

1.2 WHAT WE HEARD



A community voice for an eco sustainable future



In This Issue

- 3-4 Writers visit Ninney Rise
- 5 Cassowary Festival
- 6 WPSQ News
- 7-8 Planning
- 9-10 Terrain - Threatened Species Symposium
- 11-12 Mission Beach Master Plan
- 13-14 Mission Beach - Biodiversity
- 15-16 Assessment Process is Broken
- 17-18 Diversification of Agricultural Land
- 19-20 Art and environment
- 21-22 Biodiversity or 'Vacant Land'
- 23 CCRC Corporate Plan
- 24 What is a Planning Scheme?
- 26 FoNR membership

Cover: Word graphic from the Mission Beach Master Plan (CCRC)

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This is the second edition of The Different Drum, a periodical newsletter to capture the unique features of the Cassowary Coast and its residents.

It is published by the Friends of Ninney Rise, (FoNR) a community group which manages the Heritage listed property of John Busst at Ninney Rise.

We have been working closely with QPWS, the owners of the property, steadily working through the actions outlined in the Conservation Management Plan. Each project is a step closer to Ninney Rise being open to the public for tourism and conservation purposes.

The Cassowary Coast has seen the controversial Council approval of an Aviation facility and the court case of Mayfair 101. Both highlight the need for greater community involvement in planning.

Become informed by The Different Drum's coverage of these issues and others in this edition and become involved.

Suzanne Smith,
President, FoNR



Friends of Ninney Rise

www.ninneyrise.com

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Friends of Ninney Rise

Writers visit Ninney Rise

Friends of Ninney Rise (FoNR) was delighted to have hosted [Prof Iain McCalman](#), and his colleagues [Kirsten Wehner](#) from Australia National University (ANU), [Dr Deb Anderson](#), Monash University, [Ms Anne Leitch](#), Griffith University and [Ms Kerrie Foxwell-Norton](#) also from Griffith University.

The group were in Mission Beach to engage in research for books and academic reviews to be written on the "Women of the Reef", and Iain's major project; the full biography of the life and achievements of John Bússt.

These books will be linked to events to be held in Mission Beach in the coming year.

Iain had wide ranging conversations with Tourism Industry representative Patrick Bluett, Djiru artist Leonard Andy and Suzanne Smith from WPSQ. While Kerrie and her colleagues were criss-crossing the region, meeting with people of interest including artist and Mahogany Glider expert Darryl Dickson and artist, Liz Gallie of Mission Beach Cassowaries among many others.

Ninney Rise will be partnering with Iain and Dr Kirsten Wehner at the Mission Beach Community Cassowary Festival in September this year.

One of the stellar projects will see Djiru artist Leonard Andy create a work for the Festival, which will be documented and photographed from inception for the 'Living with Cassowaries' book.



FoNR is sincerely indebted to Prof McCalman who has contributed to the future of Ninney Rise by way of funding, friendship and with a passionate belief that John Bússt deserves high recognition in Australia's conservation history and that Ninney Rise can become a place where writers, artists and scientists can stay, be inspired and continue the conservation effort.

The six day trip culminated with a trip to Cairns to see the last night of 'To Kill A Cassowary' by Laurie Trott. All the attendees were of one mind, a brilliant scintillating show, Laurie's play crystallised the dilemma we certainly feel; that developers view special places like Mission Beach to be seized upon and turned into a profit making venture, reducing the magic and natural beauty of the area to "just another place". The play, the set design, staging, sound and lightning were on a par with anything that can be produced in a major centre.



From left; Dr Kirsten Wehner; Sandal Hayes; Prof Iain McCalman; Ms Anne Leitch and Ms Kerrie Foxwell-Norton



FoNR President Suzie Smith with guests at Ninney Rise

Feast of the Senses

FoNR was delighted to have hosted an event at Ninney Rise as part of the Feast of the Senses Southern Food Trail.

FoNR members were ready to receive the visitors at the heritage listed home of John Busst, 'on Saturday 17th April.

President Suzie Smith welcomed the guests and gave them a talk of the history and significance of Ninney Rise before they enjoyed a morning tea on the verandah overlooking the

Restoration projects

Friends of Ninney Rise (FoNR) has a close and co-operative relationship with our lessors, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). We are indebted to Cameron Sharpe, Senior Ranger, Innisfail who is our contact point for 'all things Ninney Rise'.

FoNR is most appreciative of the help QPWS has given with re-roofing, repairs to the verandah and breezeway bamboo linings and the recent replacing of the fencing along the eastern side of the heritage building. The eastern boundary is now a secure safe area for visitors and a better workable boundary for maintenance.

Pool removal

We are looking forward to the next two projects in conjunction with QPWS, hoping soon to receive the Exemption Certificate to fill in the Mrs Tode era pool.

The pool area will be returned to grass with an interpretive sign acknowledging the remarkable contribution Kate Tode made in bequeathing Ninney Rise to the public.

Jannene Smith from QPWS Heritage Department has given us invaluable time and advice on the Exemption process.

Repair work and painting

QPWS will also be processing the required heritage exemption documents for the repair and repainting of the window frames along the eastern side of the house. Sixty years of salt exposure have left their mark and repairs to strengthen the frames, and replace the hinges are now urgent.

QPWS has generously offered to provide the labour for the project while FoNR will provide the materials.

Heritage Architect, [Emma Scragg](#), produced the Detailed Fabric Survey and the Detailed Colour Study which outline our priority actions and will guide us as we work toward returning the exterior and interior of Ninney Rise to the original Busst era colour schemes.



Photo: Establishing a workable boundary fence line

Emma recently visited Ninney Rise to give her advice and encouragement for the repainting. We value Emma's friendship and ongoing professional guidance.



