

Notice of Meeting

Extraordinary Biodiversity Advisory Committee Meeting

An Extraordinary Biodiversity Advisory Committee Meeting of Byron Shire Council will be held as follows:

Venue	Council Chambers, Station Street, Mullumbimby
Date	Thursday, 16 November 2023
Time	11:30am

Shannon Burt
Director Sustainable Environment and Economy

I2023/1779
Distributed 09/11/23



CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

What is a “Conflict of Interests” - A conflict of interests can be of two types:

Pecuniary - an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person or another person with whom the person is associated.

Non-pecuniary – a private or personal interest that a Council official has that does not amount to a pecuniary interest as defined in the Code of Conduct for Councillors (eg. A friendship, membership of an association, society or trade union or involvement or interest in an activity and may include an interest of a financial nature).

Remoteness – a person does not have a pecuniary interest in a matter if the interest is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be regarded as likely to influence any decision the person might make in relation to a matter or if the interest is of a kind specified in the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Who has a Pecuniary Interest? - a person has a pecuniary interest in a matter if the pecuniary interest is the interest of the person, or another person with whom the person is associated (see below).

Relatives, Partners - a person is taken to have a pecuniary interest in a matter if:

- The person’s spouse or de facto partner or a relative of the person has a pecuniary interest in the matter, or
- The person, or a nominee, partners or employer of the person, is a member of a company or other body that has a pecuniary interest in the matter.

N.B. “Relative”, in relation to a person means any of the following:

- (a) the parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, lineal descends or adopted child of the person or of the person’s spouse;
- (b) the spouse or de facto partners of the person or of a person referred to in paragraph (a)

No Interest in the Matter - however, a person is not taken to have a pecuniary interest in a matter:

- If the person is unaware of the relevant pecuniary interest of the spouse, de facto partner, relative or company or other body, or
- Just because the person is a member of, or is employed by, the Council.
- Just because the person is a member of, or a delegate of the Council to, a company or other body that has a pecuniary interest in the matter provided that the person has no beneficial interest in any shares of the company or body.

Disclosure and participation in meetings

- A Councillor or a member of a Council Committee who has a pecuniary interest in any matter with which the Council is concerned and who is present at a meeting of the Council or Committee at which the matter is being considered must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting as soon as practicable.
- The Councillor or member must not be present at, or in sight of, the meeting of the Council or Committee:
 - (a) at any time during which the matter is being considered or discussed by the Council or Committee, or

- (b) at any time during which the Council or Committee is voting on any question in relation to the matter.

No Knowledge - a person does not breach this Clause if the person did not know and could not reasonably be expected to have known that the matter under consideration at the meeting was a matter in which he or she had a pecuniary interest.

Non-pecuniary Interests - Must be disclosed in meetings.

There are a broad range of options available for managing conflicts & the option chosen will depend on an assessment of the circumstances of the matter, the nature of the interest and the significance of the issue being dealt with. Non-pecuniary conflicts of interests must be dealt with in at least one of the following ways:

- It may be appropriate that no action be taken where the potential for conflict is minimal. However, Councillors should consider providing an explanation of why they consider a conflict does not exist.
- Limit involvement if practical (eg. Participate in discussion but not in decision making or vice-versa). Care needs to be taken when exercising this option.
- Remove the source of the conflict (eg. Relinquishing or divesting the personal interest that creates the conflict)
- Have no involvement by absenting yourself from and not taking part in any debate or voting on the issue as of the provisions in the Code of Conduct (particularly if you have a significant non-pecuniary interest)

RECORDING OF VOTING ON PLANNING MATTERS

Clause 375A of the Local Government Act 1993 – Recording of voting on planning matters

- (1) In this section, **planning decision** means a decision made in the exercise of a function of a council under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979:
 - (a) including a decision relating to a development application, an environmental planning instrument, a development control plan or a development contribution plan under that Act, but
 - (b) not including the making of an order under that Act.
- (2) The general manager is required to keep a register containing, for each planning decision made at a meeting of the council or a council committee, the names of the councillors who supported the decision and the names of any councillors who opposed (or are taken to have opposed) the decision.
- (3) For the purpose of maintaining the register, a division is required to be called whenever a motion for a planning decision is put at a meeting of the council or a council committee.
- (4) Each decision recorded in the register is to be described in the register or identified in a manner that enables the description to be obtained from another publicly available document, and is to include the information required by the regulations.
- (5) This section extends to a meeting that is closed to the public.

OATH AND AFFIRMATION FOR COUNCILLORS

Councillors are reminded of the oath of office or affirmation of office made at or before their first meeting of the council in accordance with Clause 233A of the Local Government Act 1993. This includes undertaking the duties of the office of councillor in the best interests of the people of Byron Shire and the Byron Shire Council and faithfully and impartially carrying out the functions,

powers, authorities and discretions vested under the Act or any other Act to the best of one's ability and judgment.

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Committee members are reminded that they should declare and manage all conflicts of interest in respect of any matter on this Agenda, in accordance with the [Code of Conduct](#).

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BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

BUSINESS OF MEETING

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 3.1 Confirmation of minutes from the 21 September meeting..... 9

4. STAFF REPORTS

Sustainable Environment and Economy

- 4.1 Flying-fox Camp Management Plan Review - Draft..... 16
- 4.2 Future Discussion Items for the Biodiversity Advisory Committee..... 22
- 4.3 Biodiversity and Agriculture Projects and Operations Update 24
- 4.4 Brunswick Valley Landcare Support Officer quarterly report, July to
September 2023. 40

ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Report No. 3.1 Confirmation of minutes from the 21 September meeting

5 **Directorate:** Sustainable Environment and Economy

File No: I2023/1629

10 **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2023 be confirmed.

