

MEDIA RELEASE

7 September 2020

Help shape the Gladstone Region's future biosecurity management

Biosecurity is an issue that affects everyone, not just residents living in agricultural areas, and Gladstone Regional Council wants to hear from you.

Council's current Biosecurity Plan expires at the end of 2020 and residents and landowners are encouraged to contribute to the new plan from 9-26 September.

Community engagement will be conducted through various means including online and hardcopy surveys, and in-person community information sessions at various locations.

Gladstone Region Councillor and Capricorn Pest Management Group management committee member, Chris Cameron said the Biosecurity Plan's purpose is to strengthen and protect our region's environment and ecosystems from biosecurity risks.

"The plan sets out key objectives and priority actions that are unique to our region," Councillor Cameron said.

"Key issues include giant rats tail grass, parthenium, feral *Leucaena*, absentee landholders and pest animals including wild dogs, feral pigs, rabbits, foxes and Indian myna birds."

Cr Cameron said biosecurity was an issue that impacts the entire region, not just residents living in agricultural areas.

"The benefits of biosecurity control can range from protecting our native flora and fauna to the quality of our waterways including the Southern Great Barrier Reef," Cr Cameron said.

"Failing to protect these natural assets can have a flow-on effect that can potentially affect tourism and business.

"The new Biosecurity Plan currently being drafted has been informed by a significant amount of research, alignment with the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, consideration of emerging priorities and customer service requests and feedback.

"It also forms the foundation of Council actions which includes control of land, community education and awareness, and compliance and enforcement of the act within the region."

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Council will host five community information sessions regarding the draft Biosecurity Plan:

- Sunday 13 September, 8am-midday at Discovery Coast Markets, Agnes Water
- Wednesday 16 September, 10am-midday at Ubobo General Store
- Wednesday 16 September, 2.15pm-4.15pm at Mount Larcom post office
- Saturday 19 September, 8am-midday at Miriam Vale Lions Markets
- Sunday 20 September, 8am-midday at Calliope Historical Village Markets.

Cr Cameron said access to online and hardcopy surveys, and the ability to RSVP to one of the community information sessions, will be made available via Council's *Conversations* platform.

"Residents can also RSVP by phoning Council's Community Engagement Centre on 4976 6300 and pick up a hardcopy of the survey at Council offices and at selected shops, produce and general stores," he said.

"Prizes will also be on offer for survey participants with one of five native plants provided by Tondoon Botanic Gardens available to win."

Once the final draft is complete, the Biosecurity Plan 2021-2025 will be adopted at a General Meeting of Council later this year.

Please visit <https://conversations.gladstone.qld.gov.au> to have your say.

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