

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Redwood Park

WHEN I heard that Redwood Park was being considered for becoming a competitive mountain bike track, I was disgusted, and the feeling hit me deep in the gut.

I have lived on this mountain for most of my life. Even when I have lived in other places it's this mountain that has been home, and I have returned again and again in celebration, in grief and in love.

Let me explain. Redwood Park is a piece of land located about 3/4ths of the way down the range. It has multiple trails that suit most fitness levels (even me!) and is full of delightful little cocoons of rainforest and a beautiful creek.

It also has some fascinating wildlife. It wasn't until I had walked Redwood that I realised Toowoomba had bandicoots.

Nevertheless, even on the most unexciting walk you hear the murmur of birdsong, and in the rustle you can usually see wrens or robins.

I love this place because it is home. When I moved away for university it was the sight of the range, of seeing Redwood unfurling beside me, that meant that I was about to hug my parents. Every time I had to travel back to Brisbane, I would cling to the window and watch it as we passed, marking my journey away by the trees that I recognised.

To lose this is not only to lose the animals but to lose the sense of place that connected me to a community and to a family and to pride in where I was from. Redwood is that for me.

I don't want to see people in Redwood pulling down trees and building ramps. I don't want the powerful owls disturbed or the bandicoots driven away by noise and a landscape they no longer recognise.

I don't want to be constantly looking over my shoulder for bikes or prevented from walking on training days especially when my own schedule is messy and unpredictable and busy.

I don't want the quiet and the birdsong to be replaced by dirt ramps and the whirr of metal.

The competitive mountain bike track means that people like me will no longer have the access to a place that might not even survive the interruption.

Its these little places which connect us to our sense of self, and to our place in the world.

I recently learned of the Federal Government's plans to hand a lot of their decision-making powers over to the states, and that the only protections that will safeguard them from bad decisions are contained in a proposed National Standards and Assurances Bill currently before the Senate; a bill which, by all accounts, falls a long way short of offering the protections required.

The laws proposed will make it easier for developers to hurry along changes to these places which quietly, elegantly, and without much fanfare, make up the character of a place.

Sometimes that might be a koala population. Sometimes that might be a tree species. Sometimes it is a walking track on a mountain filled with birds and bandicoots.

My awareness of these changes at a federal level was motivated by what is happening at Redwood. How many other people are out there about to lose a place or a species that is so unique and special to them?

Even if it isn't as flash as the Great Barrier Reef it is still important. It's important because it is part of us, and we should all be concerned if these little things are going to be sold off with a "one stop shop" check.

A recent report into the nature laws we currently have suggests we are not halting species and environmental decline in Australia, but fast tracking it.

I might be about to lose Redwood but Australia is about to lose a lot more. I want to have kids one day. How will I explain this to them?

I don't know if Redwood Park can be saved but I hope that, if you read this, you might make the trek yourself and have a look around.

Sit and watch the trickle of the creek among the rocks carved by water or try to spot the sweet little robins with their red or yellow chests.

Take the family, and the dog, and go and walk this part of our communal space, a place that defines Toowoomba for me.

You never know, this might be the last time you can see it as it is.

## **BRONTE GEITZ, Toowoomba**

### Inland Rail

LANDHOLDERS affected by the proposed Inland Rail project have been quick to commend the Hon. David Littleproud following his announcement that the rail line route across the Darling Downs will be reviewed.

Ben and Sarah Eisel of "Woodspring" just north of Inglewood say the business interests who now complain about further delay to the project should have been actively campaigning in recent years to make sure that Inland Rail was following best practice in its route planning.

"Inland Rail only went through the motions looking at its own issues and never stopped to properly and realistically consider the enormous impacts and risks of interfering with flood patterns, or the devastating effect of the line cutting through a large area of strategic cropping land", Sarah Eisel is quoted as saying.

"The business interests apparently didn't bother to check that Inland Rail was properly investigating the project and all of its impacts on the land and the community.