

Keeping Watch

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DEVELOPMENT WATCH NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT


Development Watch had a busy year in 2012 and it looks like 2013 could be just as manic! In 2012 there was a major contribution from a number of members to review, analyse and comment on the draft new Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme. We made the deadline of 14 December 2012 by the skin of our teeth. A summary of our key responses features later in this newsletter.

Earlier in the year our response

to the United Petroleum Service Station upgrade and redevelopment proposals for the Coolum Beach Hotel occupied much of our time. A number of court cases in which Development Watch were involved also consumed much energy and time. The "kite flying" proposals for the Palmer Coolum Resort were a major distraction.

The new planning scheme will come into force later in 2013 but there are already indications that some development proposals

seek to stretch the boundaries of what is allowable under the planning scheme. This is disappointing.

The final version of the new Planning Scheme, possible developments at the Palmer Coolum Resort, a new application by Bunnings to develop the old Llama Farm site, and possible developments re the airport expansion, will ensure that 2013 is another busy year for Development Watch. 

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Palmer Coolum Resort

Clive Palmer continues to keep his ridiculous concepts for the resort alive through the media. He is also making changes around the resort that we believe could be in breach of conditions.

The Sunshine Coast Daily article on 5 January 2013 again floated Mr Palmer's concepts. Unfortunately, and of concern, the two-page article was under the banner headline *Live Here Love Here* with Council's logo prominently displayed. Unless you read the article carefully, you could be led to believe that it was all happening! Mr Palmer was quoted as saying that he has been in discussion with the Mayor and is prepared to offer up to \$400m to upgrade the Sunshine Coast Airport: "Yeah, we've said that if we can get what we want, that would be part of our planning

to do that [i.e. offer to put up the \$400m]".

There is no application with Council yet for these big concepts. Normally we wouldn't comment until there was an application. However, given the prominent article in the press and the growing disquiet among members and residents of Coolum we have written to the Mayor asking him to advise the community of what he thinks of the concepts being floated.

We have been active in trying to keep Mr Palmer's activities within the approved conditions. We were successful in having the banner signs on the fence on both sides of David Low Way removed. We also have had the breach for vehicle access from Valerie Avenue rectified so that only service vehicles can use that entrance.

We also wrote to Council about the temporary motor museum in the Pavilion building. Council advised that in view of the current application (MCU12/0190) which includes a temporary motor museum on the driving range they would not take any action!!

Mr Palmer has also started some work on the practice chipping green and we have brought that to Council's attention to clarify if it is a breach of the conditions.

A number of members were planning to attend a meeting on 7 February at the Airport organised by the Marcoola Progress Association which would provide an opportunity to quiz our local Councillors on their views about the concept of building on the sand dunes. The outcome of this meeting will be discussed at our monthly meeting on 14 February.

HELP Stop the MEGA Quarry in Coolum's backyard!!!

The YCPA is raising funds to mount its legal case in the P&E Court. They need your support. They are planning a Fundraising night: **DRAG QUEEN BINGO Coolum Civic Centre 6.30 Friday 15th March, \$20.** Book a table for friends! By all reviews it will be a fun evening. More info: www.quarryfight.com.au/



Bunnings

In late October last year, Bunnings made an application to the Sunshine Coast Council seeking approval for an integrated commercial development. The proposed development comprises:

- Shopping complex
- Car wash and service station
- Showroom

at 39 Barns Lane, Coolum Beach. Members will note that this is the parcel of land previously known as the Llama Farm.

Development Watch has serious concerns about this proposal not the least being the size of the proposal (30,000m²), previous opposition to a similar development and the Court decision not to allow that development, and the conflicts with much of the Strategic Framework identified in the new draft Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme that designates the area as the Coolum West gateway. For those who wish to obtain more details on the proposal, go the Sunshine Coast Council web site www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au and click on PD Online. The application numbers are MCU12/0170 and MCU12/0170.01

Draft Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme

On 14 December 2012, Development Watch issued a media release expressing concern over the likely impact of the proposed Coolum (Quanda Road) Industrial Area, on local businesses in the Coolum area.

Commenting on its submission to Council on the Draft Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme, the President of Development Watch, Marian Kroon, expressed concerns that the provision of pre dominantly high impact industry activities will be allowed to the exclusion of lower impact industrial uses.

"The Coolum Industrial Park should remain a low impact industrial zone rather than a high impact zone" Marian Kroon said.

