

Trail stays available to riders

CASSOWARY Coast Regional Council has refused to permanently close a gazetted road through national park at Mission Beach, protecting the rights of horse riders in the area.

Councillors voted against the recommendation of CCRC planning manager Aletta Nugent to support a request by Queensland Parks and Wildlife to hand over two road reserves within Tam O'Shanter National Park at Mission Beach.

Ms Nugent said a section of Banfield Road and two sections of an unnamed road were the subject of the request.

"QPW is concerned about the impact of certain activities such as vehicular traffic, motorbikes and domestic pets such as dogs and horses on the national park and, in particular, the essential cassowary habitat," Ms Nugent said in her report to council.

"If they are able to incorporate the road segments into the national park, it will allow them to improve and maintain the walking track network in Mission Beach, continue to promote a unique opportunity to experience the rainforest and provide improved habitat management.

"It appears that the degazettement of the road segments and conversion the area into national park is likely to produce the best outcome for the community and environment."

Councillors did not agree.

"I use it as a horse riding track. I think it's excellent," Mayor Bill Shannon said.

"I think the real problem with closing roads is that once they're gone, they're gone forever."

Cr Jennifer Downs moved the recommendation as printed, which was seconded by Cr Mark Nolan but they were outnumbered 5-2 in the vote.