Emma Scragg with FoNR committee members Sandal Hayes and Liz Gallie.

FoNR is presently exploring grant options to fund the painting projects a major step in the restoration process to present Ninney Rise to the public interpreting the important stories the property represents in Australia's conservation history.

Sandal Hayes Secretary FoNR

More information on www.ninneyrise.com

Time to get your costume ready!!!

for the

2021 Mission Beach Community Cassowary Festival



4th September

Ulysses Park - Mission Beach

A Celebration of Nature

through

Art — Music — Science

- **Stage entertainment all day:** with local talent and musicians
- **Stripey's Tent,** Lots of interactive art projects for the kids
- **Djiru Midja;** Learn the stories from the Mission Beach Traditional Owners
- **Drumming of Cassowaries parade;** Spectacular sculptures and costumes - everyone is welcome to join in
- **Information Displays;** Wildlife and environment groups share their knowledge
- **Market Stalls;** Showcasing the regions art and craft
- **Interactive workshop;** 'Your vision for our future'

The Community Cassowary Festival is a fun celebration of nature for the whole family *with a focus on 'home grown' and sustainable ... local talent, home grown produce, home made art and craft.*

Invitation

- Would you or your group like to have a stall or an information display?
- Would you like to participate in any of the activities?
- Do you have a good idea to celebrate our spectacular natural environment?
- Do you work with, or do you know anyone working on eco sustainable solutions?
- Would you like to volunteer

Contact the festival team

0414 402 315

or

cassowaryfestival@gmail.com

www.cassowaryfestival.com

[Facebook](#)



160 attended the Threatened Species Symposium in Cairns on 16–17 February



We started the year with the NQ Threatened Species Symposium in Cairns in February.

We reported for the Mahogany Glider Recovery Team and formed good networks with other groups.

Working with the Cassowary Coast Regional Council, we supply glider trees to property owners whose resident gliders are experiencing difficulty moving to feed or disperse young. There have been several barbed wire casualties recently and we continue to push for glide poles at Lily Creek road and other pinch points.

The branch Walking programme will start with our usual walk into Kennedy Bay on Sunday 23rd May. This year we will be joined by members of the Townsville branch.

We plan to walk in the Tyto Wetlands in June, Henrietta Creek on the Palmerston in July, Dunk Island in August and Jourama Falls in September.



Kennedy Walking Track - Mission Beach



Bigura Bigura (Glenbora waterhole)

We plan to add a Cultural Heritage sign at Bigura Bigura (Glenbora waterhole) with the support of traditional Girramay owners.

Planning

- Planning is the process of deciding in detail how to do something before you actually start to do it.

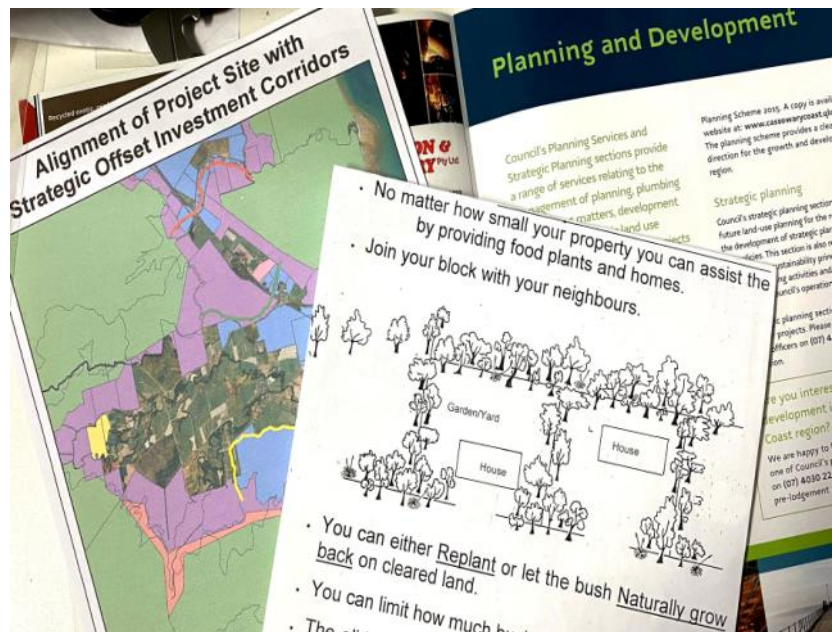
We all plan all sorts of things in our lives, some of us are better at it than others but it forms part of most of our daily lives in one form or another.

Moving to a new area to live is usually full of so many decisions and a lot of planning. For many of us we have come to the far north because of the wonderful tropical environment. It is full of stunning oceans & island vistas, deserted tropical beaches, amazing forests, magnificent wildlife, tranquil communities; *just so many visually beautiful things.*

We plan our finances, where we want to live and build, the type of house we want, the driveway, the schools we want our children to attend, where to go fishing, where to work, but we very rarely think too much about what our paradise needs us to plan for its environment to withstand our arrival and to be maintained around us.

Is it that we sometimes cannot yet see the value of what is already present? We do not mean to harm things. We arrive with enthusiasm for living here and loving this place, but we rarely stop to think about what our arrival will do to the little patch of nature's paradise that we plan to call home.

Some will say this is progress and we cannot stop change. But I feel very strongly that no matter how small our footprint, we can plan change much better than we sometimes do. We can plan to minimize our impacts on the wonderful natural environment that lured many of us to this place.



