

City of Ipswich

Enviroplan Program and Levy Progress Report

2022-2023



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Ipswich City Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners as custodians of the land and waters with which we share. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, as the keepers of their traditions, customs, cultures and stories of proud peoples.

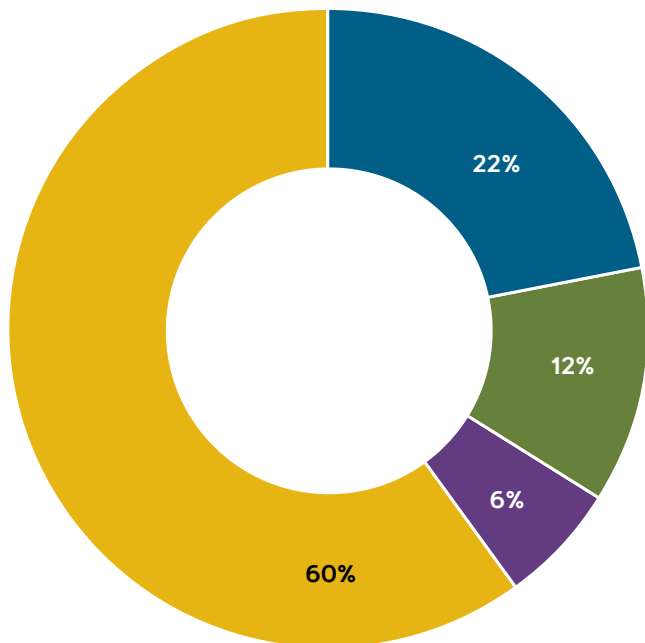
ENVIROPLAN SNAPSHOT

The initiative is funded through a levy paid through household rates. By committing to Ipswich Enviroplan, council is able deliver citywide conservation outcomes in four key areas; land acquisition, estate management, conservation planning and community partnerships.

Currently, the Ipswich Enviroplan portfolio includes more than 6,700 hectares of conservation land and broader community activities. It includes:

- Maintenance such as weed removal, hazard reduction burns, pest management
- Research and planning, including flora and fauna surveys, and masterplans
- Recreational facilities such as walking tracks, amenities, signage
- Community-facing initiatives such as Experience Nature and the Landholder Conservation Partnerships Program to inspire community action.

Where did the funds go in 2022-2023?



- Acquisition of significant nature conservation land and loan servicing – \$861,028
- Community nature conservation partnerships and support – \$484,913
- Nature conservation planning – \$229,537
- Embellishment, capital and operational management within the Natural Area Estate – \$2,353,517

Total Spend: \$3,928,995



Rosella by Gail Bryant

INVESTMENT TREND COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEAR



2022-2023 saw an increase in hazard reduction burn activity across multiple estates, as well as investment in fuel reduced areas



The Landholder Conservation Partnerships Program delivered greater support for landholders including first landholder support day since the program's re-launch.



Significant investment continued with flood recovery works and building resilience to future floods and severe storms in estates and reserves



Investment in nature conservation planning saw important fauna and flora survey works carried out at various locations.

TREND	THEME	CHANGE FROM 2021-2022
≡	Acquisition of significant nature conservation land and loan servicing	(=) 0
↑	Community nature conservation partnerships and support	(+) \$232,137
↑	Nature conservation planning	(+) \$98,545
↓	Embellishment, capital and operational management within the Natural Area Estate	(-) \$1,060,723

YOUR LEVY IN ACTION

Urban biodiversity is a crucial element to conservation efforts across the city of Ipswich.

The importance of urban biodiversity enhancement is recognised as one of the strategic goals in the Natural Environment Policy, with council committing to creating and enhancing corridors to provide refuge for wildlife and ecosystem services functions.

Enviroplan supports urban biodiversity through the protection and restoration of urban bushland conservation areas, and by supporting landholders to improve biodiversity on private property.

Urban bushland nodes such as Denmark Hill Conservation Reserve and Haig Street Quarry Bushland Reserve are examples of landscapes that were extensively cleared for uses such as mining and logging. Through Enviroplan these landscapes have been restored to a natural state and embellished for nature-based recreation such as bushwalking, birdwatching and nature play.

The value of urban biodiversity is not just in the size and number of bushland reserves and estates, but also the connection to other spaces. The bushland network creates green corridors and stepping stones for native species to move between larger conservation and habitat areas, supporting the longer-term viability of populations.

