

Hi everyone

Thank you for agreeing to write a submission to Council about the following issues at the last NRG meeting.

The Tweed Valley Weekly and Council were flooded with letters in response to the recent TVW editorial about an alternative, centrally-located permanent site for the Pottsville and District Men's Shed at Lot 3 Centennial Drive, Pottsville.

However, our voices were not heard by Councillors Longland, Polglase and Byrne. At the 15 September Council meeting they voted to approve a licence for P&DMS to construct and operate their shed at the temporary Black Rocks sports field location and against a report into the viability of the Lot 3 site. The approval was found to be invalid as according to the *Local Government Act* the licence should not have been granted prior to receiving and considering public comment. Seven days after the licence was approved, the public were notified that they had 28 days to support or oppose the granting of the licence.

Please take a few minutes to write to Council [tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au] with a copy to the Minister of Local Government [olg@olg.nsw.gov.au] requesting rejection of the granting of a licence to the Pottsville and District Men's Shed at Black Rocks sports field site or its deferral until the newly elected council makes a decision on the use of part of the Lot 3 site or adjacent sites as a permanent location for the men's shed. [The deadline for your submission is 25 October.]

This may be the last chance to have your say. Once this industrial-like facility is established 20 metres from primary koala habitat in the middle of a koala corridor, it will be too late for the Black Rocks sports field to be revegetated with koala food trees as recommended by koala expert Dr Steve Phillips and other ecologists. You may like to include the following key points in your submission:-

- By refusing to bring forward a report into the future use and viability of an alternative permanent site, Council is in breach of their resolution at the 21 August 2014 Council meeting.
- Council has ignored the advice of the Office of Local Government that between the cancelled 10 September Council election and the re-scheduled 29 October Council election Council should '*avoid making any contentious decisions that would be binding on the incoming Council that cannot be deferred*'. A men's shed at Black Rocks is a very contentious issue which has divided the community for over 2 years.
- At the 15 September meeting Councillors Longland, Polglase and Byrne had the opportunity to diffuse public division and anger by deferring the licence and voting for a Council report into the Lot 3 site (as proposed by Mayor Milne and Deputy Mayor Bagnall). But instead they have fueled public outcry from the koala caring community by voting for a licence and against a Council report.
- Rejection of investigating the Lot 3 site was based on a flawed Council report, which made false claims that the Lot 3 site does not offer any ecological

advantage and has the same suite of threatened species as the Black Rocks site [see attached map of the Lot 3 site and *Inconsistencies between Council Report and Pottsville Pre-school Ecological Assessment*].

- In 2014 P&DMS and Council Planning staff agreed that Lot 3 Centennial Drive, Pottsville was the preferred permanent site for a men's shed. It is ideally located close to community facilities (SES and RFS), the Pottsville Pre-school and Primary Schools (with easy access to skills sharing) and fulfills men's shed aims of social interaction and inclusion. Now that the development application for the Pottsville Pre-school extensions on the Lot 3 site is awaiting approval (and there are no plans for the remainder of the site), why isn't P&DMS jumping at the chance to secure their preferred permanent location?
- P&DMS are already operating at a temporary site at the Pottsville Primary School (with no need to relocate in the near future). It is illogical to go to another temporary site in the middle of the bush, and waste public grant money by outlaying unnecessary relocation costs.

Please lend our endangered koalas a helping hand. To stop imminent extinction we need to remove the threats which are causing injury, disease and death. The conclusion reached by Dr Phillips in his report on the ecological assessment for the P&DMS development application is: *'I am of the opinion that there is strong likelihood of a significant impact on the Pottsville Wetlands - Black Rocks local koala population if the proposed action (men's shed) was to proceed'*.