

Hundreds rally to 'Protect Byron'

Hundreds of people rallied in Byron Bay yesterday to protest against the proposed over-development of the town sparked by the recent controversial approval of rezoning of West Byron for hundreds of new homes.

The rally, themed 'Protect Byron', included a march down main street, speakers, a concert at the beach and a drive for young people to register to vote at the upcoming election.

Lead singer for internally-acclaimed band Parkway Drive, Winston McCall, led the march and told the crowd that the very reason people loved and cherished about Byron Bay were set to be destroyed by the over-development of the town.

Arakwal spokesperson Delta Kay spoke passionately about her love of country and noted the loss of species from the region.



The Protect Byron rally moves down main street. Photo Oliver Rudloff

Ms Kay's key message was that the land it's not ours to destroy and we should be caring for country'.

The protest was organised by the Byron Residents' Group (BRG) and Byron Young Residents Alliance (BYRA) with crowd estimates ranging from around 500 to just over 1,000.

BRG spokesperson Cate Coorey said 'what was amazing was the number of younger people coming out to stand up for the town – it shows the extent to which they want to "Protect Byron"'.

'The developers promoted the West Byron project as a place where young people could buy homes yet these young folk recognise that, like so many developments in Byron, they won't get a look-in,' Ms Coorey said.

'They know from experience that the houses at West Byron will become holiday lettings like the majority of new homes built here.

'These young people also love the natural environment and the ambience of Byron they grew up with; they don't want to lose it.

'Maybe the young people of Byron will be heard in this election and they won't see their town ruined in their lifetime,' Ms Coorey said.



Mana Aloha Hula kicking off the Protect Byron rally yesterday at Railway Park. Photo Sean O'Shea

Australian singer-songwriter Xavier Rudd said the West Byron development would inevitably cause environmental damage, while local pro-surfer Dave Rastovich said it would impact strongly on the Belongil Estuary and adjacent Cape Byron Marine Environment.

Ms Coorey said the rally was timed in advance of the upcoming state election 'to convey community feeling about the over-development of Byron Bay, in particular the recent rezoning of 108 hectares at West Byron for intensive development'.



West Byron protest organiser, Parkway Drive's front man, Winston McCall rallies the troops as more than 700 supporters march through Byron on Sunday.



By www.echo.net.au

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