Bushland areas in the urban environment provide a range of ecosystem services that benefit both native flora and fauna as well as humans. These spaces build appreciation of nature, enhance recreational opportunities and have practical functions such as urban cooling, carbon storage and reducing stormwater runoff and pollutants entering waterways.

Through Enviroplan, these benefits of urban biodiversity are strengthened through the Habitat Gardens program which had 827 members as of 30 June 2023.

This free conservation partnerships program was re-invigorated as a five-year commitment aimed at urban landholders to increase biodiversity on their properties. Members are supported with incentives such as additional free plants from Council's Nursery, workshops and networking opportunities and access to resources.

Habitat Gardens properties have also featured as 'open gardens' in the annual Sustainable Ipswich campaign in October, providing opportunity for Ipswich residents to visit these gardens, meet the landholders and raise awareness of the program.



ACQUISITION OF SIGNIFICANT CONSERVATION LAND AND LOAN SERVICING

- There were no land acquisitions in 2021-2022
- \$861,028 went towards servicing the loan

Council continues to investigate acquisition opportunities as they arise, assessing properties against a set of criteria including ecological values.

COMMUNITY NATURE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT

- \$11,262.16 went to Land Management Payments to landholders
- \$95,261.10 was spent on Nature Conservation Grants
- \$42,753.36 was provided to landholders through incentive activities
- \$17,002.12 was spent on landholder education activities.

RENEWED REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- \$13,049 was provided to Land for Wildlife South East Queensland
- \$16,305 went towards SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium



Tetragonula carbonaria on dianella by Janine Jungfels



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

LANDHOLDER SUPPORT DAY BOOSTS ON GROUND ACTION

The ever-growing Landholder Conservation Partnerships Program shared learnings and resources through a special landholder support day.

About 70 members of the program attended Ivory's Rock Conference Centre and took part in workshops and networking, as well as receiving resources to assist their property goals.

One of the presentations was on nest box installation, including a practical demonstration of installing a phascogale nest box on a tree. Landholders were provided Hollow Log Homes nestboxes made of 100 per cent recycled plastic and Queensland cypress with a lifespan of 30 years.

Another presentation from Watergum demonstrated how cane toad tadpole lures are deployed and provided practical tips on maximising effectiveness of this new technique.

At the end of the day, eligible landholders received plants custom selected based on the ecosystems on their property and restoration work being undertaken.

In total more than 4,600 native plants, 43 nest boxes, 30 cane toad traps and copies of Mangroves to Mountains were provided to landholders on the day.

Members invited to attend have migrated to the new program model and have completed a property visit by a council officer and received an up-to-date Property Management Plan.

These plans outline the ecosystems and key natural values, priority threats and recommendations for managing those threats.





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT LANDHOLDER PROFILE
REBUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM FROM SCRATCH

As Mick and Kate Drews wander through semi evergreen vine thicket at their Tallegalla property, it's hard to imagine there was once not a tree in sight.

"When we moved here 18 years ago the land was heavily grazed and the nights were quiet instead of buzzing with wildlife," Mick said.

"Looking over 20 acres of bare land, we began planning to revegetate with natives that would have existed here years ago.

"We started with 8 free council trees - you have to start somewhere."

Over the years Mick and Kate continued to revegetate, planting small patches of local dry vine scrub trees grown from locally sourced seeds.

Today around 4,000 native plants are thriving and wildlife like wallabies, echidna, birds and frogs have returned.

"Trees like company and do well in a community. The larger trees protect the smaller trees and the

understorey and leaf debris provide habitat for wildlife including some fascinating insects," Mick said.

"It's a pleasure to watch the trees naturally regenerate now. Our focus has shifted to mostly supporting the process and weed management."

Early in the project Mick and Kate connected with Land for Wildlife and the Enviroplan-funded Landholder Conservation Partnership Program.

"We have received a lot of encouragement from the partnerships team who are passionate and interested in land restoration," Mick said.

"It's helpful to have a Property Management Plan that identifies priority areas, threatened species on our property and maps out our weed management."

The property features *Araucaria cunninghamii* (Hoop Pine), *Owenia venosa* (Crows Apple), *Streblus brunonianus* (Whalebone tree) and *Acacia harpophylla* (Brigalow) which are species from the endangered Brigalow Regional Ecosystem (12.8.23).