Attachments:

15

1 Minutes 21/09/2023 Biodiversity Advisory Committee, I2023/1410 , page 11 [↓](#) 

Report

The attachment to this report provides the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Committee Meeting of 21 September 2023 .

Report to Council

- 5 The minutes were reported to Council on 26 October 2023.

Comments

In accordance with the Committee Recommendations, Council resolved the following:

23-503 Resolved that Council notes the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2023.

10 **Report No. 4.1 Identifying Open Forest Ecosystems for Ecological Restoration**

23-504 Resolved:

- 15
1. That Council welcomes the report and notes the importance of restoring eco-cultural burning practices.
 2. That Open Ecosystem Restoration Potential mapping is added to Council's online mapping tool.
 3. That Council explores the option of comparative mapping between the open forest mapping and Council's bush fire prone land mapping.

Minutes of Meeting

Biodiversity Advisory Committee Meeting

Venue	Conference Room, Station Street, Mullumbimby
Date	Thursday, 21 September 2023
Time	9.00am



BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 - ATTACHMENT 1

BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

Minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Committee Meeting held on Thursday, 21 September 2023

File No: I2023/1410

PRESENT: Cr S Ndiaye, Cr S Balson, Cr P Westheimer, Cr M Lyon (joined at 9:15am)

Staff: Shannon Burt (Director Sustainable Environment and Economy) -
joined at 9:40 am

Sharyn French (Manager Environmental and Economic Planning)

Liz Caddick (Biodiversity Team Leader)

Chloe Dowsett (Coast and Biodiversity Coordinator) - joined at 9:30 am

Caitlin Weatherstone (Project Officer-Koala)

Claudia Caliarì (Biodiversity Projects Officer)

David Filipczyk (Team Leader Bush Regeneration)

Michelle Wilde (Minute Taker)

Community: Dave Rawlins (Brunswick Valley Landcare)

Lindsay Murray

Stephen Millard

Guest: Andy Baker (Wildsite Ecological Services)

Cr Ndiaye (Chair) opened the meeting at 9:04 am and acknowledged that the meeting was being held on Bundjalung Country.

ATTENDANCE VIA AUDIO-VISUAL LINK:

Chloe Dowsett (Coast and Biodiversity Coordinator)

APOLOGIES:

James Jackson, David Milledge, Leonard Cronin, Liana Joseph

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY

There were no declarations of interest.

BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Report No. 3.1 **Confirmation of minutes from the 17 August meeting**
File No: I2023/1331

Committee Recommendation:

That the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Committee Meeting held on 17 August 2023 be confirmed.

(Murray/Ndiaye)

The recommendation was put to the vote and declared carried.

Note: The minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2023 are scheduled to be presented to Council, at the Ordinary Meeting on 28 September 2023.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There was no business arising from previous minutes.

STAFF REPORTS - SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY

Report No. 4.1 **Identifying Open Forest Ecosystems for Ecological Restoration**
File No: I2023/386

Committee Recommendation:

1. **That the Biodiversity Advisory Committee welcomes the report and Attachment 1 (E2023/26821) and notes the importance of restoring eco-cultural burning practices.**
2. **That Open Ecosystem Restoration Potential mapping is added to Council's online mapping tool.**
3. **That Council explores the option of comparative mapping between the open forest mapping and Council's bush fire prone land mapping.**

(Westheimer/Ndiaye)

The recommendation was put to the vote and declared carried.

BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

Report No. 4.2 **Update on Work Carried Out by Byron Council's Bush
Regeneration Team**
File No: I2023/1335

Committee Recommendation:

That the Biodiversity Advisory Committee applauds the work that has been carried out by Byron Council's Bush Regeneration Team and notes the report and presentation.

(Millard/Westheimer)

The recommendation was put to the vote and declared carried.

Cr Lyon left the meeting at 10:30am

Report No. 4.3 **Future Discussion Items for Biodiversity Advisory Committee**
File No: I2023/1336

Committee Recommendation:

That the Biodiversity Advisory Committee notes the report.

(Murray/Milledge)

The recommendation was put to the vote and declared carried.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 11:05am

Report

5 The Byron Shire Flying-fox Camp Management Plan (FFCMP) 2018-2023 is Council's first Camp Management Plan, and it was prepared to guide the management of five flying-fox camps (where flying-foxes roost during the day) in our Shire: Beech camp, Butler camp, Middleton camp, Mullumbimby camp, Paddy's Creek camp. These camps were selected due to their location in urban areas, proximity to houses and high levels of customer concern and enquiries. At that time, Byron Shire had 16 known camps. The 2018-2023 Plan is based on a Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) template.

10 In 2023, Council started reviewing the plan, focusing on new research, industry best practices, and any missing information that could support better decisions and inform our community. After extensive research, consultation with experts, discussions with relevant land managers, flying-fox officers in other Local Government areas and relevant State officers, we identified that a more comprehensive approach would bring more consistency to flying-fox management and consequently more community benefits. This decision
15 reflects current ecological understanding of flying-foxes, which are now known to move around so frequently that they are best treated as one large population in Australia, rather than multiple smaller populations associated with particular locations.

20 The structure of the Plan has changed, with more emphasis on providing cultural and ecological information as introductory management as well as increasing local education and awareness. The Plan will also provide more information on the reason for conflicts and the search for long-term impact mitigation strategies, as well as the current available short-term actions.

Key issues

The main updates to the revised plan will be:

- 25
- legislation review,
 - updated science and monitoring methodology and
 - detailed information on all known camps in Byron Shire.

New approaches include:

- 30
- a strategy for managing heat stress events,
 - engagement with Traditional Custodians (which will be an ongoing process),
 - evaluation of achievements to date
 - an Education and Awareness Strategy.

