

PLANNING OUR FUTURE

The Gympie Region Planning Scheme

Gympie Regional Council New Planning Scheme Project

Draft

Biodiversity Position Paper

15 May 2023



Introduction

Biodiversity is a term used to describe the number and variety of life forms that exist in a particular area or the world in general. A more biodiverse environment will be home to a greater range of plants and animals.

Biodiversity is important to all of us, no matter where we live. Intact, connected and well-functioning ecosystems provide the habitat and ecosystem services such as clean water for drinking and fertile soils, rivers and oceans upon which all life depends, including human life. Biodiversity plays an important role beyond that of our natural landscapes - ecosystem services are necessary for our food supply chains, our agricultural/industry sector and provide the foundations of our urban environments.

The Gympie region is important to the biodiversity of the State, it is home to some of the world's most unique fauna and flora such as the Mary River turtle, the Queensland lung fish, the Mary River cod, koala, macadamia, blue quandong and Gympie messmate. The biodiversity of the region underpins a number of natural resource-based industries such as agriculture, tree cropping, fishing, forestry and tourism.

The need to protect biodiversity is recognised by all levels of government in Australia. The *Australian Strategy for Nature 2019-2030* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* establish the Commonwealth framework. In Queensland key state legislation includes the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Planning Act 2016*.

Under the Planning Act, the State Planning Policy, Regional Plans and local planning schemes all play a role in balancing the impact of development against the need to conserve biodiversity. The draft *Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan 2022* includes three strategic priorities, one of which is 'sustaining our environment and lifestyle'. The objective of this strategic priority is to 'protect the region's biodiversity values and ensure the impacts of climate change are minimised'. The Planning Act requires that this objective be reflected in the way the Gympie Planning Scheme is drafted and implemented. The State Planning Policy requires that councils planning schemes are drafted such that "matters of environmental significance are valued and protected, and the health and resilience of biodiversity is maintained or enhanced to support ecological processes."

Potential threats to biodiversity in the Gympie region include:

- land clearing
- urban expansion/new development
- fragmentation of habitat
- loss of water quality
- invasive species
- climate change, and,
- changing bushfire conditions and fire management regimes.

The challenge for council in drafting a new planning scheme is to strike a sustainable balance between meeting the community's needs for housing, food production, employment, infrastructure and natural resources and the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem values. This draft policy position paper sets out the key issues relevant to biodiversity conservation in the Gympie region and council's proposed planning scheme policy settings to address those issues.

The position paper is one of 13 position papers addressing key aspects of the future land use and development policy for council. The paper has been prepared as part of Stage 2 of the Gympie Regional Council Planning Scheme project and is intended to inform the planning scheme drafting process to occur in Stage 3.

Other position papers to be prepared as part of Stage 2 are:

- Housing
- Retail and Commercial Development
- Rural Land
- Open Space and Recreation
- Heritage
- Bruce Highway Upgrade Response Strategy
- Industrial Land
- Scenic Amenity
- Flooding
- Bushfire
- Land Stability
- Coastal Hazards.

Issue 1: Council's Existing Biodiversity Temporary Local Planning Instrument (TLPI)

Discussion

- *The Temporary Local Planning Instrument (TLPI)*, Protection of Biodiversity Values was adopted by Council in February 2022.
- The need for the TLPI arose from concerns that the Gympie Regional Planning Scheme (the Scheme) did not establish the mechanisms necessary to adequately protect the biodiversity of the region in the face of growing pressure for development.
- The TLPI identifies matters of local environmental significance (MLES) using overlay mapping to define core ecological linkages, ecological linkages (vegetation corridors), priority species habitat and waterways and wetlands. The identified areas are then subject to additional consideration via a specific biodiversity code, over and above any assessment required under the wider planning scheme.
- The object of the TLPI is to avoid development in areas where new development, or the intensification of existing development, is likely to have adverse impacts upon the biodiversity of the region.
- The TLPI has been in operation for 15 months at the time of preparing this policy position paper; 21 development applications have been assessed under the TLPI. To date no development applications (D/As) have been refused under the TLPI but a number of development proposals have been modified so as to better comply with the TLPI objectives. It would also be reasonable to assume that some proposals might not have preceded to D/A stage due to concerns over their potential to conflict with the TLPI requirements.
- The TLPI does include provisions to exempt from the approval requirements a defined list of property maintenance, minor building works and subdivisions for minor boundary realignments in recognition that much of the land identified by the TLPI overlay mapping has already been developed to some extent and will continue to be lawfully used.
- The TLPI provides that a dwelling house can be built in areas identified by the overlay mapping but includes provisions that seek to minimise the impact of such development.
- The TLPI also provides for the enhancement of the "missing links" in some of the ecological corridors by including such areas within the ecological corridor overlay mapping. However, the code is not explicit on how such enhancement might occur as part of the development process. This issue could be addressed by amendments to the code provisions.
- Some areas of mapping inaccuracies have been noted within the TLPI overlay mapping. Such inaccuracies are not common, and in most instances, these occur as a result of development proceeding between the time of the original mapping and the TLPI coming into effect. A review of the mapping will address this issue.
- The current TLPI mapping reflects the biodiversity situation as it was understood at the time the mapping and related research was carried out (2016 – 2019). Further investigations into species and habitats will be undertaken as required and reflected in updated overlay mapping as part of future planning scheme amendments.

- Development activities such as vegetation clearing, soil disturbance, and the introduction of new organic material to a site increase the risk of pest species impacting upon biodiversity values. The current TLPI code does include a requirement that development does not result in the introduction of pest species, however further guidance on how this requirement is to be met would aid in achieving council's biosecurity objectives.
- There have been some concerns raised about the completeness of, or in some cases the need for, the Environmental Assessment Reports (EARs) required to be submitted under the TLPI code, making it harder to ensure consistency in the development assessment process. This challenge is not uncommon with the introduction of new planning controls and assessment processes. At the introduction of the TLPI in February of 2022 it was noted that the TLPI process would facilitate "road testing" of the provisions before they are moved across into the new planning scheme. The operation of the TLPI over the past 15 months has generally met expectations, including the "flagging" of opportunities for improvements in the drafting of the provisions and in the assessment of applications. It is proposed that a guideline document be prepared to address the learnings arising from the past 15 months of the TLPIs operation.
- The TLPI will be in effect until February 2024. It is proposed to migrate the TLPI provisions into the new planning scheme with any adjustments necessary to address the matters raised above. As the new planning scheme will not be in effect until some time after February 2024 an extension of the current TLPI will be sought to ensure biodiversity conservation continues to be a relevant development assessment consideration in the interim.

Desired outcome

- The biodiversity of the Gympie region is enhanced.

Policy positions

- The current Biodiversity TLPI provisions, modified as discussed above, be incorporated into council's new planning scheme.
- The consideration of biodiversity values will continue to be a key element of council's development assessment processes.

Actions

- Migrate the current TLPI code provisions to the new planning scheme with the amendments/enhancements discussed above.
- The current TLPI overlay mapping be reviewed, as discussed above, as part of the migration of this mapping into the new planning scheme.
- A guideline document be prepared to assist all involved in the development process to consistently interpret and apply the biodiversity provisions to be included in the new planning scheme.
- An extension of the current biodiversity TLPI be sought to ensure biodiversity remains a relevant consideration in development assessment matters between the expiry of the current TLPI in February 2024 and the coming into effect of the new planning scheme.

Issue 2: Regional Koala Conservation

Discussion

The koala, *Phascolarctos cinereus*, is one of Australia's iconic marsupials. Formerly common throughout the eucalyptus dominated forests and woodlands from north Queensland to the south-eastern corner of mainland South Australia, its range has now contracted significantly due to loss of large areas of habitat (Curtis & Dennis 2012). The Gympie region has experienced a decline in koala populations (and many other native fauna species) since European settlement. However, koalas can still be found throughout various parts of the Gympie region.

Council undertook an extensive review of koala populations and associated habitat across the Gympie Region in 2016 – 2018 to produce the Koala Conservation Management Plan (GRC 2018). The review identified extensive areas of potential habitat across the Gympie region and the location of some significant populations at Southside, Widgee, Kilkivan, Curra, Traveston, Victory Heights and Goomborian. Council's Biodiversity TLPI was specifically drafted to capture corridors and connectivity to assist the protection of this endangered species. State mapped regional ecosystems covering 173,832 hectares of the Gympie LGA are identified as having a high abundance of preferred koala tree species.

