



Dulong: A Sunshine Coast Hinterland Community

Background

For many years Dulong has been a popular place for over 50s, prepared to commute to other places to meet their needs. Traditionally, families tend to move on when their children reach high school age, for many reasons.

Residential development is bringing more people to Dulong, and a changing demographic.

2006 to 2016 (ABS):

In the last ten years, the population of Dulong has increased by 49.60%.

From 377 in 2006 to 564 in 2016

The number of private dwellings has increased by 55%.

From 150 in 2006 to 233 in 2016.

The number of families has increased by 48%.

From 114 in 2006 to 169 in 2016.

The community feels the most recent increase in development relates to the Sunshine Coast Council Planning Scheme (2014) – Superseded Versions combined with the ‘fast-track’ development application process. Land has been subdivided contrary to residents understanding of what is permissible to develop. This has resulted in some residents describing subdivisions on smaller lots as ‘illegal’.

In 2015, a new group emerged called Dulong Futures, in response to a range of community issues related to an increase in residential development, and subsequent population increase; no public space within the ten-kilometre square community for neighbours to connect, children to play and informal gatherings.

Regarding the lack of public infrastructure, the local councillor holds the position, that the Dulong community can access a public hall in Kureelipa, for community activities. This a three, to over ten-kilometre one-way trip for the residents of Dulong, which is best made by car



because there is no safe pedestrian/cycle access along busy roads (particularly, Dulong Road and Nambour-Mapleton Road).

There is no access to public transport in Dulong. There is one, 480 metre 'National Park' style walkway (restricted access due to the gradient and rough terrain). The walkway was officially opened at a community celebration on 13 August 2016. Maintenance of the walkway by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC) is an ongoing issue.

In December 2017, the local councillor attended the launch of a new residential development and announced a proposed [community garden on a 900 square metre lot](#) within the development. To date; the community is still waiting to hear the details about this project.

['Public Infrastructure Contributions'](#) are collected from developers by the SCRC, but not invested back into the community impacted by the development, to ensure the liveability of the community, in line with the SCRC Social Strategy 2015 and the Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017.

South Maroochy River

'The South Maroochy River originates in the Blackall Range at Dulong and flows north then east to join the North Maroochy River near Yandina to form the Maroochy River.'

'The main threats to the waterway are 'weed invasion, pollution from rural areas, rural-residential estates and home sewage treatment systems, barriers to fish passage and depletion and regulation of natural flows'.

[\(Maroochy Shire State of Waterways Report 2005-07\)](#)

In September 2017, residents observed that Platypus Creek, which flows through their properties in Dulong, had stopped flowing. Residents who have lived in Dulong for 25 years state this is the first time the creek has stopped flowing and suspect 'large quantities' of water

were taken from the creek and it may be connected to a nearby residential development under construction. The matter was reported to the 'Department of Natural Resources' (sic).

Residents who have lived in Dulong since the late 1970s recall the narrative from council about the significance of living in a water catchment area, therefore minimal development was expected take place in Dulong.

The Maroochy Shire Council narrative is evident in newspaper articles.

Page 2 CHRONICLE, Tuesday, January 31, 1978.

STEADY RAIN FALLS OVER WIDE AREA

Steady and widespread falls of rain on the Sunshine Coast and hinterland over the past four days have raised morale in towns and farming communities.

It has been the first useful rain for months, the sort that soaks into the ground and sends surplus run-off into dams and rivers.

An estimated 54 millimetres fell in the Dulong area yesterday, the catchment area for Maroochy Shire's Wappa Dam. Shire chairman Cr E. O. De Vere confirmed this morning that this had fed run-off into Wappa raising the water level.

"We were down to 12 feet 4 inches from the top," Cr De Vere said. "Now we're 11 feet 4 inches down."

"But the current water restrictions will not be relaxed yet. It is getting late in the season for heavy monsoonal rain and the regulations will stay until the level in Wappa is near the top. We need eight to ten inches falling over a few days to fill the dam."

West from the coast the drought-stricken Conondale, Obi Obi and Kilcoy districts all reported "useful" falls of rain.

Falls of at least 50 millimetres have been recorded in most areas. Some districts have had slightly more, others farther west have had disappointing falls of up to 12 millimetres.

However, it's the steady nature of the rain farmers regard as most pleasing. "Not a sudden burst then nothing," a Kilcoy man said, "but light and steady giving it a chance to soak into the ground."

Although the feed position had improved, actual drinking water for cattle was still scarce in the Kilcoy area. At least 150 millimetres would be needed before dams filled.

Small dams have filled in the Conondale area and farmers have reported the Mary River looking muddy — a sure sign that run-off was getting to the stream.

Rainfalls registered over the Sunshine Coast for the three-day holiday weekend included Caloundra 72.8mm., Buderim 39, Palmwoods 30, Montville 57, Nambour 30.6, Eumundi 48, Cooroy 56, Tewantin 41, Coolum Beach 20.5.

