

North Byron Parklands as a community facility

Peta O'Neill
South Golden Beach Resident

Hello and thank you for allowing me the chance to voice my opinion to you all this afternoon.

My name is Peta O'Neill and I live in Robin St, South Golden Beach. I am a mother of two children aged 7 and 10 who attend Ocean Shores Public School. I am also the owner of a small business that employs 6 people and operates out of the industrial centre in Byron Bay.

I'm here today to express my positive thoughts on North Byron Parklands, and the potential that the site has to enhance and support community events and in some instances make them safer for all. I believe it is a resource laying dormant waiting patiently for approval so that our community can take advantage of the benefits of this incredible site.

From what I understand, there is an opinion that the noise is a topic amongst a small minority of the community. I personally haven't heard the issue discussed with my local friends and I apologise for my ignorance to those that are personally affected. I'm lucky enough to live in South golden beach quite close to the shores and to date have never even heard the murmur of a beat in the background during either Splendor in the Grass or Falls Festival. The noise of the waves drown out any chance of that. In all honesty I don't even hear music from parties when they are more than 5 doors down. Maybe it is easy for me to say this given my situation, but I find that lack of tolerance a shame given what the event brings to the community and feel that 6-8 nights a year is a small sacrifice for the many positives.

The noise is not what I've come to voice my opinion on, neither is the financial benefits. The financial benefits are easily gauged. There is numerous reports that accurately measure the incredible amount of money that gets spent in the area during these events. Most of us can feel these considerable effects to our business's, to our pay slips with the extra hours of work, or albeit a few degrees of separation and we see it in others as they feel the surge of cash flow from the many people that visit the area due to Splendor and Falls. I feel privileged and grateful to have this in our backyard.

I do feel however that North Byron Parklands is underused. Which brings me to the point of why I come here today.... To plead that the community be allowed to access this site for events. It's a treasure that our community could really use and seems a shame to be inaccessible.

I've read the strict guidelines that are being presented for its use outside of major music events and it seems it can only be a massive gain for all in the local and wider community. The guidelines see to that no negative impact will be felt by locals, the roads and traffic or the environment. Let's tap in and enjoy this incredible sight that the splendor team have worked so hard to create.

Primary and high schools alone are in such a need of a space or venue let alone other community organisations.

At present my children, along with the whole of Ocean Shores Primary School run their cross country event on the streets of Ocean Shores and South Golden Beach. I must admit I was a bit reluctant to have my girls join in this when we first moved to the area, but they would have been upset if I told them they couldn't join in. Especially given that it all seemed so accepted by everyone else.

Does it not make more sense to be allowed to use North Byron Parklands to host this event each year? As a parent it would be amazing to watch and cheer them on in this beautiful setting instead of nervously watching them disappear down a suburban street as cars drive by ... sometimes over the limit!

These kinds of non impacting events would be not only viable, but completely enhanced by the use of the North Byron Parklands. I would go as far as to say that it seems short sighted and ludicrous that such a perfect site not be accessible to the community if the owners are willing to share their resourceful venue.

As I mentioned I've read the proposed limitations of hosting community events at North Byron Parklands and feel that all the suggestions are realistic and if anything overcompensating to the concerns of the community and local neighbours. Cross country, yoga and meditation, food and wine fairs, fund raising, obstacle and cycling events to name a few would be a complete positive to a huge number of people and I believe should not be overlooked. It's an opportunity for so many.

I do hope that everyone can see the advantage of having this well facilitated beautiful site that could support so many community and non profit organisations for the future and well being of the Northern Rivers. Please help by putting aside your negativity and thinking what is best for the majority of the local and wider community.

Thanks so much for taking the time to listen to my thoughts today.