Koalas are listed as Endangered under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), meaning that council and the proponents of development that might impact koala populations have an obligation to conserve and protect the habitat of this species. In addition to the EPBC Act, council has obligations to protect koala habitat under the following State legislation:

- *Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NC Act)*
- *Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan 2017*
- *Vegetation Management Act 1999 (VM Act)*
- *Planning Act 2016*
- *State Planning Policy (SPP) 2017*
- *Draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan 2022.*

More recently the QLD Government has amended the state planning framework (2020) to address the key threat to Koala populations in South East QLD, that is, habitat loss. Council also has an obligation under the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Koala Protection) Amendment Regulation to provide increased protection to koala habitat areas throughout our region. The new state framework implements new clearing restrictions prohibiting the clearing of koala habitat within designated koala priority areas.

The Gympie region is included within 'Koala District B' under the new framework and priority koala habitat mapping. The Koala Conservation Strategy describes the current koala population in the Gympie region as:

- population density generally lower than 0.2 koala per ha,
- moderately to highly threatened, and,
- habitat often in areas zoned for rural or rural residential purposes.

Development within the region is encroaching on remaining stands of koala habitat and ecological linkages. Increased mortality is expected to continue if priority species habitat and ecological linkages are developed or isolated by development within the region.

The principal threats to koalas have been identified as:

- habitat loss and habitat fragmentation
- disease
- vehicle strikes
- domestic and wild dogs
- invasive weeds
- bushfire
- the effects of climate change.

The challenge for council is how to manage these threats in the context of a growing human population.

The State framework for koala conservation in SEQ, whilst not applying directly to the Gympie region, can provide some guidance as to best practice with respect to conserving koala habitat. It is suggested that this approach be adopted for Gympie to address the threats identified above.

Desired outcomes

- Known koala populations and habitat, including potential koala habitat are protected and enhanced.
- Koala population density throughout Gympie does not drop below 0.2 koalas per hectare.

Policy positions

- Koala habitat is to be protected.
- The planning scheme adopts principles as put forward in the *SEQ Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025*.

Actions

- Incorporate the principles of the *SEQ Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025* into the new planning scheme.
- The new planning scheme codes are drafted to reflect koala sensitive design requirements.

Issue 3: Biodiversity Offsets Framework

Discussion

The biodiversity offsets policy currently included within the Gympie Biodiversity TLPI is intended to ensure that any significant residual impact upon biodiversity values that is caused by development that is unavoidable is offset by a biodiversity value gain in some other location within the Gympie region.

In practice, council's application of the TLPI to date has seen potential significant adverse impacts upon biodiversity values addressed on each development site rather than generating a "significant residual impact" to be addressed by the delivery of an offset elsewhere.

The current offsets policy (Appendix E of the TLPI) defines what a significant residual impact is, and the means by which such offsets can be delivered. As adopted, the TLPI provides that offsets can be made in one of three ways:

- a financial offset where the proponent pays a monetary contribution to council and council undertakes the delivery of the required works (and land acquisition if necessary) to offset the biodiversity loss at the proponent's development site,
- a land based offset where the proponent acquires a site, does the necessary works to offset the development related biodiversity loss and undertakes to maintain the site until the "offset" works have matured at which point the land tenure needs to reflect the intent to conserve the land in perpetuity. Often this means the land would become a reserve managed by council, or,
- a combination of land based and financial offsets.

The current offsets policy sets out the requirements for both forms of offset, including the monetary value of financial offsets and the physical/environmental attributes and area of land based offsets.

As indicated above it has been council's practice over the past 15 months since the commencement of the TLPI to require that developments are modified, if necessary, to avoid the need to deliver offsets.

The provision of a land based offset as described above is an acceptable solution as the onus remains with the proponent to identify and deliver the offset to meet the requirements of the offset policy as an integral component of completing their development. Where a financial offset is proposed a sum of money (calculated in accordance with the policy) is paid to council on the assumption that council either owns, or can acquire, a suitable site to rehabilitate and maintain as necessary to deliver the offset.

The financial offset model essentially means that the responsibility for the delivery of the offset is transferred to council. It is acknowledged that the financial offset amount is, theoretically, calculated to reflect the cost to council of delivering the offset, however:

- council would be required to establish a trust fund within which offset funds would be accumulated to finance the delivery of offsets,
- council would be obliged to identify sites to acquire or identify sites from within its current property portfolio. Such sites would need to be consistent in terms of physical/environmental attributes with the development sites from where the need for the offset was generated,

- council would need to manage the delivery and maintenance of the offset works to the point of maturity and from that point on maintain the land as part of its property portfolio in perpetuity, and,
- the effective value of funds on hand will depreciate in time with the normal inflation of land values and construction costs; council will likely need to fund a shortfall particularly where any delays are experienced in identifying and or acquiring a site.

In short, the establishment of a financial offset requires an ongoing commitment from council to fund and manage the process. In contrast the land based offset model requires the proponent to resolve the issues generated by their proposal.

It is preferable therefore that council's current adopted offsets policy as set out in Appendix E of the Biodiversity TLPI be modified to remove the option of a financial offset for offset relating to matters of local environmental significance (MLES). However, Section 18 of the Environmental Offsets Act 2014 provides that a proponent may elect to deliver an offset in one of three ways:-

- a land based offset
- a financial offset, or,
- a combination of land based and financial offsets.

It is noted that Section 13 of the same Act provides that "An environmental offsets policy may set out the requirements for determining the amount required for a financial settlement offset" so in theory council could include all of the administration costs to operate a financial offset settlement scheme although inevitably this scheme would see council obliged to accept the transfer of the proponent's offsetting responsibilities. From council's operating perspective this could become an ongoing drain on resources.

As discussed above, under the Environmental Offsets Act a Council Offsets policy to address any residual impacts upon MLES is possible but must include the option for a proponent to transfer their offsetting obligations to council by way of a financial offset settlement. It is noted that where residual impacts arise upon matters of state or national environmental matters (MSES and MNES) State and Commonwealth offset policies will apply to the extent of any overlap with a local offsets policy. It is suggested therefore that the most sustainable approach available to council is not to have an offsetting policy for matters of MLES, but rather require that development in areas mapped by the biodiversity overlays be designed so as not to result in any significant residual impact upon biodiversity values. Such an approach would negate the need for a council offsets policy to address matters of local environmental significance.

It is possible that at some point in the future a development proposal that would otherwise be worthy of council's support might not be able to resolve all of its biodiversity issues on site. In such instances the option of delivering a land based offset may be desirable, accordingly it is suggested that council could approach the State government with a request to review the requirements of Section 18 of the Environmental Offsets Act to allow a local offsets policy to limit the options available to proponents to land based offsets only.

Desired outcomes

- Impacts upon biodiversity values arising from development in the Gympie region are minimised.
- The proponents of development remain responsible to ensure there are no residual impacts upon the biodiversity of the Gympie region.
- The *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* is modified to allow councils to limit the offsetting options available to proponents under local offsetting policies to land based offsets only.

Policy position

- Council requires that development in areas mapped by the biodiversity overlays be designed so as not to result in any significant residual impact upon biodiversity values, thereby negating the need for a council offsets policy.

Actions

- The current offsets policy as provided at Appendix E of the Biodiversity TLPI not be carried forward to the new planning scheme.
- The drafting of the new scheme clearly establishes the principle that a development is to be designed so as not to give rise to any residual adverse impacts upon the biodiversity values of the Gympie region.
- Council approach the State government with a request to review the requirements of Section 18 of the Environmental Offsets Act to allow a local offsets policy to limit the options available to proponents to land based offsets only.

Issue 4: Biosecurity Management

Discussion

Invasive species of flora and fauna (weeds and pests) are a key threat to biodiversity values. Invasive species threaten industry, social amenity, livability, health, and our overall regional economy and sustainability. Management of invasive species is a legal obligation for all landholders and is critical to improved biodiversity outcomes.

Changes in land use and the development of land can increase the risks associated with the occurrence and spread of biosecurity hazards. The spread of pest species can have adverse implications for both the immediately affected property and the wider region.

Council's Gympie Region Biosecurity Plan sets out the legal obligations of landholders under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. This document describes the risk-based decisions taken for prioritising invasive species management goals and desired outcomes; it is essentially a guide to biosecurity compliance expectations (set by council) for landholders.

The current Gympie Regional Council Planning Scheme (2013) is silent on the issue of biosecurity. The Biodiversity TLPI, introduced in 2022, requires that assessable development not result in the introduction of pest species. The code could be further strengthened to address the issue of preventing the spread of pest species as part of transitioning the code into the new planning scheme. Further, the strategic framework and tables of assessment within the new planning scheme could be drafted to increase council's oversight of this issue, noting that the scheme will not be a relevant consideration where a proposed development or activity does not trigger a development application or is not referred to in an accepted development benchmark.

Where assessable development is approved by council standard conditions of approval, drafted to address biosecurity matters, would assist in the consistent implementation of the Biosecurity Plan.

Desired outcomes

- That development does not result in increased biosecurity risks within the Gympie region.
- That biosecurity risk management is integrated with the development assessment processes under new the planning scheme.

Policy position

- Council's new planning scheme is aligned with council's adopted *Gympie Region Biosecurity Plan*.

Actions

- The new planning scheme be drafted to ensure an integrated approach to biosecurity management is incorporated into the development assessment process.
- The new planning scheme provisions be supported by appropriate standard conditions of approval to be applied to relevant development applications.

Issue 5: Water Quality Management

Discussion

The Mary River and its tributaries are integral to the biodiversity of our region, providing vital water and nutrient distribution throughout the landscape, servicing environmental, social and industrial needs and providing habitat for numerous species of flora and fauna.

The Mary River catchment (much of which occurs in the Gympie region) feeds water flows directly into the Great Sandy Marine Park. Council has obligations under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*; and the *Environmental Protection (Water and Wetland Biodiversity) Policy 2019* to manage, maintain or improve water quality to meet the required water quality objectives. The Mary River and tributaries are home to vulnerable and endangered threatened fauna species; the Mary River cod, Mary River turtle, the giant barred frog, the Queensland lungfish and the white throated snapping turtle which is critically endangered. All of these species, and many others, rely on suitable water flows and a standard of water quality for their survival. The quantity and quality of those flows are impacted heavily by human activities in the river's catchment.

The management of land use within river's catchment is governed by a plethora of legislation, addressing a wide variety of activities including resource management, water allocation, agriculture, forestry, environmental management, mining, biodiversity conservation and urban development. An integrated Mary River basin management plan would be a step forward in coordinating the activities of the numerous agencies and could be expected to deliver social economic and environmental benefits. Such a plan is however beyond both scope of the new planning scheme project and the power of council, alone, to deliver.

An avenue that is open to council would be to ensure that the new planning scheme addresses the water quality matters that arise from development that is regulated by the planning scheme. In this regard the scheme could be reviewed to ensure that it requires development to follow best practice in terms of development design, operational works, site management, and landscaping design to limit the potential for adverse off-site water quality impacts with the long-term objective of achieving measurable improvements in water quality.

Desired outcome

- That water quality in the Mary River catchment is improved.

Policy positions

- The new planning scheme will require a best practice approach to those aspects of development that might impact upon the quality of water flows leaving a development site, during both the construction and operational phases of the development that it regulates.
- The development of a Mary River basin plan to coordinate the activities of all agencies currently involved in managing any aspect of the river's catchment is supported.

Actions

- The new planning scheme be drafted to ensure that it requires development to follow best practice in terms of development design, operational works, site management, and landscaping design to limit the potential for adverse off-site water quality impacts with the long-term objective of achieving measurable improvements in water quality across the catchment.
- Council advocate for the development of a Mary River basin plan to coordinate the activities of all agencies currently involved in managing any aspect of the river's catchment.

Issue 6: Bushfire

Discussion

The Australian landscape has evolved over a long period to respond to cycles of bushfire impact. Similar fire events can both threaten and promote the wellbeing of different flora species with some species being dependent upon a certain fire regime to reproduce. A bushland ecosystem is the product of a balance of attributes including the occurrence or otherwise of regular wildfires. The species of flora and fauna that constitute the biodiversity of an area will be impacted upon by changes to the natural bushfire regime.

Changes to the natural bushfire regime have come about by reason of:

- human induced climate change,
- land use, and,
- actions undertaken to protect human life and property from fire impact.

The planning scheme can have some bearing upon all of the above factors, recognising that the scheme's impact is limited to those activities that it regulates. For example, the planning scheme's influence over climate change is limited to the energy efficient siting and design of our settlements and buildings and in promoting active transport options. The planning scheme can, however, be a little more direct in influencing the remaining two factors cited above – land use and fire protection measures. These two aspects are closely related – decisions made to facilitate land use in areas subject to bushfire threat inevitably lead to the need to carry out further measures to protect the landuse. That is, more land is cleared to protect the land that has just been cleared to facilitate development. In this way land clearing to establish fire protection zones can have a greater impact upon biodiversity than would have arisen from the continuation of the natural bushfire regime.

In considering the suitability of land for various purposes, particularly residential uses, or other activities that will necessitate extensive fire protection measures, it will be critical to have regard for the impacts of the likely fire protection measures upon the biodiversity values of the locality. Such fire protection measures may include an increase in hazard reduction burning, clearing/constructing access tracks for fire fighting purposes, the creation of asset protection zones by clearing and the use of introduced landscaping species – all factors which would have potential to impact upon the biodiversity values of the locality. To date the typical approach throughout Australia has been to address the bushfire hazard at the expense of biodiversity, rather than treat the biodiversity values of a locality a determining factor as to whether or not the proposed land use is appropriate to the location.