Photos courtesy of Land For Wildlife South East Queensland

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

EXPERIENCE NATURE – 40 WAYS IN 40 DAYS

From May to June in 2023 there were an abundance of activities focused on Ipswich's Enviroplan conservation estates and reserves.

The Experience Nature – 40 ways in 40 days campaign encouraged the Ipswich community to connect with the natural environment and conservation efforts.

Overall, 1145 people engaged with the program in face-to-face activities.

The campaign expanded on council's environment and conservation goals and priorities, by focusing on awareness of conservation, sustainable nature-based recreation and 'treading lightly' in these high value areas.

A calendar of events featured free or low cost events and activities across diverse Enviroplan and natural locations, with opportunities suitable for all ages.

The campaign featured some special experiences, such as a Twilight Moonrise Night Hike at Mt Goolman Lookout, Nature Sketchbook workshop with artist Deb Mostert at Purga Nature Reserve, and a Habitat and History walk at Denmark Hill Conservation Reserve.

The culmination of the 40-day campaign was two events at the Hardings Paddock day use area in the Flinders-Goolman Conservation Estate.

An Experience Nature Outdoor Education Day had 135 students from 9 local schools and focused inspiring students to become environmental stewards. Activities included a campfire, nature walks, waterbug investigation, habitat planting and waste sorting.

An Experience Nature Family Day had more than 450 attendees, with highlights such as traditional dance performance, showcase of local conservation projects, live entertainment, the launch of an Ipswich Libraries 'Tales and Trails' location, and an informative and entertaining debate between three leading biodiversity experts.



NATURE CONSERVATION PLANNING

- \$122,581 funded operational expenses such as staff wages, vehicles and equipment necessary to deliver the Enviroplan Program.
- \$19,505 was spent on the Brush-tailed rock wallaby survey works and reporting.

SEARCHING FOR ICONIC FLORA AND FAUNA

The Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby (*Petrogale penicillata*) is a shy and cryptic species, living in hard-to-access rocky cliffs, ledges, escarpments and steep areas of Flinders-Goolman Conservation Estate, as well as smaller rocky hills and mountains in the area.

During the day they rest in the safety of high rocky homes. They also use specific ledges to sun themselves on cold winter mornings, which become polished from constant and prolonged use.

They emerge at dusk to feed on grassy hillsides, leaving behind distinctive scat.

When doing a survey of the animals, it is rare to see the wallabies themselves, so it is other telltale signs such as scat and ledges that the surveyor looks for.

A fauna survey in June 2023 found good evidence of Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby use at sites within the Enviroplan estate.

The work was part of council's Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby Recovery Plan, which was developed to conserve the city's faunal emblem.

Surveys help council understand the populations' health over time, movements and use of habitat in the landscape, which guides further conservation work such as lantana and weed removal and management of feral predators.

The Flinders-Goolman Conservation Estate also provides protection for an endangered rainforest tree *Planchonella eerwah*, also known as Flinders Plum or shiny leaved Condo.

There has been little data about the species' distribution within the estate, so a flora survey can help identify the health of the population, and understand if further investment is needed.

A survey completed in the estate in the 22/23 FY found 36 Flinders plum, of which five were juvenile. These will be re-assessed in future surveys.

