

16 February, 2017

Mr Anthony Roberts, MP
Minister for Planning, Member for Lane Cove

Dear Mr Roberts,

I am extremely concerned about a proposal before the Department of Planning to make North Byron Parklands, Byron Shire, a State Significant Development.

The site now has Part 3A approval for a five-year trial as a music festival, which will be completed at the end of this year. After that, control is supposed to revert to Byron Council. We are aware that if the Planning Minister approves this as a State Significant Development, the Shire Council will have no further control over the site, nor will it be able to require a development plan for infrastructure to support the increased capacity, the site owners are proposing once the trial is completed.

We have been very concerned about the Department of Planning's approval process over the last 4 years, as it has allowed numerous breaches of consent conditions. We have attended many meetings where our submissions have not been heard or taken into account. Our community representatives have been ignored at North Byron Parklands Regulatory Working Group meetings and communications to the Department of Planning have gone unheard. This lax oversight we have witnessed so far will only get worse if the site is declared a State Significant Development and given permanent approval.

The Shire is small, with a population of 32,000 and about 17,000 rate payers. As residents, we have already been faced with a hike in rates because the Council cannot provide existing infrastructure to roads and services. We are already faced with huge influxes of tourists.

My concerns about this particular approval are as follows:

- This festival site wants to have 50,000 people on site with a proposed 12 festivals/year – that is one per month with a doubling of the Shire population.
- The NSW Police have stated that right now, our local area command, “at current levels of capacity cannot provide sufficient police to provide first response to the community at large and a satisfactory policing response to the festival.” And that’s with 32,500 people on site at the last festival.
- The disturbing noise of amplified music far into the night has been a source of complaints already and will only increase.
- Much more traffic on our already deteriorating roads. The Council is struggling to repair existing roads now.
- Strangers are already camping illegally on our streets, reducing our sense of security in our homes.
- Anti-social behavior is already occurring and will increase (party houses, toileting on private lawns, etc.)
- Illegal and dangerous fires on our beaches, lit by festival goers, which is already occurring, as well as doof parties will also increase.

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- Telecommunications breakdowns during festivals, again this is already a major problem but occurs in July and December, when the current festivals are on.
- Thousands more people in our towns and villages, on top of the 1.5 million tourists who already come to our shire every year. Many of our businesses, who do not provide food and beverages, lose money during festivals.
- Threats to the endangered species in the much-loved Billinudgel Nature Reserve that's right next door to the festival site.

Our state government has given only lip service to "local control" for years while telling us that they know best what we need. Developers are routinely given what they want even if council and the local community say NO. My current experience with the Planning and Assessment Committee has given me no confidence that any governance will occur if this State Significant Development goes ahead, whereas I do believe my voice is heard at a local level.

This development is not significant for the state of NSW. It's not an industry providing good, full-time jobs, or a much-needed bridge, or some other development like that. It's a music festival site! If it exists at all, it should be controlled by us, via Byron Council, rather than by DOP staff in Sydney.

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