

Date: 26 April 2024

To: Mareeba Shire Council

Hi Angela (and Councillors),

I emailed Christopher on Wednesday to clarify what 're-arranged' means in this context, from your reply:

*"I can confirm that the large rocks will remain and will be **re-arranged** as a feature within the fountain site, rather than relocating to other garden beds."*

<https://kurandaregion.org/content/uploads/2024/04/20240424-Email-to-MSC-Christopher.pdf>

Shellie called me to clarify the reason why the large rocks can't be left in place and need to be laid down or 're-arranged', as it were. Shellie answered in the affirmative when I questioned if the real reason was to prevent Aboriginal people from gathering behind the rock wall and causing a nuisance.

<https://kurandaregion.org/content/uploads/2024/04/20240424-Phone-call-MSC.pdf>

After our call, I went to ask Melissa about the vertical rock wall. Melissa is the owner of Heritage Market next door, and one of the ongoing complainants about the park. Melissa said there hasn't been a nuisance from behind the rock wall – the picnic table to the left of the fountain and down the back of the park toward the highway (next to Koala Gardens) are the places where there are issues. The issues are occurring out in the open – not hidden behind the rock wall. I urge you to speak with Melissa – to confirm for yourself whether the rock wall is a culprit for disturbances.

Then I went to see Trish (Honey House, across the road from the park) who said there hadn't been an issue with Aboriginal people behind the rock wall. Trish then went on to tell me that in the 18 years she had been in her shop across from the park there had been only half a dozen times when the police had been called. She also pointed out there had been no issues for many months and that when there had been issues over the years it tended to be sporadic and short-lived – not every day, all day, year in and year out.

Perhaps there has been a misunderstanding during the community consultation? The edict to make the park 'safer' does not need to include dismantling the rock wall. And as I pointed out to Shellie on the phone the large rocks laying on their side are more likely to produce a safety hazard with people/children climbing slimy rocks. No one is climbing on the rocks as they are now so there is no safety issue as they stand there. I can assure you once they are laying down they will become a safety hazard - how will council stop them being climbed?

First, I think we should see an artists impression of how the rocks will be aesthetically 'laid down' before the man and machine hours are put to work. This should not be left to chance. I took the photos below on Wednesday afternoon while I was looking at the logistics of how they could be dismantled and quite frankly I can't see it. The large rocks are set in concrete so after they are laid down there will be concrete chunks on one end of the rocks and down the sides where they join the next rock – will that be scraped off so the rocks look natural? How much is this dismantling and re-arranging going to cost - when it's totally unnecessary – for safety or any other reason?

When I spoke with Jax (Kuranda Conservation) later in the day to explain why the rocks had to be laid down for safety reasons - she couldn't actually guess the reason why or how the rocks had not

been safe. After I explained my conversation with Shellie we then lamented what a shame that the previous generation's work would be laid to waste – excuse the pun – the hard work and dedication it took a group of community people to plan and plant out the botanical garden and design and construct the 'rainforest waterfall' AKA fountain. Part of our ongoing work now is to make sure we attribute the botanical garden to the Rotary Club – to tell the story of the garden and the people who made it happen. Because folks that's what it's all about.

In 100 years after we're all long gone – the botanical garden will be as special as the figs in Kuranda's main street :-). And people will come from all around the world to get their photos taken with the old trees that are accessible to visitors that can't walk our trails.

Thank you for your reading time.

Kind regards,

Jo Martin
for Kuranda Region Planning Group

From the left - the incorrectly identify problem area behind the vertical rock wall:



From the right – grass doesn't grow there because there's not enough sun. Grass is high maintenance – 80cm ferns proposed to be planted directly into the ground (no expensive garden bed)



Proposed design for vertical wall (with water and electricity removed):