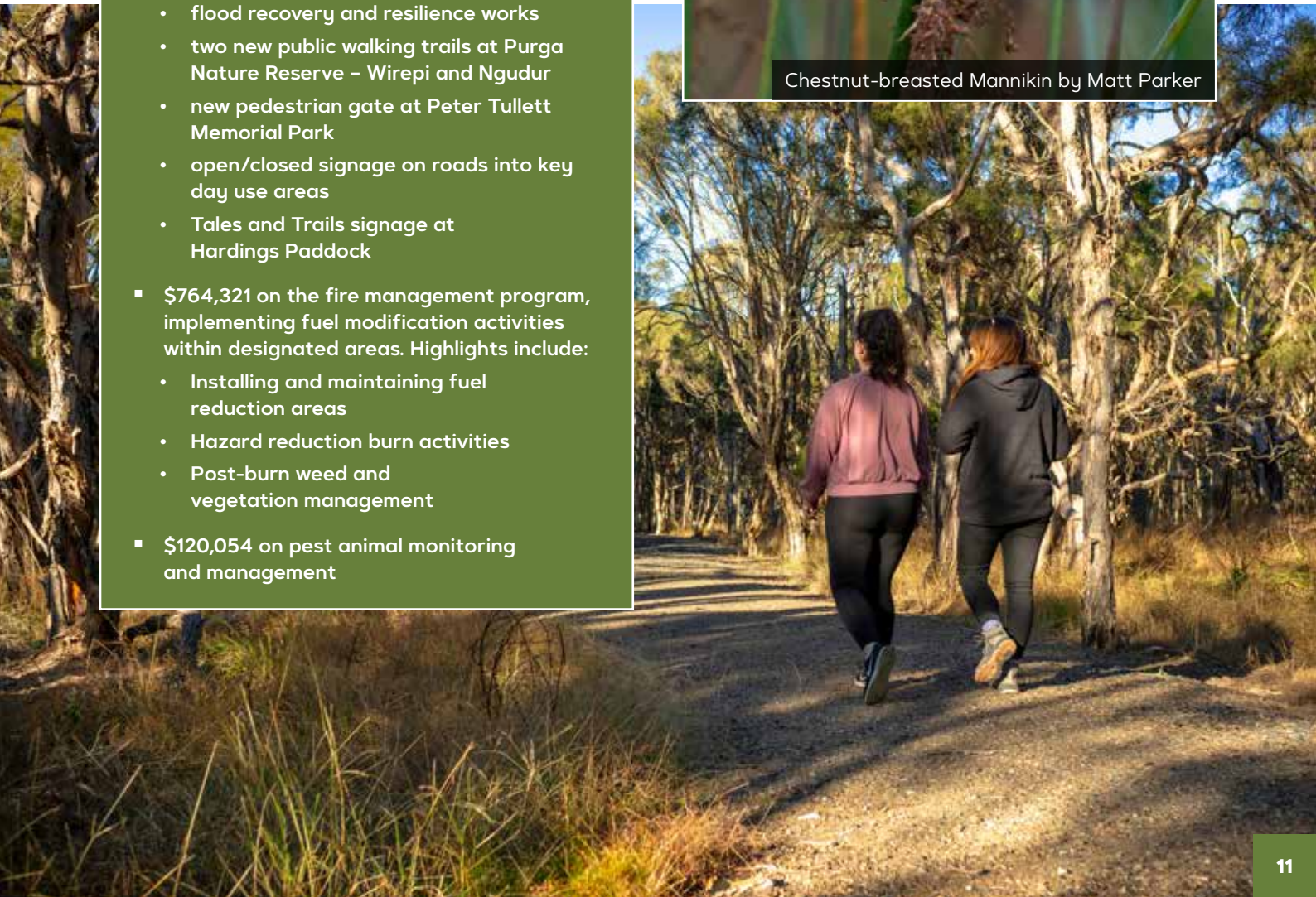


EMBELLISHMENT, CAPITAL AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT WITHIN THE NATURAL AREA ESTATE

- \$469,510 was spent on natural area maintenance, including weed control and vegetation management, service trail works, labour and equipment hire and service contracts
- \$340,486 went towards restoration projects within higher value conservation sites. Highlights include:
 - more than 17 hectares of restoration works including Koala and Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby habitat restoration, and Yellow box vegetation community.
 - 40+ hectares of weed management, including lantana and cats claw creeper
- \$423,124 was spent on capital projects across the Natural Area Estate. Highlights include:
 - significant upgrade to information bays at five key locations
 - flood recovery and resilience works
 - two new public walking trails at Purga Nature Reserve – Wirepi and Ngudur
 - new pedestrian gate at Peter Tullett Memorial Park
 - open/closed signage on roads into key day use areas
 - Tales and Trails signage at Hardings Paddock
- \$764,321 on the fire management program, implementing fuel modification activities within designated areas. Highlights include:
 - Installing and maintaining fuel reduction areas
 - Hazard reduction burn activities
 - Post-burn weed and vegetation management
- \$120,054 on pest animal monitoring and management



Chestnut-breasted Mannikin by Matt Parker



FUEL REDUCTION PREPARES ESTATES FOR FIRE SEASON

Following years of La Nina conditions and vegetation growth, it was important to manage Enviroplan conservation estates and reserves to reduce fuel loads and reduce the risk of bushfire.

