

1

I would like to begin by expressing, along with all those who have already, my disappointment and upset at the knowledge that whatever happens here today, the 20 month extension that is the issue before this meeting, appears to all intents and purposes to be a done deal.

I hope we are given assurance that we are not in some Alice in Wonderland scenario where all appears 'back the front'? It's a surreal feeling that my, and all those with me on this, that our time here and our preparation, for this public meeting is quite literally a pointless exercise.

Nevertheless I will proceed and draw attention to the reasons why this 20 month extension should not be granted.

Many speakers today have addressed the desire of many of us to see this event run locally, controlled by our shire councils.

I am going to elaborate on this a little further.

Parklands has had a 5 year trial, but from any objective viewpoint there has been no independent assessment of performance upon which to grant an extension. If we have no independent evaluation of the past 5 years than what are we basing an extension on?

I want to draw attention to how Parklands has operated up to now in terms of assessment;

1. First let me look at on-the-ground assessment at the time of the events. We know that the DoP has sent representatives on site but their purpose has NOT been one of independent investigation. To the contrary they have announced their arrival and Parklands has graciously presented them with guided tours of the site. Almost like distinguished guests rather than independent assessors of operational guidelines.
2. SECOND assessment... Complaint procedure; Any complaint during the event is channeled to Parklands. Council, the police, and others will all tell the caller to call the hotline, as would the DOP if anyone tried to call them. Parklands **only includes** hotline calls in their Complaints Register. If people called Council, Parklands wouldn't count those calls as complaints because

2

they didn't come through the hotline.

3. THIRD assessment procedure... The process for determining compliance with the PAC's consent conditions:

This is how compliance works; Parklands hires consultants to handle the monitoring that's required by the consent conditions. Noise consultants, ecological consultants, traffic consultants, etc. All are paid by Parklands, and Parklands is the client, so all the reports are written for Parklands, in consultation with Parklands, and are sent to Parklands. Parklands then forwards the reports to the DOP, and the DOP accepts them. There is no evidence or indication that there is any attempt to evaluate the accuracy or content of these reports. It appears they are accepted at face value and that the simple act of jumping through this hoop of compiling the reports is sufficient in satisfying compliance.

So Parklands is essentially monitoring themselves or is at least guiding the monitoring very closely.

As an aside... It is interesting to note that the recent breach of attendance numbers to the Splendour festival, which resulted in some fines, was initiated by a community based organization concerned with wildlife.... It wasn't ^{NOT} through the vigilance of the DoP!!

4. FOURTH assessment.... Compliance audits; there has been one in the 5 year trial period (in Oct 2014), and it covered some but certainly not all compliant conditions.

And there has never been a truly independent audit -- the kind where the DOP has said to an independent team "Tell us what's really going on at Parklands'. Audits that make an objective analysis of Parkland's claims regarding the economic benefits to our region, attendance numbers and employment figures, to name a few.

The DOP just accepts that Parklands is doing a reasonable job and that whatever issues arise are purely minor (which is what Parklands always says) and will be dealt with before the next event.

5. Finally I want to acknowledge some bureaucratic limitations that the Dop

faces and which work against us in our local community.

- a. First we recognize that the compliance department at the DOP does not have the resources or time to keep up with all the compliance they're supposed to be monitoring. Coal mines, along with other developments, are considered more important than Parklands.
- b. Secondly, there is the reality of staff turnover in the DoP. And every year, just as a few people get up to speed on Parklands they leave and novices come in, their accumulated knowledge is lost. Novices who knows nothing and don't have the time to learn, are left to carry on as best they can .

To conclude my presentation, my point, in the event it has not become clear, is that we are talking about extending an event that has had five years to prove its worth and its ability to be responsible

BUT which has given no objective rationale why it should exceed the conditions of the trial period.

We are running with a model that is fundamentally NOT ACCOUNTABLE. And that is the primary reason for me standing here today. Just as my confidence in the democratic process has been undermined by the advertisements shown around the room so my confidence is being challenged by an event that impacts my entire neighbourhood and which has the ability to override local needs, but which has no accountability to the people.

From an objective point of view I can see no reasonable reason why this 20 month extension, of what was a TRIAL PERIOD, has anything to merit it... ~~Simply, there is nothing to justify any extension.~~

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ROBERT HESS STRANGERS

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