

Developing council's Natural Environment Strategy

The story so far

Introduction

A healthy natural environment is important to council and the community. It enhances the liveability of the city and is important to our wellbeing.

After an extensive process of research and consultation, council endorsed its Natural Environment Policy in September 2021. Providing rules for planning and decision making, the purpose of the policy is to strengthen council's commitment to conserve, protect, enhance and restore the natural environment and its value.

Feedback gathered from the community over the past two years has helped us map the current situation, understand community concerns and identify future trends. This data will be used in the development of the Natural Environment Strategy which will shape the natural environment of Ipswich into the future.

You said - we listened

Below is an overview of the feedback received so far on Ipswich's natural environment. Also shown is how this feedback has been incorporated by council.

CORPORATE DOCUMENT	YOU SAID	WE LISTENED
<p>Natural Environment Policy</p> 	<p>The community values greenspace and natural areas.</p> <p>Four areas for improvement were management of natural areas, protecting wildlife, waterways and natural area connection across the city.</p> <p>Two key actions focused on land use planning and control and community support and partnerships.</p>	<p>Seven focus areas are included in the strategy including the key areas for improvement and action mentioned by the community.</p> <p>Through the policy, council commits to conserve, protect, enhance and restore the health of the city's natural environment so community can continue to experience these areas in Ipswich.</p>
<p>Sustainability Strategy</p> 	<p>The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the five action areas of the Sustainability Strategy framework. The Natural Environment and Healthy Waterways action area was one that received the highest level of agreement.</p> <p>Respondents felt that the environment (native vegetation and reduced land clearing) was a key aspect of what sustainability means to them and the city.</p>	<p>The 'Natural Environment and Healthy Waterways' action area remained in the strategy with actions to improve the condition of urban biodiversity corridors and improve water quality, habitat and fauna connectivity.</p>
<p>iFuture</p> 	<p>Community said that they wanted a "natural and sustainable" theme included as a key theme for the plan.</p>	<p>The Natural and Sustainable theme has been incorporated into iFuture with a number of catalyst projects to be achieved in the next five years.</p>

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This strategy

The strategy will be different to the policy in that it is about how council will achieve goals and objectives, while the policy is about how to act in situations relating to the natural environment. It will outline:

- where we are
- where we are going
- how we will get there
- how we will know when we get there
- if there are any hard deadlines along the way.

The next step is to develop the strategy together. This will guide how the Policy is put into practice to provide a corporate approach to conserve, protect, enhance and restore the health of the city's natural environment values. It will provide a roadmap to help ensure:

- the city is greener and more connected
- council and the city are prepared to face future environmental challenges
- council continues its commitment to conserve and restore the city's natural environment through implementing its corporate responsibilities and provision of services to the community.

How you can be involved

We want to make sure we have the strategy right and include your thoughts on how we can protect and enhance the natural environment.

You can share any feedback you have on the natural environment or find out where you can talk to us in person at [Shape Your Ipswich](#).

Ipswich's Environment

An overview of the natural environment of Ipswich can be seen below and further information on these environment aspects can be read in the [Natural Environment Policy: Background Paper](#).



46 rare and threatened species of fauna and flora



Over **11,000 kms** of waterways



219 nature reserves maintained

400+ parks



6,646ha of conservation estates



21% remnant vegetation cover across the Local Government Area



Over **12 days** per year over 35°C

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