As the land manager, council has a responsibility to undertake activities that mitigate the risk of fire leaving or entering council-owned land.

An ongoing program of hazard reduction burns achieved outcomes at estates and reserves across Ipswich in the 2022 – 2023 Financial Year.

- **White Rock – Spring Mountain Conservation Estate:** 45.5 hectare burn area completed in March 2023
- **Mount Grandchester Conservation Estate:** 155 hectare burn area completed in April 2023
- **Hillview Drive Reserve:** 10 hectare burn area completed in February 2023.

Fire is recognised as a natural and essential requirement for the long term health and viability

of bushland and associated wildlife species in Ipswich. Managing fire in bushland areas is also vital for the protection of surrounding properties and structures.

Proactive fire management activities are a key to achieving balanced outcomes.

As well as hazard reduction burns, council also implements strategic fuel reduced areas (FRAs).

These are 20 metre wide areas where vegetation in the under-storey, mid-storey and canopy layers are managed to mitigate fire risk.

A number of new FRAs were created across key Enviroplan estates and reserves, with Mount Grandchester Conservation Reserve and Rifle Range Reserve also having new service tracks installed.

There was also a significant amount of maintenance on FRAs created in recent years. This included fire mitigation in 25 local bushland reserves across the city.



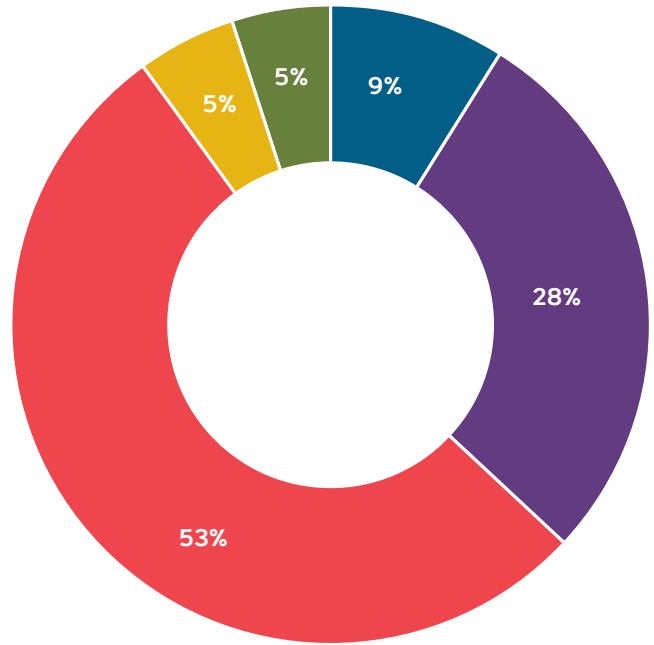
HABITAT PROTECTION THROUGH PEST MANAGEMENT

Over 1,875 hours were spent undertaking pest management in priority habitat areas across the Natural Area Estate.






Management involved activities such as:

- Deploying, monitoring and retrieving traps and cameras
- Reviewing camera data
- Monitoring trails and tracking pest animal activity
- Maintaining equipment
- Active hunting
- Humane destruction and carcass removal
- Opportunistic pest plant control
- Reporting.

As a result of implementing the program, 43 pest animals were removed along with several areas of pest plant control.



Per cent of total controlled pest animals

-  *Vulpes vulpes* (fox)
-  *Lepus europaeus* (Hare)
-  *Sus scrofa* (pig)
-  *Cervus elaphus* (red deer)
-  *Canis familiaris* (wild dog)





CONTINUING TRADITIONS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

The Enviroplan Policy emphasises the importance of Aboriginal Cultural Values when protecting and enhancing Ipswich’s natural environment.

Council has an ongoing commitment providing opportunity for the preservation, management and promotion of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and Cultural Landscape values.

In May 2021, council adopted a new Traditional Land Access Permit to allow access to culturally significant locations within the Enviroplan conservation network, enabling continuation of cultural activities by Traditional Owners and Indigenous Organisations:

- **Education** – passing on traditional knowledge and practices
- **Harvesting** – collecting leaves, branches, bark, stone and/or ochre for basket weaving, painting practices, traditional dancing or making didgeridoos, coolamons, stone tools, etc
- **Hunting/food resources** – collecting edible items
- **Men’s business and women’s business**
- **Yarning circle** – place to share knowledge, culture and stories
- **Traditional cooking** – Kupmurri at Hardings Paddock



In the 2022-2023 financial year, four Traditional Land Access Permits were issued.

