Our Natural City Strategy

Our Natural City Strategy seeks to protect our natural environment and recognise its significant value to our economy and lifestyle. Gold Coast is one of the most biodiverse cities in Australia. The City aims to conserve this unique biodiversity as our city grows, including achieving 51 per cent native vegetation cover by 2020.

One of our priorities is to ensure we live in balance with nature. This strategy encourages nature-based recreation while safeguarding our beaches, wetlands, waterways, rainforests, bushland, coastal and marine environments and the wildlife these habitats support.

Our Natural City Strategy recognises that the natural environment underpins our wellbeing, cultural identity, economy, tourism and overall prosperity while supporting the City of Gold Coast’s vision themes of place, prosperity and people.

Download and view Our Natural City Strategy (PDF 2.14MB).

Strategic outcomes and key priority actions

Building on and complementing existing City initiatives such as the City Plan and Nature Based Recreation Plan, the strategy focuses on the strategic outcomes of connecting people with nature, protecting places for nature and partnering with the community to secure and enhance our natural assets.

The City will establish new and grow existing partnerships with government, businesses, research institutions, landowners and the community to protect and restore strategic habitat and conserve priority species.

There are 13 key priority actions to support the strategic outcomes, including nature-based recreational infrastructure, an expanded community participation program, continue implementing policies to protect natural assets; undertake vital health monitoring and management of our natural assets; and seek opportunities for investment attraction to support long-term outcomes.

People in nature

1.1 Implement key recommendations of the City’s Nature Based Recreation Plan that provide opportunities for people to connect with and appreciate nature while actively supporting nature conservation outcomes. Some project examples for delivery consideration over the coming years include:

- enhancing the experience of the Springbrook Mountain to Tallebudgera Valley Cream Track walk
- Wyangan Valley multi-use track linkage
- Schuster Park pathways
- a track to connect Raintree Glen with Shelter Road in Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area
- community infrastructure, including nature-based recreation trails
- community infrastructure, directional and interpretive signage to enhance visitor experience.

1.2 Implement an Into Nature program to:

- enjoy, explore, feel and engage residents and visitors with nature
- build awareness and understanding of the city’s unique natural assets
- promote, support and reward nature conservation partnerships with residents, community groups, schools and research institutions, business and the development industry.

1.3 Explore and support opportunities in the cultural space to promote our natural assets and their connections to our indigenous and non-indigenous history, cultural identity and heritage, landscape character, economic prosperity and lifestyle.

1.4 Pursue actions from the City’s Water Cycle Implementation Plan to support community participation in catchment health and waterway initiatives.

Places for nature

2.1 Investigate collaborative monitoring and reporting arrangements on the health, condition, quality and protection of our city’s natural assets to inform management actions.

2.2 Prioritise and implement management actions to improve health, quality, condition and level of protection for our priority natural assets.

2.3 Continue to implement the City Plan’s environmental policies to protect native vegetation, habitats, corridors, wetlands and waterways and where applicable, offset the loss of environmental values.
2.4 Continue to implement waterway policy to improve development and waterway health outcomes across the city.

**Partners with nature**

3.1 Establish new and grow existing partnerships with private landowners, volunteer groups and government programs to increase the area of land protected, restore strategic habitat and conserve priority species.

3.2 Implement a suite of tools which are economically responsible to enable practical, community-focused partnerships to safeguard areas of high value for their environmental, recreational and hazard mitigation functions.

3.3 Partner with government, research institutions and businesses to undertake targeted research and conservation actions on strategic habitat and priority species in the city.

3.4 Continue to work collaboratively with stakeholders and landowners to coordinate bushfire, pest plant and animal management in the city.

3.5 Work with the development industry, major infrastructure providers and government to direct investments and activities in the permanent protection of important natural assets and provision of vegetation offsets arising from the City Plan, the Queensland Government’s Environmental Offsets Act 2014 and the Commonwealth’s Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, to help secure the city’s critical wildlife corridors, core habitat areas and substantial remnants.

**Responding to the community**

In May 2017 we asked the community for feedback on this strategy and respondents indicated majority support (88.99 per cent). The community have expressed that our natural environment is vital for the health of our city and its flora and fauna.

The Community Engagement and Marketing Report provides a comprehensive account of the marketing and communication reach and engagement tools employed, as well as the survey results and key findings.

**Key information**

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