



The State Registrar, Heritage Branch
Department of Environment and Resource Management
GPO Box 2454 BRISBANE QLD 4001
And via email; mary.burns@derm.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Heritage Reference Number 602754
HRN: 602499; Bingil Bay; Ninney Rise, 405 Alexander Drive and Esplanade

Introduction

C4 submits that the place Ninney Rise does satisfy the cultural heritage criteria and should be entered in the Queensland Heritage Register as a place of State significance. C4 generally agrees with the assessment of significance undertaken by the Heritage Branch. However C4 submits that the place satisfies criteria a, e and h in additional ways and also satisfies criteria b and g.

Previous submissions

C4's previous submissions to EPA/DERM re entry of Ninney Rise in the Queensland Heritage Register consist of the following:

- "Application for entry of Ninney Rise in the Queensland Heritage Register", C4, 13 April 2004. (Att A)
- "Further information regarding the nomination of Ninney Rise to the State Heritage Register" email from C4 to Helen Lucas @ EPA on 7 May 2004. (Att B)
- "Ninney Rise, the Wet Tropics and the Queensland Heritage Register" letter from C4 to Cultural Heritage EPA Townsville, 15 June 2004. (Att C)
- Letter from C4 to Queensland Heritage Council, 25 January 2009 (Cultural Heritage State-wide Survey submission). (Att D)

Copies of these previous submissions are attached to the hard copy of this letter (but not the emailed version). Please consider these previous submissions as part of this submission.

New information sources

C4 has accessed some new information sources that were not referred to in our previous submissions. Copies of these new information sources are attached to the hard copy of this letter (but not the emailed version) as part of this submission. The new information sources consist of the following:

- Len Webb. "To Drop Quietly From A Twig", Wildlife in Australia, Vol 8, No 2, June 1971, p57. (Att E)

- PS Valentine and R Hill 2008, "The Establishment of a World Heritage Area", Living in a Dynamic Tropical Forest Landscape. NE Stork and SM Turton (eds.). Oxford, Blackwell Publishing: 81-93. (Att F)
- "Catalyst for action: Formation of a conservation society", Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland Historical Papers, Monograph 1. (Att G)
- "Heart and Mind: WPSQ Finding Directions in the 60s", Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland Historical Papers, Monograph 2. (Att H)
- Annie Austin 2008. "Defending Diversity: Strategies used by conservationists John Busst, Dr Len Webb and Geoff Tracey in the conservation of north Queensland habitats during the 1960s", www.terrain.org.au/missionbeach. (Att I)
- "Bid to heritage list home", The Cairns Post, 10 May 2010, p9. (Att J)
- "Busst legacy", Tully Times, 13 May 2010, Letters to the Editor. (Att K)
- Mission Beach Bulletin, June 2010, No 154:
 - Margaret Thorsborne wears a 'Save the Reef' campaign T shirt remembering the battle led by John Busst and Judith Wright in the late 60s to stop mining for oil on the reef (front cover)
 - C4 Editorial (p2)
 - "Ninney Rise: Home of conservation pioneer John Busst", (pp 6-7).
 - "The Tropical Rainforest of North Queensland Australia: Address to the Rotary Club, Tully 2nd March 1966 by conservation visionary John Busst" (special insert) (Att L)

Spatial extent of the place

C4 agrees that the entire property including the house and grounds and memorial plaque meet the criteria; i.e. all of Lot 539 on NR 6887, Easement A on RP730263, and Road reserve (Esplanade, Bingil Bay, segment parcel no. 31326/53). The grounds of Ninney Rise (not just the house) are significant because they include rainforest (obviously rainforest was very important to Busst) and evidence of the experimental CSIRO forestry plots (which demonstrate Busst's innovative approach of promoting economic benefits from rainforest conservation).

