

We The People
Program 294 May 21, 2018
We the People 294 Lake Orr the People's Lake



Good Day to You. At Varsity Lakes near Robina and just south of Bond University lies Lake Orr. It's a peaceful body of water used by all manner of folk for fishing, sailing, kayaking, rowing and indeed it's the **people's Lake**. Good folk have homes around its shoreline and value the tranquil uncongested view and the peace it brings to life. Now enter Gold Coast Council and the 'more is better' mantra and it seems everything has to be world class, whatever that means. When I was a kid growing up we just had fun. Outright competition was racing your billy cart or playing street cricket and I'm pleased to say none of it was world class. So it appears the Council are all set to approve up to **nine rowing lanes** with most a kilometre long with hundreds of coloured buoys on the Lake's surface.

In order to appear consultative toward the community, Cr Hermann Vorster wheeled out an on-line survey so residents could express their view, however the e-survey didn't work for a while. Now Vorster's survey was rendered on or about March 26 with a deadline of April 16. This coincided with Easter, the Commonwealth Games and school holidays. Was this a coincidence or was it just a case of burying the survey allowing only a few weeks to comment so Australian Canoeing could just get the matter through quickly. Mind you, in my view this is par for the course for this Council where sometimes they go through the motions then do what they want being sure they will pass a rudimentary audit later on. Well, not so boys, as the Local Government Act of Queensland at page 16 2(c) calls for ... **"democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement"**. So it appears after two years of planning for these rowing lanes the people received just a few weeks' notice in the low profile survey. When Cr Vorster wrote to residents most letters were just addressed to **'the resident'** pretty well guaranteeing they'd be binned as junk mail. Now a growing group of residents realised the blight the lanes will create visually on the lake and were able to compel Cr Vorster to extend the deadline to May 18 which is still far too little time.

The rowing lanes' stainless steel cables are each a kilometre in length with 2 sizes of tethered buoys. There are consequences for this and yet no environmental study is available nor it appears has any effective community impact assessment been made. By way of example, the Gold Coast Rowing Club is cancelling its program called **Sailing for the Disabled and Little Tackers learn-to-sail** programs, because of the soon to be buoyed lanes on Lake Orr and they have nowhere else to go. Now the question must be asked why this marvellous course for the disabled will be ruined when apparently the public haven't yet provided their comment or is it just a done deal as the residents suspect. These little sailing craft have a tendency to heel over causing centre boards and rudders to run at an angle under the water placing them at high risk of being caught by the tethered buoy cables and that my friends is world class selfishness and perhaps hypocrisy on behalf of the Councillor's survey. Residents predict over 500 buoys will be floating on the lake's surface and apparently Gold Coast Waterways have concerns about the monopolisation of public aquatic precincts in general. Many people use the lake and residents say it will interfere with many regular community activities including all sailing apart from the visual degradation. Of course you also have the potential loss of property values once the lake is festooned with plastic balls not to mention the added early morning noise and the major parking problems in the area. Public parking is very limited and it appears none of these matters have been significantly or effectively canvassed by Hermann Vorster. He also claims that the lanes will be there on a semi permanent basis but no suggestion as to what that really means and he claims the changes will be to the benefit of all lake users which is demonstrably not true. I think these are just motherhood statements and the residents should be invited to a public meeting to have their questions and concerns properly addressed before this matter proceeds.

I remind listeners, Cr Vorster howls the mantra of **"protecting our lifestyle"** but that's very, very debatable and especially so with infrastructure keeping up with population growth. So where to from here.....well it's not a done deal yet and the monopolisation of Lake Orr may not be in the public interest because no monopoly ever is. My concern is that residents' views appear effectively sidelined with this tricky Council of secrecy. Time to re-consider your own mantra Herman.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley