

Redwood Park

IN A letter (TC, 4/10) Paul Herbert stated “Mountain biking has a similar level of impact as hiking and less than that of equestrian use, and that there is no scientific data to indicate that mountain bikers have a greater negative impact on wildlife compared to other trail users”.

This is a very misleading statement because the people who use Redwood now are using existing tracks. The proposal put to the council by a private company is that up to 30km of brand new tracks be cleared through Redwood.

The environmental effects of this, as well as the ongoing issues of erosion and weed spread, are very clear.

Redwood Park is only 243 hectares, but at just 0.2% of the size of the Daintree National Park it has 50% of the bird species. It is a biodiversity hotspot and the most critical piece of environment along the escarpment.

Redwood receives over 10,000 person visits per year, many of them by elderly people and young families.

In Wales, in 2014, a woman was killed when a mountain biker collided with her. This would be a very real possibility if mountain bike tracks are developed in Redwood.

The mountain biking community already has the use of Jubilee Park, and there are alternatives to connecting the existing tracks to Withcott without going through Redwood.

The Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley Escarpment Mountain Bike Master Plan states that an additional 75,000 people will visit Toowoomba as a result of the mountain bike expansions. This is around 200 each day or 1500 per week. There is no sourcing or substantiation of these figures and I challenge the proponents to release them.

Where are the 200 visitors each and every day going to come from? The numbers seem as unrealistic as the stated \$20 million dollars in economic activity they say it will bring every year.

By my estimation there is one federal law, four state laws and the Toowoomba Regional Council Planning Scheme Strategic Framework that any mountain bike development in Redwood will have to overcome. This is to say nothing of the fact that Redwood Park is not owned by the council, it is owned by the State Government, and the council is just the trustee under a Deed of Grant in Trust, which to my understanding prohibits commercial developments.

Rather than say there is “no rational or evidence-based reasons why the council should not implement its recreational plan for the park” I suggest that the burden of

proof is on the proponents to show that there is a rational or evidence based reason for it to go ahead.

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