

## Subdivision of Lot 502, Wongaling

As you drive south from Mission Beach to Wongaling, the Tully-Mission Beach Road crosses a creek that feeds down from Mission Circle and into a melaleuca swamp on the beach side of the road.

A subdivision application has been made to Cardwell Shire Council, by the developers, Wongaling Beach Investments Pty. Ltd., for a 39 lot subdivision of that 50 acres on the south side of the creek, known as Lot 502 on SP110366, Parish of Rockingham.

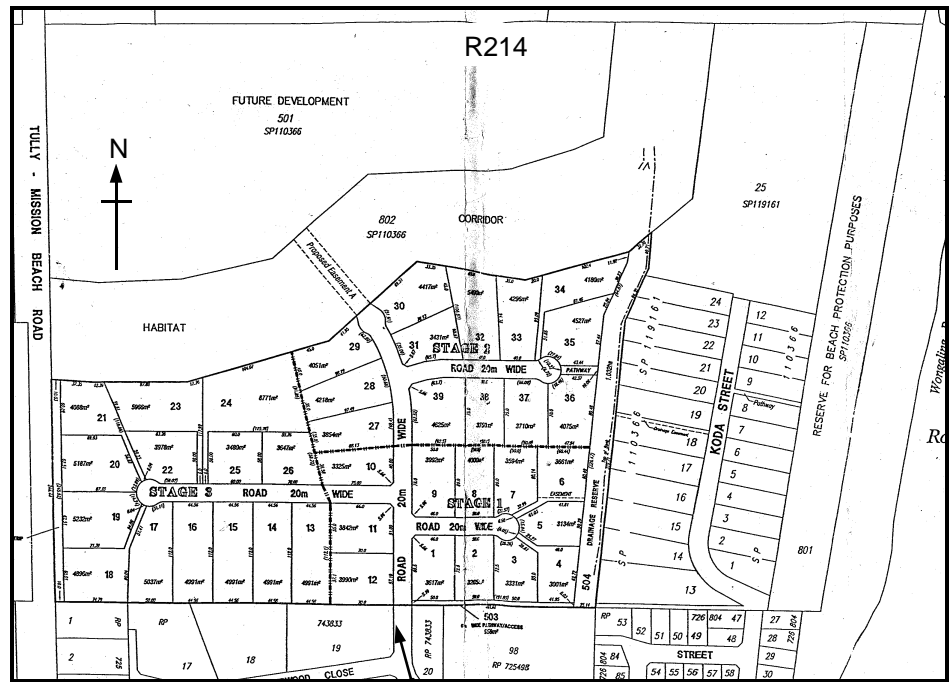
The area 300 metres back from the road is a sand dune rainforest/wetland and cassowary habitat. The vegetation is disturbed Tracey type 17 mosaic, and the rainforest component of the vegetation mosaic (Tracey type 2b) is an endangered vegetation type.

At Cardwell Shire Council's Town Planning meeting on January 18th, Council approved a report by the Town Planner, saying that he had asked the developers to answer some further questions about the development. This effectively stops the clock on the development assessment process until the developer responds.

The questions relate to the low-lying nature of the site, location of lagoons, suitability for on-site sewerage treatment, and sites of special ecological value.

In 1998, fifty metres either side of the creek was surveyed off and became a habitat corridor, Lot 802. There is no doubt that this is an important cassowary corridor because it was surveyed by respected cassowary expert, Les Moore, and referred to as Crossing Point 12 in his report to Department of Main Roads in 1999.

The access to Lot 502 is at the end of Coolibah Street in Wongaling. If you were to drive there now and step off the end of the bitumen onto Lot 502, you would have to be prepared to go up to your knees in water because there is a lake there. The water stretches away for a hundred metres or more between the dunes, and could be much deeper in places. This makes it potentially



The development site would be accessed from the end of Coolibah Street

crocodile habitat.

**Most of this land is totally unsuitable for residential development as it is flood-prone and it should be protected for its environmental values.**

This block, along with the cassowary corridor and Reserve 214, just to the north, and the Gundlewood Reserve beyond that, form a cassowary feeding territory fronting the beach that is in danger of collapsing due to fragmentation. A further loss of 30 acres on Lot 502 would seriously undermine the viability of this habitat and will lead to a lower population of cassowaries,

The wetland area of Lot 502 should be made a conservation trade-off against developing the higher land near the road. Part of Lot 501 and all of Lot 25 (in the north-east corner of the map) should be included in the reserve as they are currently zoned Urban, like Lot 502, only wetter.

The issue has been raised at the local Progress Association meeting. They and Environmental Management Group and C4 have all made submissions to Council raising their concerns.

I get the impression from the Town Planner that he thinks the developer will probably not pursue the development in its current form.

However under the last Council, and a different Town Planner, they passed the adjacent Koda Street subdivision, which had similar wetland habitat. This was under the existing rules, so it is all a matter of how the Planning Scheme is interpreted at the time.

In that instance, the developer cleared and bulldozed the block until it was smooth enough to build on, but the effects of altering the hydrology of the area is completely unknown, and may result in peoples' houses cracking their slabs and walls as the sand settles.

The development application seems to conflict with the Planning Scheme for the Wongaling precinct.

It should also be referred to the EPA as it is endangered species habitat, and damaging it could be against the Nature Conservation Act. It should also be referred to DNR for assessment under the Water Resources Act. And finally it should be referred to the Federal Environment Minister for assessment under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

With all this legislation aimed at protecting the environment, it seems unlikely that this project will get the go ahead.

□ Dave Kimble