So as someone who arrived in the far north nearly thirty years ago, here, with hindsight, are some suggestions to consider when planning your new life in the far north tropics:

- try not to make any major decisions until you have lived on your block for at least twelve months
- do not assume that old trees need removing or are dangerous. Stop to think that if they are old they have been strong enough to withstand major cyclones the strength of which you probably do not yet understand. If you feel you have to do anything, "trim, don't fell"
- design around your big shade trees, it will make your home & garden more interesting and cooler
- old trees provide essential food and homes for so many animals, reptiles and birds that use hollows to sleep and raise young
- native trees and shrubs feed the butterflies, birds and mammals
- tall trees are the only way for gliders (gliding possums) to move through the landscape. Trees are their highways and if the trees are too far apart they are isolated, cannot find food or disperse young

- trees and shrubs that are endemic to this area grow better in these soils and climate than exotics
- trees and native vegetation help your land absorb and filter the heavy tropical rainfall
- natural filtering of water run-off from your block means less damaging silt and nutrients reach the ocean = healthy reefs & healthy fish
- use wildlife friendly fencing
www.wildlifefriendlyfencing.com
- if you are a cat owner, for your cats safety, (from pythons etc) and for wildlife safety please think about installing a cat run and enclosure
- if you plan to keep poultry, make sure their pen it is snake proof and close them in at night
- most of the small furry creatures you will encounter are protected native wildlife not city 'rats & mice'
- many commercially available rat and mouse poison kill owls and other wildlife
- if you have a treasured pet dog they require a fenced yard for their safety and the safety of wildlife



- do not clear your block and assume your neighboring landholders will keep their trees for you to enjoy. All too often this approach fails
- sit and watch through your first year, you will be amazed at the wonderful wildlife that feed and rely on shrubs and trees that you first though were scraggly and insignificant
- try not to recreate the garden you left behind in the city, it's a different world in the tropics
- make your new home a balanced environment that gives you what you need and also allows the wildlife around you to coexist, you **can** have both. It just takes a bit of understanding & **planning**

[Daryl Dickson](#)

Make a **plan** to share your new home with wildlife!

Planning is so important in our lives – councils have town plans to ensure that we know what to expect in the location we have chosen to live and to protect the community from inappropriate development. State and Federal Government have plans to ensure our wonderful environment is protected.

As good and engaged citizens we should all be prepared to raise our voices if we find that these elected agencies and their planning does not meet our expectation.

Threatened Species Symposium

So much knowledge in one room at the first North Queensland Threatened Species Symposium... One hundred and fifty people met in Cairns - from recovery group and other conservation group members to traditional owners, scientists, natural resource management practitioners, government department representatives and Threatened Species Commissioner Dr Sally Box.

The collaboration was invaluable and some initial outcomes include a working group to better protect the magnificent broodfrog and widespread recognition that more engagement is needed with traditional owners.



Threatened Species Commissioner, Dr Sally Box



150 attended the 2010 Threatened Species Symposium in Cairns Photo Julie Lightfoot

The symposium was organised by the NQ NRM Alliance – Terrain, Northern Gulf and Cape York natural resource management organisations – in partnership with the National Environmental Science Program's Threatened Species Recovery Hub. It was supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and National Environmental Science Program. Sponsors were The Nature Conservancy, South Endeavour Trust, Bush Heritage and the Wet Tropics Management Authority.



Photos Julie Lightfoot, , [Terrain NRM](#)

MISSION BEACH MASTER PLAN

***** Public consultation is an important part of forward planning; The consultation process involves the public in providing their views and feedback on a proposal to consider in the decision-making.***

**** Underpinning effective consultation are two key assumptions. Firstly, that the public are perfectly capable of making sense of complex issues. Secondly, that decision makers are not necessarily expert on the issues for which they are deciding or debating. Evidence suggests that this holds true for the vast majority of cases.** Source <https://www.darzin.com/public-consultation>

Using the [Mission Beach Master Plan](#) as an example, the following word graphics sum up the feedback received during the public consultation period. Has the development concept outcome reflected community input?

WHAT ARE THE HEROES AND STORIES OF MISSION BEACH?



The key words that leap out;

- Wet Tropics
- World Heritage
- Artists
- Tourists
- Careful not to lose Natural beauty
- Conservationists
- protect it
- rainforest to reef.
- Birthplace of Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- Protect Natural Beauty

Then add from the '*What we heard*' graphic;

- Jewel of the Cassowary Coast
- Laid back atmosphere
- cassowaries
- stunning
- farms
- village
- natural beauty
- rainforest
- village feel
- iconic wildlife and trees
- Keep it natural
- relaxed

1.2 WHAT WE HEARD



The key words don't come as a surprise. They are the same every time the community is asked what it is they identify with - what is important to them about Mission Beach.

Every workshop, every consultation, every survey over decades has reinforced the words in these graphics, yet on the ground we see the incremental loss of the things that make Mission Beach special. The very things visitors and locals love about the place.

At the end of one of the workshops, the participants were asked, "if you could describe Mission Beach as a person, who would that be"? The response was swift and unanimous, "David Attenborough".

Despite the decades of consistent community feedback, there has been a business as usual approach to development. The decision makers have failed in a great many cases to interpret the feedback correctly.

Instead of new development being designed to blend with the World Heritage environments they are nestled in, generic architectural and engineering designs are slowly but surely dominating the natural surrounds; turning Mission Beach into 'Just another Place'.

If people are prepared to question an outcome when they believe it hasn't properly reflected public input, the more the decision makers will need to listen and the more the intrinsic values and our lifestyles can be protected.

Does the overall design capture the unique character of Mission Beach?

Does it reflect the amenity described in these graphics?

Does it identify the points of difference defining Mission Beach as a tourist destination?