Next steps

35 The draft Plan has been sent for the first round of expert peer review by flying fox expert Dr Peggy Eby and local ecologist Ian Colvin. The draft FFCMP is scheduled to be sent to

the Biodiversity Committee for the second round of the peer review process on the 7th of November. The draft plan will then be presented at the 14th December 2023 Council meeting. Community consultation on the draft plan is planned for 15/1/2024 to 19/02/2024, and a community information session will be during that process on the week of 22-27/01.

5 Strategic Considerations

Community Strategic Plan and Operational Plan

CSP Objective	CSP Strategy	DP Action	Code	OP Activity
We nurture and enhance the natural environment	Partner to nurture and enhance biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	Use best practice land management to improve ecological resilience and reduce threats to biodiversity	3.1.1 Native species	3.1.1.5 Review Flying Fox Camp Management Plan
		Coordinate and support environmental education to the community	3.2.2	3.2.2.8 Provide advice and information to the community regarding flying foxes

Legal/Statutory/Policy Considerations

The table below is an excerpt from the draft FFCMP, outlining local government policy documents and their relevance to the FFCMP.

BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

STAFF REPORTS - SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY

4.1

Table 1 Local Government Policy Documents and their Relevance to the FFCMP

Documentation	Administered by	Relevance to subject camps
Byron Local Environmental Plans 1988 & 2014	Council	Matters for consideration are camps within 'Deferred Matter' (DM) zones of Byron LEP 2014. Byron LEP 1988 currently applies to all DM areas, which are currently being assessed as part of Council's Environmental Zone review process. Refer to Table 2.
Development Control Plan 2014	Council	Advice and guidance on planning for land use compatibility, avoiding land use conflict and the use of buffers. The emphasis is on identifying current and potential future land use conflicts at the outset and designing to avoid them during the development process where possible.
Byron Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2020 - 2030	Council	Matters for consideration when developing planning controls. New developments or activities that occur in close proximity to ecological attributes and/ or habitats can impose negative impacts to human health, safety or comfort values (e.g. where in close proximity to Flying-fox camp). The Strategy supports appropriate buffers as required. The accuracy and availability of mappable information held within Council note high environmental <u>values</u> , but indicates the need to continually update mapping including Flying-fox camps, as new and/ or emerging camps establish.
Open Spaces Asset Management Plan 2020	Council	The plan details information about infrastructure assets including actions required to provide an agreed level of service in the most cost-effective manner while outlining associated risks.
Byron Shire Council Operational Plan for Pine Avenue Sports Field Mullumbimby Crown Reserve 85663 for Public Recreation	Council	The Operational Plan provides a framework for the management and development of Crown Land under Council's control. Council has responsibility for two main types of public land; Crown Land whose control is vested in Council under the <i>Crown Lands Act 1989</i> and Council owned and managed community land dedicated under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> . The land included in the Operational Plan is Crown Land identified as Crown Reserve 85663, comprising Lot 451 DP 728526, which is located in Mullumbimby, west of the township and bordered by Pine Avenue, Garden Avenue and the tributaries of Chinbible Creek, being the Yalgany and Yoga-bera Creeks. The land is known locally as the Pine Avenue Sports fields, and also includes the Rotary Rainforest Park.

Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 - administered by the Department of Planning and Environment.

5 Under this Act, a person who harms or attempts to harm an animal of a threatened species, an animal that is part of a threatened ecological community, or a protected animal, is guilty of an offence. The grey-headed Flying-fox is listed as threatened under the BC Act. A biodiversity conservation licence under Part 2 of the BC Act may be required if the proposed action is likely to result in one or more of the following:

- harm to an animal that is a threatened species, or part of a threatened population
- the picking of a plant that is a threatened species, or part of a threatened population or ecological community
- damage to habitat of a threatened species, population or ecological community
- damage to a declared area of outstanding biodiversity conservation value.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979

- It may be an offence under this Act if there is evidence of unreasonable/unnecessary torment associated with management activities. Adhering to welfare and conservation measures provided in Section 10.3 will ensure compliance with this Act.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 - administered by the Department of Planning and Environment

20 Development control plans under the Act should consider Flying-fox camps so that planning, design and construction of future developments is appropriate to avoid future conflict.

Financial Considerations

25 The budget for development of the Flying-Fox Camp Management Plan is \$25,500, with a small variation to be allocated for Traditional Custodians engagement (in progress).

Consultation and Engagement

The table below summarises stakeholder engagement to date. Following expert peer review, it is intended to put the FFCMP on public exhibition from 15/1/2024 to 19/02/2024, with a community information session held during the week of 22-27/01.

BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

STAFF REPORTS - SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY

4.1

Who was consulted?	How did consultation occur? <u>e.g.</u> email, verbal etc	Comments/Feedback
1. Arakwal Corporation	Email and online meetings	Feedback is ongoing
2. Jali Local Aboriginal Council	Email, and in-person meeting	Feedback is ongoing
3. Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Council	Email, online and in-person meeting	Feedback is ongoing
4. Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Council	Email	Waiting for response
5. Widiabul Wiabal Gurrumbil Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC	Email	Waiting for response
6. Biodiversity Advisory Committee	Consultation will start on November 7 th	

**Report No. 4.2 Future Discussion Items for the Biodiversity
Advisory Committee**

Directorate: Sustainable Environment and Economy

Report Author: Michelle Wilde, Project Support Officer

5 **File No:** I2023/1767

Summary:

This report summarises reports and information requested by the Biodiversity Advisory Committee.

10 Future requests, resourcing and alignment with Council’s Operational Plan can be tabled for discussion by the committee.

There were no requests for reports or information received from the Biodiversity Advisory Committee members for this meeting.

15

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Biodiversity Advisory Committee notes the report.

