

## **OBJECTION TO NORTH BYRON PARKLANDS - FESTIVALS**

### **1. "Technicalities" used by the Applicant do not Engender Trust.**

Byron Shire Council, as the approving authority for festivals and conditions of operation, were technically by-passed because the applicant has moved the proposal to a State Significant Development.

Reading the proposed sewage treatment system references it been outside the jurisdiction of the governance of other authorities, including the EPA.

By using these 'technicalities' it raises questions about the transparency and quality of this DA, particularly given the size of the total operation and its impact not only on the environment but also the surrounding areas of Pottsville, Murwillumbah, Yelgun, Brunswick Heads, Wooyung and Ocean Shores.

### **2. Local Knowledge versus State Decision-Making and Failures in the States' Compliance Enforcement of Conditions of Operation does not engender confidence**

When the State assumes the role as decision-maker, as proposed in this case, it is local knowledge that presents as of little to no worth. We are well versed in the 'consultative process' been reduced to a 'tick and flick' exercise.

Evidence of the incompetence of governance by the State has been demonstrated by its inability to enforce compliance with conditions of operations during trial periods. Local knowledge identified close to 100 breaches and other irregularities since a trial approval was granted. The DOP has been lacking in its enforcement, issuing only a few Penalty Infringement Notices and Official Cautions. The state has not been transparent about breaches in conditions of operation. Instead, NBP's self-monitoring and self-reporting has been relied upon by the State.

Independent monitoring on key performance criteria is crucial to lend any credibility to data supplied to the State by NBP. 9.

### **An independent cost-benefit analysis has not been done.**

No independent cost-benefit analysis has been done that objectively weighs the purported benefits of the festivals against the costs to the community. The Economic Benefits Report, Appendix W in the proposal, was generated by a Parklands-paid consultant. The report is presented "without the assumption of a duty of care to any other person other than the client [Parklands]" and the report further cautions any third party from "using or relying on the facts, content, opinions or subject matter" in the report. The communities of Tweed and Byron Shire Councils deserve better.

There can be no trust that the State is the appropriate decision maker in relation to the applicant seeking permanent operations of festivals/events on this site. Instead, Byron Shire Council needs to be the appropriate decision maker.

### **3. Tourism and Infrastructure in Byron Shire.**

Heavy marketing of the Shire as an international tourist destination has been highly successful bringing over 2.1million tourists to the Shire, conservatively estimated at over \$400m/pa. The rateable base in the Shire is 15,600 properties. It cannot finance the existing demands on infrastructure yet the proponents will depend on it.

Section 94 developer contributions are \$420,000. This \$ is nothing less than provocative given the scale of this proposal and what it presents in terms of impact on stretched infrastructure.

Brunswick Heads, in particular has been bearing the brunt of festival goers been 'dumped' here on a daily basis during event days. At Falls 2017/18 the numbers bussed into Brunswick Heads were 1,500 on one day and approx 1,000 on other days. This added to the high season tourist population of say 6,000. Census figures would show the place is approx 1800persons. The bussed figures exclude the exponential rise in illegal campers. The applicant will argue they are not responsible for their clients' behaviour once off site. However, what cannot be discounted is the 'syndrome' effect of festival events that brings illegal camping in greater numbers, not only on road reserves but also in nature reserves and on the beach.

Festival goers were similarly bussed to Ocean Shores, Pottsville and Murwillumbah.

Fire hazards, during a total fire ban occur on-site with bonfires in fire-prone areas and repeated illegal use of fireworks. Proponents have not been able to stop this behaviour.

The health hazard of festivals cannot be dismissed. Byron Hospital records will evidence the numbers who experience 'festival 'flu' well known amongst medicos to correlate with festival events in the Shire. This is a festival induced syndrome and cannot be ignored as a random infection.

Part of the health issue is the drug-taking induced syndrome of festivals. Police with sniffer dogs are a must at a festival of any size. In addition, a drug testing facility needs to be part of any festival. Such a facility is now successfully working in the UK. Patrons, who can by-pass a sniffer dog can have their drug of choice tested. UK results, reported on ABC radio in January 2018, were highly successful in mitigating the use of adulterated drugs etc. The model does not purport to decriminalise drug taking but rather reduce the damage and save lives.

