




Speech By
Michael Berkman

MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mount Coot-tha, Zip-Line

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.46 pm): Among the many local issues that Maiwar residents have brought to me over the past year, none has generated as much concern as the dodgy, ill-considered zip-line project proposed by the LNP Brisbane City Council. A parliamentary e-petition on this issue reached more than 4,000 signatures, making it the biggest I have sponsored.

This is an iconic part of Queensland's capital and one that is held dear by Brisbane locals, whether they live near or far from Mount Coot-tha. Folks regularly visit from all around the south-east corner, across the country and around the world. We all enjoy the iconic views from the summit lookout, the tranquil picnic areas and parks, and the extensive walking and riding paths through the beautiful Mount Coot-tha forest. It is a place of great cultural significance for first nations people around Maiwar and others from further afield who travelled through the area. Traditional owners from New South Wales have identified significant cultural artefacts on the mountain, including shield trees. It is a unique and much loved part of Brisbane—a place of unrivalled natural beauty, so close to the heart of the city.

Therefore, it is unsurprising that the BCC's proposed mega zip-lines have generated such strong opposition. I want to briefly acknowledge the great work being done by the Mount Coot-tha Protection Alliance, the Metro North Wilderness Society, numerous other groups and local residents who have taken up this cause. The community has instigated a massive campaign against the proposal, including a packed community meeting that I hosted at the Botanic Gardens just a few weeks ago.

Just last week, the community's concerns were completely vindicated by scathing advice from the State Assessment and Referral Agency, otherwise known as SARA. SARA has reinforced serious concerns about cultural and natural heritage, vegetation clearing, and various road safety and transport issues with the project. SARA notes that the project fails to meet the requirements of the State Development Assessment Provisions and, in particular, that the vegetation clearing required will be far more extensive than the BCC identified.

The council's development application conveniently failed to take into account the clearing that would be required for firebreaks and safety buffers, but we now know that approval of this project would authorise the clearing of more than 28 hectares of land on Mount Coot-tha. On this issue, the BCC's application is either completely deficient or plain misleading. The council must have been aware of the need for firebreaks but obviously has decided to try to keep locals in the dark on the issue. SARA is clear that the proposed launch tower will disrupt the iconic views from the summit. It indicated that those views 'should not be compromised through partial clearing and the introduction of new large built form directly in the view line'. Taken in its entirety, SARA's advice is a pretty hard no to the mega zip-line proposal.

I would like to be able to take some comfort from this damning assessment from SARA. Perhaps we could, were it not for the LNP council's outrageous self-approval process. BCC is both the proponent and the decision-maker on this project. That in itself is a major concern, but there was also no sensible

process for selecting this project. They reached into the bottom drawer and picked an idea, announcing it in the 2016 election with no consultation and without any indication of the scale of the plan. They are now calling that a mandate, spending stupid amounts of council budget on promoting the project like it is a done deal and at the same time trying to run consultation as quietly as possible.

Labor's opposition leader in the BCC, Peter Cumming, has committed that Labor will not support this project unless it meets certain requirements, including some alternative to council's dodgy self-assessment. I table a letter from Councillor Cummings pointing out those requirements.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 3 September 2018, from Councillor for Wynnum Manly, Mr Peter Cumming, to community members regarding Labor councillors' position on the proposed Mount Coot-tha zip-line and associated infrastructure [1764](#).

It appears highly unlikely that the BCC will or can meet these requirements, so it now falls to this Labor state government to veto this flawed proposal. There are a variety of ways the state can intervene to draw a line under it. The first falls to Minister Lynham. Since Mount Coot-tha sits on trust land, which was granted as a site for a public park and no other purpose whatsoever, he has a clear role to play in the approval of a commercial adventure sports enterprise like this. I am calling on the minister to say no to this secondary use and stop the project in its tracks. The next falls to Minister Dick. As planning minister he quite clearly has the power to call the project in, given its massive impacts on state heritage at the iconic Mount Coot-tha and the environmental impacts that have been laid bare most recently.

Both the member for Cooper and the member for Moggill represent areas very close to this proposal. I am calling on them both to take a position publicly so that residents in Chapel Hill, Paddington and The Gap know where they stand. As the Minister for Tourism, the member for Cooper should clearly be able to see this is an example of someone perverting the concept of ecotourism to trash and privatise public green space.

My position on this is clear and in support of the overwhelming community sentiment on this issue. The proposal does not have public support. The BCC needs to swallow its pride, walk away from the zip-line and respect this community sentiment. Instead of pursuing this thought bubble, we should keep Mount Coot-tha as public, accessible green space for all Brisbane residents. Our beautiful green space and native wildlife already attract tourists. Let us continue to show it off without trashing it.