20

Report

There were no requests for reports or information received from the Biodiversity Advisory Committee members for this meeting.

Requests for future items can be raised at this meeting.

- 5 These requests, resourcing and alignment with Council’s Operational Plan will be tabled for discussion by the committee at the next meeting, to resolve whether they are taken to Council for consideration for inclusion in a future Council OP and budget.

Key issues

Nil

10 Strategic Considerations

Community Strategic Plan and Operational Plan

CSP Objective	CSP Strategy	DP Action	Code	OP Activity
1: Effective Leadership We have effective decision making and community leadership that is open and informed	1.2: Engage and involve community in decision making	1.2.4: Advisory Committees - Coordinate advisory committees to inform decision making on their areas of expertise	1.2.4.1	Coordinate and support Advisory Committees to assist with effective Council decision making

Recent Resolutions

Nil

Legal/Statutory/Policy Considerations

- 15 Nil

Financial Considerations

No detailed costings for requested items provided at this stage.

Consultation and Engagement

Nil

- 20

Report No. 4.3 Biodiversity and Agriculture Projects and Operations Update

Directorate: Sustainable Environment and Economy

Report Author: Lizabeth Caddick, Biodiversity Officer

5 **File No:** I2023/1358

Summary:

This report provides the Biodiversity Advisory Committee with an update on current projects and programs being undertaken by the Biodiversity and Agriculture team, including:

- 10 • Flying Fox monitoring
- Flying Fox Camp Management Plan review
- No Bat No Me Project
- Koala vehicle strike
- Koala habitat restoration
- 15 • Koala monitoring
- Updates to vegetation mapping
- Pest animal management program
- Bringing Back the Bruns
- Farm extension program
- 20 • Sustainable agriculture.

25 **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Biodiversity Advisory Committee notes the update on current projects and programmes being undertaken by Council staff.

30

Report

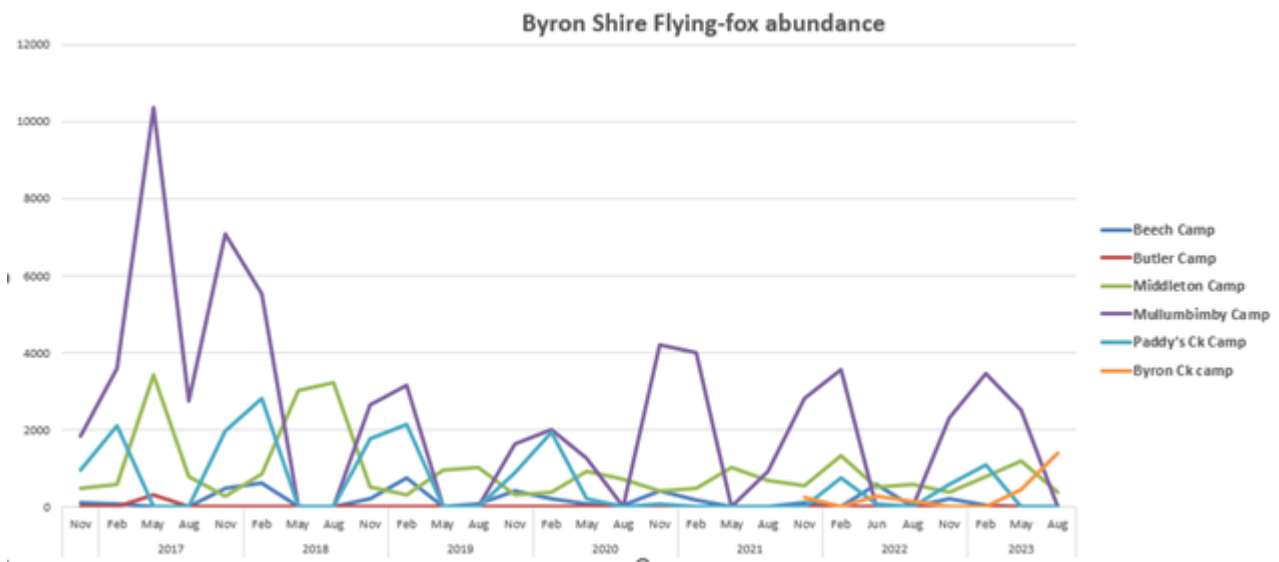
Flying Foxes

National Flying-Fox Monitoring Program - Census

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:

- 5 **4.9** Review and implement monitoring programs to assess effectiveness of Council ecological restoration

10 In Aug Byron Shire Council’s Biodiversity Project Officer collected data from 6 flying-fox camps in urban areas in our shire. The data was sent to state government and it’s the baseline for the National Monitoring program. This survey is done quarterly, formally since 2016.



Flying Fox Camp Management Plan Review

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Actions:

- 15 **4.18** Implement actions in the Flying Fox Camp Management Plan 2018-2023.

20 Council is progressing the development of a revised [Flying-fox Camp Management Plan \(2023-28\)](#), and has engaged EarthScapes Consulting to develop the plan. The objectives of the plan are to support Council in managing flying fox camps on Council-land, help conserve threatened flying foxes and their habitat and support Council in managing concerns about flying foxes raised by the community. An important achievement of the 2018-2023 Flying Fox Camp Management Plan was an 85% reduction in the number of complaints received by Council since 2020, in addition to flying-fox habitat restoration at 3 sites. A summary of what has been achieved so far includes:

1. Current Plan Action Audit – tracking the implementation of the 18-23 plan.
2. Initial communication with 5 local Traditional Owner organisations.
3. Winter Field Work – site assessment of 19 flying-fox camps in Byron Shire.
- 5 4. Desktop research including legislation and protocol updates, camp management actions and health.
5. Review of previous community engagement process and feedback.
6. Development of draft Flying-fox Camp Management Plan.