Criterion (a)

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history

Without Busst, the WPSQ in Brisbane wouldn't have taken up the Save the Reef campaign. Busst inspired and motivated WPSQ and they really put everything into it with public surveys, bumper stickers, etc. Conservation was something very new in Queensland in those days. It became a big wave that captured Queensland people's imagination.

"Initiated by John Busst, ... the successful 1967/68 campaign to prevent limestone mining of Ellison Reef off Innisfail laid the cornerstone for the conservation movement in Queensland." (Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland Historical Papers, Monograph 1, p4.) The reef was the first major state-wide conservation campaign in Queensland. It represents the evolution of community-led conservation in Queensland. "It came right out of left field for people to challenge the government to protect the reef ... it launched the whole conservation movement" (pers. comm., Geoff Tracey to Tony O'Malley, April 2004).

It also demonstrates the evolution of state-wide campaigns led from regional Queensland, not from the capital city of Brisbane. It also demonstrates the emergence of global campaigning about Queensland conservation issues. Busst sent letters all over the world seeking support for conservation of Queensland's tropical reefs and rainforest. The John Busst Collection in JCU Library

North Queensland Collection is evidence of the massive body of work undertaken by Busst; the collection includes boxes and boxes of correspondence.

Busst was instrumental in initiating Web and Tracey's scientific study that was the first time that the global significance of the north Queensland rainforests was identified. Busst ensured that both the reef and rainforest campaigns were informed by the best possible scientific evidence. This community alliance/collaboration with scientists was new. Until then, the Queensland government had a monopoly on scientific knowledge. Busst got scientists for free, partly by providing them with free accommodation at Ninney Rise. This community ownership of scientific knowledge represents a major change in natural resource planning and management in Queensland. It empowered the community to have a much greater say in natural resource outcomes in Queensland. Busst showed that the community could demonstrate best practice. But the campaigns were not only based on cold hard science. Busst was also an artist; sentiment was also ensured by poet and author Judith Wright.

The reef campaign was an innovative alliance of a great cross-section of the Queensland community. Busst raised money and got the airlines to provide free flights for marine biologists to come and scientifically survey the supposedly "dead" reef. Busst got the local boat operator (Perry Harvey) to repeatedly take the scientific divers out to the reef for free. He introduced his friend Prime Minister Harold Holt to the reef. "He was a humanist with an immediate and relaxed ability to communicate with young people, bureaucrats, professors, prime ministers, domestic animals, coral studded seascapes and hills with sombre trees" (Webb 1971, p57). Busst's personality drew everyone in and made it a sector-wide campaign.

The reef campaign was a major evolution because it was about about strategic planning for the whole of the Great Barrier Reef, the largest living system on the planet. It was something new and unheard of, the fact that anyone was wanting to protect the whole reef; that was very ambitious. Natural resource management of that scale had never before been contemplated in Queensland. Yet here was a member of the public from Bingil Bay (a place most had never heard of) advocating such and with scientists to back him up. This represents a major change from ongoing ad hoc exploitation of the reef to managing the reef as a whole system. It represents a turning point for the main purpose of the reef from exploitation to preservation. It resulted ultimately in the declaration of the largest marine protected area in the world and World Heritage listing.

Busst told Len Webb "always go to the top Webb" (pers. comm., Len Webb to Tony O'Malley, April 2004). Busst wasn't content to just stop mining on one local reef. He went for the whole of the Great Barrier Reef. Busst wasn't content to just negotiate the reef's future with local government officers. He went to the Prime Minister. It was Busst of Bingil Bay who set the bar so high. If he had been a mining magnate, the entire reef would have been mined. Luckily his goal was for its conservation (Austin p12). In 2010, for the bar to be any lower for reef protection is unthinkable to most Queenslanders. Busst took Queensland on a giant leap forward.

Similarly, Busst revolutionised Queensland tropical rainforest conservation.