"A low impact category better meets the desired characteristics of the Coolum local area. Trying to establish a high impact industrial zone in close proximity to an area which relies heavily on the tourist industry beggar's belief".

"Similarly, such an industrial zone abutting a sensitive Conservation Area makes it almost impossible to comply with provisions in the draft planning scheme that aim to prevent adverse affects on adjoining environmental areas."

Ms Kroon said there was much in the draft planning scheme that Development Watch supported and this endorsement had been conveyed to Council. She said that in spite of broad support, a number of other major issues had been identified. Of particular

concern was the designation of the Coolum town centre as a District Centre Zone & the categorisation of the Palmer Coolum Resort as an Emerging Community Zone.

"Development Watch opposes the zoning of the Coolum town centre as a District Centre and wish to retain the town centre as a small scale "local activity centre" more in keeping with its present character" said Ms Kroon.

"Through previous consultation processes residents have indicated a preference for small scale retail and business development catering for local residents and visitors, rather than a wider catchment area".

Development Watch is deeply concerned at the proposal to permit development within the Palmer Coolum Resort in accordance with the provisions of "an emerging community zone".

"The Emerging Community Zone generally applies to areas that have been identified as being suitable for urban purposes at some time in the future", said Ms Kroon, "and we are concerned that this new categorisation could override existing covenants and open the door for increased urban development over the golf course".

"A new zone category and zone code should be created to guide the future development of the Resort and to guide future development in accordance with the Master Plan. This should be specifically included in the Coolum Local Plan so that there is no ambiguity" Ms Kroon said.

Draft Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme

In summary, Development Watch:

1. broadly supports the Strategic Framework and strongly supports statements about maintaining the Sunshine Coast as a community of unique communities with a focus on low scale development and strong protection for the natural environment.
2. strongly agrees that the development of the Palmer Coolum Resort should be in accordance with the existing Master Plan, Plan of Development and the Infrastructure Agreement, and this should be included in the Coolum Local Plan and not merely as a footnote. We have a very strong preference for the Resort having an international status as a tourist resort and not developed as a theme park. Coding the Resort as an emerging community zone is strongly opposed.
3. broadly supports the Coolum Local Plan Code. In particular we support retaining the “small scale coastal village character and identity of Coolum”. Coolum has, however, been categorised as a District Activity Centre with an unclear catchment area. We oppose this categorisation and wish to retain the Coolum town centre as a small scale “Local activity centre” servicing local needs and with small scale retail and business development. Residents have indicated a preference to travel to the nearby centres of Noosa, Nambour or Maroochydore to fulfil higher order needs rather than having large scale retail and business developments in the town. The Coolum Local Plan needs to be amended to make it clear that there is no provision for any additional large scale business development in Coolum and that the Coolum Town Centre caters only for residents and visitors in the Coolum Local Plan Area.
4. strongly supports limiting the retail and commercial activity in Coolum West to within the boundaries of the local activity centre. No new large business development should be allowed in that activity centre.
5. strongly supports the gateway concept and the enhancement of the north, south and west gateways to Coolum.
6. supports the height limits in the Coolum Local Plan with the following exceptions:
 - (a) the 20 metre height in the Coolum Industrial Park is too high. It will create an eyesore for residents on the ridges in Coolum and Ninderry and compromises the scenic area and scenic route identified in the Plan;
 - (b) the 25 metre height in the Town of Seaside should be reduced to reflect the permissible height in the Master Plan for the area; and
 - (c) the 12 metre height for the Mt Coolum Local Activity Centre should be reduced to 8.5 metres to ensure that the views to Mt Coolum from the David Low Way are preserved.
7. strongly objects to the Coolum Industrial Park becoming a high impact regional industrial park. When the park was established it was intended to provide for local industry and not regional industry. We also object to the future exclusion of lower impact industry. The Yandina-Coolum Road is not designed for the high traffic movement associated with a high impact and regional site. High impact industry that could, by definition include dangerous goods, night time work and “*significant offsite impacts in the event of fire, explosion or toxic release*” should not be located in such close proximity to residential areas nor be sited in the middle of an environment and conservation management zone. The Coolum Industrial park should remain a local low impact industrial park.
8. does not support the small dual occupancy precinct in the Coolum Local Plan as it could become a “ghetto”. We would prefer dual occupancy to be scattered throughout the low density residential zone with appropriate restrictions on the number, location and lot size.
9. strongly supports the zoning of the land between Barns Lane and the Motorway as rural, and supports its exclusion from the Urban Growth Management Boundary in the Coolum Local Plan. This is the western gateway to Coolum and its rural and natural landscape character should be retained.
10. strongly supports no urban development being permitted on the cane fields to the west of Coolum.
11. considers the inclusion of part of the town of Marcoola (Town of Seaside) in the Coolum Local Plan and Zone Map as inappropriate
12. strongly objects to the Yandina Creek local and state extractive resources continuing to be shown on the overlays given the significant decisions previously made by the Courts and by Council.

