

SPRINGBROOK AT A CROSSROADS

Will one of the world's oldest rainforests be protected for future generations
or
transformed before the public fully understands what is proposed?

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Urgent Call to Protect Springbrook World Heritage Area Before October Planning Decisions

Springbrook, Queensland

Concerned residents, scientists, senators and community stakeholders are calling for immediate independent scrutiny of a series of major planning and development proposals affecting the Springbrook Plateau. Community members are concerned that these projects are being fast-tracked, with key planning decisions expected before October, to maximise tourist opportunities **in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympic Games**. Many are urging that comprehensive environmental assessment and public transparency occur before irreversible decisions are made.

Springbrook forms part of the **UNESCO World Heritage-listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia**, one of the oldest surviving rainforest systems on Earth and home to rare wildlife, ancient ecosystems, significant water catchments and places of deep cultural importance.

A WORLD HERITAGE CLOUD-FOREST IS NOT A THEME PARK

Community members have spent the past year compiling scientific reports, planning documents and publicly available government information relating to proposals for the Springbrook Master Plan that included a Springbrook Cableway, the Eaglemont Estate eco-tourism expansion, a tour bus terminal at The Settlement, road widening – three meter wide cement paving for most of Purlingbrook wilderness walk- more suspension bridges in front of the Purlingbrook waterfall, a huge viewing platform that cantilevers out over the waterfall, power station upgrades, groundwater issues and **new laws to enable the compulsory acquisition of private land and homes for non-essential eco-tourism projects**. Rather than viewing these proposals in isolation, residents are asking whether their combined environmental impacts have been independently assessed.

“Tourism has no inherent right to national parks; its role should be limited to carefully controlled support for public recreation, or in rare circumstances, to support conservation through adjacent communities. National parks must remain autonomous conservation assets, protected from political and commercial capture, and accessible to the public who fund and value them.”

Professor Emeritus Ralf Buckley Griffith University’s School of Environment and Science

One of the key documents now available is the **Springbrook Groundwater Investigation (2021–2025)**, which confirms that Springbrook's groundwater, streams and rainforest ecosystems are closely interconnected and recommends capped tourism and continued monitoring before long-term environmental thresholds can be confidently established. Environmental impact studies, of the area from previous decades, based on less tourism, have found the area far too sensitive for any previously proposed developments. Something on this scale, proposing to increase Tourist numbers

by 7 to 10 times, with so many moving parts, is impossible to predict its full environmental impact, but could well be a fast-tracked environmental disaster.

"We are not opposed to responsible community planning," said Dr Shé D'Montford, speaking on behalf of concerned the 735 Springbrook residents. "Our concern is that irreversible decisions could be made before all of the environmental, hydrological, cultural and cumulative impacts have been independently assessed."

Residents are now seeking assistance from environmental lawyers, scientists, universities and conservation organisations to undertake independent reviews of the available evidence and identify whether additional environmental investigations should be completed before major planning decisions proceed.

The community is calling for:

- Independent cumulative environmental impact assessments.
- Updated ecological and biodiversity studies.
- Independent hydrogeological review.
- Comprehensive assessment of World Heritage values.
- Transparent public access to environmental reports and planning documentation.
- Meaningful consultation with Traditional Owners and local communities.
- Independent scientific review before irreversible approvals are granted.

Senator Corinne Mulholland says:

"Regarding the proposed Springbrook Cableway development, I am advised that no EPBC referral has been received to date. The proponent has a legal responsibility to make a referral if their actions have a significant impact on any Matters of National Environmental Significance. The Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water has offered to meet with the proponent to review their proposal and remind them of their obligations under the EPBC Act."

Community members are particularly concerned that planning processes expected to progress before **October** could significantly influence the future management of one of Australia's most internationally significant natural landscapes.

"This is not simply a local planning issue," Dr D'Montford said. "Springbrook belongs to all Australians and is recognised globally for its Outstanding Universal Value. Once these landscapes are altered, they cannot simply be recreated. We have a responsibility to ensure that decisions are guided by the best available science, transparent planning and genuine community consultation."

The community is encouraging environmental scientists, legal practitioners, conservation organisations and interested members of the public to review the available evidence and assist in ensuring that any future decisions affecting the Springbrook World Heritage Area are informed, transparent and environmentally responsible.

With planning milestones expected before October, the time for independent review is now.

Media Contact:

Dr S. D'Montford

Springbrook, Queensland

Phone 0410582295

Website: <https://savespringbrook.org>