

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

A proposed action under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), has resulted in a Public Environment Report (PER) on a Residential Development, Rockingham Close, Mission Beach (Ref: EPBC 2009/5051) to be developed by Willmatt Holdings Pty Ltd. This is known as Lot 66 in 'Garrett Corridor'.



The proposal is to develop the land for 15 low density residential allotments, of about 4,000 m² each and infrastructure such as fencing, services, a private road and a common property conservation land and conservation corridor.



Map as of Dec 08



Lot 66 boundary
Private ownership approx 4000 sq mtrs
proposed house lots approx 850 sq mtrs

WHY IS THE DEVELOPMENT NOT GOOD FOR CASSOWARIES?

ON the 21 July 2008, Peter Garrett, then the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, disallowed a development on the same site on the basis that it would have "clearly unacceptable impacts on a matter protected by Part 3 of the EPBC Act.

The Minister's media release of 28 July 2008 included the statement: "*While it is often possible to identify ways to offset or minimise the potential impacts of a project or development like this, I don't believe that's achievable in this case and that's why I have taken the serious and unusual step of acting to rule this development out completely.*" Which is why we have since then called the area The Garrett Corridor.

And everyone in the community has recognised its importance as essential cassowary foraging habitat.

The present proposed development on Lot 66 is essentially the same development with a few changes made.

Biotropica's 2008 report on "Wongaling Beach Habitat Linkages, prepared for Terrain NRM, lists Habitat Linkage 6 (which is: Reserve 214 to Tam O'Shanter National Park via Lot 802 on SP110366) as a primary linkage that ".... is considered the most significant linkage within the Wongaling area. Linkage habitat on the eastern side of the Tully Mission Beach Road is State land but adjacent forests are privately owned lands.The security of linkage habitat on State lands is assumed, although this **security rests entirely on achieving appropriate levels of protection for the very significant linkage habitat represented by Lot 66 SP164474** [our emphasis]".

"These two parcels contain very high quality vegetation, including riparian vegetation fringing two watercourses that flow into Reserve 214. If these parcels are developed there is a high risk that this critical linkage will become dysfunctional and degraded.

The long term future of Lot 66 on SP164474 requires careful consideration given its critical position, high quality habitat and continuity between State lands. Protection incentives should be considered and some acquisition may also be warranted." (Biotropica 2008).

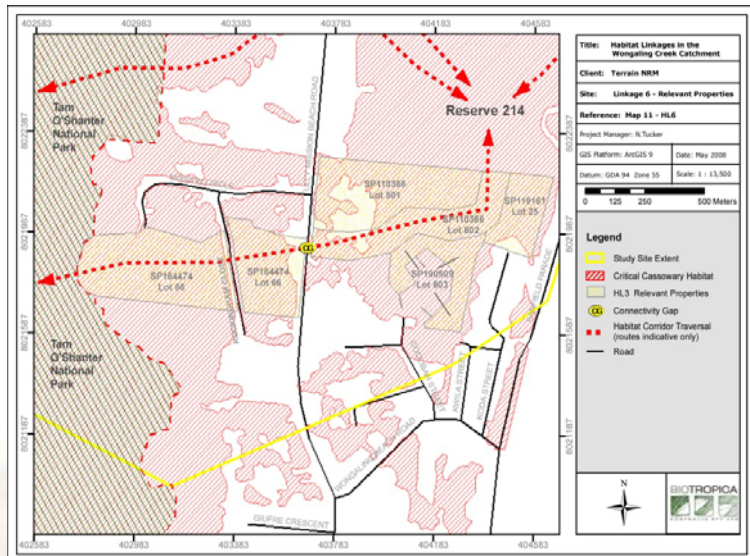


Figure 13: MAP 11 - Habitat Linkage 6

WHAT DO WE WANT?

WE WANT BUY-BACK FOR LOT 66!

WE request that the proposed subdivision on Lot 66 SP 164474 be bought back so that the land can be restored and protected. It forms a significant part of the coast to hinterland corridor connecting the World Heritage Wet Tropics to the critically endangered littoral rainforest and World Heritage Great Barrier Reef. A buy-back of this land is essential, as further development on this site would have unacceptable impacts on the Mission Beach population of the Endangered Southern Cassowary (and possibly other fauna and flora).

The short field study done for the PER shows the considerable value of the corridor for cassowaries. Many residents close to Lot 66 regularly see and recognise individual breeding adults and juveniles (Licuala Lodge includes cassowaries as part of its attraction). Records held by the Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation (C4) show regular sightings along Cassowary Drive, as these birds cross the road to the food sources available within the rainforest area to the east.

The Main Roads Department recognises the importance of the corridor by recently reducing the speed limit and installing a specific cassowary crossing zone.

The Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan (as of July 2010) outlines its strategy for habitat protection and restoration, with three of its main targets being:

- The extent, condition, connectivity and resilience of habitat are increased at Mission Beach.
- Native animals can move between habitat areas through native vegetation along corridors and creeks.
- Cassowaries are thriving in native habitat at Mission Beach.

When it comes to the environment, Mission Beach has taken a battering during this latest development boom. With all the legislation, codes, policies and regulations, on all levels of government, 40% of cassowary habitat is still not protected at Mission Beach.

Lot 66 is a prime example and represents a very important part of that. Some of those policies need to be changed.

SOMETHING CAN BE DONE!!

The Community voice is heard above all others. The Mayor has put his voice toward buyback, so have other Councillors, community groups and many community members.

PLEDGE SUPPORT

If Lot 66 was purchased through a community-supported buy-back project, the Garrett Corridor would remain intact. Buy-back would allow the site to be restored and maintained in the best condition possible.

DONATE

C4's Land Gift Fund has over \$80,000. It may not seem like much, but if we ask all levels of government to match our dollar two to one we would be well on the way.

WRITE A LETTER

The current development is still being assessed by the Federal Environment Agency. You could write a response during the comment period open till 10 December or write directly to Minister Burke asking for buyback for Lot 66.

WE CAN HELP

C4 can help you with a pro forma letter or dot points to guide you. Call in to the Centre or look out for flyers at participating shops and businesses.

For more information on ways you can help protect this important habitat corridor for the future generations of the Mission Beach Community please; visit C4 (next to the Visitor Centre Porter Promenade) call (07) 4068 7197 or email us c4@cassowaryconservation.asn.au