



We The People
Program 279 February 5, 2018
We the People 279 The Theme Park and Noah's Ark

Good Day to you. The Biblical story of Noah's Ark is known throughout the world. It records the dreadful state of man's civilisation and God's instruction to Noah to build a mighty wooden ship in which birds, animals and his family would be saved from a catastrophic flood. It rained for 40 days and forty nights and the waters rose and engulfed the land but Noah and his family survived. The story serves as a warning which is timeless but with sadness I must say it appears man learns little from past events. There are a number of levels to Noah's story however I am taking the liberty to liken the foolishness of the people of that day to a huge Chinese corporation and the Gold Coast City Council. At Carrara on the Gold Coast the people are building a metaphoric ark as they fear for their lives and their freedom and that their democratic rights will be washed away.

The heart of the issue lies with a large flood plain at Carrara on the banks of the Nerang River. There is a short street which runs into Maryland avenue. It's an area of lovely homes right on the river and a beautiful haven for people to raise families and enjoy life. Across the river a network of streets also provides residents with a tranquil mature enclave of parks and trees. Both sides of the river are text book havens of peace and are places to aspire to live and in direct contrast to the little boxes made of ticky tacky and the giant concrete monoliths this Council encourages. On this important patch of flood plain trees provide shade and cows graze and water birds feed and rest. It's simply stunning and an asset for all on the Gold Coast. Now along comes the Chinese company, the Songcheng Entertainment group, a private company, which runs theme parks and they want the flood plain to build a theme park called Australian Legends. I find the name offensive as you can bet your life the Chinese developer doesn't give two hoots for our heritage.

So the Mayor Tom Tate has been reported as saying this development will be a "game changer" and you are right about that Mr Tate. A game changer for the Chinese who appear to want to be our masters and our landlords. A game changer for the residents who call the area home. A game changer for traffic congestion with an estimated flood of **7000** addition cars each day accessing the area. A game changer during times of flooding when the deluge, instead of flowing in and across the flood plain, roars straight on down the river to increase inundation for all river side residents. It appears a game changer for the better in your world Mr Tate but for **we the people** and especially those at Carrara and downstream a world of pain and disruption. Mayor Tate, life is about people not Chinese companies and crass theme parks and the false mantra of jobs, jobs, jobs. It seems in the race to pretend we're a city rather than a large town the Council and your mob appears to have thrown out the rule book of common sense and good town planning and seem oblivious to the quality of life we have enjoyed in the past.

Flood plains are an asset and not a liability. Flood plains are essential and slow the water and allow silt to settle and the water to spread over a large area during a flood. They provide a haven for wild life and often create a pleasant buffer zone where it's quiet and peaceful but this of course appears to be of no consequence to the Chinese developers. Now let's consider **climate change** and extreme weather patterns. The Gold Coast is listed as extremely vulnerable to sea level rise. As it rises, so it holds back the floods waters so what will be the legacy of this Council in say 20 years. Building a Chinese theme park on a flood plain defies logic and reminds me of the people in Noah's day who didn't listen. What happened then was a game changer Mr Tate. In the meantime the metaphoric rains have started and the flood of public opinion is coming as a deluge like no other. People count, not unbridled broad scale unsustainable development pushed along by a complicit State government and sheepish dominated councillors. I met with the good residents affected on both sides of the river. They will all suffer from noise and light pollution while the theme park trades to 10pm nightly. While meeting with these good folk I was handed a poem by resident Yvette Dempsey and it says it all and now here is Yvette to share it with you.

The Theme Park and Noah's Ark

There is a lovely floodplain – you'll find it near to me.
It's full of grazing cattle and shady native trees,
When the Heavens open and the ground soon turns to mud,
It fills with gentle water and it saves us from a flood.

Its beauty is a tonic, it's better than a pill
And sometimes there are wetland birds, the black & white spoonbills.
And in the muddy corners, just near a fallen log,
You hear the raucous croaking of an army of green frogs.

But soon the plain is going and the mood is very dark,
The grass will turn to concrete and we'll get a big theme park.
We're told it will be 'Aussie' and will be the new 'bee's knees'
But how can it be Aussie when it's owned by rich Chinese?

Not Chinese like our neighbours, who add to this great nation
But a group of faceless businessmen – a giant corporation.
Our view will go forever – we'll get car parks and some diners
And the whole thing will be hidden by the great, big 'wall of China'.

Did we want this theme park? Did we ever get consulted?
The answer's 'no' to both of those – we're sad and we're insulted.
The cattle will be moved, they might even make a dam,
Our little road will morph into a massive, traffic jam.

We're OK with new neighbours, with homes that suit the place,
But a theme park on the floodplain is an absolute disgrace.
Will Council listen to our woes, what of the politicians?
To change their keen approval will be a mighty mission,
To bulldoze pristine nature is really *just not on* -
We'll miss our lovely floodplain when it's well & truly gone.

Well there you have it, a very sad situation where yet again it appears 'we the people' don't count. My thanks to the good folk at Cararra for their vitality and interest in fighting this affront to the environment and democracy.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley