

(B29)

To: Planning Assessment Commission
From: Ford Newbold
RE: Yelgun Festival Site Proposal
Date: 2 February 2012

I don't like having to be here today, but I am compelled to speak out against this proposal and against the Department's recommended approval. I've been a resident of Byron Shire for over 20 years, and I now live in North Ocean Shores. I want to make five points.

1. The greatly increased traffic, including heavy trucks, campervans, and all the large buses moving people about during events and during the bump-in, bump-out periods, will have a negative impact on our roads. The onus for maintaining the roads will remain on the rate payers of the shire: 14,500 of us. Our roads are already in a shocking state of disrepair. Ongoing festival traffic will make them that much worse. Will the proponents be expected to compensate us for the damage the extra traffic will cause? There is no mention of this in the DPI's assessment, and it's hard to believe that whatever compensation might be forthcoming will be enough.

2. It's still unclear how buses will be used to reduce traffic demand. Surfside Coaches of the Gold Coast is to provide buses, but they have admitted a constraint: They must serve the weekday school period. The DPI has not adequately considered this constraint in approving the proposal. Friday will be the first festival day, with people arriving early in the morning, and that's a school day. It's not clear that enough buses will be available at the right times to reduce the number of cars impacting our local road system.

3. The event promoters say they would take out newspaper advertisements informing local residents of the additional traffic in the area and asking them to change their travel plans and avoid the area around the site. That's on page 11 of the *Further Traffic Analysis Report*.

This is unrealistic. We live here. We shouldn't have to change our way of life to suit the proponents and their customers. There are no alternatives to Tweed Valley Way for some people and some journeys. Also, the proponents should not assume that their newspaper advertisements will reach everyone. Quite a number of people here do not get the local papers regularly and do not necessarily read them.

4. The police coverage in North Ocean Shores is minimal to non-existent. They can't cope with large numbers of people on the street. We had about 100 intoxicated people go on a rampage on our street a few months ago, and the police did not have the resources to handle the situation. With thousands of people leaving the festival site late every night, we will see significant increases in the numbers of partygoers on our streets. The local command will not be able to deal with this. The extra police that the proponents will hire will serve only the festival site and will not benefit us at all.

5. Condition J3 in the Project Approval document requires that the proponents supply evidence to the DPI that their customer numbers did not exceed the approved numbers. But locals know that some festival goers pride themselves on sneaking in to festivals and share information about how best to do it. And this site lends itself well to entry by stealth. So attendance will almost certainly exceed the required numbers. The only question is by how much. And there is no way the proponents can provide evidence that people did *not* sneak into a festival.

In closing, I want to say that I trusted the planning process when I put in my submission. I have been shocked at how the Department has paid no attention to my concerns or the concerns of other residents and has recommended a direction for the shire that is so severely going to diminish the quality of our lives. I've completely lost my trust in them. I now implore you to do the right thing and reject this.

And thank *you* for the opportunity to speak today. I really feel this is the first time I have been heard.