

Media release Coolum West

STARTS

State Government should not use COVID-19 as an excuse to open the flood gates at Coolum West

As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the State Government has shown it will put the safety of people first.

That should also be the case when it comes to development of vital flood plains at Coolum West.

Over the years, Consolidated Properties has bought up much of the flood plains at Coolum West and is now seeking approval from the State Government to develop those flood plains. The developer is primarily touting the development as a 'wave pool' but he has also made it clear there will be no wave pool without a 1500 residential lot and mixed use development.

A consortium of concerned community groups: Coolum Residents Association (CRA), Friends of Yaroomba, Surfriders Foundation (Sunshine Coast), Development Watch, SCEC and OSCAR are urging the State Government not to allow development of the flood plains at Coolum West.

The proposal is clearly an example of urban sprawl with a wave pool as a secondary or "selling" point but spuriously promoted as a tourism project and is not supported by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and many community members.

These floodplains are outside the urban footprint in the South East Queensland Regional Plan (SEQRP).

They are zoned rural.

They are wholly within the Maroochy River floodplain, subject to tidal inundation, permanent standing water, flooding and contain acid sulphate soils.

The Maroochy River catchment and floodplain has been included by the State in the development of the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy (CHAS) being undertaken by SCRC, due for completion in 2021.

The developer has indicated that he intends to "fill" extensive areas and the concept of "no worsening of flood risk" is problematic.

Part of this land has been designated by the Sunshine Coast Council, in partnership with the State Government and Unity Water, as the "'Blue Heart" – Blue Carbon initiative. This is a worthy initiative that should be progressed to its maximum extent (5000ha) for the multiple environmental, ecological, eco-tourism/cultural and community benefits it would provide.

We appreciate the difficulties the construction industry is facing owing to the COVID-19 shutdown and are supportive of existing approved developments being actioned BUT COVID-19 SHOULD NOT be used as an excuse to allow the development of floodplains which could result in further trauma for communities down the track. There is plenty of opportunity for activity in the CBD and we would encourage construction companies to explore those opportunities before pushing for the development of flood plains.

Any proposal to develop these flood plains must not exclude the community or be devoid of proper and transparent processes.

The Groups are seeking a meeting with Kate Jones, the Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation to discuss their concerns. We will also be reminding the State Government of the Townsville floods which occurred in newly created urban areas that had been built to Q100 levels.

ENDS

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