

We The People  
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We the People 263 The Tarnishing of Coolangatta Gold



Good Day to you. In 1984, Peter Schrek was writing a movie featuring the talents of ironman legend Grant Kenny, about two brothers competing for their father's love. Needing a dramatic climax for the movie, Peter was sitting on a Gold Coast beach when he came up with the idea of racing from Surfer's Paradise down to Coolangatta, and back again. For the filming of the race, the producers decided to run **The Coolangatta Gold** as an actual event, rather than staged shots. Many well-known ironmen at the time competed, but it was won by an unknown 18-year-old Guy Leech and the rest is history as **Coolangatta Gold** was inducted into our Australian lexicon. Coolangatta, Greenmount and Kirra Beach are affectionately remembered by most Australians and this was paradise when it came to holidays and memories. This being said you would think that the Gold Coast Council would do all they could to preserve it but not so. Once again the developers have been let loose and the **Coolangatta Gold is tarnishing.**

By way of just one example let me tell you about 140 to 144 Marine Parade Coolangatta. These two allotments are to be consolidated and a huge monolith of dominant proportions built on the site. These allotments reside at the foot of Greenmount headland which is a geographic blessing and land mark. The building will have a podium or solid concrete base the equivalent of three stories while the height overall is equivalent to 27 storeys. The building will be over 80 meters high in an area intended to be 38 meters high, the tallest along eastern Marine Parade by a whopping 15 meters. The town plan has sensibly been to stagger the building heights of the high rise down as they extend towards Green mount thus providing a visual buffer and a height ratio so as not to dominate the head land. This development fails to do that. This is precisely why the neighbouring building at number 136 was constructed at ten stories being the maximum allowable height for this zone, with plenty of set back and gardens. The residents who live in this building will have a massive construction alongside built less than one meter from the neighbouring block boundary. This type of infill is the work of Tate's Gold Coast Council. It appears to me that throughout the Gold Coast the Planning department have seemingly abrogated responsibility to the councillors and my own sources within Council tell me that the City planning department must capitulate or be ostracised. It's not much of a stretch to imagine **'management by fear'** inside Council.

When considering major development, the density of the project is calculated as this relates to parking and many other factors including utilities, noise and the impact on the area. In the case of this development known as Komune the density is nearly fourfold greater than the guide lines for development in an RD7 area. Think about that and the limited parking available and it seems to me that the inevitable overflow will end up in the adjacent public beach car park alongside the surf club. An expert in urban architecture advised me that the proposed density and height conflict with the City plan 2016 strategic framework and the original local area plan for Coolangatta. Further, our subtropical city is dependent upon shade and generous landscaping but with the Komune site and **its 99% site coverage** denies the opportunity for deep planting and generous set-backs for landscaping. There will be no softening of the built environment in the transition precinct between central Coolangatta and the heavily landscaped area around the foot of Greenmount Hill. I have spoken with the neighbours at 136 Marine parade and they are devastated that the dominant bulky structure approved will dwarf their building along with the noise generated by the roof top entertainment area. From what I see and from what I have read they do indeed have much to be concerned about and are currently **taking the case to the Planning and Environment Court** where they hope common sense and justice will prevail. No doubt the Council will defend their position but at what cost to the community and if the building goes ahead how does Council calculate the social cost to people's lives. There appears to be something wrong with the operation of Gold Coast Council as the effects of some of their planning decisions will adversely affect the lives of many. In the case of Code Assessable proposals and that's most of them, we the people have no legal right to comment or to object. That is a recipe for social disaster and this development, it appears, **will forever tarnish Coolangatta Gold** and for what.

**Until next time this is Kent Bayley**