

Kabi Kabi fear for Maroochy salt water fishery



Bill Hoffman | 7th Nov 2016 3:55 PM



From left: Sean Fleischfresser, Rodney Jones and Kerry Jones inspect a water mouse nest in mangrove adjacent the proposed Twin Waters West development.

ONGOING development was destroying salt water fisheries in the Maroochy River according to indigenous residents who fear Stockland plans to develop an 850-allotment estate would endanger species currently the subject of a National Recovery Program.

The indigenous residents, including those with family links to the region which go back 10,000 years, have made a submission opposing a proposed major Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme amendment that would facilitate a residential development application on the site.

They say development would put at risk the nocturnal water mouse, a species subject to a National Recovery Program, which make their nests in the roots of the mangrove and causaurina that line the river banks in front of the proposed development.



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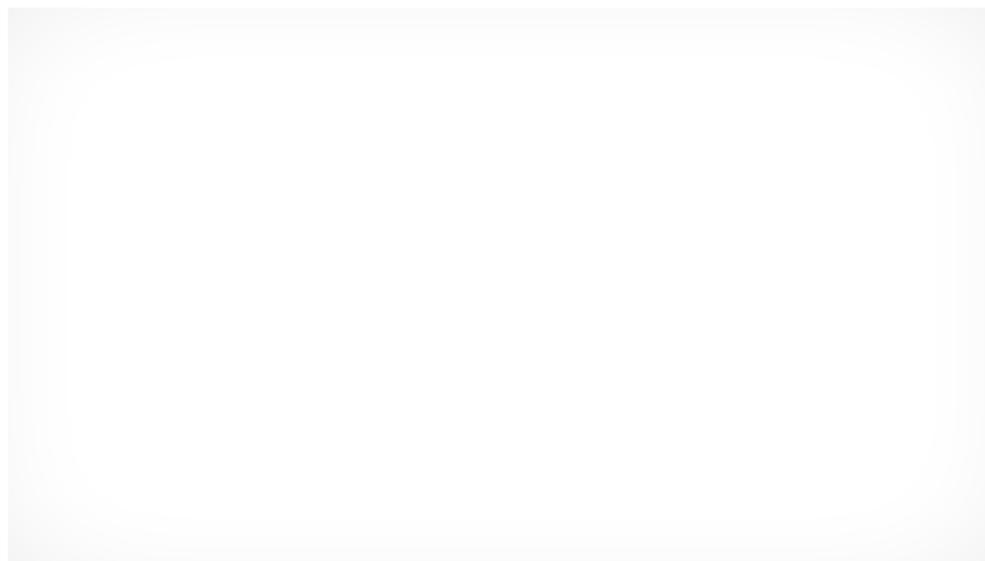
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Kabi Kabi traditional owner Kerry Jones has been working with family members, the

community and government agencies revegetating sites along the river with mangroves, removing invasive weeds, monitoring wildlife and testing for water quality.

He believes mangrove and saltmarsh communities were vital fisheries habitats and nurseries with their state of health indicated by the abundance and numbers of key species including crabs and the vulnerable water mouse.

"These communities are champions in taking up carbon pollution while providing free environmental services in helping to deal with climate change and rising sea levels," Mr Jones said.

He has called for more land to be set aside for conservation, wildlife habitat, eco-tourism and Aboriginal cultural heritage along the Maroochy River.

University of Queensland researcher Janina Kaluza has been studying water mice on the Maroochy River, Pumicestone Passage, the Great Sandy Strait including South Moreton Bay Islands and Fraser Island in southeast Queensland since 2011.

She said the water mouse was listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act (1999) and Nature Conservation Act (1992) with a National Recovery Plan (2010) that is now supported by the Commonwealth Government's Referral Guidelines for the vulnerable water mouse (2015).

A published report in 2016 by Ms Kaluza et.al has provided evidence of 180 water mouse nests being present within 765ha of available habitat along the Maroochy River system.

The study is the first to report the distribution and density of water mice in the Maroochy River with nests being located adjacent to the proposed development at Twin Waters West.

As the key elements in nest construction were mud and plant presence found within an intertidal wetland, Ms Kaluza said a very cautious approach was required to land use change to protect the water mouse and other species from local extinction (Kaluza et.al 2016).

"Other contributing factors that may adversely impact water mouse population in southeast Queensland are linked to introduced predators such as fox, pig and cat," she said.

Both Twin Waters and the Twin Waters West land Stockland proposes to develop are historical indigenous areas.

Kabi Kabi members remain concerned the development of the Twin Waters residential estate destroyed or disturbed many culturally significant site which they say led to the removal of more than a thousand artefacts.

Areas already lost include extensive village and campsites encompassing traditional women's areas, healing areas, special marker trees and ceremonial grounds which are all part of the Maroochy Dreamtime legend.



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