

My NAME is SIMON PAWSON.

ON BEHALF OF THE T.C KOALAS

I WELCOME THE COMMISSION TO THE

In the last 50 years humans have wiped out two thirds of the world's wild life.

Deforestation Tweed Shire

Consequently it is time to consider rights for Nature to curb our over exploitation of our earth and its wildlife. Human fulfillment and wellbeing currently relies on extracting from the earth as much as possible, as opposed to contributing to the health of our planet.

Modification 4 Kings Forest, as lodged by the proponent in mid-2017, is an ultimate example of not considering the rights of nature.

All of the measures in that modification sought to implement conditions that were detrimental to the koala and its habitat.

Such as

Reduced areas of koala habitat offsets

Planting secondary koala habitat in preference to primary habitat.

And on it went in a similar theme

Community opposition of over 2000 objections lodged with the Dept of Planning and Environment to Modification 4 has resulted in this meeting here today convened by the IPC.

There are at least 3 matters that need to be addressed in Modification of Project Approval

- 1 The Offset planting of 27 hectares should be legally in place before the issuing of any construction certificate

2 Roads through environmental zones should be fenced, and agreed underpasses for koala transit put in place, before the commencement of any other earthworks whatsoever.

3 The original concept plan of 2010 stated "A golf course covering 69 hectares of land that also acts as a buffer zone between the environmental protection areas and the residential development" The only fencing should be between the golf course and residential zones thus allowing koalas and other wild life unimpeded access to the golf course and permitting easy access to other Environmental Protection Zones.

Growth in our society, and its attendant destruction of wildlife habitat, is the inevitable outcome of the economic model we have chosen to embrace. Many of us here today are the beneficiaries of development of housing on the Tweed Coast. Initially we were just numbers on a developer's strategic plan; then we became residents; then a community and ultimately the guardians of the intrinsic beauty of the Tweed Coast.

Consequently we demand a strong voice in what kind of development takes place as we do not want development that marginalizes our wild life, and diminishes the social and environmental amenity of the Tweed Coast.

Which brings me to the siting of the hospital

An article in the SMH of 5 March 2019 reports that the proponent has written letters to Government Ministers stating he will delay commencement of Kings Forest if a tax payer funded public hospital is not built there. I feel it is outrageous that such perceived threats can be made by a wealthy person of influence a few weeks before a State



election. Further, I feel the incident highlights the power differential between local residents, and unelected wealthy individuals who seek to impose their will on a community as if the Tweed Coast is part of game of Monopoly.

The siting of the public hospital has become the subject of local political intrigue with unsubstantiated allegations of nepotism, incompetence, corruption and lack of transparency. There are even calls from some people for a referral of the selection process to the ICAC.

Any decision to site the hospital at Kings Forest will require amendment to the Koala Plan of Management to address changes to the concept plan and 24/7 hospital operation and associated increased traffic. The consequence could be that the interested parties, represented here today, will gather once again to debate yet another fair deal for our endangered koalas.

So, 16 years after the purchase of Kings Forest by the proponent in 2003, 8 years after the concept Plan of 2010 we are still debating the plight of our Tweed Coast Koalas. It is a great shame that the proponent cannot have been more magnanimous towards koalas in the first instance. Maybe the proponent will have a change of heart, ditch the hospital that the koalas don't want anyways and make Kings Forest a wildlife reserve. Such a decision would single the proponent out as a visionary who helped save the koala from extinction by 2050.

I commend the concept of the Bob Ell Memorial Koala Sanctuary to the Commission