For more details refer to the separate report presented at this meeting.

No Bat No Me Project – Flying Foxes/Koala

10 *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Actions:*

2.1 Provide expert advice regarding how people can help protect biodiversity

4.9 Implement actions in the Flying Fox Camp Management Plan 2018-2023.

15 Project funded by a \$27,100 grant from WIRES, to increase community understanding of the importance of flying foxes in our local ecosystems, particularly for other species such as koalas. This project coincides with flying-fox educational year, and is enabling Council to deliver it's Environmental Trust educational booklet "Facts about Bats" to local schools.

The project main elements:

- 20 1. Flying-Fox Workshops presented on 9 local schools, plus one presentation for 20 home-schooled children (17 presentations in total). Preliminary results indicate a significant impact, with 90% of students expressing changed perceptions about flying-foxes.
2. Media Campaign: to amplify community engagement, Council has prepared a media campaign including newspaper ads, social media posts, street banners and an informative video.
- 25 3. Community events: Splendour in the Grass roving presentation with human-sized flying fox costume..
4. Community survey: conducted at the project's inception (January 2023) and end (September 2023).

Data are currently being compiled and reporting is in progress.

30 **Koalas**

Koala Vehicle Strike

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Actions:

4.25 *Work with RMS, local wildlife groups and Regional Koala Communications Group to identify road strike hotspots in Byron Shire.*

4.26 *Seek funding for road strike mitigation trials at priority road strike hotspots.*

5 **4.27** *Consider roadkill mitigation measures and opportunities to improve wildlife connectivity into design work for new roads and road asset upgrades.*

10 Geolink have developed a Koala Vehicle Strike Mitigation Feasibility Options Assessment Report, covering the key koala road-strike black spots that extend from Granuaille Rd to Lismore Rd, coming into and out of Bangalow. Mitigation measures proposed include fauna exclusion fencing, escape structures, lighting, vehicle activated signage and on-road koala crossing zones and entrances. This report was funded by the NSW Koala Strategy and DPE representatives are now following up with the NSW government regarding funding to deliver some of the mitigation measures proposed. Should funding be available, this is likely to be delivered in a staged manner, due to the high costs of such infrastructure, and to coordinate with any other planned works along these road sections (which are managed by Transport for NSW, not Council).

15 Staff are continuing to progress the Koala LED radar speed signs project, funded by a \$185,029 grant from the NSW Koala Strategy. Signage quotes and sign location maps are being reviewed by Infrastructure Services staff.

20 Council is also continuing ongoing discussions with Bangalow Koalas and DPE regarding seasonal koala signage. Bangalow Koalas and DPE are funding relocatable variable message signs at Broken Head and Bangalow during this years' koala breeding season.

Koala Habitat Restoration

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:

25 **3.9** *Seek grant funding opportunities for combined Council-private landholder restoration and revegetation projects on private land.*

Two grant-funded koala habitat restoration projects have recently been completed, totalling 5.5 ha of koala habitat planting and 7.5 ha of koala habitat restoration and maintenance. These projects were funded under the NSW Koala Strategy and include:

- NSW Koala Strategy grant of \$101,211 for planting and restoration at 6 sites.
- 30 - NSW Koala Strategy grant of \$15,000 for ongoing maintenance at 8 existing koala habitat restoration sites.

Koala Monitoring

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:

4.7 *Implement a monitoring program for the Byron Coast koala population.*

35 The 2023 Koala Activity Survey program is in progress, with over half of Council's 80 survey sites completed so far. The survey work is being undertaken by the Biodiversity

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5 team, with additional contractor costs and equipment funded under the NSW Koala Strategy (\$32,604). Sites are being surveyed using the Spot Analysis Technique (koala scat surveys) to assess koala occupancy and activity level over the 2023 koala breeding season. Additionally, DPE are installing song meters at selected sites throughout the shire as part of Tier 2 NSW Koala Strategy to detect calling male koalas during the breeding season. The song meter program is being extended throughout the Northern Rivers region and statewide. Both these surveys' field components aim to be completed by mid-December 2023.

Northern Rivers Koala Network (NRKN)

10 *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:*

4.13 *Liaise with local conservation groups and government agencies to share information (e.g. monitoring data) and identify opportunities for biodiversity conservation partnerships.*

15 Council supported the Northern Rivers Koala Network's Koala Count initiative in September. Friends of the Koala are now collating the data and results will be published soon.

Staff attended the Regional Koala Network meeting on October 26. Key points to note include:

- 20 • Friends of the Koala website now includes a habitat restoration page where landholders in the northern rivers can submit expressions of interest. This will help organisations like Council find sites where landholders are interested in habitat restoration, when grant funding is available.
- 25 • Friends of the Koala and DPE are finalising some community engagement materials (digital and print) that can be rolled out across the Northern Rivers to educate people about koala conservation issues such as road strike, dog attack and koala health.
- 30 • Following the Bayshore Drive-Tyagarah Fire, the Wildlife Emergency Response Taskforce (WERT) trained staff searched the fireground over 4 days for injured wildlife in areas safe to search. Several wallabies, goanna and birds were observed in good health. So far, 1 wallaby required rescuing, some freshwater turtles, and a snake. 2 dead snakes were found. The Wildlife Emergency Response Taskforce is comprised of NPWS/ DPE and members of the Northern Rivers WERT trained to be able to access the fireground and rescue and care for native wildlife. The NRWERT (which represents Northern Rivers wildlife hospitals and carer groups) works closely with the NPWS/RFS Incident Management Team to coordinate the emergency wildlife response. This partnership came about following the 2019 bushfires and is a flagship program for the entire state demonstrating immediate, coordinated wildlife care during emergencies. NR Wildlife Network volunteers will be surveying adjacent unburnt sites for injured wildlife and will be entering the fireground when they get the go-ahead from NPWS. If needed IFAW will fund drone surveys of the area to look for surviving koalas.

