

Submission to Toowoomba Regional Council

Re: Development Application – Material Change of Use for Nature-based Tourism

Lot 84 Kynoch Road, Palmtree (Lot 84 CSH515)

Reference: MCU/2026/4930



I wish to lodge my objection to the proposed Material Change of Use for Nature-based Tourism at Lot 84 Kynoch Road, Palmtree. I refer to the above-mentioned application and wish to state my objection to the proposed development for short-term accommodation at Lot 84 Kynoch Road, Ravensbourne being a property of approximately 5.45 hectares located in Palmtree, Queensland. I became aware of the proposal through the notice displayed at the property entrance and subsequent public notification in the 6 August 2026 online edition of the *Western Downs & Darling Downs Town & Country* newspaper.

I am a visiting family member of a nearby farm (5th generation) and regularly spend time in this area. Through growing up on, and regularly visiting the farm and travelling the surrounding roads, I am familiar with the rural character of the district, and in particular the limitations of the local road network and the agricultural activity that occurs throughout the area.

While I support appropriate tourism and development within the Toowoomba Region, I do not believe this proposal is well suited to this location. My concerns relate particularly to the protection of the district's traditional farming character, the suitability of the existing road network, and the potential cost to Council and ratepayers of supporting increasing commercial development in a rural area.

Protecting a Traditional Farming District

Palmtree, Ravensbourne and the surrounding Kynoch Road area are first and foremost a working farming and agricultural district.

The local roads support cattle and livestock movements, tractors and farm machinery, livestock transport, trucks, agricultural contractors and other activities associated with working farms. These activities are not inconveniences; they are an established and legitimate part of this district and fundamental to its character.

As someone who regularly visits family on a nearby farm, this traditional agricultural character is also a significant part of the area's appeal. It remains an authentic farming landscape rather than a commercial tourism precinct.

Tourism should complement agriculture where appropriate; agriculture should not be expected to change to accommodate tourism.

Visitors may have limited experience driving through working farming areas and may not anticipate livestock, tractors, slow-moving machinery or heavy agricultural vehicles. Similarly, normal farming activities can involve machinery, livestock noise, dust, agricultural odours and activity at irregular hours.

Council should protect the ability of existing farms to continue normal agricultural operations without creating increasing conflict between farming practices and commercial visitor expectations.

There is also a broader concern about incremental development. Individually, one tourism proposal may appear minor, but repeated approvals can gradually change the character and function of an agricultural district.

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The irony is that the traditional farming landscape itself is a major part of what makes this area attractive. Commercial development should not progressively undermine the rural character upon which its appeal relies.

Road Suitability and Safety

From regularly travelling to the nearby family farm, I am familiar with the limitations of Kynoch Road and surrounding routes.

These are rural roads with narrow sections, bends, variable surfaces, limited passing opportunities and restricted visibility in some locations. Conditions can deteriorate following wet weather, while dust and loose surfaces can also create difficulties during dry periods.

The roads already accommodate residents, families, school buses, livestock movements, tractors, farm machinery, trucks and other agricultural traffic.

Commercial tourism introduces another type of road user: visitors who may be completely unfamiliar with local conditions and reliant on GPS navigation.

Meeting cattle, farm machinery or another vehicle on a narrow rural road requires patience and an understanding of local conditions. Increasing unfamiliar traffic creates additional potential for conflicts, sudden braking, inappropriate speeds and vehicles meeting where there is insufficient room to safely pass.

These roads were primarily established to support agricultural operations and rural residences, not regular commercial tourism traffic.

Cost to Council and Ratepayers

A significant concern is the potential financial consequence of this and similar developments for Toowoomba Regional Council.

If increased commercial activity eventually requires road widening, intersection improvements, additional signage, drainage works, resurfacing, vegetation management, improved passing opportunities or more frequent maintenance, who will pay for these works?

The cost should not simply be transferred to Council and the broader ratepayer base.

Before approving commercial development dependent upon rural infrastructure, Council should determine:

- what road and safety improvements are required;
- the capital cost of those improvements;
- whether additional ongoing road maintenance will be required;
- the cumulative infrastructure impact of further development; and
- who will be responsible for funding these costs.

Any infrastructure required to safely accommodate the proposal should be identified, funded and completed before the commercial operation commences, rather than allowing development to proceed and addressing deficiencies afterwards.

This is particularly important because unsealed rural roads create ongoing maintenance costs. Increased traffic can contribute to potholes, corrugations, rutting, dust and surface deterioration.

Council should therefore consider the whole-of-life cost of facilitating commercial tourism in this location, not simply whether the road can accommodate the traffic generated by one development today.

Private commercial development should not result in public infrastructure costs being transferred to existing residents and Toowoomba Regional Council ratepayers.

Cumulative Impact

This application should not be considered in isolation.

Traffic is already increasing as additional dwellings are constructed in the area, bringing construction vehicles, tradespeople, deliveries and other vehicle movements.

If further tourism developments are subsequently approved, a series of individually "low-impact" proposals can collectively create substantial pressure on the same rural road network and Council services.

Council should therefore consider not only whether the roads can accommodate this individual proposal, but how much additional commercial development the existing rural infrastructure can sustainably support and what that will ultimately cost Council.

Conclusion

For these reasons, I respectfully request that Toowoomba Regional Council refuse MCU/2026/4930 in its current form.

This is predominantly a working farming district supported by infrastructure designed around agricultural and rural residential activity. Its farming identity, agricultural operations and traditional rural character should be protected.

As a regular visitor to a nearby family farm, I value the area precisely because it remains genuinely rural. The district's appeal comes from its farms, livestock, agricultural activity, quiet roads and lack of commercialisation.

Council should be cautious about approving development that relies upon this rural character for its commercial appeal while potentially contributing to its gradual erosion.

Most importantly, approval should not create an expectation that Council and ratepayers will fund substantial road upgrades or increased maintenance to support private commercial tourism activity.

The traditional farming character of Palmtree and the surrounding district is one of its greatest strengths and should be preserved for farming families, residents, their families and future generations.



Katherine Thomson