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Media Release

No Fines. No Convictions. Save Wallum Protectors Prevail in Byron Local Court

Yesterday's appearance before the Magistrate in Byron Local Court by seven Save Wallum protectors marked a pivotal moment in the steadfast and peaceful vigil at the site of the contentious Wallum housing development proposed for Brunswick Heads.

The court proceedings concluded with an exceptional outcome: no fines and no convictions.

The challenges faced when heavy machinery and riot police descended on April 17th, 2024, resulted in the arrest of 19 individuals protesting the proposed development but today's events have turned the tide.

Led by local lawyer Cassandra Bennet, who graciously offered her services pro bono, six matters were finalised with guilty pleas submitted. Remarkably, the presiding Magistrate exercised discretion under Section 10 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999, issuing all six a non-conviction and no fine.

The significance of this ruling cannot be overstated. Section 10 underscores the court's recognition of the protectors' genuine intentions and unwavering dedication to their cause. With a Section 10(1)(a) order dismissing the charges, the court affirmed the rightfulness of their actions.

While one matter remains pending until June 5th, 2024, today's outcome is a testament to the power of collective action and the resilience of communities in the face of zombie developments.

One group member who faced the courts yesterday encapsulated the outcome aptly, "Today's dismissal of charges is a victory not just for myself and the other Wallum protectors, but for every community member fighting to protect sacred lands from unchecked development. Our voices were heard, and justice prevailed. Let this serve as a reminder that when we unite to defend what's sacred, we are unstoppable. We are determined to Save Wallum."

The local community remains steadfast in its mission to protect one of the last remaining Wallum ecosystems in the Byron Shire. Today's events mark a significant step forward and is an inspiration to communities far and wide to stand up for what they believe in.

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