



National Parks Association
of Queensland Inc.



Council urged to drop Springbrook Cableway ‘mission’; listen to locals

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A coalition of environment groups are gravely concerned that the Gold Coast Council is pushing ahead with a cableway proposal in World Heritage listed Springbrook National Park without First Nations agreement or community consultation, and despite likely “devastating consequences” for threatened species and ecosystems.

Today the Gold Coast Council’s Economy, Tourism and Events Committee discussed a report into the Springbrook Cableway to “seek Council decision on the way forward”, despite the report noting native title applicants Danggan Balun people provided formal advice that they do not support the Springbrook Cableway and do not want the project to proceed.

Gecko Environment Council, along with Queensland Conservation Council and National Parks Association of Queensland is calling on the Crisafulli Government to rule out a cableway through the World Heritage listed Springbrook National Park and commit to meaningful consultation with local communities before announcing plans for developments in and around protected areas.

Gecko Environment Council Campaigner Lois Levy said:

“As a conservationist involved in the original and subsequent cableway proposals all of which failed to recognise the environmental damage and safety risks of such a project, I urge Council to give up on this push.

“A cableway to Springbrook would significantly impact threatened species and increase risk of fire and landslip in the National Park. It would completely endanger the integrity of this small National Park which is home to exceptional wildlife and habitat.”

Gecko Environment Council is concerned that community consultation will be flawed.

“How can a community member make an informed decision with little information about the environmental, social, cultural and economic facts?” asks Ms Levy.

“Gecko urges Council to find another project to celebrate the unique natural and cultural values of our World Heritage listed National Parks. Gecko strongly recommends investigating a world-class World Heritage Centre either at Springbrook or Mudgeeraba with the opportunity for locally-based tourism companies to take visitors to various sites in the hinterland.

“Even the Council’s own report says that cableways are nothing new to attract more visitors, but an internationally renowned World Heritage Centre may just do that. There is nothing like it in Queensland’s southeast.”

Queensland Conservation Council Protected Areas Campaigner Nicky Moffat said:

“The Gold Coast City Council needs to either come clean to the public on their plans, or preferably to abandon this flawed project. The public still don’t have the details of the cable car, where it will go, or who the proponent is.

“We know that the native title applicants for the study area are opposed, and the Council has committed \$500,000 on a project that appears to be a non-starter because of the likely environmental impacts on Springbrook National Park, and lack of traditional owner consent.

“We are unclear on the position of the State Government. Premier Crisafulli has told QCC he will not support any cable car project in the Gold Coast hinterland that will damage the environment, so we are calling on him to publicly rule out support for any project that involves impacts within national parks, especially World Heritage areas, or proposals opposed by traditional owners.”

National Parks Association of Queensland CEO Chris Thomas said:

“Tourism benefits greatly from our wonderful natural assets in Queensland, and brings visitors and prosperity to regions. But tourism in protected areas will be hindered by an approach that takes shortcuts around necessary community consultation.

"We urge the Crisafulli Government to have a more considered approach and to value the opinions and expertise of Traditional owners, local residents, tour operators, conservationists, and the scientific community who all treasure this renowned world heritage area."

Media contact:

Queensland Conservation Council: Ellie McLachlan, 0407 753 830

Available for interview:

Gecko Environment Council Campaigner Lois Levy: 0412 724 222

QCC Protected Areas Campaigner Nicky Moffat: 0424 452 350

NPAQ CEO Chris Thomas: 0427 024 579

Background:

Despite its natural values, a cableway was first proposed by a private consortium in 1998, and was rejected because of the risks that it posed, including:

- It would destroy habitat and impact on wildlife, with clearing for towers, access roads, and helicopter pads, through multiple regional ecosystems.
- It posed a risk of landslips on the geologically unstable soils
- It would increase fire risks, a risk that has grown in severity after the 2019 bushfires that burnt down rainforest and Binna Burra Lodge.
- It would require more sewerage and water truck movements up and down Springbrook Road, and more.

The previous rigorous environmental assessment found that the risks and damage would be too high and the location inappropriate for environmental, cultural, and social reasons.

Gecko’s Lois Levy was involved in the original campaign to protect Springbrook National Park from this proposal, and says the community remains strongly opposed.

“Gecko supports positive eco-tourism in the hinterland, such as a world class visitor centre, providing information about the unique natural values of Springbrook and Lamington National Parks.

“A cableway through Springbrook National Park poses unacceptable risks and damage to the environment.”

Gecko Environment Council has long advocated for improved management of Springbrook National Park, including additional rangers and park and ride.

The pre-feasibility study assumes that a possible future cableway proposal would have a base station accessed from Gold Coast-Springbrook Road around Neranwood; a mid-way station; a destination station on Springbrook Plateau with good access to Purling Brook Falls; and a total length of approximately 10 kilometres.

The details of the pre-feasibility study are here.

<https://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/Services/Projects-works/Springbrook-Cableway>

In the SPRINGBROOK CABLEWAY UPDATE REPORT to the Economy, Tourism and Events Committee of Gold Coast City Council, it stated that “To capitalise on the unique opportunities of the landscape, the route would need to traverse predominantly through Springbrook National Park”

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