Additional police resources, including dogs are needed in Brunswick Heads and any other affected township during festival periods. The reason doesn't have to be spelt out it is so blatant, and even moreso at the impact of the Splendor in the Grass festival!

#### 4 On Site Management System of sewage. (OSMS)

**The comments made in this section are in response to Whitehead and Associates, consultancy report. Page references refer to that report.**

The proponents will argue the proposed en-site composting sewage system is world class. However, I am concerned about what part is award winning and world class? If its accolades have honed in on using converted wheelie bins to collect urine and faeces then those accolades are deserved. However, in context of the whole of the system, this is but a part.

The concept for OSMS is comprehensive and thorough. However, there are areas that raise substantive concerns about Whitehead Associates report.

Foremost, the consultant has underestimated the size for all parts of the entire system. The reason for this is that thousands of clients are bussed off each day to surrounding places. This reduces the volume of urine and faeces collected onsite to what could be construed in support of the proponents' agenda. The reliance on Local Councils to pick up the impact is blatant. The OSMS needs to be recalibrated and increased to the maximum all day attendance at the site. This fact should not be dismissed out of hand, particularly when the impact of the numbers of people bussed into Brunswick Heads/day has been witnessed and indeed speaking with volunteers at the bus stop outside the Tourist Information Centre, Brunswick Heads, the number of festival clients who just want to know where are the public toilets is a constant. The fact that so many are bussed off site would go towards explaining, in part why the waste/unit is decreasing. I would also add that the numbers wanting to be bussed off site/day would vary depending on the weather. Hot, humid weather or wet muddy conditions has, based on experience, made the site not conducive to spending the day there.

Is the modeling based on dry weather and/or what soil conditions? The consultant's modeling was done on wet weather data from Byron Shire Council. This raises **major** concerns as the level of competency in BSC's Water and Sewerage is highly questionable. Any climatic and weather data needs to be from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM). BOM data would have a far higher level of credibility.

The consultant to North Byron Parklands has used BSC data to provide a greater area of land for effluent irrigation than would otherwise be required in say a dry climatic regime. It is an imperative that BOM data is used and the area intended for effluent irrigation reassessed. Add into that equation the recalibration of the whole OSMS to include a modeled urine and faeces waste that would be expected if all patrons stayed onsite and were not bussed off.

The consultant has acknowledge (page 20), in reference to site assessment, that the average rainfall exceeds evaporation for 7 months of the year (January to July) and the climate is expected to pose a moderate to major limitation for effluent management.

The starting point for the proponent's modeling is probably dependent on dry soils. I doubt if BSC provided them with daily data under the heading of 'wet weather data'. If the soils are wet prior to any event, then the modeling is challenged. (see page 26 where reference to the capacity

of Effluent Management Area 2 is flood prone, already reliant on surface drains and used for camping at the two big events.)

The consultant may argue that wastewater would be stored. What has to be challenged is the capacity to store if the starting point is when soils are wet/waterlogged prior to the two big events in particular and how long are they able to store what quantity of waste before having to irrigate?

The consultant's modeling has been done on North Byron Parklands providing him with 5 years of data. Again this would have to be cross referenced with general data figures. (Note in Point 2 he is saying they used wet weather data from BSC. I cannot stress enough that if this data came from BSC's Water and Sewage, then its credibility is questioned! It must be cross referenced with BOM data!)

The consultant has stated (page 27) that the unit values of waste were very low compared to published figures reflecting the excellent practices by North Byron Parklands' management. It is imperative that the precautionary principle is adopted particularly when thousands are bussed off site/day.

Another serious concern about relying on past figures is that management has been sold to a global festival company. There is no faith/believe that what has been management practices in the past will continue into the future. Everyone is aware that change in management and assuming what has happened in the past will continue into the future is nothing less than 'tricky'.

There is a problem with the storage time for composting wheelies. Yet, the existing system is alleged to be 'world class' and awarding!! In one section of the report it talks about 4 months to compost i.e. before been turned out into trenches, and in another it shows in photography 9, page 18, the composting area after 3 months. The consultant is recommending a 5 months storage and 1,019 wheelie bins. (page 36). More wheelie bins are required. I would be adding 615 wheelie bins so that a minimum 5 months+ storage is met. I have used the figure 615 as this was the figure of wheelie bins modeled for a large event. It also represents a built in precaution in case of wet /cool weather causing a slowdown in composting. Wheelie bins converted to composting toilets would not be an onerous cost on the organisers!

