

Sent to Crs. O'Shea, McMahon, O'Hara Sullivan and Cahill.

Dear

I am writing to you about my concern that Redwood Park is about to become yet another victim of Council vandalism with support for a number of mountain bike trails being carved through such a sensitive and greatly valued public area – for what... in the pursuit of ever more 'development'?

In the years I have lived here, since 1989, I cannot recall a single action on the part of the previous Toowoomba City Council (TCC), or the combined entity, the Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC), to actively support or promote the environment in which we all live.

Feel free to correct me if you have any examples though.

In my early years here I was a member of Greenwatch, an environmental group that sought to save the vast numbers of trees the old TCC happily allowed 'developers' to bulldoze and burn. As far as I can tell, absolutely nothing has changed under the new TRC regime, and the wanton destruction of Redwood Park would be entirely in keeping with the pro-vandalism mindset displayed by successive councillors, for generations.

So, imagination my shock and surprise when I read on the TRC website, while searching for information for this letter, a press release from September 2021 promoting a 'new deal' for koalas in the region:

*In addition, Council will advise the state government that it wishes to see the Koala Conservation Strategy expanded to incorporate the Darling Downs following consultation with local communities.*

*TRC Planning and Development Committee chair Cr Megan O'Hara Sullivan said Council also agreed to advise the Minister for the*

*Environment and the Great Barrier Reef that accurate koala mapping of the Region was needed to better reflect the situation on the ground.*

*Cr O'Hara Sullivan said the Department of Environment and Science was seeking local government support for the first phase of the Implementation Plan 2020-2022, which involved limited actions in the Toowoomba Region.*

<https://www.tr.qld.gov.au/about-council/news-publications/media-releases/14993-trc-endorses-supporting-se-qld-koala-conservation-strategy>

Prompted to sign after TRC was found to be supporting the Rifle Range Road debacle, perhaps?

Anyway, I took it to mean that TRC was about to become 'serious' about preserving an Australian native that, frankly, all three levels of government right across the country have happily failed to bother about, ever. I see the federal minister has now declared it to be 'on the way out', no thanks to years of inaction from her and previous federal ministers.

Where does this new found TRC support for the koala fit with the proposed destruction of the Redwood Park area, where, so I am advised, koalas can still (or should that be just?) be found?

I am not 'anti-mountain bike' but I do choose not to ride one, mainly for my own preservation. I am not a bird watcher but I do appreciate them (apart from the Indian Myna – a pest made ever worse here through the wanton destruction of tree cover for the poorly designed housing 'developments' TRC approves all the time). I am not a great native animal follower but I have noticed the increasing alarm from those who are, and who know far more about the dangers of their destruction than me. But, I am appalled at the cavalier, casual, ignorant, wanton, 'jobsworth' attitudes on display from those who seek high office, at all levels of government, particularly when the convenience of duckshoving is used so freely and our shared environment is the unwitting victim. But when it's gone... it's gone.

I am sure other 'concerned citizens' have already detailed the long and impressive reasons why Redwood Park does not need to suffer 'development', so I will spare you from presenting them all again. If you are uncertain though, ring Hugh Krenske for the full bottle, I'm sure he would be only too pleased to advise you on it, if he has not already.

I do fear the 'lure of the Olympics' will override any intelligent decision making on this, and probably many other developments too, while our council representatives fall for the sugar hit of a few days of glory on TV if this mountain bike course goes ahead, rather than thinking about the destruction of what sounds to be a fairly unique piece of local 'habitat'.

In terms of tourism dollars, and regional visitor numbers, and small business support across the TRC area, TRC would be better engaged in investing in more railtrails; there are many old railway routes still owned by the state government waiting to be developed, and regional cycle tourism.

I suggest you visit this NSW Facebook site to see how to develop regional cycle tourism. This was done without any meaningful support from the three council areas involved. No habitat destruction required to 'bring in the quids' for a swift reinvigoration of many rundown country towns: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/centralwestcyclingtrail>

I see the cry, 'we're going to build the best MTB course in Australia', has become something of a shibboleth amongst councils eager to cash in on the current boom in mountain bike sales. In not-too-long there will be an oversupply of 'the best MTB course in Australia', and then what? Would investing in black tulips have provided a better reward?

I searched for 'the best MTB courses in Australia' to try to understand how many there are. This one website lists 445:

<https://www.singletracks.com/bike-trails/region/australia/?orderby=best&order=DESC>

I urge you **not** to support the wanton destruction of Redwood Park – think of the future and what sort of world you might want to leave those who will have to live in a brown and barren land. I doubt they'd be thanking

you. I won't be anyway. There are many MTB courses in Australia but only one Redwood Park. It is here, and you may well be determining its fate.

Hugh Wilson