facilitates economic growth over the next 20 years".

Currently Council administers four Planning Schemes within the region. Their policies are not consistent and the documents vary in their structure, definitions complexity and usability. A uniform single scheme is therefore desirable. In a Council statement released by the Mayor, whilst the Plan will be uniform across the shire, it will not be a "one size fits all". It intends to enshrine the individual characteristics of diverse communities within the shire.

At the end of September, Council held meetings with stakeholders at three locations to present project findings and to discuss priority issues and options. Clearly, a great deal of work has been done to cover detailed aspects of the various land uses. In the various sections, a great many points were raised. These included.....

Tourism.....development needs to be in context of the landscape value.

The landscape is the primary attraction in the region.

What impact is there on the community...etc.

Residential..... the region has a greater number of older residents

The population in the shire is anticipated to grow by 78% in 20 years

If Bromelton goes ahead then it will be doubled. etc.

Retail/commercial..... Scenic Rim does not have any big department stores, large bulky goods suppliers, or hardware mega stores. Population requirements here are...25,000, 25,000 and 15,000.

Tamborine Mountain....Gallery Walk....35% hospitality, 65% consumer goods

Eagle Heights....29% supermarket, 31% personal services, 24% professional services

School Road.....45% vacancy rate

Main Street.....26% foods, takeaway etc., 14% hospitality, 22% professional services

Main Street had a 14% vacancy rate. This was before the IGA closed.

(Mention was made twice that specialty shops tended to move round an anchor supermarket.)

Industrial....As far as jobs are concerned, in the Tamborine/Canungra area, there are 158 available, whilst 276 travel outside the region for work.

These policy directions will find their way into a draft of the planning scheme in 2014. Whilst Council promises community consultation along the way, the actual consultation regarding the draft Plan will not occur till 2015. It is expected the Plan will be adopted in 2016.

Small IGA..... As anticipated, many people are experiencing inconvenience (to varying degrees) with this grocery shop closing. Walking, especially in bad weather, is not an option. Some have had difficulty struggling with shopping bags. Some residents do not drive. Others who can, now have to use their cars if they wish to shop at the Super IGA. Many, who located around the CBD primarily to be able to walk to all shops, particularly as they aged, now cannot do so.

At Council's recent Planning Scheme Directions meeting, it appeared that council planners did not understand the concept of social cohesion as it applied to Tamborine Mountain. The loss of a bustling social hub within the CBD is now starkly apparent. Not being able, for example, to sit in the Spice of Life and watch the passing parade, many of whom you recognized or knew, has been described as a "tragedy".

The soulless Super IGA site can never hope to replace this. People have reported that even Logan Village now has a "beautiful" new Woolworths within its business area.

How this will all play out is uncertain. The developer's original economic report on which the development was ticked off was highly flawed. Eagle Heights shopping centre was not mentioned, and neither was the current adequate supermarket in Canungra. Canungra has development approval for another very large supermarket. Coles has development land in Tamborine Village.

The recent AGM did not produce a stampede for executive and management positions. These have remained the same as before.

Jeanette Lockey (president), Stuart Wright (secretary/treasurer), Henry Braun, Amanda Hay, David Henderson, Roly Lindenmayer, Jennifer Wilton (management committee).

It is more than a year since we updated the formal membership. This was last done when court requirements in the Gillion water appeal required TMPA to present an Affidavit stating its number of paid members. So if any out of date kind soul feels inclined to chip in the \$15 annual membership fee, the particulars are: TMPA box outside Gina's Travelling Places, Nth Tamb., Suncorp BSB 484799, A/c 083817199 or PO box below.

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