"A key principle of the master plan is to reflect the values of the adjacent Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage areas as these natural wonders are at the core of what makes Mission Beach so special". (from the Mission Beach Master Plan)

**Does the design blend with the World Heritage values ?
Does it capture the magic of Mission Beach?**



Or is it a generic hard edged design that could be just about anywhere?

Mission Beach is called the 'Jewel of the Cassowary Coast'. It is a priority conservation area recognised for its high biodiversity.

It would be assumed there would be appropriate consideration and protection for these values within the Planning Scheme.

The photo below left, taken in June 2017 shows the sandy track leading through the littoral rainforest to the beach at Ulysses Park. You can see Dunk Island through the trees.

The view is now dominated by a seating shelter (below right). The public was not consulted when the shelter was built. The Foreshore Management Plan was not referenced.

No council officers could be found who knew how the building was approved or permitted.

If a little more consideration had gone into the positioning of the shelter, it could have provided convenience for the people while retaining the 'wilderness' amenity of the dune track.



Cassowaries

Cassowaries play an important role to the Mission Beach community identity, the health of the rainforests and for visitor experience. Yet they are offered very little protection in the Planning Scheme and barely rate a mention in many of the current Cassowary Coast plans and strategies.

Why?



Bright blue rich green
STUNNING
Keep it natural
Rainforest
RELAXED
VILLAGE ATMOSPHERE
Unique character
NATURAL BEAUTY
Tropical feel
FARMS
Size and quaintness

Biodiversity Significance of Mission Beach



Nestled at the junction of the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas, Mission Beach has long been recognised for its beauty and environmental values. The outstanding natural and cultural significance of the area has been recognised in a number of studies including as a Priority Biodiversity Area in the 'Sustaining the Wet Tropics' regional plan and the Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2010.

The natural values of Mission Beach are under increased pressure, particularly from residential and tourist development.

In order to plan for the future a detailed understanding of the attributes and significance of the overall environment is necessary.

The Biodiversity Significance of Mission Beach [report](#) was commissioned by [Terrain NRM](#) to better define what makes Mission Beach a priority biodiversity area, to assist with future planning exercises to enhance decision-making, and to raise awareness in the wider community of the area's outstanding significance.



The diversity in vegetation communities and both flora and fauna species is driven by the complexity of landscapes, geology and differences in weather patterns across the area. The relatively extensive stands of lowland forest ecosystems in combination with the continuity of rainforest habitat to the west as far as Atherton is unique in the Wet Tropics.





Mission Beach has many significant environmental attributes. Some of these attributes alone, such as the highest cassowary concentration in Australia, justify that Mission Beach has very high biodiversity significance. What is outstanding is that these attributes are all contained within a small area representing only around 0.005% of the continental area of Australia or about one third the area of mainland Brisbane City.

- The report confirms the Mission Beach area is significant at a
- local, regional, national, and in some instances, global scale including:
- Unique geological features such as the basaltic headland at Clump Point and Ordovician Granite at Tam O'Shanter Point;
- 12.8% of all remaining lowland rainforest in the Wet Tropics and the largest contiguous 'block' of lowland rainforest south of the Daintree River;
- 50% of Australia's remaining Licuala Fan Palm Forests, incorporating the largest single stand;
- At least 5% of all Australian vascular plant species;
- 13% of the recorded plant species of Mission Beach occur nowhere else but the Wet Tropics, with one orchid occurring nowhere else but Dunk Island;
- Habitat for approximately 36% of Australia's bird species, (Birds of Mission Beach; A Walker)
- Australia's highest concentration of Cassowaries;
- Marine areas support 20% of the world's seagrass species and close to 35% of the world's mangrove species;
- The largest suite of mainland fringing reefs between Port Douglas and Bowen;
- Wetlands of National and, in the case of the Great Barrier Reef, international significance;
- Very high diversity in vegetation communities and both flora and fauna species;
- Relatively extensive stands of lowland forest ecosystems;
- The most integral and widest east-west corridor in between Cairns and Cardwell; and
- The best coastal to highlands rainforest corridor in the Wet Tropics.

"Mission Beach rainforests are special. They are the most diverse lowland and beachfront rainforests in Australia and part of the biggest lowland-highland rainforest corridor in Australia. This varied and well-connected habitat provide the perfect opportunity for wildlife experiences."

Source; [Mission Beach Naturally](#)



The Assessment process is -

BROKEN

In Oct 2017 the 50th Anniversary of the saving of Ellison Reef from lime mining was celebrated on the verandahs of Ninney Rise'. Guest speaker, Prof Bob Pressey of ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies - JCU Townsville, began his [address](#) titled '**Death by a thousand cuts**' with, ***"The development assessment process is broken, it's been broken for a long time and it is kept broken deliberately."***

The Mission Beach community has been made painfully aware of the professor's statement as the Cassowary Coast Regional Council (CCRC) threw them off balance with the controversial approval of a heliport in the centre of their quiet peaceful villages.

The councillors accepted the Planner's recommendation without question despite the Development Application (DA) containing inconsistent and contradictory statements with respect to the proposed use of the Aviation Facility.

The approval will allow up to three medium lift (heavy) helicopters to operate for multiple purposes early morning to late afternoon, 7 days a week, in the wilderness heart of Mission Beach; a tourist destination known for its quiet, peaceful amenity and population of endangered cassowaries.

The development will introduce industrial development on rural land at the scenic approach to Mission Beach.

At the December 2020 CCRC general meeting, it was worrying to hear Mayor Mark Nolan remembering the consequences of a past development decision (being negative) "...because the council listened to the people's concerns ahead of a reputable business...".

When casting his vote in favour of the heliport, Cr Nolan claimed the development had been through a robust assessment process despite the absence of environmental impact studies being carried out by any level of government. Neither were there any technical reports contained in the DA to address impacts of noise, dust and the development generally on the cassowary or surrounding area.

