

Hello everybody - I am Dominic Finlay-Jones, and I will be brief.

I am an architect who is equally passionate about both the built and natural environments.

Having studied the submission with this in mind, I strongly feel that the proposed Cultural Events Facility at Yelgun is a good idea.

I have walked over the site on four occasions with the environmental officer, Matt Morris.

My lasting impression is the fact that over two-thirds of the area has been cleared by previous farmers, and left degraded by those shining lights of bio-diversity in our Shire - sugarcane and cattle.

A lot of money and effort needs to be spent repairing and managing its areas of ecological importance, and for the first time ever, it has an owner who is ready, willing and able.

Not only that, but this proposal is an **opportunity** to establish a purpose-built cultural events facility, that is environmentally world-class - right here, for us to enjoy and benefit from!

If we're smart about it, I reckon we can have our cake and eat it too.

In finishing, I would like to share a quick story with you:

I saw my first ever koala out of captivity, just near the entrance to a music festival at Belongil Fields a few years ago.

It was sitting, unperturbed, in a paperbark at eye height, less than 3m from the path.

It had a choice to be right there, as just behind was a large area of bush to retreat into.

I am no expert, but what I saw was a curious animal watching 20,000 other curious animals file past.

Many stopped to enjoy the sight, remarking that this was also their first time seeing a koala in its natural habitat.

Then we re-joined the queue, and went and saw some music, and I thought about how much I love living in the Byron Shire.

Thanks