

# What a great and interesting week

## Letters to the Editor

Editorial  
JOHN HUGHES

### CASSOWARIES AND RAINFORESTS

Anyone who drives through the greater Mission Beach area will have noticed all the signs pointing to future developments.

There is also very clear evidence of developments that are already under way.

Monday's decision by Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett to stop one such proposed development must now give pause to other developers.

The need to strike a balance between development and the environment is clear.

But I would take it a step further and question whether there is any place for future large scale developments in the Mission Beach area.

Some developments are proposed for land previously used for agriculture.

The land is largely already cleared and the more sensible developers have made every effort to retain remnant native vegetation as part of their plans.

Done correctly and such developments could be an asset to the area.

I have greater difficulty accepting the clearance of land in the Mission Beach area (rainforest, regrowth or otherwise) for residential or commercial developments.

or otherwise) for residential or commercial developments.

In all cases, how do you justify such developments when the majority of future land owners won't spend the majority of their time in the area?

It is an extravagant waste of land that might, at best, be occupied for only a couple of months each year.

Again, everyone knows that a substantial percentage of properties in the Mission Beach area are owned by people who do not have that place as their primary residence.

It is one of the reasons why the Mission Beach population recorded at Census time remains as low as it does.

As for the minister's decision, I hope it is not a sign of future inconsistencies (selective bans?) as he sees fit.

If this development is "clearly unacceptable" how many others are in the same category?

Some "conservationists" who managed to clear their patch of rainforest should also be careful in their celebrations about this decision.

It would be the height of hypocrisy for them to sit in their cleared area without acknowledging their presence is a danger to cassowaries and a further diminution of our rainforests.

The best thing they could do is knock down their houses, replant the land to rainforest and move somewhere less environmentally sensitive.

But I don't think that will happen.

What's good for the goose is not good for the gander - or the cassowary.

### REGIONAL PLAN

Apparently some Mission Beach real estate agents have become the farmer's friend and are lobbying hard to have the proposed 2025 Regional Plan allow the subdivision of even more rural land.

At a time when our water security and growing environment is the envy of most Australian farmers the subdivisions already happening at Mission Beach on red basalt soils (rated the world's best soil type) is clearly a lasting monument to the stupidity and short-sightedness of previous planners and decision makers.

The disproportionately high percentage of prizes won by Mission Beach area banana farmers at the Tully Show is clear testament to the quality of the area for horticulture and its farmer's skills.

Most people living in the Mission Beach area do so because of its quiet laid-back lifestyle and good fishing, as the Cassowary Coast is the southern-most point where the Great Barrier Reef comes close to the coast.

With a land bank in the Mission Beach area alone of around 1300 vacant blocks for sale and another 400 more applications on the table - we can expect to see another 3000 or 4000 cars on the road and another 500 to 600 boats on our waters with what's already in the system.

Mission Beach Road is already hectic at peak times and those of us who use the Clump Point boat ramp know the parking facilities are already fully stretched on a decent day.

Unlike other "iconic" coastal settlements in Queensland (Noosa and Gold Coast) we have stingers and no surf, so fishing is a very important source of fun and food for locals of all ages and fitness levels.

Is there an example of anywhere in Australia (or the world for that matter) where increasing population density improved the lifestyle? Have you tried to catch a legal crab in the Hull lately?

Increasing the rate base is a short term fix for councils and there will always be ravenous "developers" keen to gobble up loose land and spit out urban sprawl.

make sure the current crop of politicians, planners and "quick quid merchants" don't squander our environment, farmland and lifestyle for short term gain.

Page 58 of the plan clearly indicates the crazy population densities planned for us.

The State Government probably already has the plan set in concrete and the consultation process is the usual token offering to resemble democratic process.

However apathy will get us nowhere and we all have the opportunity to have our say by August 8 by filling out the forms from local council offices or phoning 1300 721 194 or going to [www.dip.qld.gov.au](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au)

There will always be people wanting to move into this brilliant part of the world.

Ask people why they left where they were and they'll more often than not describe what's "in the pipeline" for here.

There aren't many spots on the coast as good as we've got.

We all need to defend it.

Peter and Alison Salleras  
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