The community is justified in being further disappointed at the lack of federal or state interest in the matter with the Environment Minister, Sussan Ley and the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Dr Steven Miles, both deciding against calling in the development to be reassessed.

In his [response](#) to requests to use his power under the Planning Act to call in the development, Dr Miles said the development doesn't impact any matters of state interests. The Minister also said the court was the appropriate place to examine any technical assessment issues relating to this application.

The Minister's decision shows just how broken the assessment process is. How can the strategic intent of the planning scheme, High Environmental Significance (HES) mapping, cassowaries and community expectation *not* be of interest to the state? The Helicopter facility development will impact on all of those things. Mission Beach Cassowaries (MBC) will be following up on the response by asking what advice the Minister received to make that decision? Was the Minister fully informed of the facts?

Where *is* the technical supporting material that should have been required with the DA? There isn't any. That cost burden has now been placed on the public through the court appeal.

In an interview with ABC Far North recently, Pedro O'Connor, Director of Australian Inbound - Private Epic Journeys, asked "What is the developer's true agenda?" "There is no high end tourism industry at Mission Beach. It has developed as a low key boutique nature based tourism industry.



Artist impression—Industrial development on agricultural land on the scenic approach to Mission Beach.



"Mission Beach is one of the few places in Australia where you can enjoy a true nature experience. It attracts the same market as the Daintree." said Pedro. "Why would you bring in this noise factor when the iconic features of Mission Beach are the Dunk Island butterfly and the cassowary. It just doesn't go hand in hand with community and visitor expectations".

"It won't be employing a lot of people so it needs to be weighed up against who will *not* benefit". The accommodation houses and other providers along the coast who are selling their region for its nature and that's being interrupted".

Pedro said there was no evidence the helicopter development would bring any economic benefits to Mission Beach. "Of course we need balanced growth. That's what everyone is looking for". said Pedro, "but who is to benefit from this development?"

The public is justified in losing faith in the assessment process. They feel they have been sidelined, let down and treated with contempt. Council decisions are dividing communities and forcing some into costly court battles. Small communities cannot afford these pressures.

The community now has an uncertain future. Their lifestyle and economy are threatened. Communities rely on their local council to develop sound future-focused planning, with state and local governments defending that planning; not to play the double game of writing good things into policy and legislation and doing bad things on the ground.

The CCRC Mayor Mark Nolan told ABC Far North he couldn't comment as the matter is in the court. Cr Nolan said the submitters are exercising their right of appeal and confirmed the ratepayers will be paying for the council to defend the appeal.

The community has been thrown into a state of anxiety - unsure of their future

This is what the assessment process has come to. The public input during the consultation process is ignored, the planning scheme is ignored, and the planning department report is skewed in favour of the developer.

The council will then use ratepayers funds to defend themselves if there is a public appeal against the decision. A 'win win' for the developer and a 'lose lose' for public trust in a fair due process.

The council and the Minister were made well aware of the community's concerns. There is no evidence to show there would be any benefits for the community. But they have chosen to ignore that fact.

All the angst could have been avoided by the council sticking to their planning scheme and working in the public, not the developer's interest.

The helicopter facility belongs at one of the designated Cassowary Coast air services facilities.

LG

Legal Appeal

C4 has filed an appeal against the approval in the Planning and Environment Court.
Contact [C4](#) should you wish to donate toward the court costs.

More information and updates can be found on www.nohelicoptershere.com



Diversification of Agricultural land

"We can't underestimate what's possible"

Peter Salleras

Summer school holiday visits to the Wheatley's farm at Wongaling Beach were always an exciting adventure.

My brothers and I lived on a cane farm in Midgenoo. It was boring compared the exotic wonderland of Wheatley farm 60 years ago. The road in was lined with new fruits (for us then) like lychee, longan, buah ke-dongdong and a row of rich exotic tasting mangoes which had us kids racing each other from tree to tree, picking up fallen fruits and slurping into them like bulldogs eating custard, to find the best tree. This home/trial orchard would have started in the 1940s and followed in the footsteps of the Cutten Brothers at Bingil Bay, Banfield on Dunk, and growers trialing all sorts of useful new edible plants up Boyett road on the rich red volcanic soils.

Bananas emerged as a sustainable commercial crop when Stan Mackay first started farming them on Tully/Mission Beach road. His wise vision then, has continued to grow into a family enterprise today which is the biggest producer in the southern hemisphere (of bananas) and also grows cocoa, cane, cattle, papaya and avocados. The Tully business has a substantial value adding component with frozen bananas.

Accolades for quality bananas are many in this small growing area of Mission Beach. Les Buglar grew a World record bunch, Sellars bananas are renowned nationally for quality and taste, with plenty of show ribbons to prove a high benchmark locally.

Coastal land for a considerable distance North and South of Mission Beach is relatively flat, swampy and infertile. The strengths of the Mission Beach zone for agriculture/horticulture are good fertile soil, mostly from grey wacke and basalt parent rock. No frost, hail, flood, drought or bushfire threat. Good access to rural supplies, transport depots and workforce. The big variable business wise has always been cyclones....but these days they are more of a hiccup than a death knell for fruit growers.

The viability of farm land in the region has long been gauged on cane bananas and cattle. Cane and bananas have become broad acre commodity crops. With sugar prices low more often than not, and the Cavendish banana market hovering around 98% saturation, small land parcels in the Mission Beach area could be correctly considered of unviable size for these crops.

