

Ipswich City Council

Land Development and Vegetation Clearing Workshop: Summary & Outcomes



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Land development and Vegetation Clearing Workshop

Objective

The objective of the workshop was to facilitate a “meeting of the minds” to review the vegetation clearing practices and processes for land development to determine:

- what we are doing well that needs to be continued;
- what needs to be improved and how this can be achieved; and
- what are the key priorities.

Stakeholder Participants

Key Stakeholders from Environmental Groups, Environmental Consultants, the Development Industry and Government Agencies were invited to attend the workshop.

The following organisations and agencies were represented at the workshop:

- Sekisui House
- Lendlease
- Stocklands
- Woodlinks
- Defence Housing
- Endeavour
- UDIA
- Ipswich Koala Protection Society
- Queensland Trust for Nature
- Gainsdale Group and QTFN
- Healthy Land and Water
- West Moreton Land Care
- Australia Fauna Management
- S5 Environmental
- Ecological Australia
- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy

The following additional organisations and agencies were invited but were unable to attend:

- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
- Commonwealth Department of Environment
- Dreamworld
- Avid Property Group

State Government Perspective

The workshop commenced with a presentation from the Department of Natural Resource, Mines and Energy representative Lyall Hinrichsen outlining proposed changes to the Vegetation Management Act 1999.

Ipswich City Council Perspective

Strategic Planning Manager Nick Vass Bowen presented an overview of:

- The Land Use Planning Framework – the ‘Plan Hierarchy’;
- *ShapingSEQ* Key Policy Objectives – Grow and Sustain Themes;
- ICC Planning Scheme Measures – balancing of vegetation retention and development outcomes;
- Development Conditions and Requirements;
- Likely vegetation clearing ‘hot spots’;
- Non-Scheme Measures

Development Industry Perspective

Queensland UDIA State President Ian Murray and Nelson Wills presented an overview of:

- Environmental Planning
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Environment Impact Management

- What next

Environmental Defenders

Perspective

Rebecca Larkin from the Ipswich Koala Protection Society presented on an overview of:

- IKPS Vision for Koala Habitat protection
- What hasn't worked
- Koalas need trees/What sort of trees
- Threats
- Habitat fragmentation/disturbance
- Public education

Workshop Discussion

The workshop was managed by an external facilitator – Warren Rowe. After the presentations Warren facilitated a group discussion around:-

- what we do well (that needs to be continued); and
- what needs to be improved (and how this can be achieved).

The group feedback is outlined below:

What we do well

- Comprehensive suite of measures (both planning scheme and non scheme)
- Pre Lodgment DA Meetings/Discussions (right people with adequate information attend from Council)
- Ability to work through problems (understand existing status, development constraints, zonings, etc)
- Collaboration – work well with community groups
- Try and avoid duplication across levels of Government and between Council Departments
- Property owner support
- Council staff recognize the

impact/workability/understanding of EPBC Act

- Holding this workshop – willingness to interact
- Amount of council owned and protected land (8000ha) – planned acquisition
- Use of Enviro Plan (Green Levy)
- Realistic Planning Advice/understanding
 - Existing zoning understood
 - Rational and reasonable approach

What we could do better

- **Overlays/duplication – Commonwealth/State/Local**
 - Desire for a Regional Outcome/Solution
 - Advocacy role for Council
 - Strategic Assessment (under EPBC)
- **Inform the community**
 - Infill Hotspots – conservation is a 'legitimate' land use
 - Partnering/transparency with industry and community
 - Inform about the details of what we already have (e.g. Nil net loss, stormwater quality off sets)
- **Maintenance obligation for land handed over to Council**
 - Needs to be well maintained in order to engender ongoing support from both the development industry and community.
- **'Landscape Level' of assessment and consideration-v-project level**
 - Regional/Sub Regional role for ICC
- **Use Commonwealth and State offset funds as well as ICC funds (eg from Nil net loss and stormwater quality offsets) for good strategic solutions.**
 - Review ICC provisions (whilst having regard to Commonwealth & State provisions)
 - Need to be aware of 'pricing' effects

- **Inform Commonwealth & State of workshop outcomes**
- **Spotter catchers**
 - Permits/oversight by DES
 - Inform the community
 - Pre clearing Advice/Information
 - Signage
 - Use of technology (fauna heat sensing)
 - Utilise spotter catcher knowledge in review of site practices and Councils development conditions and clearing plans
 - Transfer of site knowledge from Environment Consultant to Spotter catcher.
 - Integration of design and on site practices
- **Interactive mapping/information**
 - Available on internet
 - Existing ICC mapping (PD Online) is 'Old and clunky' – needs refreshing, make contemporary
- **'Publish' how much Nil net loss and stormwater quality offsets funds have been secured and where they are spent**
 - Try and spend 'locally' where possible
 - Need to ensure 'good/right' environmental outcomes are achieved
- **Increase ICC nil net loss 'one for one' to 'two for one'**
- **Council should not have to 'do it all' importance of partnerships with landowners/industry**
 - Collective support
- **Measurable indicators to ensure right outcomes**
- **Focus on enduring outcomes with appropriate rigor and technical support/information.**

What are the Key Priorities

Each participant (excluding Council Officers) were allocated 5 'votes' to place on the matters that they considered were of the greatest importance.

The collective votes (each of which had similar high scores) were:-

- **Use Offset funds for good strategic solutions**
- **Inform the community**
- **Undertake a 'landscape level' of assessment/consideration-v-project level**

The next priority was avoiding/removing duplication between Commonwealth, State and Local assessments/provisions. However it was recognized that Council had only limited opportunity to influence or achieve this.

What's Next?

The workshop provided Council with valuable feedback about what we are doing well and what could be done better. There appeared to be strong consensus that a lot of good initiatives were in place, but these initiatives and their success should be more widely communicated.

The results of the workshop will be used by both the Planning and Development and Works Parks and Recreation Departments to inform their ongoing strategic and operational planning.



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