

Presentation for North Byron Parklands Cultural Events Site

By: Kate Little

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Good Afternoon Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your taking the time to listen today.

I am here to speak in favour of approval for the development proposal at North Byron Parklands.

I am a local Byron based events specialist who has been working within the entertainment industry for over 20 years. One of my current contracts is to produce the Global Village for Splendour in the Grass and I have been doing this for 13 years. In this time, I have had the great privilege of working with a wide array of creative individuals from various cultural groups across this region and beyond.

It is fair to say that my interest lies in the potential of this venue to create a stronger sense of Culture for all of our Community. We know that a strong sense of Culture is developed through the sharing of music, dance and stories and festivals are a modern outlet for such sharing.

The Global Village introduces our young Splendour audience to cultural experiences they might not have had access to before. We are host to over 30 local Minjungbul, Arakwal and Githabul people who join us each year to share their traditional and contemporary music and dance. In preparation for Splendour, the young dancers are able to mentor with the elders of their community to ensure their culture and stories stay alive and relevant in a changing landscape.

We have also been able to sponsor the creation of new works, most recently an all male dance project titled "calling to belong", which explored what it is to be a young man of a minority cultural background in this country today. Striving to maintain connection to one's own heritage and yet also being part of the co-creation of a new culture together. With dancers from Aboriginal Australia, The Middle East, India, South America, Africa and Ireland who all identified as 'Australian' this work was empowering, healing and inspiring for both performers and audience.

We have also hosted cross cultural ceremonies, in which Elders were able to share their traditional cultures with the Splendour audience. With Gyuto Monks of Tibet, Maori Elders, Hawaiian Elders all working together in a contemporary Rock Festival.

I share these stories as examples of what is possible in this unique environment, and what is often missed by people looking at the event from the outside and not participating in its cultural landscape.

I am also a liaison between the Parklands and the various local Indigenous Representatives and Elders. This has been a true opportunity to cultivate reconciliation and harmony for us

all moving forward. Healing can happen when people connect authentically and learn to listen to each other. I have learnt to listen in whole new ways and I strive to share this with the audiences that we curate for. I am also dedicated to supporting outlets for our Traditional Custodians to share their Culture with our wider Communities. We continue to develop event protocols to ensure the local traditional custodians are always recognised and respected.

Although I am based in Byron, I also work on events all around the country, including, Sydney, Queensland, Melbourne and Arnhem Land. I have had the opportunity to work on a variety of events sites and I can say that very few offer the amazing potential of the North Byron Parklands.

I see the great benefit of the North Byron Parklands for the wider community. I was very inspired recently to attend the Fields of Healing Gathering. This small scale cultural event, inspired by the long held dream of our local Minjungbul song man Magpie, allowed our community to experience the site in such an intimate way. I heard so many comments about how beautiful and peaceful the site was and how lucky our community were to have it. I am sure that with permanent approval other smaller events such as this can come to call the North Byron Parklands home.

This proposal is not just about Splendour in the Grass, or bigger festivals. This site is about a space that can serve all facets of our community in a way that is intrinsic to the development of a thriving Culture . One that celebrates diversity, sustainability and creative enterprise.

It is for these reasons that I urge you to approve this proposal.