Times are a changing though, and fast. With the migration of people from tropical Asia since the Vietnam war, demand for fruits and vegetables unknown to the average Aussie has skyrocketed. Just as pizza, spaghetti, salsami and olives etc, which were clear cut "wog tucker" when I was a kid, have now become mainstream. Rambutan, mangosteen, lychee and longan are well known to most....and mangoes and avocados are as mainstream as apples and oranges.

"we're mainly limited by our own thinking of what is possible"

We have 220 acres at East Feluga just inland from Mission Beach in the foothills of the Walter Hill Range. 160 acres of our land is rainforest and most of the rest is fenced for cattle (fallow) for use by family and our staff. We grow multiple tree crops and some plantains on about 15 acres. Our workforce varies between 6 and 10 locals depending on the time of year. In 2020 we were nominated for the national Delicious

Produce Awards by a Brisbane chef who reckoned people in Melbourne etc have no idea of what is happening in the tropical North. We won a gold medal in the State stage, which entitled us to enter into the National competition. We were over the moon when we heard we had won a gold medal in the Out of the Earth category nationally.

We wondered why they wanted to film here and interview us, but the reason became clear when we were announced National Trophy winners for the category. Out of 20 gold medalists nationally we were picked best of the best and dragged kicking and screaming out of the jungle into the limelight. What excites me is that even though we are innovative growers, there is soooooo much more we can do better.

Sometimes like "Keystone Cops" we bumble forward for a win. A massive amount has changed since the Cutten Brothers and Wheatleys grew tree fruits. After being smashed by cyclone Larry in 2006 we started trellising our tree crops as is done with temperate fruits in the south. After endless negative comment as to why it wouldn't work....and we wouldn't have to worry about another puff for 20 or 30 years, Yasi paid us a visit in less than 5 years. The eye of a cat 5 is the ultimate test. Our measure was a soursop block smashed by Larry, regrown on trellis, won champion fruit of the Tully Show 6 months after the hit of Yasi.

Small blocks have very big earning potential here using contemporary methods to supply current markets (capital city and local).

Boutique durian farms in Thailand sell durians as baby fruit hanging on the tree for between US\$300 and \$600. The customer follows their fruit digitally through to harvest. Some of the many fruits we grow have limited markets and others are totally untapped and could handle plenty of growth.

Clearly we never stop learning here on farm, but we are buoyed (and paid very well) by the demand for quality, and something new (and healthy). With so many people becoming vegetarian, vegan, raw food, fruitarian etc, demand is growing fast.

Apples and pears grown on the Open Tatura system we use get yields of around 60 to 120 tonnes per hectare. We haven't cracked yields that high yet but... we expect from twice to ten times the price for the fruits we grow. How much will people pay you ask...saw scabby little Moreton bay bugs for \$70 per kg recently, coral trout and abalone around the same, and can be bought all year at almost any city fish monger. Good lychees this past season returned as much as \$28 per kg to local growers.

The sky is the limit with the variety of commercial tree fruits which can be grown in the Mission Beach agriculture zone. We are at the southern extreme where the "ultratropicals" can grow commercially and the sea breeze and localised microclimates will allow production of subtropical species. The region undoubtedly has the potential to become a foodie destination like the Margaret River in WA and others. Yes they have Perth 3 hours drive away. Mission Beach has Cairns and Townsville far closer.

Regarding the current local block (Porters) about to go down to industry, helicopters, and whatever other stuff there is better suited to the backblocks of Townsville. The block has exceptionally good potential as an intensive horticulture block!

The hammel grass growing on it, and the lushness of the native vegetation on the seaward side clearly indicates very good soil and provides excellent windbreak for more sensitive species....and a diverse, free plethora of pollinators such as bee species wasps, moths, bats (for durian) flies etc etc. Pump shed in the middle...water ready to go. Gentle slopes for good drainage. Salt air sea breeze has benefits we wish we had at East Feluga. Also slightly less rain and more sun we wish we had.

We get endless requests for "gate sales" of fruit (but reject them). That block is perfect for a farm shop, and social media will bring people for a long way we can attest.

The biggest threat to that amazing bit of ground is lack of knowledge.

We have had international wildlife film crews, 60 Minutes film crew etc etc visit the farm. Federal and State boards of directors. Horticultural researchers of many persuasions. State members of parliament, and an ex-prime minister.

Celebrity chefs Maeve O'Meara, Joanna Seville, Niel Perry, Curtis Stone, Matt Moran, Miguel Maestre, Pete Evans, Luke Mangan, Alistair Mc Leod and Peter Russell Clarke.

Most of the above spent 2 hours or more here and have a reasonable knowledge of what we grow and do here.

Ironically the people who hold the reins in the direction this area heads into the future, councillors, council staff (other than regulatory) and real estate agents, have never invested a millisecond in 38 years here, finding out about our growing primary industry which is unique to the coastal Wet Tropics.



Matt Allen and Fiona George hand pollinating the flowers in their high value niche vanilla crop at [Broken Nose Vanilla](#) orchard in Mirriwinni Photo: Richard Cornish

Small rural blocks lend themselves to a multitude of high value niche, boutique and mainstream market businesses involving the soil and primary production.

There is still the potential (inspiringly so) to excite and amaze locals and visitors alike, with what this patch we share can produce.

If too much good arable land goes under concrete, bitumen, lawn and golden cane palms (irreversible), and we lose critical mass. We also lose opportunity for current and potential residents and future generations, and there aren't a lot of places i've seen out there with the natural assets Mission Beach is blessed with.

Peter Salleras—[Fruit Forest Farm.](#)



Cocoa harvest at [Charlie's Chocolate](#) Farm Mission Beach

Feature Artist – Deanna Conti

Deanna is one of Mission Beach's most significant and innovative artists and is a link to the history of art and tapestry on the Family Group of islands.