An application form for Traditional Land Access Permit is available at lpswich.qld.gov.au/live/our-community/indigenous

Hardings Paddock has also been activated for community cultural education. This has included Galvanised Festivals ‘Culture on Country’ Event in 2022 and 2023, as well as the Experience Nature outdoor classroom day in June 2023.





NATURAL AREA VISITATION

Enviroplan conservation estates and reserves continued to be popular locations for a range of nature-based recreation including bushwalking, horse riding, mountain biking, orienteering and more.

22/23 FY Visitor Counts:

- White Rock - Spring Mountain Conservation Estate: 111,560
- Flinders - Goolman Conservation Estate: 24,035

ESTATE ENFORCEMENT

Council officers from Natural Environment and Land Management, as well as Compliance, collaborate with the Queensland Police Service to engage with the public and build awareness about appropriate behaviour.

The emphasis is on education and behaviour change, with enforcement an option where offences are encountered.

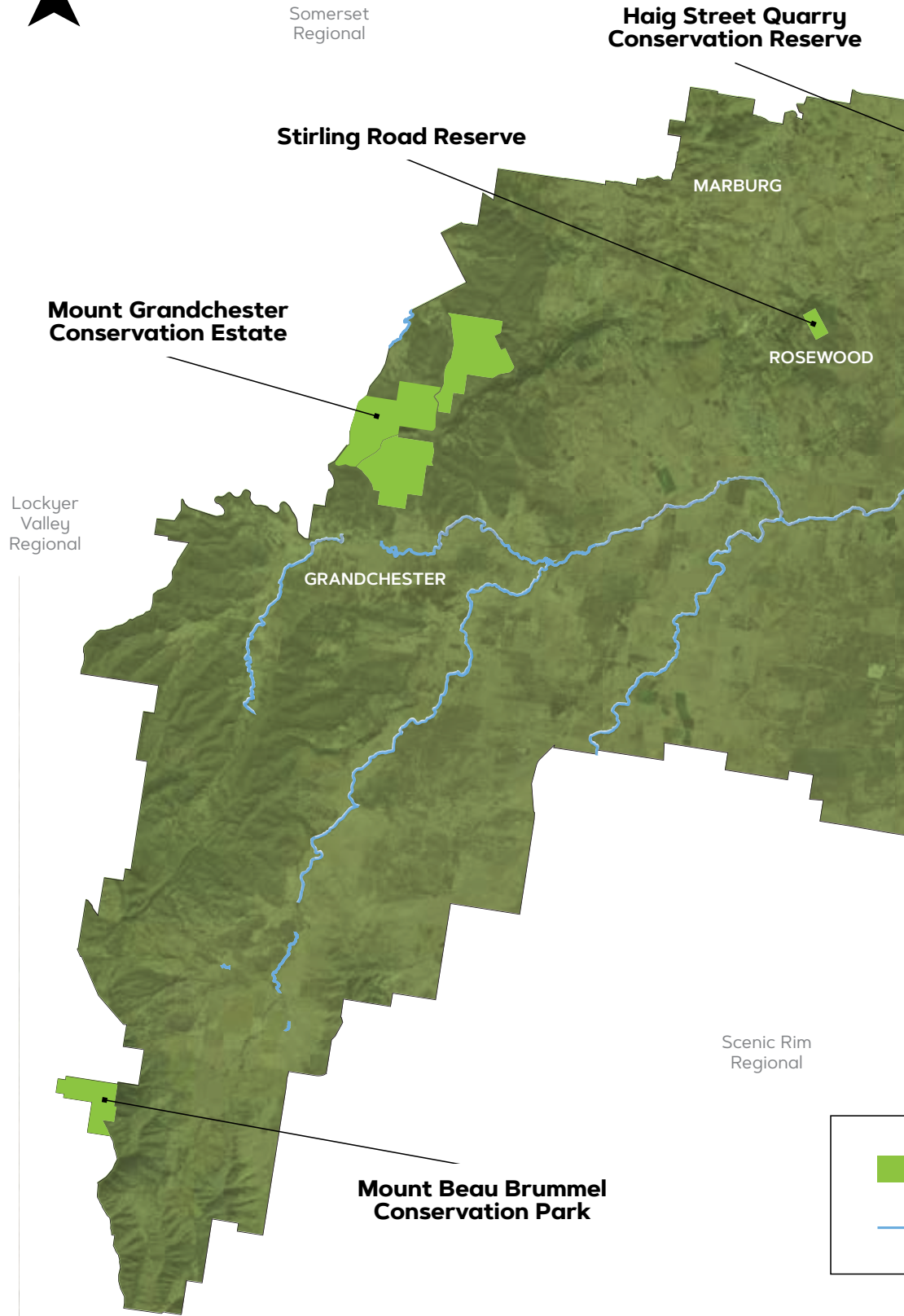
Estate Enforcement Patrols support the protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Traditional Owners have long requested that no-one climb White Rock, which is protected under the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003. As of April 2023 the climbing of White Rock is also prohibited under local law

