

Media Release

12 July 2022

Council's plan to manage Rainbow Bee-eater colony

Gladstone Regional Council continues to implement a management action plan to protect the Rainbow Bee-eater birds' breeding place at Seventeen Seventy, as the breeding season approaches.

Rainbow Bee-eaters are colonial breeders and a special least concern species prescribed in the *Nature Conservation (Animals) Regulation 2020*.

Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Burnett said the bird is a seasonal visitor to our region with a colony located at the SES Grounds.

"The Rainbow Bee-eater is the only species of bee-eater in Australia and its breeding season is typically during the August to January period," Councillor Burnett said.

"Earlier this year we stopped offering bookings for events or festivals on the oval section of the SES Grounds at Seventeen Seventy while we reviewed our processes."

Now, for any event bookings that could potentially impact the breeding Rainbow Bee-eaters, the event organisers must provide evidence to Council that they have a Department of Environment and Science, Queensland (DES) approved Species Management Program (SMP) incorporating management actions to avoid or minimise impacts of their event on the breeding place.

The conditions of hire include obligations to comply with the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and associated regulations.

The 1770 Cultural Connections Immersion Festival, to be held from 30 September to 2 October, has a DES approved SMP.

A Species Management Program (SMP) is required for any activity that will impact on the breeding places of protected animals.

To comply with legislation, efforts must be made to ensure the breeding place, a nest located inside a chamber at the end of an excavated burrow, is not harmed.

Cr Burnett said all groups with park bookings for the Seventeen Seventy location have been made aware of the birds and their duty of care to manage their events so the breeding place is protected.

"We have placed signs around the area to alert all users of the SES Grounds where the birds are breeding and to avoid any disturbance," he said.

Mowing of the oval during the breeding season is also reduced to assist with this management plan.

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From 18-29 July, contractors will install bollards around the oval boundary to help control and reduce public movement, particularly during the breeding season.

Regular monitoring will also be undertaken to assist with management of the SES Grounds area.

If any member of the community has questions about the Rainbow Bee-eater or wish to follow up further, please contact DES on 13 74 68.

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