- National Parks (NPWS) gave an update on their habitat restoration and koala translocation programs. Part of their koala habitat restoration program in future years will include cultural-ecological burns in parts of Goonengerry, Whian Whian and Nightcap National Parks, and habitat restoration near Unicorn Falls in Mount Jerusalem National Park.

5

Mapping Projects

Council is continuing to progress a number of biodiversity mapping updates in accordance with the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. These mapping updates are a useful tool to guide Council and other community conservation groups, on where to prioritise biodiversity conservation activities, including habitat restoration and enhancement.

10

Review of coastal wetland and littoral rainforest mapping

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Actions:

1.19 Update vegetation mapping to clearly identify recently listed threatened ecological communities.

15

1.30 Continue development of Coastal Management Programs for the Shire's coastline and estuaries, ensuring CMPs are consistent with the intent of this Biodiversity Strategy.

As part of the development of Coastal Management Programs for Byron Shire, Council has engaged a consultant to review the coastal wetlands and littoral rainforest areas as mapped in the *SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021* following a State-led minor review undertaken in 2018. This will primarily be a desktop assessment using Council's High Environmental Value mapping (currently being updated), as well as other data such as Plant Community Types (PCT) mapping, Council and agency staff input, and guidance provided by the Department of Planning and Environment on mapping criteria. Updates on this project will be provided at a future Biodiversity Advisory Committee meeting.

20

Wildlife Corridor Mapping

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:

1.18 Update Council's wildlife corridor mapping and liaise with other NRJO Councils to ensure consistency in wildlife corridor mapping across the region.

30

The draft Wildlife Corridor System (Landmark 2022) was on public exhibition from 31 October to 12 December, with over 100 submissions were received. Staff have reviewed feedback and discussed this and proposed amendments to the Wildlife Corridor System with Councillors at a Councillor Workshop on 7 September.

35

As part of the proposed amendments, Council has engaged PlanIt Consulting to review the Biodiversity and Tree Protection chapters of Council's Development Control Plan (DCP chapters B1 and B2). To date, PlanIt have held three workshops with Council planning staff, and they are currently preparing draft revised DCP chapters that will be presented to Council, together with a report on Wildlife Corridor mapping in late 2023/early 2024.

Pest Animal Management Program

Pest Animal Management Plan 2018-23

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:

- 5 **4.23** *Work with North Coast LLS and private land managers to develop a coordinated cross-tenure approach to pest animal management.*

The team is in the early stages of evaluating the outcomes of the PAMP from 2018 and preparing a reviewed plan for the next 5 years. A request for quote to develop the new PAMP will be sent out to experienced contractors before the end of the year. Council has received a grant of \$25,000 from DPE to contribute towards development of the PAMP.

10 Some new elements of the 2023 plan are likely to include:

- Greater collaboration with neighbouring Councils in recognition that many pest animals are highly mobile.
- Greater emphasis on management of feral deer.
- 15 • Up to date information on genetics and management of wild dogs and/or dingoes as a culturally significant species for traditional owners.

Deer

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:

- 20 **4.13** *Liaise with local conservation groups and government agencies to share information (e.g. monitoring data) and identify opportunities for biodiversity conservation partnerships.*

Council staff are working with Tweed Shire Council to develop a coordinated protocol for managing feral deer from sightings reported in both Local Government Areas. Staff will also be meeting with other local councils involved in the Northern Rivers LGA Invasive Species Group on 5 November to develop an emergency response plan for feral deer.

25 Indian Myna

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:

- 4.22** *Develop and implement Operational Plans for target pest species*

The Indian myna trapping program runs from October to May. Council's trapping contractor is currently trapping and distributing decoy birds to interested landholders.

30 Imported Red Fire Ant

Recent monitoring has revealed that Red imported fire ants (fire ants) have been found within 5km of the QLD border at Tallebudgera. Fire ants can move approximately 5km per year. Fire ants are invasive exotic ants that cause serious social, economic, and environmental harm. They are aggressive and have a severe, burning sting.

Training workshops for Council indoor and outdoor staff were provided on 31 October and 1 November, to ensure that all relevant staff are up to date with how to identify, manage for and report fire ants.

5 Keeping Cats Safe at Home' Project - RSPCA NSW

Byron Shire Council are one of 11 Councils taking part in the RSPCA NSW Keeping Cats Safe at Home project. The Keeping Cats Safe at Home project aims to promote responsible cat ownership. It will do this by educating and encouraging cat owners to keep their cats safely contained at home to enhance their welfare and reduce the impacts that cats have on wildlife. The project will provide insights and inspiration, advice and answers about cat safety and cat enrichment to effectively extend and enhance the lives of cats across New South Wales. This campaign is all about loving cats as indoor pets, celebrating the people who love their cats and motivating cat lovers to keep their feline companions safe and fulfilled. It will include a tailored behaviour change strategy, which will be developed based on extensive consultation with stakeholders, especially cat owners.

The project is being delivered by RSPCA NSW with support from Council, and will provide up to \$90,000 in incentives for cat owners over the period of the project. The project will run from 2021-2025 and has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.

Surveys and data collection to date:

- RSPCA has consulted with Council partners and other stakeholders including animal welfare organisations, wildlife rescue groups and veterinarians, to understand priorities, interests, conflicts and behaviours in each project area.
- RSPCA have collected data from the community via phone and online surveys, and used this data to develop specific strategies for each of the 11 councils.
- Council has engaged with a researcher to help with the data collection to evaluate the efficiency of a new phase of the campaign Keep Cats Safe. As part of the research cameras were set up across the shire to monitor for roaming cats and roaming cat transect surveys were carried out with support from Council staff in October 2022.
- UNE are conducting their 2nd years data on roaming cats in the Byron Shire in the coming months.
- So far, the Sydney results have been published ([Animals | Free Full-Text | Spatial and Temporal Movements of Free-Roaming Cats and Wildlife in Two Local Government Areas in Greater Sydney, Australia \(mdpi.com\)](#)) and Northern Rivers data will be published in 2024.