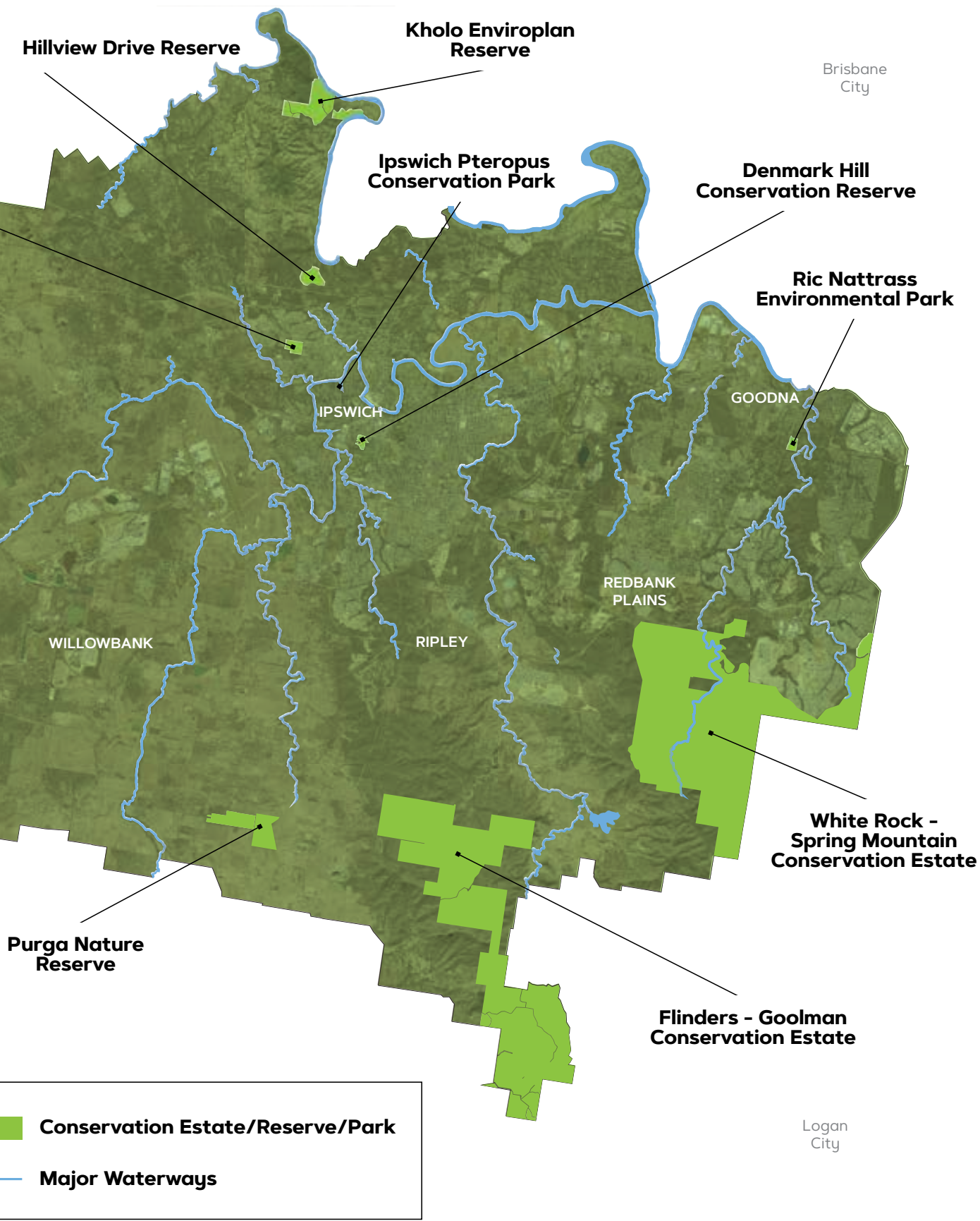
\$35,715 was spent on the Estate Enforcement program. Fewer patrols were delivered in the 22/23 FY as the estates were closed due to track repairs.

