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# **Submission**

to the

## **Richmond Valley Council**

[council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au)

on the

## **Proposed Irongates development**

**DA 2015/096**

Compiled by John Edwards  
For the Clarence environment Centre  
8<sup>th</sup> December 2014

## **Submission to Richmond Valley Council on the Proposed Irongates development (DA 2015/096)**

### **Introduction**

The Clarence Environment Centre (CEC) is a not-for-profit, volunteer run organisation that has maintained a shop-front in Grafton for over 25 years, and has a proud history of environmental advocacy.

The conservation of the Australia's natural environment has always been a priority for our members, and we believe the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity is of paramount importance. In recognising the interrelationships between species that are crucial to the proper function of those ecosystems, we see it as our responsibility to ensure that all native species, their habitats, and food sources, receive full protection from the law against all inappropriate development. The Ion gates development is, without question, inappropriate.

### **General comment**

One of our major concerns, and one The Richmond Valley Council would be well aware of, is the appalling history of the Iron Gates' saga and the abuse of due process that has been a feature of that saga, not the least of which has been the allowed ongoing destruction of environmental values on the site.

In an earlier development proposal community members successfully fought to protect those values through the courts. Subsequently, court orders on the developer to rehabilitate the site were thwarted by the developer's declaration of bankruptcy, and it is our understanding that, despite that bankruptcy, it is the same developer, under a different business identity, that

Members of the community have taken a strong stand to protect the significant environmental and cultural values of this site. Despite being pilloried by supporters of the development lobby, those who had previously endeavoured to protect the site were vindicated in the courts.

Orders that preclude the use of Iron Gates Road to service the proposed development also appear to be under threat of change.

### **Threatened Species impacts**

The land in question has particular value as a wildlife corridor linking national parks at Broadwater and Bundjalung, and includes a riparian corridor which links to the internationally acclaimed Bungawalbyn Wetland Catchment and beyond. Any development in this area will have seriously negative impacts on the corridor value.

The proposed development site also contains important koala habitat, the removal of which will significantly impact on this seriously threatened species. It seems that where ever major developments of this nature occur, koala populations immediately decline. The Tweed is a typical example of this, where Koalas are expected to become locally extinct within twenty years.

Endangered Ecological communities, Littoral Rainforest, and Coastal Wetlands on or adjoining the site will all suffer from the collateral impacts of land-clearing, erosion and pollution, all of which will contribute to a significant loss of important coastal vegetation.

Acid sulphate soils on the site are also a concern, with ongoing underground disturbance to provide

drainage and infrastructure, guaranteed to result in fish-kills for decades to come. Dead fish and aquatic life would do little for the towns tourism potential where a clean healthy river is one of its major attractions. Unlike the nearby Richmond, the Evans River and its catchment is still in a relatively healthy condition, with good riparian vegetation cover throughout, leading to good water quality. These attributes are becoming increasingly hard to find on the North Coast and will be even more valuable into the future. Water quality of the estuary and river should not be allowed to be compromised by this inappropriate development.

Much of the subject land is flood-prone, and will require considerable fill to place built assets above imminent sea-level rise. That invariably creates massive environmental damage at the quarry site, impacts that are never assessed as a part of the cumulative impact of developments. Projected, sea level rise will give the Iron Gates development a use-by date of less than 100 years, a cost that will be borne by future generations.

Therefore the Clarence Environment Centre asks Richmond Valley Council to reject the proposal outright, and require the developer to rehabilitate the site as required by the earlier court determination.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment

Yours sincerely

John Edwards (Honorary Secretary)  
Clarence Environment Centre