

## North Byron Parklands, a history:

**2006** Byron Council hired a Community Economic Development Officer whose job, in part, was to identify a site for large scale events (BSC agenda 20/12/05, p 36).

September: DSRD facilitated a meeting of key agencies (DSRD, DECC, DoP and Byron Shire Council). The meeting recognised the conceptual merit of the proposal to establish a cultural facility of regional significance, whilst simultaneously achieving significant environmental outcomes.

North Byron Parklands consulted with immediate neighbours and Conservation of North Ocean Shores. Given their positive response, on 15 September 2006 we met with Mayor Jan Barham, councillors, senior staff and Council's ecologist, who supported the plans for a cultural event venue.

December: The property was purchased and Council resolved to rezone it as a cultural events site. Council report to meeting 19 December 2006:

*Purpose: To recommend an amendment to Byron LEP 1988 to facilitate a proposed Regional Cultural and Events Facility at Wooyung.*

*Summary: For a number of years the issue of a sustainable site for events has been under consideration. This proposed area of 260 hectares (660 acres), adjacent to the Pacific Highway and on the northern edge of Byron Shire, has attributes to accommodate large events subject to some rezoning of the land.*

*The proposal, if it proceeds to finality, will result in a number of benefits to the community, environmentally through the enhancement of regional wildlife corridors and land swaps, economically through potential employment prospects and socially/culturally as a centre for festivals and events.*

**2007** We met with the Ocean Shores Community Association and the Brunswick Valley Sports Association. We held community open days and tree planting days on site and provided 160 people with site tours. A public meeting was held at Byron Shire Council to discuss a range of issues. We also met further with neighbouring land owners. In August we lodge a DA for a trial event.

We also hosted an environmental forum and invited approximately thirty environmental groups to attend. At this forum a range of environmental initiatives and mitigation strategies were discussed in detail. A question and answer session followed the presentation.

**2008** July: Approval was granted to host a trial event. Over ten government agencies were consulted by Council, with none objecting to our application.

October: CONOS challenged the Council approval for a trial event.

**2009** The Land and Environment Court found fault with Byron Council's processing of the approval and invalidated the DA approval.

**2010** March: Byron Council exhibited their Draft Events Policy through a 60 day public exhibition period. The majority of public submissions opposed the suggested restrictions on major events. Byron Council's own planning staff opposed the restrictions. Further, a petition was submitted with 2054 signatures opposing the proposed restrictions.

July: Splendour in the Grass temporarily moved to Queensland whilst they awaited North Byron Parklands approval.

July: The NSW Department of Planning designated North Byron Parklands as a major project.

September: North Byron Parklands lodged an application with the Department of Planning.

October/November: North Byron Parklands' six week public exhibition period with the NSW Department of Planning. The Department received 4,821 submissions in support of the proposal and 715 submissions against. The Department also received a petition with 4,160 signatures in support of the proposal and petitions totaling 25 signatures against.

**2011** April: North Byron Parklands prepared a response to submissions. The *Reply to submissions and preferred project report* (291 pages without appendices) included substantial modifications to the original proposal, including the downsizing of the scale and frequency of events for the first five years.

July: Splendour in the Grass was again held in Queensland whilst they waited for North Byron Parklands approval. Mayor of Moreton Bay Regional Council Allan Sutherland stated that Splendour injected approximately \$20 million into their economy over three days. The Council, supported by the Queensland government, launched a "save Splendour in the Grass" campaign to keep the event in Queensland.

July: Despite community and Council staff opposition to the restrictions proposed to major events in the Draft Events Policy in 2010, Byron Council proposed an amendment to the 1988 LEP to permanently restrict major music events. A four week public exhibition period in relation to this proposed amendment concluded on August 18. Council received 3,525 submissions. 43 of these were supportive of the LEP amendment to restrict major music events and the remainder objected to the amendment.

December: The Department of Planning and Infrastructure finalised their assessment of North Byron Parklands, recommending approval. They forwarded the application to the Planning and Assessment Commission to undertake the final determination on the project.

**2012** February: The Planning and Assessment Commission held public meetings over two days to hear community feedback on the proposal from North Byron Parklands.

March: Byron Council put their proposed amendment to the LEP – Amendment 151 – on public exhibition for 36 days. Despite community and Council staff opposition to the two previous attempts to limit events in the shire, Councillors proposed to amend the LEP to limit outdoor music events of over 6,000 attendees per day (including staff, participants and patrons) to two a year. This rule would have applied to events of any duration, be it a one or six day event. There were

numerous other restrictions proposed to be included in the LEP, including limiting “major” outdoor music events to certain land use zones, certain times of year and only under certain restrictive conditions.

April: The Planning and Assessment Commission approved a five year trial for North Byron Parklands.

May: A Byron Council media release dated May 24 stated, in relation to the proposed amendment to the LEP – Amendment 151 – which they placed on public exhibition in March (refer above):

*“Recently out on public exhibition for community feedback for the second time, the exhibition saw approximately 10,000 submissions received, most of which were in opposition to the clause and auto-generated through various websites.*

*The submissions were largely in the form of either template-style emails or petitions and totaled approx 9,800. There were 134 individual submissions received, 42 (31%) in favour of the clause and 92 (69%) in opposition”*

July: Sam Haddad, Director General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, wrote to Byron Council on July 1 in relation to their proposed amendment to the LEP – Amendment 151 - to limit “major” outdoor music events, saying:

*“I have formed the opinion that the proposal is not in the public interest. I believe matters of concern to the Council can adequately be assessed through the normal development application process”.*

July: Splendour in the Grass was held at Belongil Fields in Byron Bay whilst the North Byron Parklands site is being prepared to host Splendour in the Grass for the 2013 event.

October: Splendour in the Grass won a Highly Commended Award from the international Greener Festival Awards.

**2013** January and February: Unexpected heavy rains pounded the East Coast, hampering construction efforts at North Byron Parklands and causing flooding throughout the Northern Rivers.

July: Byron Council announced that The Falls Festival would form a part of the Byron Shire summer safety measures for New Years’ Eve. The festival will be held at North Byron Parklands from December 31 2013 to January 2014.

July: The very first event was held at North Byron Parklands, Splendour in the Grass 2013.