UPDATE ON CURRENT COURT CASES

SURFING WORLD V SCRC

This is the proposed large shopping centre at Mudjimba, which Council refused because it doesn't comply with the planning scheme hierarchy of shopping centres on the Coast. The developer appealed the decision in December 2009 and the hearing process has now stalled, apparently because of the reluctance of the developer to accept conditions imposed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The next review is scheduled for 8 March 2013. The date for a hearing is now likely to be pushed out to mid-year.

TGS V SCRC

In December 2008, the developer appealed Council's decision to refuse the proposed construction of seven units in Cassia Ave, Coolum Beach, as the planning scheme permitted only a single or duplex dwelling. Prior to a mediation that Marian and Brian attended, Council instructed its legal team to "attempt to settle the matter". At the mediation, Council staff clearly indicated that the development would be allowed provided certain minor conditions were met. DW immediately withdrew from the appeal to avoid being party to the reversal of what we considered was an appropriate decision by the previous Council.

SUNDALE V SCRC

Council refused, in December 2010, an application to expand the Coolum Waters Retirement Village over the adjacent football fields. Little has changed since the last newsletter as Council's legal team has been waiting for instructions on how to proceed. We have been discussing this matter with Councillors in an effort to know their position on the retention of the playing fields. Although some councillors are unequivocal in their support for the previous Council's decision to refuse, we have been disappointed with the response of others. Crs Baberowski and Cox don't want to discuss the matter and Crs Robinson and O'Pray are most indecisive.

STOCKLAND V SCRC

In July 2009, Council refused this proposed development for 900 dwellings on the flood plain at Twin Waters West. After an extremely long appeal process, the matter will be heard in the Brisbane Planning and Environment Court starting 11 February. Town planning and need issues are likely to be the judge's primary focus when determining the outcome.

Development, flooding and insurance

Council's approval of developments on land subject to flooding is highly questionable and has the potential to subject ratepayers and taxpayers to huge costs in the future.

Why, when our television screens have recently been full of graphic pictures of homes destroyed by flood waters & whole communities devastated, has Councillor Robinson (amongst others) voted (refer Council meeting 31 January 2013) to allow a development application on the caravan site on Bradman Avenue, Maroochydore? Councillor Jason O'Pray, a strong supporter of the flood prone Pacific Paradise proposal, absented himself from the discussion & vote because of a conflict of interest!

Council's own mapping, supplied as part of the draft Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme, clearly shows the caravan park land is subject to flooding; a fact acknowledged by Council officers.

Council has given preliminary approval to the proposal subject to

certain conditions. The subject site is low lying and will require 250,000 cubic metres of fill material to achieve the required levels of flood immunity. It is interesting to reflect that the Pacific Paradise evacuation plan involves helicopter rescues from the roof while the caravan park evacuation plan involves wading to an island. The proposed development aims to provide a range of affordable living options for vulnerable sections of the community.

The Premier has questioned the approach by local councils in approving developments on flood prone land and has indicated that this practice needs to be reviewed.

The insurance industry has conceded that while the level of flood cover has significantly improved in recent years, those that need it most can generally not afford it. Mark Milliner, chief executive of personal insurance at Suncorp, is reported to have commented that non-insurance was

still a serious problem and has hit out at local governments for allowing houses to be built on flood-plains. Mr Milliner, who is also President of the Insurance Council of Australia, was quoted in the Financial review (4 February 2013) as saying:

"I think absolutely one of the solutions is to continue to have better flood maps and understand the data and make sure we don't build houses in flood plains"

The president of the Queensland Master Builders Association, Graham Cuthbert, is also reported as saying that he would never support a council approving the development of land clearly marked as a flood prone area.

The low cost housing earmarked for the caravan site at Maroochydore will attract the very socio-economic group that can least afford the high premiums and excesses imposed by insurance companies. Should flood damage occur it will be the ratepayers and taxpayers who foot the bill.