Byron Shire Council and RSPCA NSW have undertaken the following as part of our specific strategy –

- Partnering with Catnets (they sell nets and cat enclosures) and to offer a 15% discount code to cat owners – being promoted via Council's media unit and

customer service area and in vet waiting rooms. To date there has been low interest in this program.

- 5 • Partnering with Vetlove Billinudgel to offer funding free desexing and microchipping (funded by the project). The aim is to target stray cats and kittens that people have taken on, or multiple cat households. However, any cat owner living in Byron Council area is eligible. In the first instances, approval has been given for Pets for Life and Animal Welfare League to use the first 30 spaces. .

Bringing Back the Bruns

Biodiversity Conservation Strategy Action:

- 10 **4.29** *Continue to develop and implement 'Bringing back the Bruns' branded projects to address improvements in riparian and instream habitat, water quality, fish passage and habitat connectivity on Council and private land along the Brunswick River and its tributaries.*

15 Council is partnering with Brunswick Valley Landcare to update and reprint the *Planting Rivers and Streams in the Brunswick Valley Catchment* booklet that was developed in the 1990s. This booklet will give clear information on what species to plant where in riparian zones and how to plant. Particular emphasis will be on keystone riparian species that held banks and slopes well in the recent floods.

Farm Extension

20 *Agriculture Action Plan action:*

1.3 *Develop and maintain a database of farmers and primary production stakeholders to: identify farmers issues and opportunities and enable easy forwarding of relevant information and activities to specific farmers and stakeholders.*

25 The Byron Farmers Network database now has over 400 members and is an excellent resource to share information and advice with the grower's community, for both Council and other agencies that work to support farmers in the region.

30 The farm extension program is ongoing, with visits, emails and phone conversations with local producers to provide support, advice and information. It has become a great resource for many other farming and food groups and a good avenue for them to reach more people.

Agriculture Workshops/Field Days

Agriculture Action Plan action:

1.4 *Develop and deliver (or refer landholders to) workshops and field days on best practice farming, innovation, productivity, sustainable land use and biodiversity.*

Next on farm field day to be held Nov 3rd at Zentvelds coffee who have embarked on a successful regenerative path with their coffee production. We have a few farms in the pipeline for more field days throughout the year with varying themes.

- 5 Helped facilitate a cattle workshop for local graziers October 21st which was a great day of learning and opportunity for local farmers to get together. The workshop was designed to help beef producers better understand the health of their cattle and pick breeds suited to their context.

Sustainable Agriculture Activities

Agriculture Action Plan actions:

- 10 **1.2** Establish and support an agricultural mentoring program to support new and existing farmers in starting up, expanding their enterprise or changing their land management practices.

1.5 Establish and maintain links to relevant organisations for the benefit of information sourcing, project collaboration, resource sharing and support.

- 15 **3.6** Investigate, develop and support processes and arrangements that increase opportunities to access and activate underutilised farmland.

- 20 Continued support with incubator program including being one of the mentors and assisting with strategy to continue the program next year and how to raise funds. A great article went out in the Echo recently with a mention of the Byron Shire Council support. In the process of assisting current farmers in the program with getting on land with some of our local landholders.

In development of soil biology workshops which were very successful last year.

Creating a day at the farm Byron Bay for Regenerative Ag Day Feb 2024 in collaboration with Farmers Footprint Australia.

- 25 Santos Organics Growing the Growers campaign successfully launched with considerable ongoing support and consultation to help grow growers in our shire. Great to see this initiative unfold after much consultation beginning over 2 years ago. Santos supporting local farmers to become certified organic. Improving their production as well as giving farmers stronger access to markets. The Official launch/celebration dinner was held at the Paddock in Mullumbimby September 26th which I presented at.

Soil Test Video

Agriculture Action Plan action:

1.6 Source and provide current best practice farming information and techniques to assist farmers to improve productivity and sustainability by practice change

- 35 In conjunction with the soils testing video we offered 10 free soil tests for local farmers all of which were taken up and we are starting to see soil test results come in as well as get to

some properties to help those who need a hand. This was a great exercise to highlight the importance of getting to know your soil and start looking at ways to improve it.

Soils video out to the public and getting some great responses.

[The importance of soil testing - YouTube](#)

5 Cover Crop Demonstration site to increase soil biodiversity and build carbon

We are developing a multi species cover crop demonstration site on leased council farm land in collaboration with Leela farms in Myocum. Cover crops is something that are being trialled in various ways and we are looking to get some good demonstration for region specific applications. Many people spend too much on unnecessary farm equipment and lose time an money making mistakes – these demonstration sites are aiming to help us give good guidance on what species and simple soil biodiversity and carbon building methods can be applied in the Northern Rivers region.

Strategic Considerations

Community Strategic Plan and Operational Plan

CSP Objective	CSP Strategy	DP Action	Code	OP Activity
2: Inclusive Community We have an inclusive and active community where diversity is embraced and everyone is valued	2.2: Enhance safety and contribute to the physical, mental, and spiritual health and well being of our people	2.2.4: Companion animals - Promote awareness of the requirements of the Companion Animals Act with respect to the ownership of companion animals	2.2.4.3	Facilitate companion animals education
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.1: Native species - Use best practice land management to improve ecological resilience and reduce	3.1.1.1	Partner with DPE to implement koala vehicle strike mitigation in Byron Shire as part of the NSW Koala Strategy 2022-2026.

