

Prof Richard McKay

No 22

Public Meeting North Byron Parklands Events Site

110 th December, 2018

Speaker Ray Darney

Mr Chairman, & Panel Members.

Speaker no 15 Laurel Cohn and I have been Community Representatives on the Regulatory Working Group for this current Parklands Festival site for the past two years.

Laurel highlighted that 52 recommendations from this Group have been adopted by the Parklands Company assisting in the gradual improvement in the music event operations on the site.

It is pleasing to see that the Regulatory Working Group will be continued as a condition of development consent if permanent approval is given for this festival site.

I was previously Director of Planning and Environment at Byron Shire Council from 2004 until I retired in January, 2015.

Just a short history.

Music Festivals have been a part of the annual calendar of events for the Shire for many years with the Blues and Roots Festival and other music concerts held at the Red Devils Football Field at Byron Bay and at Belongil Fields Caravan Park until at least 2012.

Council received many complaints regarding these two sites, mainly regarding noise, traffic, parking and illegal camping. Some camping associated occurred on the footpaths in front of houses in the Sunrise Residential area off Ewingsdale Road.

From about 2006 Council looked to find an alternate site for these music events, ^{generally} ~~general~~ in Byron these events had ~~patron~~ numbers of 18, 000 to 20,000 patrons.

In 2009 Council approved a trial event on the Parklands site, for a capacity of 22,500 patrons, in order to gauge whether that site would be a better solution.

Unfortunately, this trial approval was challenged in the Land and Environment Court, and the Court over ruled the Council approval.

From that time Council has had NO control over the size of events on the site , as the Company has escalated the size of the events and its value, so that it is a STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT.

Byron Council would not have approved of the event size now proposed.

Initial events at the Parklands site had some teething problems, mainly relating to traffic management and noise. However over the past 4 years these problems have been resolved and both the Falls Festival and Splendour in the Grass operate effectively with the last approval being for 35,000 patrons.

I therefore support the proposal in this current application to use the site for up to 20 days per year, and for the Falls Festival and Splendour to have a maximum patronage of 35,000 .

BUT , I do not support, and the Byron Community certainly would not support the proposed escalation of event sizes above 35,000..

Compare this to our current total Shire population of 32,000 residents, and the fact that our small Shire is already overwhelmed by tourist numbers of 2 million visitors per annum.

~~25,000~~ / 40,000 , 45,000 = 0 \$50,000

This application seeks to increase patron numbers to 42,500 and then to 50,000 for the large events, subject to meeting K.P.I. s, ie that will be noise, traffic and other physical measures. It is likely that these K.P.I. s can be achieved as the Company effectively manages these events.



However, K.P.I.s won t measure the social impact not the angst in our Community.

Mr Chairman, the festivals are an important component of our Shire s Economy, but enough is enough , and this approval when granted should not exceed the maximum number of patrons , as per the last approval, that is 35,000 patrons.