

Council backs petition

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MORE than 1000 petitioners do not want retail giant Woolworths trading on Sundays in the rainforest town of Mission Beach - and now their local council agrees.

Days before a Queensland Industrial Relations Commission hearing on the matter, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council has thrown its support behind campaigners who say Mission Beach's village atmosphere will be lost.

Councillors voted 6-1 yesterday to support the petitioners, Cr Jennifer Downs saying six businesses had closed in the aftermath of Woolworths coming to town and she did not want to see more shut up shop.

She said the town's smaller independentsupermarket 10km from Woolworths would be severely impacted and the flow-on effect to other businesses and to the Sunday markets would result in even more job losses.

"We have a special community with a relaxed tropical lifestyle - but such a community cannot exist unless we embrace the values that make it special," she told fellow councillors.

The National Retailers Association is making the Sunday trading proposal for Woolworths in the tourist town south of Innisfail.

Executive director Gary Black told



Bill Shannon

the council a survey of shoppers at the Woolworths shopping complex showed the majority supported Woolworths opening on Sundays and some public holidays. Surveyors interviewed 123 shoppers in one day and received a 65 per cent approval rate.

Mr Black said large supermarkets were already allowed seven-day shopping in the Far Northern centres of Cairns, Mossman and Port Douglas. Only regional Queensland and parts of Western Australia were still enforcing the ban and requiring supermarkets to apply for extended trading hours.

Cr Downs said Woolworths already had 74 hours of trading a week and existing businesses kept tourism well-catered for seven days a week.

But Mayor Bill Shannon, who lodged the sole vote against petitioners, believed his hometown remained divided on the issue.

He said it was a matter for the court. The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission will sit in Innisfail on Tuesday and Wednesday next week.