

Perspectives Page

Please email your stories to: noosaed@scnews.com.au.

Struggling to save wild life

By **DUNCAN STRUTHERS**

FIFTEEN years ago we moved into Noosa Heads.

Like many others, we decided Noosa was an excellent place to live and for our children to grow up in, a Shire whose past and present residents have fought hard to preserve and protect the natural beauty and wildlife that surround us.

This was recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) designated the former Noosa Shire boundary as a biosphere region in September 2007. It was a first for Queensland. Why am I telling you this? Because I was amazed that a large significant tree was removed from a residential block in our area and absolutely stunned to find out how easy it is now to remove a tree.

What has changed to allow this to happen? The Noosa Plan is still in place, as are the council by-laws which are to protect our environment. Under the former Noosa Council, to

remove a tree or even prune a tree from your property, one would apply for a permit, a council officer would come onsite and inspect the tree and would only issue a permit if the stringent guidelines were met. Most of the time the owners were educated by the officer about the importance of the tree to the local ecosystem and the tree was safe.

Now, as in this case a qualified arborist recommended that the tree should be removed citing beetle damage, decay, limited live crown, considerable dead wood and necrotic foliage. Wow this was one very sick/dead tree. The only problem is – it wasn't.

Now the owner with his arborist report, his application (legal document) pays his fee, a council worker in Caloundra does a Google earth search, (no onsite inspection) approves permit, tree gone. This makes a complete mockery of Noosa's Local Law 10 Vegetation Management 2003. In this case the permit was for the

removal of one tree. Funny thing is there used to be four trees and now only one extremely lopped tree

These trees offer Koalas and other wildlife safe passage when they move around.

remains. I have photos to prove the trees were normal gum trees.

The cut foliage waiting to be wood chipped was healthy green growth.

You can go to Google street search and see these former magnificent trees. Did I happen to mention that they were Koala food trees that formed a wildlife corridor for declared Koala protection areas?

These trees offer Koalas and other wildlife safe passage when they move around.

Do you think this might have something do with the



FALLEN GIANTS: Trees being removed from Noosa streets.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

increase in Koala deaths from dog attacks?

My enquiries have shown the qualified arborist also was the tree lopper.

I believe this is a case of conflict of interest.

In most cases of business these days, that would be deemed totally unacceptable.

How did I find out? By doing research and putting the facts together and folks the Council's reaction to this is total indifference. The Council needs to stop all permits for tree

removals in Noosa.

Use an independent qualified arborist to inspect trees onsite.

If any are found to be false applications then council should prosecute to the full extent of the law. Before you start to blame your local councillor for which we have only two, don't!

They are genuinely hardworking people who do care about their community. This large council which was forced upon us is struggling to meet

expectations, keep rates down yet maintain services. Somewhere there has to be cut backs and loss of services.

The blame falls solely on the shoulders of Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh who forced Noosa to amalgamate against its wishes.

Remember Anna's pledge that Noosa's standards would not change under the amalgamated council. Another Lie. When Anna comes to Noosa it's coffee on Hastings St, walk on Main Beach and back in the car to Brisbane.

Her eyes are shut to what's happening in the Noosa Community. Shame on you Anna. My only reason for writing this is raise awareness to protect our environment and way of life.

Many of our political leaders go back on promises and cover up the truth.

We preach to the youth about being honest and to care for the environment. actions speak louder than words, and that's what they see and learn from.