Criterion (b)

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Queensland's cultural heritage
Ninney Rise demonstrates a rare example of a Montsalvat building in Queensland, a rare example of tropical Montsalvat building and a rare and fine example of an "artists in the tropics" residence. A significant school of artists from southern Australia were attracted to north Queensland, particularly the tropical island coast, following in EJ Banfield's "different drummer" footsteps. Those in Busst's

era became known as “artists in the tropics ... escape artists ... modernists in the tropics ... modern Gauguins”. They brought innovative ideas, lifestyles and building styles to North Queensland. The buildings they designed and constructed were particularly artistic and romantic incorporating materials such as mud, bamboo and driftwood in organic and/or unconventional building methods and styles. The buildings were typically constructed in idyllic locations, e.g. foreshores. They were forerunners of tropical new settler/hippie building styles of the 1970s in places like Kuranda. Ninney Rise was designed by the artist Busst. Ninney Rise is a rare example of a pre-1970s “artists in the tropics” building. It is undoubtedly a one-of-a-kind building with no comparable buildings known, particularly since Busst’s earlier building on Bedarra Island was demolished. Ninney Rise’s foreshore location is a classic artist’s location. Ninney Rise is rare in that few artists’ buildings from this significant era remain because most have been demolished and redeveloped, having prime locations on beachfronts, etc. The location, design, layout and materials of Ninney Rise demonstrate the work of the artist. It is a particularly fine example of an artist’s building because John Busst was an early student of architect Justus Jorgensen at the Montsalvat artist’s colony in Victoria and therefore Busst was specially trained. The buildings at Montsalvat that Busst helped design and construct are now listed on Heritage Victoria's Register and the Australian Register of National Estate. Ninney Rise is a rare example of a Montsalvat building in tropical Queensland.

The above statement could also apply to Criterion d ... “a particular class of cultural places”, the class being pre-1970s artist’s houses in the tropics. The principal characteristics would be idyllic location and unique and artistic building design, which Ninney Rise exemplifies.

Criterion (e)

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance

Looking at the unique aesthetic of the building and grounds, many people feel that Ninney Rise was obviously the work of a special person. You can sense that the building was purposefully and intelligently created to last. It’s like a fortress.

The aesthetic is not just about looking in at the place, but also looking out from the place. From Ninney Rise, you can see the rainforest growing from the mountains down to the Coral Sea. The elevated position overlooking the Coral Sea and lowland rainforest gives people a broad perspective/overview and encourages appreciation of nature, far-sightedness, contemplation and conservation commitment. This same view of the surrounding spectacular natural environment surely motivated Busst. The huge verandas of Ninney Rise facilitate a strong relationship with the outside environment. The frequent presence on the property of rainforest fauna including Ulysses butterflies and endangered cassowaries add to the aesthetic significance of the place. The aesthetic is not just visual. You can hear and smell the Coral Sea and hear the rainforest animals.

The location of Ninney Rise at the end of a road on a cliff-edge backed by rainforest and overlooking the Coral Sea including Queensland’s largest fringing reef (King Reef) provides a significant aesthetic environment. Judith Wright’s plaque on lichen-covered metamorphic rocks in littoral rainforest beside the Coral Sea is of exceptional aesthetic significance.

Criterion (g)

The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

Ninney Rise means a lot to C4 and other Queensland conservation community groups. This is demonstrated by the following actions:

- the gifting of Busst's boxes and boxes of information on the reef and rainforest campaigns to the James Cook University North Queensland Collection in recognition of its heritage significance. Many of the letters are addressed to or from Bingil Bay.
- the gifting of the place to Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service by the previous owner Mrs Tode who was a C4 member
- the strong community opposition to the proposed sale of the place in recent years
- the nomination of the place by C4 to the Queensland Heritage Register
- the strong support by C4 and other Queensland conservation organisations for the entry of the place on the Queensland Heritage Register
- the current Mission Beach Bulletin features Ninney Rise as the front cover story. The Cairns Post and Tully Times have recently included articles and letters about Ninney Rise heritage significance.

