

FORMAL LETTER OF OBJECTION

Proposed Resort Development – 18 Oasis Drive, Wonga Beach

Wonga Beach QLD 4873

Date

The Mayor and Councillors
Douglas Shire Council
PO Box 723
Mossman QLD 4873

RE: FORMAL OBJECTION TO PROPOSED RESORT DEVELOPMENT – 18 OASIS DRIVE, WONGA BEACH

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I write as a resident of Wonga Beach to formally object to the proposed resort development at 18 Oasis Drive.

This objection is not based upon opposition to tourism. Tourism is an important part of the Douglas Shire economy and I recognise the value that appropriate tourism development brings to our region.

My objection is based upon my belief that **this particular development is inappropriate for Wonga Beach** and that the publicly available documentation does not demonstrate that the proposal is consistent with the planning intent for our community or that many of its significant impacts have been adequately addressed.

Having reviewed the publicly available documents lodged with Douglas Shire Council, I respectfully ask Council to carefully consider the following matters before determining this application.

GROUND OF OBJECTION 1

The proposal appears inconsistent with the planning vision and intended character of Wonga Beach.

Wonga Beach has developed over many decades as a quiet, low-density coastal residential village with a unique identity based upon its natural environment, relaxed lifestyle and strong fishing heritage.

It is fundamentally different from Port Douglas.

Port Douglas has developed as the Douglas Shire's principal tourism destination, supported by restaurants, shopping, reef departure facilities, tourism infrastructure and an established commercial precinct.

Wonga Beach has never fulfilled this role.

The proposed development introduces a large destination resort incorporating accommodation villas, conference facilities, restaurant and bar facilities, wellness facilities, commercial activity, coaches, servicing vehicles and significant visitor numbers.

This represents a substantial change to the existing function and character of Wonga Beach.

I respectfully request that Council determine whether this proposal is genuinely consistent with the Douglas Shire Planning Scheme and the intended future role of Wonga Beach.

GROUND OF OBJECTION 2

The applicant has not demonstrated that the social impacts upon the Wonga Beach community have been adequately assessed.

The applicant identifies numerous projected economic benefits arising from the proposal.

However, the publicly available documentation appears to provide comparatively little consideration of the impacts upon the existing Wonga Beach community.

In particular, I have been unable to locate detailed assessment of:

- impacts upon village character;
- impacts upon community identity;
- impacts upon residential amenity;
- impacts upon pedestrians and cyclists;
- impacts upon elderly residents;
- impacts upon children walking to and from Wonga Beach State School.

Children regularly walk between the newer residential areas and the school using roads and pathways affected by this proposal.

Given the applicant's own predicted increase in vehicle movements, I respectfully submit that these matters warrant much greater consideration.

GROUND OF OBJECTION 3

The applicant has not demonstrated that existing public infrastructure has sufficient capacity.

A development of this scale will place additional demand upon roads, electricity, water supply, wastewater systems, telecommunications and emergency services.

While the applicant describes proposed servicing arrangements, I have been unable to locate formal confirmation from the relevant infrastructure providers demonstrating that existing public infrastructure has sufficient capacity to accommodate this development without significant augmentation.

In particular, I have been unable to identify publicly available confirmation regarding:

- electricity network capacity;
- additional transformer requirements;
- feeder upgrades;
- water supply capacity;
- wastewater servicing;
- road capacity;
- emergency services.

Council should be satisfied that existing residents will not ultimately bear the impacts or costs of future infrastructure upgrades arising from this proposal.

GROUND OF OBJECTION 4

The applicant has not demonstrated that the proposal is compatible with Council's long-term flood mitigation strategy.

Wonga Beach is a recognised floodplain community.

Following Cyclone Jasper, Douglas Shire Council has undertaken significant flood investigations and has publicly discussed future drainage improvements intended to improve flood resilience throughout Wonga Beach.

The applicant has described how stormwater generated within the development may be managed.

However, I have been unable to locate evidence demonstrating how the proposal has been assessed against:

- Council's broader flood mitigation strategy;
- the Wonga Beach Flood Study and Drainage Assessment;
- future drainage corridors;
- regional floodplain function;
- future Council drainage works.

Council should ensure that approval of this development will not compromise future flood mitigation opportunities for the broader Wonga Beach community.

GROUND OF OBJECTION 5

The applicant has not demonstrated that traffic impacts have been fully assessed.

The applicant concludes that traffic impacts are acceptable.

However, I have been unable to locate detailed assessment of:

- school children;
- vulnerable pedestrians;
- cyclists;
- construction traffic;
- coach movements;
- tourist drivers unfamiliar with local roads;
- cumulative traffic impacts during peak tourist periods.

These issues appear particularly important given the existing residential nature of Wonga Beach.

GROUND OF OBJECTION 6

The proposal appears inconsistent with the existing function of Wonga Beach.

Unlike Port Douglas, Wonga Beach is not an established tourism service centre.

Visitors wishing to access restaurants, shopping, reef tours, Mossman Gorge and many other regional attractions will generally need to travel by vehicle.

This raises the broader planning question of whether Wonga Beach possesses the infrastructure, services and settlement function intended to support a destination resort of this scale.

I respectfully request that Council carefully consider whether the proposal is appropriately located within the Douglas Shire settlement hierarchy.

GROUND OF OBJECTION 7

The long-term planning consequences have not been adequately considered.

Council is not simply deciding whether to approve a tourism business.

It is deciding whether to permanently alter the character of Wonga Beach.

Should the tourism operation cease in the future, substantial permanent buildings and associated infrastructure would remain.

I respectfully submit that Council should carefully consider the long-term planning consequences of introducing a development of this scale into a low-density coastal community.

CONCLUSION

I respectfully request that Council refuse this application unless it is satisfied that:

- the proposal is consistent with the Douglas Shire Planning Scheme;
- the established character of Wonga Beach will be protected;
- the social impacts upon the existing community have been properly assessed;
- infrastructure providers have confirmed adequate servicing capacity;
- future flood mitigation works will not be compromised;
- traffic impacts have been comprehensively assessed;

- the proposal is appropriate for the intended role of Wonga Beach within the Douglas Shire.

The existing character of Wonga Beach is unique within the Douglas Shire.

Once that character is fundamentally changed, it cannot easily be restored.

I respectfully ask Council to place the long-term interests of the Wonga Beach community at the forefront of its decision-making process.

Yours faithfully,