"An estimated 54 millimetres fell in the Dulong area yesterday, the catchment area for Maroochy Shire's Wappa Dam"

By 2017, the council appears to have shifted its interest and responsibility for waterways (and more), to the individual. An example: Residential development known as Platypus Creek (Legal Description: [Lot 1 SP 286012](#))

Town Planning Notation

Description:

Council Reference REC05/0049.01 The property records of Lots 1 to 21 SP286012 are to be noted as follows:

SOUTH MAROOCHY WATER SUPPLY CATCHMENT

1.This allotment is located within the South Maroochy Water Supply Catchment. To assist in the reduction of pollutants entering down slope watercourses, the developer has installed a number of Water Quality Management Features within the allotment. These include infiltration trenches, vegetation plantings, rock dissipaters and earth swales. These devices are necessary to achieve required water quality objectives within the catchment and must not be removed or disturbed in any way. The landowner is responsible for all ongoing maintenance requirements for the devices. Further details of the devices are contained in the Water Quality Management Report prepared for this development by EBIS - Engineering & Building Investigation Services (Council file reference REC05/0049).

BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.Bushfires can cause extensive damage to property, injury and loss of life unless appropriate measures are taken to mitigate or reduce risks. Bushfires can result in costs to individual residents as well as significant costs to the general community

3.Bushfire Management Plan has been prepared for this allotment to assist landowners in reducing the threat of wildfire on their property. A copy of this plan can be found on Council approval REC05/0049 or is available from the local fire brigade

4.Landowners must monitor and manage fuel loads within their property to reduce bushfire hazards to their own and surrounding assets

5.Landowners must familiarise themselves with the access points to their dwelling and the route to evacuate if a bushfire threatens

Disclaimer

While every effort has been taken to require the developer to prepare a Bushfire Management Plan for residents, a degree of risk will always remain when housing and other assets are located in Australia's flammable vegetation. Sunshine Coast Regional Council takes no responsibility for any outcomes, actions or losses resulting from the implementation of the Bushfire Management Plan.

Community Groups and History of Local Issues

Dulong Quarry is the former home of Dulong State School which closed from 27 August 1967.

There has been a long history of concerns and community action over quarry operations.

In 1982, the Kureelipa and Dulong Residents and Ratepayers Association (KDRRA) voiced their opposition to quarry operations and called for stricter controls. In addition, in the same news article; Chronicle, 8 July 1982, page 26; KDRRA stated they were opposed to 'heavy or



noxious industries in the area' and development of industries such as 'heavy engineering, tanneries and car wrecking yards'.

Around the same time, a quarry was proposed on private property in Sherwell Road. Residents of Dulong, Flaxton and Mapleton collected \$10,000 which was used in preparing for a court case which did not eventuate. The application was rejected by the Maroochy Shire Council. All the money was spent on reports, records and maps; to date, this collection of work by the action group has not been located.

Residents re-focussed their efforts on the council quarry with the aim of shutting it down.

A breakaway group formed, proposed name of the Dulong Area Resident Environmentalists (DARE). It seems the group became the Dulong Association of Residential Environmentalists (DARE).

The goals and actions of DARE, caused tensions between the existing residents' and ratepayers association (KDRRA) and DARE. Both groups supported 'hamlet-style development' rather than 'intensive park residential sub-divisions'. DARE advocated for parklands and sport fields for the area. DARE claimed they would attempt to 'preserve the rural environment of the range' and 'viable farms'. In 1983, a controversial issue which DARE campaigned over, was the sale of the Dulong-Kureelipa School of Arts site in Thrushs Road, (half an acre of land gifted to the community in 1906). The sale was authorised by the Kureelipa Public Hall Committee and the money from the sale used for their hall – to service both Kureelipa and Dulong communities.

It is yet to be established, when the residents' groups dissolved.

Dulong Quarry



Photos: 19 September 2018

'Dulong is a basalt producing quarry. Basalt is used for asphalt production with the extracted rock transported to Image Flat site for crushing and asphalt production.' (Sunshine Coast Council, 14 January 2013)

In 2004, the Maroochy Shire Council were aware of environmental concerns at Dulong Quarry which relate to treatment of the 'Dulong water problem':

Extract from the Maroochy Shire Council Ordinary Meeting Minutes, 25 February 2004 –
'Manager's Verbal Overview'

- iv. Environmental - trials of treatment of Dulong water problem
- v. General:
 - Electrical switchroom upgrade - see report
 - Water recycling project - no work completed to date, expect some work to be carried out during quarry shutdown time using quarry plant and operators
 - Strategy on overburden/fill

In 2018, there is still concern about the same issues;

1. Threats to the South Maroochy Water Resource Catchment Area. Specifically, treatment of the water from the pit that enters the creek and run off from the overburden.
2. Management of the overburden along the Dulong School Road boundary.



