

# TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.

“Protecting the quality of living on Tamborine Mountain”

## To whom it may concern

### **Tamborine Mountain Progress Association supports a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status for Tamborine Mountain and its escarpment.**

Tamborine Mountain is an area the size of a small township and is unique in Australia.

Atop a flat plateau eight kilometers long and two kilometers wide it is adjacent to two large cities, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. However, because of its 550 meter elevation it has so far retained its semi-rural character. Its 7,500 residents do not have reticulated water and sewerage and there is only a basic service infrastructure. It is a sizeable town which is largely self sustaining.

It grew this way over the past century from a heavily wooded rainforest area which is the main northern extension of the Mt. Warning (Wollumbin) volcanic caldera dating back 250 million years ago.

This association was formed in 1915, in part to help maintain the first gazetted National Park in Queensland (1908) and the second in Australia (Witches Falls National Park).

With such a strong environmental core, Tamborine Mountain has always attracted residents who place great value on our natural environment. Due to strong community inputs, successive local government strategic Plans contain many sections to protect the environmental nature of this area.

One of the key activities which has engaged this registered Community Purpose association is enlightening residents of potential threats to the environmental character of the mountain. Owning a local newspaper from 1958 to 2012 has helped disseminate such information quickly.

Over the decades residents have been quick to respond to any call for broad community action regarding perceived threats from inappropriate development applications. We have fought large battles in the courts and there are several instances when judges have noted that “Tamborine Mountain residents are well known for having their voices heard” plus several other such quotes.

With no reticulated water, residents have long been worried about the permanent depletion of our aquifer by commercial water extractors. As well as this source being an alternate supply of our water (we have tanks for rainwater), the gradual sinking of the level of our deep aquifer water poses serious problems for our rainforests.

We are just finishing off participating in a decade long series of court cases concerning one precedent commercial water extraction case which together with council we won. More than 1,200 residents submitted objections in the last round alone. More than 200 signed up as Co-Respondents in each of the two District Court rounds.

This association liaises with other similar associations and groups in matters which concern our environment - Landcare, Natural History Association, Knoll Road Group and Bush Volunteers.

We have maintained contact with similar clean and green destinations such as Noosa and Port Douglas since the early 1990's. With similar problems maintaining the environmental character of our areas, we learnt how to try to balance growth whilst not losing our unique environment.

About fifteen years ago we participated in a federal government survey of ground water across Australia. Our submission spelt out how a sizeable community can be self supporting water wise and not be a drain on government reserves. We are still self sustaining.

Currently we are participating in a group endeavouring to establish a permanent centre for the general public and professional users that provides information, study and research facilities, and interpretative resources for understanding the biodiverse natural environment and ecological value of Tamborine Mountain.

Tamborine Mountain receives an estimated one to two million visitors each year. It is the most visited day destination in South East Queensland. A survey of visitors done by this organisation over one weekend found that over 90% had arrived principally for an environment related experience.

Viewing areas along its long and convoluted escarpment are favourite stopping off spots. The wide expansive views to the west over a series of mountain ranges are rare in South East Queensland and have been cited in at least two state government reports to be preserved.

### The Tamborine National Park

In December, 1906, the Queensland Parliament assented to “An Act to Provide for the Reservation, Management, and Protection of State Forests and National Parks” and it became effective from 1st January, 1907. The legal basis for National Parks in Queensland had been established.

On 15th June, 1907, Tambourine Shire Council carried a motion that the Department of Public Lands be asked to resume an area of Crown Land on the side of Tamborine Mountain “as a national park for the preservation of the flora and fauna as owing to the way the land in the vicinity is being cleared it would seem that in the near future such an action could prove its necessity”.

As a result, Witches Falls was gazetted as a National Park on 28th March, 1908, becoming the first National Park in Queensland and the second in Australia.

As Tamborine Mountain residents were in favour of preserving rainforest areas, on 29th May, 1915, the Tamborine Mountain Progress Association was formed, in part to help manage the mountain’s newly gazetted National Park.

In 1925, accepting the offer of land covered with palms and ferns, the Queensland State Government purchased part of a farm, subsequently named Palm Grove.

In 1927, an area of 68 acres below Curtis Falls was gazetted as a National Park. This was named Joalah. Extra land was added to this park in 1961 and 1983.

At Eagle Heights a donation of just over 29 acres in 1932 for a National Park was made and in 1962 and 1972 more land was added to this park.

In 1954, another fine area was added to the mountain’s list of parks. It became known as the Knoll National Park and was added to on five separate occasions.

At another Tamborine Shire Council meeting in 1915 a one acre area featuring a splendid grove of macrozamia (now known as *Lepidozamia peroffskyana*) was reserved. The whole area of now three acres was declared a National Park in 1957. This grove of macrozamia was featured in an earlier David Attenborough series.

Cedar Creek, which had previously been a reserve, was gazetted as a National Park in 1962. Two additions came later.

Also in 1962 land on the road from Curtis Falls to Eagle Heights became an un-named National Park.

These donations were followed in 1976 by donations of two sites, one near the Fig Tree corner and the second around the curve on the McDonnell Ridge road. These areas totaled nearly five and a half acres.

About twelve acres at Panorama Point were given by Herringe Research and Development in 1980.

## **Together, the gazetted National Parks make up The Tamborine National Park.**

Bushwalking trails through these forests attract walkers from far and wide. The diversity of vegetation and the sheer experience of the natural environment have drawn appreciative responses from visitors dating as far back as the 1890's. Reports at that time were coming out about the wonderful flora and fauna of Tamborine Mountain. Today, the mountain and its escarpment area house up to 80% of the Gold Coast region's flora and fauna.

This unique and precious area is under constant threat – either from inappropriate developers with deep pockets or from off mountain bureaucrats who see Tamborine Mountain on a flat piece of paper adjoining two large cities resulting in decisions more appropriate to large urban areas. Careless and thoughtless decisions have been made.

Acquiring UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status would help preserve this unique South East Queensland asset. By sending out a clear message that this area requires special consideration in a wide range of matters would help make sure that the values Tamborine Mountain presents are preserved for the future.

Jeanette Lockey,  
Hon. President,  
Tamborine Mountain Progress Association

9th July, 2019