

Extract from ABC Interview – Cameron Costello comments

FOCUS: Development at Toondah Harbour

9 October 2018. 10:00 am

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/brisbane/programs/focus/focus-on-toondah-harbour/10331364>

At 15:13

Question:

Now Cameron Costello for the Quandamooka People there is also cultural heritage at stake here as well - what will this development mean for that?

Answer:

Yeah thanks Emma, The Quandamooka People we've been here for 20 000 years - plus, so for us this our traditional country and landscape and so there is a vast cultural heritage landscape right across Quandamooka Country beyond Toondah Harbour and so we are the registered cultural heritage body that undertakes the legislative requirements for the state of Queensland and so we will be actively engaged by Walker to go out and just actually identify the cultural heritage here. So obviously the Traditional Owners are very interested in the whole range of the development. There is native title, a native title Claim of our people has been lodged and registered over most of Redlands which includes Toondah Harbour so any proposed development would have to go through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement process with the Quandamooka People which would be, have to be authorised by them as well, so...

Question:

Have you come up to a point at which you can decide whether you are for or against the development?

Answer:

No, I think at this stage there is a range of varying opinions around it and I think the Quandamooka People are watching very closely on what will be the outcome of all the assessments and reports around that. We've seen the concept change in scope and scale already and we sit there in wait for the right time for the government and developers to come and engage with us around those points but at this stage it is really an EIS process and there is a lot of technical reports that need to be done.

But I will say that Quandamooka Country is a cultural and wildlife sanctuary - that is our starting point and totally acknowledge that there is significant Ramsar areas and stuff that will need to be dealt with the developers and the Traditional Owners are very interested in what the outcome will be.

At 16:11

Question:

We are talking of population projections of 2 million extra people what opportunities or challenges do you see there in terms of protecting First Nation native title rights if they are granted but also the cultural heritage in this area?

Answer:

Yeah there is a couple of points – the first is that there is an SEQ Regional Plan and for the first time First Nations people have been included in that, in that we must be also prospering as we move forward and taking into consideration our cultural heritage and native title rights. So what's really important for this project is to make sure that the Traditional Owners who historically have been excluded from, you know, the development process and so we are now actively engaged in that and that's a really critical and important thing –and so protecting cultural heritage and ensuring that native title rights are recognised are really critical - but the other broader thing is that Quandamooka Country is broader than just Toondah Harbour – its Moreton Bay and you have to take into account - I haven't seen any studies that said this is actually how much has been dredged already from the bay. So you've got the Sunshine Coast airport was dredged from the bay, you've got the second airport being dredged from the bay, we got Gold Coast dredge as well. So there is a lot of those sort of broader impacts that are across the bay that aren't even Redland City Council. They are State Government or other Councils.

Question:

So Cameron you were saying that there is already a dredging issue there that you want addressed?

Answer:

Well - It's an unknown, it's an unknown issue, but , it's happening across the bay. But I think the other - just coming back to that - I think the economic development opportunity for the Quandamooka People needs to be fully entrenched in this project to date, which did occur as part of the initial process. So it was conditions put on the developers and the developers have engaged us around those opportunities but there is a long way to go and if it does come to fruition at the end of day we need to make sure First Nations peoples are actually benefitting and seeing, being included and being part of that economic development.

Question:

Do you want more people, many more people going to North Stradbroke Island?

Answer:

Our, our key goal is to actually get less people spending more money – we have got to protect our - we have got to protect our environment and our culture over there but I think there is capacity - it all comes back to infrastructure – so right now we, are looking at developing - part of the economic transition for the island is looking at upgrading the Dunwich harbour as well and if the infrastructure is put in place then there may be more extra, there may be extra nodes and more people might be able to go but at the current state that it's in we are actually looking to look at what is the capacity for the island to take tourism. That is a really critical question. What is the capacity for the bay to take increases in tourism and that's what these infrastructure projects are about. If... the last thing we want is to close down Brown Lake because it's been so severely damaged because we didn't have the right infrastructure there. So for us it's about us all collectively working together to plan, to look at the capacity, to look at protecting cultural heritage and the environment and putting in place infrastructure that is going to, I guess deal with what is actually coming. It is a reality. The population growth is coming and so as Traditional Owners who sit back and watch water taken, watch fisheries, large fisheries taken - we are sitting there going we have to actively engage. We've got to be out there and we've got ensure that we are in there and making sure the planning is putting infrastructure in place to protect our cultural heritage and our environment.