The numbers of wheelie bins in the aforementioned paragraph need to be recalibrated again to take in the thousands that are bussed off site during each day of the festivals. If the proponents want a credible OSMS, then they cannot dilute their project by impacting on adjoining council's infrastructure and by default demanding the local ratepayers subsidise their commercial venture.

Sullage from the conference kitchen, which can be expected to operate for the major part of the year needs to be taken off site in the same way sullage from the festival kitchen is removed from the site. Until such time as existing problems with BSC's sewerage treatment plants are resolved all sullage needs to be taken to Ballina STP, subject to Ballina Council approval. The problems with Brunswick Valley STP and Ocean Shores STP are specifically related but not exclusive to failures in the collection systems of each and hydraulic overloading of the BVSTP during a wet weather event. West Byron STP has flooding problems associated with the discharge of treated

effluent and serious questions about the volume of discharge indirectly to the Belongil, disguised as reuse of treated effluent.

Waste from the conference centre is to be chlorinated and then irrigated. Plants are to be grown to take up nitrogen and phosphorous but I am unsure of their ammonia take up. In contrast, irrigated effluent on EMA 2 is neither chlorinated nor planted out to take up these chemicals but presents as a major area for irrigation? I am aware that chlorine is a residual the effect is to kill cannot recall what chemical dosing is intended and far more importantly, how the amount required is to be monitored?

Irrigated effluent on EMA 2 presents as reliant on natural UV disinfection. This would require a minimum of 4-5 sunlight hours. Since it is adjoining a camping area it needs to be visibly cordoned off as no-one can rely on the good behaviour of patrons to keep off until it is disinfected.

Table 23 page 48 is headed 'Monitoring Regime'. This sets a minimum standard for monitoring OSMS. I draw your attention in particular to inorganics. These would occur in the composting wheelie bins in the form of plastics, rags from menstruation tampons etc. It is unreasonable to expect these not to occur. Human behaviour defies it! I have not been able to find reference to how treating inorganics occurs in the intended practice when it comes from all the wheelie bins?

The entire concept for OSMS is highly dependent on excellent practice. NBP will have to be exceedingly vigilant in supervising operators. It demands a high standard of staff qualifications, supervisory practices and a transparent monitoring process. NBP must put on its website the daily monitoring of its OSMS i.e. volume of waste collected, volume of irrigated effluent and where it is irrigated and results of testing of irrigated effluent. Critical to any successful OSMS is ground water testing particularly since the site is adjacent to two major catchments.

5. Dependency on "Volunteers" - the past does not extend into the future. Previously mentioned was the change in management/ownership of the festival business. To date, volunteers on a contras deal have been used in Brunswick Heads to collect rubbish, particularly in the main commercial block and foreshore parklands areas. Multiple bin collections have had to be called upon. The success of this has, in the past been reliant on the good management skills of one woman. No longer can NBP access her services. Consequently, all costs involved in employing people plus additional costs involved in extra bins and bin collection by Byron Shire Council needs to be a condition of any proposal.

The assessors also need to source information as to whether or not NBP has similarly relied on 'volunteers' with contra deals in Murwillumbah, Ocean Shores, Pottsville etc. The same would apply in those locales.

6. Rubbish Management: NBP acknowledges this is a continuing problem. It certainly cannot be added to the load for any local Council. If NBP intends to do these festivals then it should incur the total cost of transporting it themselves direct to some accepting Council rubbish dump.

There must be a recycling of waste management system included in any proposal...and that should not be dependent on charity workers coming on site and collecting disused and discarded tents etc.

6. Billinudgel Nature Reserve and Marshalls Ridge Wildlife Corridor, into which NSW has invested millions of dollars over decades, are the most state significant assets in the north of Byron Shire. Approval of this proposal will permanently change the nature of this ecologically-significant area—for the worse e.g. koala sightings in 2016 on the site of the proposed conference centre.

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30.1.18

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patricia Warren". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name and address.