On Tuesday morning, 21 August 2014, Dulong residents were alarmed when an incorrect blast at Dulong Quarry shook the community. Many residents reported property damage which they felt was directly related to the blast.

Several residents have privately pursued damage claims. Most residents who reported damage are still waiting on an inspection of their property. Apparently, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Quarry Management lost the list containing resident's details, collected at a community meeting at the quarry in relation to this issue.

Community action resulted in the current email notification system, and notification letter mailed to households, prior to scheduled blasts, which usually occur on a nine-month cycle.

Additional unresolved issues: Public access to reports and information about blasting, and plan of monitors prior to each blast, an interpretation and comparison of data to assess impact on the community with an increasing number of homes in the affected area.

The landscape and visual amenity of Dulong Quarry is at best – poor. The quarry is not a well-developed operation that is contributing to sustainability development in the Dulong community. It appears there is no progressive restoration of the environment and no attempts have been made to landscape the overburden to reflect the existing landscape.

Since 2014, residents have been undertaking independent research. This has revealed reports in the public domain about the Sunshine Coast Airport Expansion Project and the link to Dulong Quarry. There is concern about the future of Dulong Quarry, and likelihood that production will increase to supply major infrastructure projects in the region. Also, residential development is now occurring in areas of Dulong that were understood to be part of the exclusion zone of Dulong Quarry.

Blasting takes place on a nine-month cycle, and on these occasions, [residents provide feedback to Dulong Futures](#) about their experiences and the impact on their homes/property. There are serious concerns now, about adverse impacts of Dulong Quarry on the environment – landscape and waterways, and social impact on the community. If production is to increase combined with the existing issues at Dulong Quarry, it can be expected there will be community action to address the matter.

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Quarries


Council operates a number of quarries throughout the Sunshine Coast, which are used for the manufacture and supply of premium quality quarry products for construction, architectural and landscaping purposes.

Image Flat

Image Flat is a continuous producing quarry extracting rhyolite. In addition to providing rhyolite, the Image Flat site operates a four-stage crushing plant, an asphalt plant, blending plant, NATA certified testing laboratory and weighbridge.

The product range includes:

- road base
- asphalt
- landscaping rock and fill
- crusher dust
- concrete aggregates
- landscape and drainage aggregates
- raw materials for further manufacture into allied products such as batched concrete and paving.



Dulong

Dulong is a basalt producing quarry. Basalt is used for asphalt production with the extracted rock transported to Image Flat site for crushing and asphalt production.

Contacts

For further information, contact Quarries on:

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Email: quarries@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

Last Updated 14-Jan-13

Image: Viewed 19 February 2018, <<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/138766/20130308-0000/www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/sitePage2d18.html>>.

Commercial Activities

Over the years there have been several wholesale plant nurseries operating on rural properties in Dulong. Local residents have often been employed on a casual/seasonal basis but very little is known about their experiences. In addition, how the plant nurseries manage environmental issues such as containment of chemical substances and nutrient rich run off, particularly in periods of heavy rainfall.

In December 2017, a plant nursery situated on Dulong Road, started work on a new site to expand their operations – an old dairy farm on 52 acres. The property is situated in the South Maroochy Water Resource Catchment Area, yet the development application for major earthworks and commercial shade structures, was able to be approved by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council under a 'self-assessment' process.

This raises many questions; major earthworks to reshape a hill into an elevated, flat plateau has potentially created a future storm water issue, which supposedly can be managed successfully by an engineering solution – holding dams. Heavy rainfall events are common place in Dulong, and the impact of changing the natural flow of water is yet to be felt by neighbouring properties and poses a threat to local waterways.

The situation could have been avoided. It seems there is a problem with the development application assessment process, that a commercial activity in a water resource catchment area can qualify for 'self-assessment' without a public notification period and a community feedback process, so the application could have been appropriately assessed.

The applicant had considerable confidence to proceed and began work before the development application was approved. This sends the wrong message to the community about the integrity of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to properly consider the risks of a proposed development application.

In addition, landscape and visual amenity seems to have be overlooked in assessing the development application.



10 December 2018 – work underway. The DA was approved on 13 December 2017

Conclusion

In the ten-year period to 2016, the population of Dulong has doubled. There are more families and more homes but there has been no provision of public infrastructure and community facilities. This equates to a decline in liveability. The current situation in Dulong fails to align with the Social Strategy 2015 and Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017 of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. There are community concerns about the operations of Dulong Quarry which date back to 1982. The community is aware that Dulong Quarry is likely to increase production to supply the Sunshine Coast Airport Expansion Project and major development infrastructure in the region. Yet the current issues have not been addressed. There is concern about the recent approval of a commercial development application which poses a threat to the South Maroochy Water Resource Catchment Area and neighbouring properties.

Written by Gillian Hall, Dulong Futures
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