Deanna, is one of Australia's pre-eminent textile artists; she studied art and sculpture at RMIT, and learned weaving under Jack Louitt. She mastered the art of tapestry, and as well as her own sculptural, contemporary work, she undertook commissions for well-known Australian artists such as Leonard French, John Coburn, Clifton Pugh and John Olsen.

She lived for many years on Timana Island, where she worked on her large vertical loom to create her own designs in tapestry, strongly influenced by the stunning tropical surroundings of her island home. Her work was featured in the "To the Islands" exhibition at the Perc Tucker Gallery in Townsville, along with the other artists who lived and worked on the islands.

Deanna lives in Mission Beach these days, and is working mainly in glass, making vibrant mosaics, and colourful kiln-fired, fused-glass art. Her work can be seen at Mission Arts, and at the Helen Wiltshire Gallery. She was given a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2108 by the [Mission Beach Community Arts Centre](#).



Deanna receiving her award from Mission Arts

Art and the environment—inextricably linked in Mission Beach

The natural beauty of the area attracts artists, and artists have been strong fighters to protect the environment.

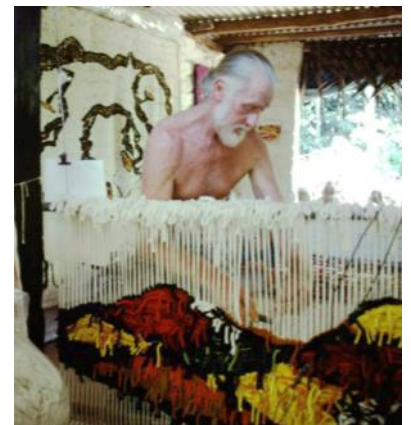


Artist Leonard Andy with Djiru Casowary Midja and Shield

The Djiru people, the traditional owners of this country, have a strong history of art – their distinctive geometric patterns were used to decorate shields, and Bagu figures, based on their firestarter forms. This tradition continues, and their art can be seen at the Girringun art centre in Cardwell, with the other tribal groups of the Cassowary coast.

Last century, Mission Beach and the Family group of islands became a haven for many artists. Noel Wood came from Melbourne in 1935, settling on Bedarra Island. He was joined by the sisters Yvonne Cohen and Valerie Albiston, and, inspired by the lush tropical environment, they produced colourful, exuberant work, and established the area as a centre for artists to visit and settle. Bruce Arthur established his renowned tapestry workshop on the islands, creating huge works based on the work of some of Australia's most famous artists.

Among the many modernist artists who visited from the cities were Fred Williams, Margaret Olley (re-visiting her childhood home) and Donald Friend.



Bruce Arthur with hand dyed wool



Toress Strait Pigeons by Helen Wiltshire

[John Büsst](#) was another artist who was drawn to the tropics, living first on Bedarra island, and eventually building Ninney Rise at Bingil Bay, where he and associates began the environmental battle to preserve the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef.

In 1972, Helen Wiltshire also from Melbourne, established her first gallery at her home in the rainforest at Bingil Bay with her art on the themes of the foliage, fauna and scenery of the local area, still open in Mission Beach. Helen's galleries have featured works from many of the regions celebrated artists who gained inspiration from their tropical surrounds and lifestyles including painters Ray Croke, David Stacey and Diana Croke, ceramicists Peter Laycock and Eric Chester, sculptors Ben Trupperbaumer, Dennis Risley and Stephanie Risley and Jeweller Liz Gallie.



Platter by Ben Trupperbaumer



Soapstone sculpture by Denis Risley



Plate by Peter Laycock



Jewellery by Siri Omberg



Bowl by Michael Pugh



Leather bowl by Peter Wallace



Soapstone sculpture by Stephanie Risley



Loya cane & Silver hairpin by Liz Gallie

Other well known artists who had strong associations with those who made Mission Beach and the islands their home who also exhibited at Helen Wiltshire Gallery include Michael Pugh and Siri Omberg.

These days, the arts are stronger than ever as an important aspect of life in Mission Beach – an art trail includes

- ◆ Helen Wiltshire Gallery, at the Village Green, at North Mission – selling prints and original work by Helen and other local artists
- ◆ Mission Arts at MARCS park, next to the Aquatic Centre – an active centre, with Gallery Shop, changing exhibitions, pottery and frequent workshops in various art forms.
- ◆ Art Print Frame in Stevens St has a gallery featuring indigenous art, as well as art materials, framing and printing services
- ◆ Liz Gallie's studio, nestled in the rainforest at Bingil Bay is open by appointment

Look for public art around town, including the Djiru commemorative installation at the entrance to South Mission Beach, Raya, the mosaic sting-ray, on the sea-shore near Boyett Road, the mosaic, tiled pathways and totem at Ulysses Park, north of the business centre of Mission Beach, and the Black Cockatoo installation at the entrance of MARCS Park.

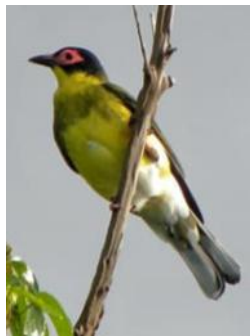
THEY CALL IT 'VACANT LAND'

IMPORTANT HABITAT DIVERSITY UNDER THREAT

The heliport development application described the high biodiversity reserve west of the development site and beneath the flight path as 'vacant land'. "These photos are a small representation of the living creatures that inhabit the "vacant land" and whose life will also be disturbed by helicopters that will fly directly overhead" said Ruth Williams who lives next to the reserve.

