To: The Hon. Dr Anthony Lynham MP
Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy.

cc. The Hon. Stirling Hinchcliff,

Minister for Local Government.
LGRMA@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Dr Lynham,

Re: Draft Land Management Plan for Mt Coot-tha.

I am writing regarding the requirement under the Land Act (1994) for Brisbane City Council (BCC), trustee of the Mt Coot-tha trust lands, to develop a draft Land Management Plan (LMP) for the trust lands as a preliminary to seeking approval from you to issue a trustee lease over part of the trust land.

I understand that BCC was formally notified in July of the need to submit a draft LMP for your approval. I am also aware that BCC was made aware of your preference that the LMP matter be sorted before any development application was considered.

The associated documents to the Land Act: LMP Info. Kit (DNRME 2009) and Operational Policy Document (PUX/901/209 SLM/2013/493; 2/5/17; Version 6.00) provide clear guidance about how the community is to be involved, in good faith, in the development of a draft LMP.

To this end the Lord Mayor and various councillors received a petition (attached) weeks ago signed by several hundred residents, as well as many individual letters, asking for the community to be fully and adequately consulted in the development of the draft LMP. We also inquired as to how BCC proposed to gauge community support for the draft LMP. What we received back from the Lord Mayor and elsewhere in BCC was nothing but a general and unhelpful response, not even recognising our concerns. Taking guidance from Land Act documents, the petition to the Lord Mayor (attached) included that he: “

        Hold open public meetings where (you) speak personally to residents of Brisbane about what you are proposing for this development;

        At public meetings explain to us how you can justify your proposal to lease public land, for which you are the trustee and which is held in trust for ‘a public park and for no other purpose whatsoever’, for a privately owned adventure tourism business venture that is not intended for the people of Brisbane;

        Set up a working group that includes community representatives selected after consultation with the broader community;

        Make the final draft Land Management Plan available for public scrutiny for a period of time that is adequate and realistic for residents to prepare submissions; “

Referring to the dot points above, there have been no public meetings, no explanation, no working group, and the period of time for public scrutiny is not adequate and realistic for the public to prepare submissions.

BCC has chosen to ignore your advice regarding the timing of the draft LMP and DA processes and submitted to you a draft LMP. BCC has not consulted with the community in any way regarding the development of this draft LMP. Further, they have refused until now to let us see it. They deliberately misled us in claiming they could not let us see the document because it was the property of DNRME. This is grossly unfair and contrary to guidance provided under the Land Act.

 BCC did not provide a copy of the draft LMP until the beginning of the so-called ‘community consultation’ on the draft LMP commencing November 28, 2018 which occurred at the same time as the public submission period for the Development Application. There was only a short time period to analyse and prepare questions for the Draft Land Management Plan for four ‘drop in sessions’ that occurred at the same time as the DA public submissions period. These were the ‘consultation’ for the LMP. This is grossly unfair and contrary to guidance provided under the Land Act.

We the public have at the same time to also analyse and make submissions on all the revised DA documents in the same time period. This is grossly unfair and contrary to spirit of consultation under the Land Act.

The ‘community consultation’ on the draft LMP will comprise four ‘drop in’ sessions at various locations, at inconvenient times for the community, and in the period set down for the submissions period for the DA, 15 working days. This is grossly unfair and contrary to guidance provided under the Land Act.

Even though the ‘community consultation’ on the draft LMP is to last until the end of the year, all four ‘community consultation’ sessions are to be held during the public submissions period for the DA. This is grossly unfair and contrary to guidance provided under the Land Act.

The public submissions period for the DA and the ‘community consultation’ for the draft LMP are to be held in the lead-up to and over the Xmas period, when many people are understandably otherwise occupied. This is grossly unfair and contrary to guidance provided under the Land Act.

The Lord Mayor has chosen to ignore guidance in documents associated with the Land Act, contrary to your advice.

*The proposal is an inconsistent use of the public park*
The land is dedicated for use as a “public park and for no other purpose whatsoever”
Mt Coot-tha has always been used for quiet, relaxing, low intensity, recreational activity. Organised, high intensity activities have never been allowed. A zipline complex which is high intensity, adventure tourism facility will dominate the park experience for all visitors to all parts of the park. A zipline complex is therefore inconsistent with its legal purpose and customary usage.

*The proposal is a commercial venture*The zipline complex will be constructed and operated by Zipline Australia which operates on a commercial for-profit basis. Access to zipline attractions will be by way of admission fees.

*The ziplines proposal will diminish public access*Parking and shuttle bus arrangements will make access to the Summit area and beyond less convenient and more expensive for visitors. The general public will reluctantly abandon the Australian Plant Precinct within the Botanical Garden because it is to be converted into a garden setting for a zipline drop zone. The high noise / high intensity scenic ziplines will dominate the eastern face of the mountain thereby excluding those who enjoy quiet, low intensity, nature-based, recreational activity from a large portion of the park.

*Does the LMP demonstrate forward planning?*A zipline complex aims to capture a narrow, international, tourist demographic which may well prove to be a short-term bubble. We should be enriching established recreational values which have a broad appeal and which are set to become more important as tourism numbers increase and population densities increase in middle and inner suburbs. Allowing a zipline on Mt Coot-tha sets a precedent for the privatisation-by-stealth of parks and reserves across the state

In my view you should not approve the current draft Land Management Plan for Mt Coot-tha in principle because it has not been developed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the policy documents associated with the Land Act. Additionally, it is a commercial tourist venture that will exclude the public from areas of Mt Coot-tha Forest and the Botanic Gardens and does not fit the purpose of the DOGIT lands.

Yours faithfully,