Ninney Rise inspires and strengthens Queensland conservationists to fight the Queensland conservation battles of today and tomorrow. Knowing that the Save the Reef and north Queensland rainforest conservation campaigns were substantially masterminded from the Ninney Rise headquarters reminds us that we can make a substantial and lasting difference to the Queensland and global environment. Ninney Rise makes us better conservationists: the place reminds us to be strategic, work as a team, bring the best science to the table, go to the top, and realise that our natural environment is of international significance, as John Busst did. If it wasn't for John Busst, we'd probably have oil rigs on the Barrier Reef today and oil spills on our reef and beaches and coastal wildlife like the current Gulf of Mexico environmental disaster. Ninney Rise and Judith Wright's nearby plaque remind us of those before us "who fought that man and nature might survive" and strengthen us in today's battle to protect Queensland's cassowaries which are a keystone species and listed as endangered under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act. It is fitting that cassowaries utilise Ninney Rise grounds. In summary, Ninney Rise is a spiritual place for Queensland reef and rainforest conservationists; "a mecca for friends of conservation" (Webb 1971, p57).

Criterion (h

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland's history.

Ninney Rise is closely associated with the following people, groups and organisation of importance in Queensland's history:

- John Busst and the Committee for Preservation of the Tropical Rain Forest, WPSQ Tully-Innisfail Branch, and the Save the Reef and Queensland tropical rainforest conservation campaigns
- Judith Wright and the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland
- Eddie Hegerl and the Queensland Littoral Society
- the Australian Conservation Foundation
- Len Webb and Geoff Tracey and the CSIRO
- Prime Minister Harold Holt and the Australian Government.

All of these people and organisations have been to the place because that was the centre of the action. Many of these people stayed at Ninney Rise, even the Prime Minister. They were all very welcome there. Going to Ninney Rise and talking with Busst and looking out over the reef and rainforest would have strengthened their commitment to conservation. These people and organisations are important in Queensland's history because their actions ultimately protected Queensland's global treasures: the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics rainforests.

Of course Ninney Rise is very specially associated with John Busst because he designed the place and lived there and masterminded the visionary 1960s reef and rainforest conservation campaigns from

there. Ninney Rise was the headquarters because Busst was the moving force, the generator of the energy. He wrote countless campaign letters from Ninney Rise. At Ninney Rise, Busst was living in the environment of the rainforest by the reef. He could see the rainforest being cleared; he could see the beauty of the reef and read the applications to mine the reef in the local newspaper. The reef and rainforest campaigns were not run from an office in Brisbane; they were run on-site from the reef and rainforest surrounding Ninney Rise. Busst saw the little advertisement for limestone mining in the local Innisfail newspaper. Busst seeing this ad was the worst thing for the miners and the best thing for the reef. If Busst wasn't living there, probably no one would have noticed the reef mining application and no one would have raised the issue of the future of the reef and no one would have objected to mining the reef and won.

As detailed in criterion g, Ninney Rise has a special historical and ongoing association with Queensland conservationists. The living nature of this special association is demonstrated by the special effort that Queensland conservationists are currently making to have the place protected on the Queensland Heritage Register so that the place survives and Queensland conservationists association with the place can continue.

Being at Ninney Rise, many people feel that Busst is still alive. The place reveals much about Busst and his conservation campaigns. The same mind that designed Ninney Rise designed the reef and rainforest conservation campaigns. Busst's design of Ninney Rise was based on personal experience with great architects including Justus Jorgensen. Similarly the reef and rainforest campaigns were based on Busst's personal experience with great scientists and ecologists including Dr Len Webb and Geoff Tracey. The solidness of Ninney Rise reflects the solidness of Busst. "I'm not interested in making anything that won't last for a thousand years" Busst told Patricia Claire about the house. Busst's reef and rainforest campaigns were similarly built for long-lasting results. Ninney Rise "was Busst's meticulous creation" (Claire p 91). Busst was similarly meticulous in the reef and rainforest campaigns.

Sincerely
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