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		threats to biodiversity		
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.1: Native species - Use best practice land management to improve ecological resilience and reduce threats to biodiversity	3.1.1.2	Engage with the community regarding mitigating threats to koalas.
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.1: Native species - Use best practice land management to improve ecological resilience and reduce threats to biodiversity	3.1.1.3	Partner with Regional Koala Group to progress koala conservation in Northern Rivers region.
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.1: Native species - Use best practice land management to improve ecological resilience and reduce threats to biodiversity	3.1.1.9	Seek funding to implement the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, Coastal Koala Plan of Management and Flying Fox Camp Management Plan.
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.2: Pest and weed management - Use best practice land management to improve ecological resilience and reduce	3.1.2.1	Implement Dog, fox and cat trapping program.

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		threats to biodiversity		
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.2: Pest and weed management - Use best practice land management to improve ecological resilience and reduce threats to biodiversity	3.1.2.3	Participate in Northern Rivers Feral Deer Management group.
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.3: Habitat restoration - Restore degraded areas that provide high environmental or community value	3.1.3.1	Update Byron Shire habitat restoration database and DPE Koala Habitat Restoration Archive.
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.3: Habitat restoration - Restore degraded areas that provide high environmental or community value	3.1.3.3	Implement 2022 Koala Habitat Restoration Project.
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology	3.1.3: Habitat restoration - Restore degraded areas that provide high environmental or community value	3.1.3.4	Investigate grant opportunities for improving the Brunswick Estuary ecosystems and river health.

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<p style="text-align: center;">3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.1: Partner to nurture and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems, and ecology</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.1.3: Habitat restoration - Restore degraded areas that provide high environmental or community value</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.1.3.5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Deliver Federal Fish Habitat Restoration Project</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2: Deliver initiatives and education programs to encourage protection of our environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2.3: Planning - Plan to improve the quality of the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2.3.1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Update flora and fauna lists for the shire, including status of threatened flora and fauna.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2: Deliver initiatives and education programs to encourage protection of our environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2.3: Planning - Plan to improve the quality of the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2.3.2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Update Byron Shire Vegetation and HEV mapping</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2: Deliver initiatives and education programs to encourage protection of our environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2.3: Planning - Plan to improve the quality of the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2.3.3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Participate in regional coastal and environmental working groups and initiatives</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2: Deliver initiatives and education programs to encourage protection of our environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2.3: Planning - Plan to improve the quality of the natural environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.2.3.4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Identify priority open forest ecosystems requiring restoration through the reintroduction of fire.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3: Nurtured Environment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.3: Protect the health of</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.3.1: Coastal Management</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3.3.1.5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Research the effects of recreational uses</p>

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<p>We nurture and enhance the natural environment</p>	<p>our coastline, estuaries, waterways, and catchments</p>	<p>Program planning and implementation - Undertake Coastal Management Program planning and implementation</p>		<p>on coastal biodiversity and habitats</p>
<p>4: Ethical Growth We manage growth and change responsibly</p>	<p>4.3: Promote and support our local economy</p>	<p>4.3.5: Regenerative agriculture - Develop and implement strategies to support regenerative agriculture, agri-business and farmers</p>	<p>4.3.5.1</p>	<p>Maintain and update Byron Shire Farmer database.</p>
<p>4: Ethical Growth We manage growth and change responsibly</p>	<p>4.3: Promote and support our local economy</p>	<p>4.3.5: Regenerative agriculture - Develop and implement strategies to support regenerative agriculture, agri-business and farmers</p>	<p>4.3.5.2</p>	<p>Provide extension services to farmers to support and promote sustainable agriculture.</p>
<p>4: Ethical Growth We manage growth and change responsibly</p>	<p>4.3: Promote and support our local economy</p>	<p>4.3.5: Regenerative agriculture - Develop and implement strategies to support regenerative agriculture, agri-business and farmers</p>	<p>4.3.5.3</p>	<p>Deliver farmer mentoring and farmer education activities.</p>

Recent Resolutions

N/A

Legal/Statutory/Policy Considerations

N/A

5 Financial Considerations

N/A

Consultation and Engagement

N/A

Report No. 4.4 Brunswick Valley Landcare Support Officer quarterly report, July to September 2023.

Directorate: Sustainable Environment and Economy

Report Author: Michelle Wilde, Project Support Officer

5 **File No:** I2023/1660

Summary:

This report tables the activities of the Landcare Support Officer quarterly report, from July to September 2023.

10

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Biodiversity Advisory Committee note the report.

Attachments:

15

1 BSC Landcare Support Officer report September 2023, E2023/108405 , page 42  

Report

Council provided an allocation of funds in the 2023/24 budget to continue to support the Brunswick Valley Landcare, Landcare Support Officer position for 1 day per week to deliver the Land for Wildlife Program and respond to customer enquiries.

- 5 Attached is the quarterly report July to September 2023, from the Brunswick Valley Landcare Support Officer, for the Committee’s reference.

Strategic Considerations

Community Strategic Plan and Operational Plan

CSP Objective	CSP Strategy	DP Action	Code	OP Activity
3: Nurtured Environment We nurture and enhance the natural environment	3.2: Deliver initiatives and education programs to encourage protection of our environment	3.2.2: Environmental education and awareness - Coordinate and support environmental education to the community	3.2.2.1	Support Brunswick Valley Landcare to deliver the Land for Wildlife Program and biodiversity enquiries.

Recent Resolutions

- 10 N/A

Legal/Statutory/Policy Considerations

N/A

Financial Considerations

Funding allocated in 2023/24 budget.

- 15 **Consultation and Engagement**

N/A

