



KURANDA

conservation

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7 June 2023

To: EPBC.REFERRALS@dcceew.gov.au

**URGENT REQUEST TO STOP OPERATIONAL WORKS
URGENT REVIEW OF CASSOWARY ACTIVITY WITHIN CURRENT SUBDIVISION
AT FALLON ROAD, KURANDA (LOT 72 ON RP 903071)
EPBC APPROVAL 2011/5939
MAREEBA SHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL DA/12/0035 FROM 2012
AND OPERATIONAL WORK APPROVAL OW/16/0006 FROM 2016**

Kuranda Conservation wishes to urgently report on current (2023) cassowary activity in and around the abovementioned site where heavy earthworks are taking place as we write.

We understand you are currently investigating the status of EPBC rulings (2011/5939) regarding the development application process for this project. This investigation has been initiated by Kur-Alert Inc, a NFP community organisation, of which Kuranda Conservation is a part.

Our role is to inform you of the history and impact upon cassowaries on this site.

Kuranda Conservation (KCons) is the organisation representing all-things-cassowary in the mid section of the WTWHA. We have been researching many aspects of cassowary habitat and behaviour since the early 2000s. Through our research, we have identified that over 40 cassowaries are currently in the Kuranda region where it was believed that only 12 had been identified in the area when we began our work.

When the reconfiguration of the subject site was applied for in 2007, the site was largely cleared for dairy farming and there was little habitat or rainforest vegetation except along Jumrum Creek and its riparian valleys. KCons has conducted continuous cassowary monitoring throughout this period.

The story of the site is that it has been bought and sold, without development, until this year, 2023. In May, the bulldozers began clearing for roads, drainage and house blocks for an 83 lot subdivision. This work is being done without public notification by the developer or the Mareeba Shire Council.

In the period from 2007 to 2023, the entire site has revegetated and provided wildlife corridors in which we have monitored and identified two cassowaries that now inhabit the area. One is a male, named Archie, who frequents the Kuranda Springs end of the site and the other is Matilda, who inhabits the western boundary.

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Innovators are leaders, not followers

In the last week, Matilda was seen on the side of the Kennedy Highway by many drivers, confused and frightened. She was seen to be retreating down the driveway of the large property which borders the subject site. At the time, earthworks on the subject site were underway. The residents at the property, known as Arona, have reported seeing Matilda in the last couple of weeks as she appears to be moving away from the construction noise.

KCons wishes to inform your department that the environmental corridors have improved significantly since the 2007 date of approval of the subdivision which was approved 16 years ago under an out-of-date 2004 Mareeba Shire Council Planning Scheme (MSCPS).

It is also important to note that MSC introduced a further update to the MSCPS in 2016 after community input to reflect the environmental concerns within the Kuranda environs. This 2016 MSCPS is now scheduled for a further update. Between 2007 and today, there have been 4 to 5 'extensions of time' allowed for this development under the 2004 MSCPS. **Whilst cassowaries were not present at the time of the approval, they are now present at the time of the operational works.**

We ask that a new assay of the subject site be undertaken under the EPBC Act that would ensure the site is protected under relevant present conditions. An application to stop work has been made to Minister Plibersec to enable time for conditions to be applied to the subdivision to bring it in line with 2016 planning protocols and allow vegetation to remain and support the successful population increase of cassowaries.

We would appreciate being advised of the actions you propose to take. Obviously, speed is of the essence in this case before more damage is done to habitat and waterways.

Yours sincerely



Jax Bergersen
Secretary