Seven Estate Enforcement Patrols were undertaken, resulting in warnings or fines being issued for the following offences:

- 1 trail bike
- 7 dogs in a conservation area
- 16 climbing White Rock (warnings only)
- Around 420 meaningful interactions with the public including topics such as prohibited behaviours in conservation areas, the cultural values of White Rock, conservation action opportunities and reporting illegal behaviours

NATURAL AREA ESTATES





2022-2023 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

This statement is certified by the Chief Financial Officer (Mr Jeffrey Keech) on the 23 August 2023

PROJECT/ACTIVITY	ACTUALS
STRATEGIC THEME: ACQUISITION OF SIGNIFICANT NATURE CONSERVATION LAND	
Land Acquisition Program	
Land Acquisition Program Implementation: Assessments and Purchases	\$0
Loan Service for Land Acquisition	\$861,028
Sub-program total	\$861,028
Theme total	\$861,028
STRATEGIC THEME: COMMUNITY NATURE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT	
Landholder Conservation Partnerships Program	
Landholder Conservation Partnerships Program Management: Operational expenses	\$216,103
Voluntary Conservation Agreements Payments: Annual landholder land management payments	\$0
Landholder Nature Conservation Grants: On-ground landholder support projects	\$171,456
Voluntary Conservation Agreement Incentives: Education and capacity building activities	\$1,263
Landholder Partnerships Workshops: Education and capacity building activities	\$0
Sub-program total	\$388,821
Community Partnerships Program	
Community Partnerships Program Management: Operational expenses	\$0
Community Awareness and Engagement Events: Annual city-wide events	\$19,238
Community Support Grants: On-ground community projects	\$13,007
Community Education Resources: Digital and printed material	\$28,555
Strategic community partnerships: Building community capacity	\$0
SEQ Land For Wildlife Program Partnership: Regional partnership contribution	\$13,049
SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium Partnership: Regional partnership contribution	\$16,305
Citizen Science Program	\$5,939
Sub-program total	\$96,092
Theme total	\$484,913
STRATEGIC THEME: NATURE CONSERVATION PLANNING	
City-wide Nature Conservation Planning Program	
Nature Conservation Planning: Operational expenses	\$122,581
Nature Conservation Planning, Management and Research: Continual improvement projects	\$0
Sub-program total	\$122,581
Threatened and Key Species Recovery Program	
Biodiversity planning: operational expenses	\$86,351
Koala Conservation and Habitat Management	\$0
Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby Recovery	\$20,605
Platypus recovery	\$0
Flying-fox roost management	\$0
Protected plants managmeent	\$0
Sub-program total	\$106,956
Theme total	\$229,537
Strategic Theme: Embellishment, Capital & Operational Management Investment within Natural Area Estate	
Natural Area Maintenance Program	
Natural Area Maintenance: Operational expenses	\$469,510
Sub-program total	\$469,510
Natural Area Management Program	
Natural Area Management operational expenses	\$104,194
Conservation Works Program: On-ground operational projects	\$340,486
Fire Management Program: On-ground operational projects	\$764,321
Natural Area Capital Investment Program	\$423,124
Pest Animal Management Program: Operational expenses	\$120,054
Natural Area Estate Visitor Management: Operational expenses	\$87,652
Natural Area Activation Program	\$8,462
Natural Area Estate Enforcement Program	\$35,715
Sub-program total	\$1,884,007
Theme total	\$2,353,517
PROGRAM TOTAL	\$3,928,995
Revenue	\$4,721,595
External Grant Funding for Enviroplan Projects	-
Adjustment to Reserve (Drawdown)	\$792,600
Reserve Balance	\$5,312,108



Green Tree Frog by Janine Jungfels




City of
Ipswich

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