

To the Mayor and Councillors of Toowoomba Regional Council.

Re : The possibility of Mountain Bike Trails intruding into Redwood Park.

We are writing to register our total objection to any possibility of construction of mountain bike trails within Redwood Park.

Redwood Park was a bequest of Mr Bernays in the 1880s to the then Toowoomba Council to be held in perpetuity as a nature reserve. He was a keen birdwatcher who recognized that this land held the most significant biodiversity of all Toowoomba's escarpment areas reaching to the foothills in the Lockyer District. He wanted the integrity of this precinct preserved forever.

In nearly 140 years since, the terms of his bequest have largely been adhered to. The Range Highway (eventually "up" and "down") has been constructed beside Redwood Park. Subsequent Councils have created/maintained walking tracks, even at one stage constructing a suspension bridge, established firebreaks and a bridle trail – all of which, we assume, conform to Mr Bernays' expectations for his nature reserve.

Along the way, community groups such as Friends of Escarpment Parks (F.E.P.) have taken on weed /invasive creeper control – initially under Mr John Swarbrick, then managed by Hugh and Kay Krenske since about 1994. This has been an active group of volunteers dedicated to holding Redwood Park to its optimal integrity, for over 25 years.

Now, enter the Mountain Bikers, whose use of such an environment would occasion considerable impacts. It is our contention that these impacts would be far greater than any pressures caused by bushwalkers. There are alternative pathways of descent, through less vulnerable and prized environments, for the mountain bikers. It should be Council's role to negotiate such an alternative, especially since Federal Member for Groom, Garth Hamilton, has recently prioritized \$3.3m for the mountain bikers' cause. This is quite likely with an eye to securing a 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games venue.

We understand that the construction of any Olympic Games venue must demonstrate the least possible environmental impact. This alone must create a sensitivity for Council to monitor closely. All such guidelines should be established sooner than later, so that both sets of stakeholders may confidently progress their respective activities.

It would be a travesty to see Mr Bernays' bequest of land as a nature reserve become prioritized for mountain bike trails. This area has so long been esteemed by bushwalkers, birdwatchers and others seeking to enjoy the aesthetics of this special parkland, in accordance with Mr Bernays' wishes. In the same vein, it would be an insult to the hundreds of F.E.P. volunteers who have put in so many thousands of hours of hard work, to stand by and see their efforts so devalued. These two conflicting "land uses" must be seen to be mutually exclusive.

We urge all Councillors to consider the issues very carefully.

Warren and Jean Gundry (0475 311525)