

## **WEST BYRON DAs – in brief**

**There are two Development Applications (DAs) proposed for large subdivisions at West Byron – one for the group called ‘Local Landholders’ and the other for the ASX-listed development company [Villaworld](#). The environmental impacts and the scale and bulk of these proposals are totally inappropriate for the location.**

**TOO BIG** The proposals allow for over 1,000 houses to be built on the site, which have the potential to increase the size of Byron Bay by over 25% -- placing an immense strain on Byron's liveability and already inadequate infrastructure (roads, parking, schools).

**TOO MANY CARS** - The State Site Significant approval was obtained based on 6,000 extra car movements. These DAs would result in over 16,000 additional car movements a day on Ewingsdale Road, almost doubling the current weekday traffic. This would significantly increase congestion and create adverse impacts on residents and the tourism industry. The proposed Butler Street Bypass will divert no more than 20% of traffic from the town centre and will increase congestion at the Butler Street roundabout.

**TOO MUCH FILL** The proposal seeks to fill most of the site to 0.5m above flood level, which requires fill up to 3m deep. It would take thousands of truck movements on Ewingsdale Road to import the 500,000 m<sup>3</sup> (around 1 million tonnes) of fill. The approval for the rezoning of the site was obtained based on half this amount of fill. The potential for the filled site to direct water off the site and contribute to the flooding of neighbouring properties and indeed the town is significant.

**SAVE OUR KOALAS** Byron's koala population of only 240 individuals relies on scattered patches of habitat from the Brunswick River to Broken Head. West Byron has 5.5ha of scattered patches of core koala habitat, of which 37% is intended to be cleared and the remnants fragmented by houses, roads and fences. Without contiguous habitat, the koala population will decline into extinction (as is underway north of the Brunswick). Koala habitat must be protected with 50m buffers and we must protect large feed trees and exclude dogs in accordance with the draft Byron Coast Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (2015).

The DAs propose to clear almost one third of 35ha of remnant native vegetation at West Byron. Local Landholders are proposing to clear vegetation on 1.8ha of Environmental Zones.

### **FAUNA**

Thirteen Threatened fauna species have been recorded on the site with 4 of these listed under the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act. Impacts on these are downplayed or ignored in the DAs.

### **WALLUM SEDGE FROG**

There are two local populations of the nationally vulnerable Wallum Sedge Frog (Olongburra Frog) to the east and west of the site. The State approval was based on the premise that both these populations will be protected but the DAs show a plan to eliminate the habitat of the western population of frogs by covering their wetland with 3m of fill, houses and roads. The habitat of the eastern population will be so changed by fill and stormwater it could not survive.

**WATER IMPACTS** The site is a highly sensitive coastal environment adjacent to the Cape Byron Marine Park. The groundwater is already polluted with aluminium and iron from acid sulfate soils, with unsafe levels of zinc, lead, copper and petroleum hydrocarbons. Runoff from 19% of the urban area will be discharged directly into the part of Belongil Creek that is a Special Purpose Zone of the Cape Byron Marine Park. Another 37% will be discharged into wetlands and the remaining 44% is to be discharged into the central drain and thence into Belongil Creek. The Belongil estuary is already significantly degraded and in need of rehabilitation, not further degradation.

The urban area would generate many pollutants, whilst the increase of hard surfaces –house slabs, roads and footpaths would reduce infiltration and concentrate runoff. The proposed management of runoff water in the DAs is inadequate for the site, which means that at times untreated stormwater will be discharged into the Belongil estuary.

**FLOODING** Additional to the poor quality of water that could enter the Belongil is the increased amount of water that the development will generate into the area. As well as the intensified stormwater caused by all the hard surfaces, the sewage will go to the Sewage Treatment Plant. The treated effluent water from the STP travels through the West Byron Wetland and back into the Belongil Creek. The effluent from the STP is already exceeding manageable volumes and is inundating neighbouring properties.

**APPROPRIATING PUBLIC LAND** The proposal plans to construct an acoustic barrier up to 6m high on the edge of the road reserve, and plant earth mounds extending 6m (or more) into the public road reserve for visual screening. This vital transport corridor should be retained for Byron's future needs, and an expanded vegetation buffer should be provided on the proponent's properties, not public land.