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supplementary sub

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SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION NO. 131

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House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry - Inquiry into Future Water Supplies for Australia's Rural Industries and Communities.

Supplementary Submission on Behalf of Tamborine Mountain Progress Association Incorporated.

Scope of Submission.

The Tamborine Mountain Progress Association Submission contains detailed background data and recommendations. These continue to be supported and will be referred to in summary but only when relevant. Additional considerations are identified.

Major Recommendations.

- A. Tamborine Mountain is believed unique in being a community of its size, character and value as a residential, tourism and rural industry resource which has no dependence on reticulated water and sewerage systems. It should be recognised that there is no realistic possibility of the provision of such systems and such provision would also be resisted by the majority of the local community.**
- B. Sustainability of water supplies is critical to the Australian natural, resource and social environments. Tamborine Mountain should be identified as a model for self-sustainability of water supply and waste disposal. It would be an ideal model for the purpose. There should be studies to identify the basic mechanisms existing and the measures necessary for sustainability.**
- C. There should be input to the new Beaudesert Shire Planning Scheme now in course of preparation to support the above aims.**

Tamborine Mountain Environment.

The present community of approximately 5500 is located generally on a sharply defined plateau of approximately 2000ha at an elevation of 500 metres. It is about one hour drive from the Brisbane CBD and 40 minutes from the Gold Coast. There are varying numbers of tourism visitors with a mix of day and overnight stays.

The landscape is semi-rural with some residential nodes. For many years it has been recognised as a unique and highly significant residential and tourism resource and is the site of Queensland's first gazetted National Park.

Development Control

The locality is under constant pressure for potentially damaging forms of development. The intensity and character of development is defined by the Beaudesert Shire Tamborine Mountain Development Control Plan. This was developed over the period of 1991 to 1997 in an iterative process involving the State Government, the Shire Council and the community. It is widely supported as the best available indication of primary priority for the local and broad community.

As required under the State Government Integrated Planning Act, A new planning scheme is in course of preparation. The draft has not yet been published but there is concern that it may be of reduced effectiveness in managing future development.

Water Supply and Management

a) The normal annual rainfall is about 1500mm.

b) There is no reticulated water supply or sewerage system, a situation which has functioned well and is strongly supported by most of the community.

c) Under the Development Control Plan:

- i. Council requires a minimum tank capacity of 32,000l litres with a recommendation for twice that capacity. Experience has shown that the higher capacity is necessary
- ii. Commercial development other than rural activities should not be approved when sustainability of rain water collection cannot be demonstrated.
- iii. There is no control on the drilling and use of bores.
- iv. Extraction of water for sale on and off the Mountain is a significant activity.
- v. With regard to Water Supply and Effluent Management the Aim is "to ensure that effective measures are taken in relation to the supply of water and the treatment and disposal of effluent so as to protect the quality of surface and ground water and other aspects of the natural environment which depend on that water quality."

d) The Department of Natural Resources classifies the underground water resource as to be so small and fragmented as to not be a classifiable reserve. As such the Department takes no interest and fails to apply any controls on the resources' exploitation.

e) It has been unsuccessfully proposed that the taking and sale of water under these circumstances should be classified as "extractive industry" and adequate controls applied.

Normal Consumption.

- a) Consumption in a residence living quite normally but avoiding unnecessary waste is about 130 litres/person/day.
- b) Budgeted consumption in urban environments is about 500/litres/person/day with the difference from (a) being largely poured on the ground. This has been established from a comparison of water inflow (total usage) and sewerage outflow (residence usage) in areas with reticulated services. There has been further confirmation via private checks on Tamborine Mountain re water usage.

Sustainability Levels.

Three levels exist

- a) **Rain collection area.** For domestic use in a house, this is not a major limit on housing density since even a small roof will collect the water necessary if adequate storage is available.
- b) **Waste disposal area.** The area required is much greater than (a) and can depend on the ground character.
- c) **Ecological sustainability area.** In a locality such as Tamborine Mountain, this is the critical parameter and is almost certainly greater than (a) and (b).

Ecological Sustainability.

The Integrated Planning Act defines its basic aim of 'ecological sustainability' generally as the maintaining of a balance between the natural, built, social and economic environments.

The Tamborine Mountain Development Control Plan which predated the IPA also identifies 'ecological sustainability' as its Broad Aim in this case defining it as: "To ensure that land use and development on Tamborine mountain is ecologically sustainable and their ongoing management on Tamborine mountain are of a form and character that is consistent with the natural environmental qualities, semi-rural character and amenity, and resource management requirements of land within the Plan area." The intent is remarkably similar.

Input to New Planning Policy.

The considerations of water supply and waste disposal in the Planning Policy now in course of preparation (draft not yet published) will be absolutely critical to the ecological sustainability of Tamborine Mountain and its value as a residential, tourism and rural industry resource.

The opportunity must not be lost to use the area as a model for sustainability with the necessary provisions included in the Planning Policy.

Informed input to the Policy creation is necessary from all available sources.

Michael J. Gifford