

We The People
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We the People 239 Where Will the Children Play



Good day to you. I remember so very well my years as a kid growing up with my mates, building cubby houses, street cricket, practical jokes, riding our bikes, cracker night and sticking bungers in the next door neighbours letter box and general fun and mischief. We were the quintessential Australian boys. We spent most of the summer holidays on the beach around rock pools and in the surf and while we only had a little pocket money from mowing lawns, we made do and had a ball. I remember clearly that we could invent play around anything and in between being harmless scoundrels we used our **imagination** as it gave us limitless possibility for simple fun. Later when older a curious attraction began with girls and spin the bottle took over from the cubby. Somewhere in that post pubescent period my brains fell out. We lived in relative safety as an ordinary Australian family and I don't remember wanting for anything as life was so much more straight forward and our basic needs were met. Our front door was never locked and safety for all of us was never an issue. Children need to play and use their imagination and that start in life happens only in a sound and stable community.

This brings me to the topic today and the quality of life we can expect for ourselves and families and children in the future for the Gold Coast. The Queensland State Governments plan for SE Queensland spells out a future where families and children will in many cases be robbed of the quality childhood so many of us enjoyed. We carry those early memories as special character bench marks right through life and I think developing one's imagination was actually a rite of passage. So now the plan pushed by a thoughtless short term Palaszczuk government and backed by an arrogant compromised Gold Coast City Council, leaves much to be desired when it comes to building a healthy community, let alone in looking after the natural environment and our precious wild life. The key word is **high density living** which means traffic grid lock, crime and people forced from their homes because of infill. The latter, called '**infill**', is a sinister practice and is one of tearing communities apart by stealth. Put simply, an individual can demolish their house and build pretty well what they want without the neighbours being told or having any right to complain or negotiate. In doing this it caters for the short term developer and ruins streets and people's dreams. Whole neighbourhoods are lost as has happened to so many in Brisbane. Who wants to live next to a high rise or block of ugly units. So '**infill**' is a creeping paralyses where our democratic rights are trampled on for the greater good as the bureaucracy and politicians see it. They are demonstrably wrong.

I have no idea why governments and some people think an ever increasing population is good. Any growth benefit is short lived and yet we the people are left with infrastructure bills and an ever increasing cost of living and no back yards and so the question must be asked....**where will the children play**, where will the cubbies be built, where will it be safe and where will imaginations be encouraged through play. When asked about a population cap Mayor Tom Tate memorably said, "**I won't put a rabbit proof fence around the Gold Coast**". His clumsy metaphor aside, it appears however he is happy for us to live like '**battery hens**'. This type of thinking is not in our long term interest because there is a limit on population before we end up just a crowded unpleasant place full of memorials to short lived politicians and social gamblers. The yard stick for success with a lot of these characters is just more of everything but in reality it doesn't produce a cohesive community or a decent place to live for any of us. In my view Australia must establish a population target and I believe we have already exceeded it just as we have on the Gold Coast. The population here is set to double, so what one earth do you think the Gold Coast will be like in the next two decades. *Beautiful one day, ruined and over populated the next.*

We live here for the life style and tourists come here for the relaxed layback experience so why on earth would you destroy that and part of the answer lies in our leaders being stuck in an old exhausted paradigm and driven only by political cycles and greed. The State governments aims are best summed up by the new development at Carrara where Council has given approval for a **high rise** development for 1500 dwellings on the famous cow paddock flood plain, on condition the developer supplies **life boats and tinned food supplies**. The upside is that the kids can play in the life boats before Gold Coast society follows the Titanic into the depths.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley