

Cottonwood Tree Study Currimundi to Wickham Point, Caloundra

Study Brief

At council's Ordinary Meeting on 17 August 2017, a resolution was passed to undertake an investigation regarding the overall characteristics of Cottonwood trees which would include such things as: distribution, growth patterns, habitat values and landscape relationships, and consideration of alternate landscape options.

The details of the resolution are as follows:

Subject:	Ordinary Meeting Draft Sunshine Coast Council Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan
Target Date:	18/09/2017
File Reference	Council meetings
Notes:	Relation to Council Resolution (OM17/144) Subsequent Motion

Council Resolution (OM17/143)

Moved: Councillor J McKay

Seconded: Councillor G Rogerson

That Council:

- (a) *receive and note the report titled "Draft Sunshine Coast Council Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan"*
- (b) *endorse the Draft Sunshine Coast Council Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan for the purposes of public consultation (Appendix A) as amended and*
- (c) *delegate the authority to the Chief Executive Officer to place the Draft Sunshine Coast Council Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan on display August/September 2017.*

Carried unanimously.

Council Resolution (OM17/144)

Moved: Councillor T Dwyer

Seconded: Councillor P Cox

That Council

- (a) *delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with Division 2 and Division 3 Councillors and the Portfolio Councillor for Environment, to prepare a report on the Cottonwood Tree by 31 December 2017 (Ordinary Meeting 25 January 2018) and*
- (b) *request the above report cover the geographical area along the coastal strip from Currimundi to Wickham Point and*
- (c) *ensure the report is prepared in an independent; impartial and objective manner and*

- (d) have the report consider, but not necessarily limited to, the overall characteristics, growth patterns and attributes of the Cottonwood Tree from a practical basis and have regard for specific locational considerations, its relationship with other related habitat and provide advice on how, why and where alternative landscape options could be considered and
- (e) give regards to the inclusion of the Cottonwood Tree in the Sunshine Coast Council Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan subsequent to the completion of the report.

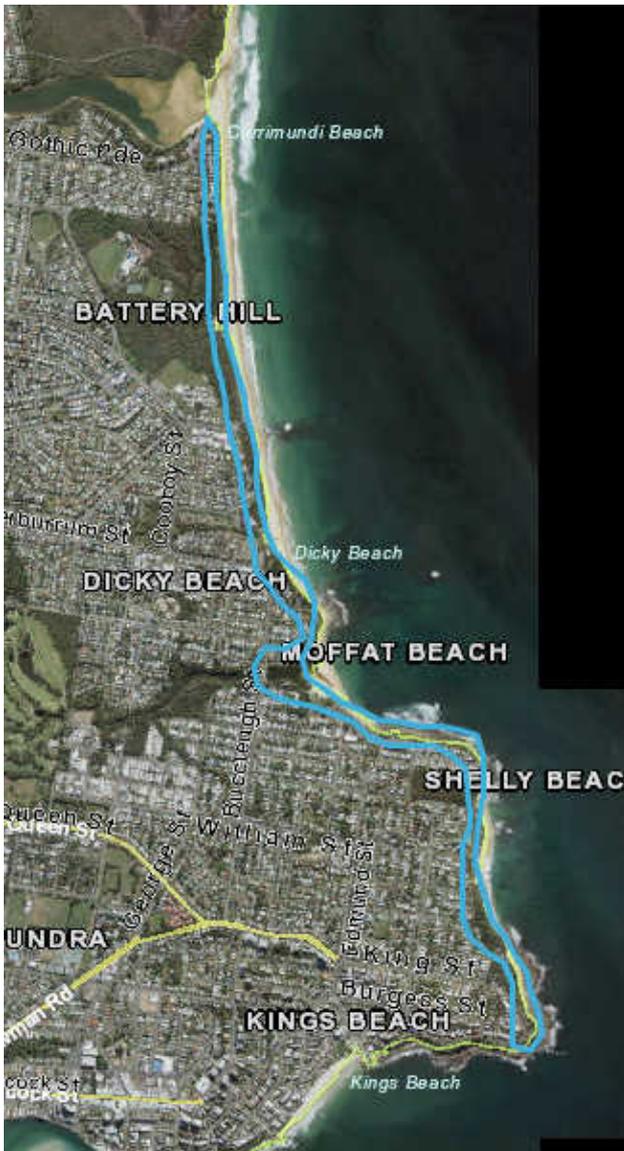
Carried unanimously.

To progress the above resolution the following information seeks to define the extent and scope of the required study.

Geographical Area Description

Define 'coastal strip' as generally including open space west of the highest astronomical tide (HAT) and east of road or property infrastructure; this also includes estuaries, lakes and lagoons. The extent of the study area is defined below in Image 1.

Image 1 – Study Area



Independent Report

To ensure the study is undertaken in a manner that is independent, it is recommended that consulting professional skills from several different disciplines be utilised to develop the study. Those professional disciplines would be drawn from council's existing procurement panels and include experience in:

- Horticulture and vegetation management
- Open space planning
- Landscape design and architecture
- Ecology
- Flora and fauna habitat assessments, and
- Cultural Assessments.

It would be expected that further professional independent advice be sought from peak industry bodies and relevant experts such as:

- Queensland Herbarium
- Urban Design Advisory Panel
- Landscape Queensland Industries Association Inc
- Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service – Dr Col Limpus
- Lighting Specialists – A/Prof Ian Rolfe Cowling, School of Chemistry, Physics and Mechanical Engineering Science and Engineering Faculty QUT / Dr Catherine Bell and Dr K. Pendoley, Pendoley Environmental Pty Ltd
- Coastal Engineers – WBM BMT
- Open Space Amenity Planning, and
- Indigenous Cultural Heritage (Kabi Kabi First Nation).

Cottonwood Characteristic Assessment

It is expected that the characteristics assessment be undertaken in two parts:

- (a) Desktop assessments to detail:
 - classification, habit, distribution of cotton trees within different landscape settings of differing maturity
 - specific declaration of Cottonwood trees as a native species, rationale and justifications
 - use, feature/amenity value and performance of Cottonwood trees in urban park landscaping, coastal dunes and creek and waterway settings
 - function of Cottonwood tree as habitat in own right or relationship as supporting habitat for other species
 - role of Cottonwood trees for dunal stabilisation
 - potential for dominance and reduction of biodiversity if in a natural setting
 - review of relevant legislation
 - undertake landscape assessment of study area using aerial mapping to define landscape density/coverage and assess against other mapping available, and
 - detail current information, management actions or principles already in place and subsequent findings.
- (b) Undertake on-ground inspection to define and record landscape attributes that includes:
 - open space settings e.g. developed urban park, natural dunal reserve, coastal path
 - occurrence and density of target species within that landscape and relationship to contiguous vegetation or infrastructure

- list current management practices associated with Cottonwood trees in those locations and on-going observations and results
- identify role and function of individual tree or aggregation of trees e.g. dune stabilisation, shade, amenity, habitat, microclimate, intrusion impacts on recreation and scenic amenity values etc
- identify maturity of landscape e.g. established park under recurrent management regime or natural coastal settings indicative of time brackets 0-10 years, 10 – 20 years or 20 years or more, and
- undertake opportunistic survey to define community value of Cottonwood trees in various landscape settings (provide alternative landscape options and develop impartial and objective questions in conjunction with respective councillors).

Alternative Landscape Options

Based on assessments noted above consider alternative landscape options that provide guidance for:

- triggers to consider alternative landscape treatments
- fit for purpose horticultural management practices e.g. pruning, lifting
- species replacement options based on better use and community value, landscape context and function
- timing and implementation considerations based on landscape context and function
- legislative triggers and processes, and
- other considerations, costs, opportunities, constraints, community value suitable to location/destination.

Biosecurity Plan Considerations

Examine potential for listing under the Biosecurity Plan and provide rationale as to why it should or should not be included within the plan and the process required if deemed appropriate to do so. Considerations should include available descriptions and information e.g. invasive nature of canopy/branches

Timing

While the council resolution indicated a reporting timeframe of January 2018, this has now been revised to June 2018 to support this important study.

Consultation

The investigation and subsequent report will be developed in consultation with:

Councillors

- Deputy Mayor and Division 2 Councillor, Tim Dwyer
- Division 5 and Environment Portfolio Councillor, Jenny McKay
- Division 3 and Design Development and Place Portfolio Councillor, Peter Cox

Staff

- Manager Parks and Gardens, Mark Presswell
- Manager Environmental Operations, Chris Allan
- Manager Environment and Sustainability Policy, Bill Haddrill
- A/Manager Design and Place Making Services, Jamie Franklin (proxy Kerrie White)
- Manager Community Planning and Development, Liam Mayo
- Group Executive, Liveability and Natural Assets Group, Warren Bunker