There is no doubt that residents within 1 – 2 kilometres will be subjected to an unprecedented level of unavoidable, intrusive and unpredictable noise that will be completely at odds with the lifestyle for which they have chosen to live in this locality.





2021—25 Cassowary Coast Corporate Plan



The CCRC recently released its draft 2021—2025 [Corporate Plan](#) (CP) with a vision statement 'One Coast —Cassowary Coast. The CP is described as a high level strategic document that sets the direction for Council for the next five years.

The vision for a 'One Coast —Cassowary Coast carries shire wide policies

to a new level of *homogenisation* for our region by failing to give recognition to the exceptional diversity of the character of our townships communities and environments — our strengths.

The CP reads like a template for a plan before its been worked on. It has no direction or vision. The objectives, goals and performance measures are meaningless—lacking insight to our region. The council considers the community to be their customers, not their employers.

It can be left up to your imagination what the vision "to provide great experiences, deliver value and create a sustainable future for our community" might actually mean.

The Plan is a document of weasel words and generic statements such as 'accountability' and 'transparency' and 'community engagement' that belie the reality of the councils actions.

The community was given just a 12 day consultation period for feedback— for a plan considered to be one of the most significant planning documents to guide our future over the next five years.

Without state government oversight of local council decisions, it is of utmost importance that the community take advantage of opportunities to provide feedback when planning documents such as these are open for public consultation.

The 2021—25 Cassowary Coast CP is unacceptable. The councillors should reject this document and ask the authors to conduct appropriate shire wide workshops to inform a properly made vision for our regions future.

LG



Friends of Ninney

The Different Drum is collated and distributed by the Friends of Ninney Rise (FoNR)

We would love to hear your stories

In celebration of our diverse natural environments within the Cassowary Coast we would love to hear your stories. It could be what contributes to your 'sense of place' or to your community identity or it could be an activity that contributes to an eco sustainable future.

Publication of any articles submitted for consideration is solely at the discretion of the Friends Of Ninney Rise management committee.

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What is a planning scheme?

Planning schemes are documents prepared by local governments to plan for the future development of their local government areas. They allocate land for different uses (e.g. housing, industry and agriculture), provide for infrastructure (e.g. roads and sewerage) and **protect the natural environment and quality of life** in those areas. They are legally binding documents that affect private rights to use land.

What is Public Consultation?

- ** Public consultation is a process that involves the public in providing their views and feedback on a proposal to consider in the decision-making.
- Underpinning effective consultation are two key assumptions:
 - Firstly, that the public are perfectly capable of making sense of complex issues.
 - Secondly, that decision makers are not necessarily expert on the issues for which they are deciding or debating.
- Evidence suggests that this holds true for the vast majority of cases.

• Why is Public Consultation Important?

- ** Benefits of public consultation include:
 - It acknowledges the desire for humans to have a say in decisions that affect their lives. More importantly, it provides an opportunity for the affected people (and interested parties) to have a say in decisions that affect their lives.
 - It provides the decision makers a better understanding of the stakeholders' values, interests, issues, and concerns about the proposal to incorporate into decisions and ultimately empowers them to make better decisions.
 - It facilitates understanding on the proposal (for the public), and problems and opportunities (for the Consultant).
 - It generates new ideas to be considered and evaluated throughout the development.
 - It encourages the public to provide meaningful input into the decision-making process.
 - It helps create a strong foundation for long-lasting and trustful relationships between the project and the stakeholders.
 - It helps organisations enhance risk management and have better project outcomes.
 - It informs the public and helps them accept any resulting changes.

Source <https://www.darzin.com/public-consultation>

What is the role of local government?

- transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest
- sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services
- democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement
- good governance of, and by, local government
- ethical and legal behaviour of councillors and local government employees (section 4, LGA).

Local government Act 2009 (LGA)



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Join Friends of Ninney Rise

The aims of Friends of Ninney Rise are;

- ◆ to assist the conservation of the cultural heritage significance of Ninney Rise;
- ◆ to promote ecotourism at Mission Beach and ongoing reef and rainforest conservation through
- ◆ interpreting Ninney Rise's leading role in saving the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics rainforests;
- ◆ to assist retain Ninney Rise in public ownership with opportunities for appropriate public access particularly for tourism and conservation purposes;
- ◆ to assist the economically viable use of Ninney Rise;
- ◆ to facilitate tourism, conservation, community and government partnerships.

Membership Fees (inclusive of GST)

\$30 – couple / family \$20 – pensioner couple
\$25.00 – single \$15 - pensioner single

Payment can be made via direct deposit to;

Friends of Ninney Rise Inc.

BSB 633000

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Please make sure you include your name in the description field.

Then email your name and phone number to friendsofninneyrise@gmail.com

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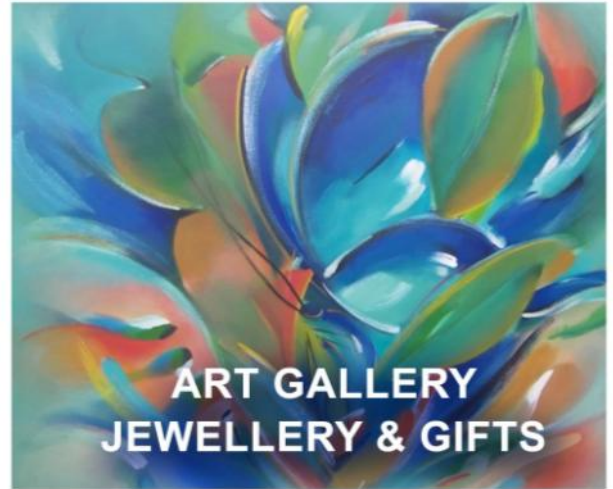
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