Desired outcomes

- Land use and development decisions in fire prone areas have regard for the impact of likely asset protection measures.
- Asset protection is achieved without adverse impacts upon the biodiversity of the Gympie region.

Policy position

- In considering new development council shall have regard for the biodiversity impacts of the likely to be required asset protection measures.

Action

- The new planning scheme be drafted in a manner that makes it clear that new development will be required to demonstrate that any necessary asset protection measures can be delivered without an adverse impact upon biodiversity values.

Issue 7: Climate Change

Discussion

Climate change has the potential to impact significantly upon the biodiversity of the Gympie region by reason of flow on changes to an extensive range of factors including:

- rainfall patterns
- temperature ranges
- bushfire behaviour
- rising sea levels and changing coastal environments
- pest species vectors.

Council has an adopted policy with respect to climate change, adopted in June 2021. The Policy is appended to this draft policy position paper. The policy identifies that “the planning scheme will address all aspects of climate change related risk, as guided by the State Planning Policy.

Desired outcome

- The Gympie region’s resilience to climate change is enhanced.

Policy position

- Council maintain the Climate Change Policy adopted on 30 June 2021.

Action

- The new planning scheme is drafted to reflect the impacts of climate change consistent with the State Planning Policy and council’s adopted policy.

Issue 8: Wildlife Conflict Areas

Discussion

Some species of wildlife can cause concerns in residential areas where they flock to roost or feed in remnant habitat. Flying foxes, for example can roost in large numbers and establish new roost sites with little or no warning. Large congregations of flying foxes can pose a human health risk as vectors for a number of diseases, generate significant noise levels, emit a strong odour and foul adjacent properties. This situation has been experienced over the past three years at Commissioners Gully in central Gympie.

Managing high-conflict wildlife areas requires considerable time and resources. The options available to address the conflict are limited – flying foxes, like all native wildlife in Queensland, are protected by legislation. Specific management plans are required to be prepared and approved before any action can be taken and, in reality, the process generally has a fairly low success rate in terms of animal welfare or resident satisfaction.

Avoiding this situation is seen as the preferred approach – prior knowledge of current and historic roosting sites could be used to influence land use zoning decisions in future development areas.

It should be noted however that:

- the retention of remnant vegetation is desirable in residential areas for a multitude of reasons,
- some fauna, particularly avifauna are highly mobile,
- the existence of current roost sites needs to be addressed in the development assessment process to avoid simply moving the problem onto a new site,
- smaller, more linear areas of open space with a higher edge to area ratio will increase the likelihood of conflict with people, and,
- much of the urban fabric to the planning horizon for the new planning scheme, i.e., 2046 is already in place meaning there are few options, within the context of the new planning scheme, to address existing wildlife conflicts.

As at April 2021, council was aware of 10 locations where flying-foxes roost on a relatively constant basis:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Inskip Reserve, Rainbow Beach | 6. Power Street, Neerdie |
| 2. Seary's Creek, Rainbow Beach | 7. Beenham Valley Road, Beenham Valley |
| 3. Queen Elizabeth Drive, Cooloola Cove | 8. Commissioner's Gully, Gympie |
| 4. Snapper Point, Tin Can Bay | 9. Amamoor State Forest, Amamoor |
| 5. Anderleigh Road, Goomboorian | 10. Hyne Estate Road, Kandanga |

Additionally, there are locations that are known as historic roost sites, that could be re-occupied and there are locations that have potential roost habitat value that may be used in the future. It is suggested that the land use, design requirements and the potential for buffer zones in these areas be reviewed as part of the drafting of the new planning scheme to minimise the potential for future conflict, noting that in many instances, land use and development decisions will have already been made.

Desired outcomes

- Conflict between wildlife and residents is minimised.
- The new planning scheme facilitates the early consideration and resolution of potential wildlife conflicts.

Policy position

- Council will seek to ensure conflict between humans and wildlife is minimised through the planning scheme provisions and development assessment processes.

Actions

- Review current information on flying fox habitats and the habitats of other potential “conflict species” such as ibis to identify existing and potential conflict areas.
- Investigate the most appropriate planning scheme responses to manage this issue.