

ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSET ON LOT 126 ON NR5009 CAIRNS AIRPORT

61/1/3 | #7436436

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 1. Endorse the offset application put forward from Cairns Airport and provide approval as landowner for land rehabilitation on Lot 126 NR5009.**
- 2. Pursuant to section 257(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2009* (“the Act”), delegate to the Chief Executive Officer the power to finalise all matters relating to the approval as landowner.**

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Cairns Airport (applicant for offset)

Cairns Birders Association (community use of site)

Department of Resources (State owner of trustee land)

Note: The identification of interested parties is provided on a best endeavours basis by Council Officers and may not be exhaustive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Council has been approached by Cairns Airport regarding an offset application which they are in the process of submitting to the State Government requesting Council approval to rehabilitate an underutilised portion of land under Council management (trustee of State land) in order to meet the requirements of replacing equivalent land which they plan to develop, pending final State Government approval.

The identified offset must be of specific size and vegetation composition to meet the State Government application requirements (like for like). Lot 126 NR5009 is the only identified Council land that meets the requirements for this offset application with the rehabilitation works that Cairns Airport will undertake estimated at \$155,000 of improvements over a number of years.

Significant consultation has occurred and multiple positive outcomes are identified including pest eradication, dedicated land maintenance, improved community use and better environmental outcomes with no additional ongoing commitments or costs to Council.

BACKGROUND:

The location (Lot 126 NR5009) is on the corner of Dunne Road and Yorkeys Knob Access, adjacent to Cattana Wetlands, and was chosen because the land being cleared by Cairns Airport needs to be replaced by an equivalent vegetation type (which Cairns

Airport does not have) in order to meet the requirements under the Environmental Offset Act. Cairns Airport have approached Council and this location was suggested on the basis that no other suitable land had been identified in the region.

The area is managed by Council, as trustee for the Department of Resources and is in line with Council's trustee responsibilities and conditions for management of this land parcel.

The proposed offset area is marginal land, situated between existing mangrove wetlands, public roads and cane fields. Sediment and debris build-up has encouraged invasive weeds, such as Singapore Daisy, to become the dominant vegetation type. Rubbish, including plastic debris and dumped hard rubbish, is present and further inhibits ecological function.

The sole known users of the proposed offset area are recreational bird watchers who visit the site intermittently. They have actively participated in site surveys, contributing valuable local ecological knowledge and supporting the monitoring efforts. Their involvement ensures the offset's implementation aligns with community interests, promoting both conservation and recreational use of the area.

Cairns Airport has submitted the application and had pre-lodgement meetings (6 June) discussing technical details with the Department of Environment and Science and Department of Agriculture and Fisheries seeking pre-approval, noting that landowner approval is still required as part of final approval of application.

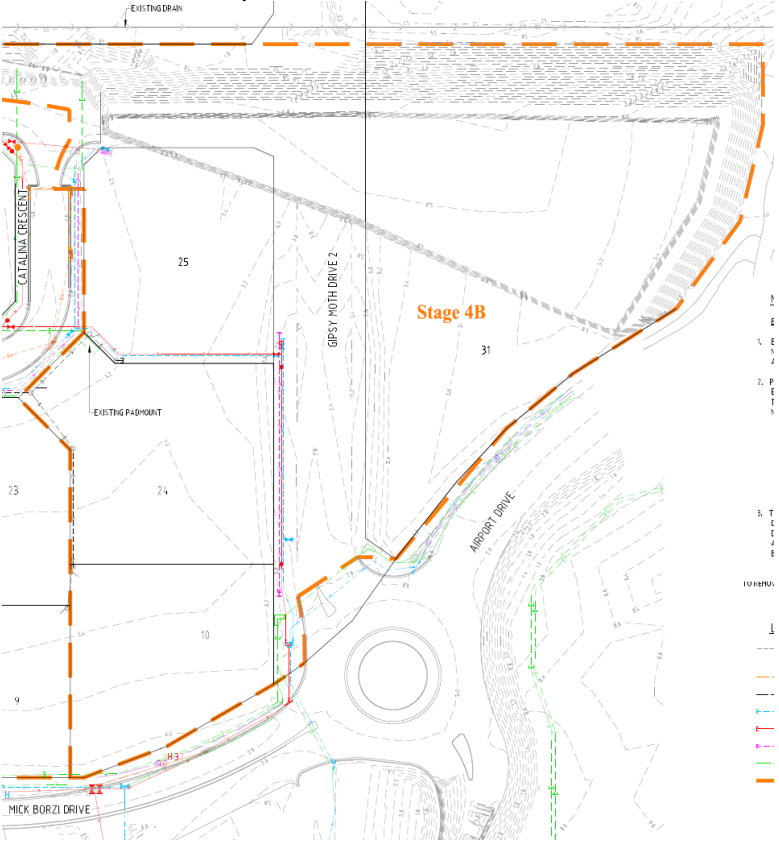
Lot details:



Lot in context of Yorkeys Knob Road access and Cattana:



This vegetation offset application is a subsequent step, post the historically approved SDA-0516-030021 approval by Council for Airport works extending stage 4B of the Airport Business Development Park.



COMMENT:

There is substantial benefit to Council and community to support this project.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: (Recommended)

That Council:

1. Endorse the offset application put forward from Cairns Airport and provide approval as landowner for land rehabilitation on Lot 126 NR5009.
2. Pursuant to section 257(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2009* (“the Act”), delegate to the Chief Executive Officer the power to finalise all matters relating to the approval as landowner.

Option 2:

That Council does not endorse the offset application.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

In approving the offset application Council loses the strategic capability to use the land for its own offset purposes at a future time however this is considered a low risk given that there are no current or future Council offset requirements identified requiring Lot 126 NR5009.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

Council has a current ongoing obligation to manage pests and issues on the land as trustee. This project would reduce maintenance requirements (illegal dumping issues) and ensure ongoing management of restored sections (site monitoring as part of Airport conditions), which are currently outside of Council operational plans. This would be at no additional cost to Council. There is potential for the location to increase use of Cattana as a natural recreational location due to its neighbouring effects and general improvement to the area.

Cairns Airport still has the opportunity to pay a financial offset instead of restoring land but this is at their discretion.

Community and Cultural Heritage:

Given the site is adjacent to Cattana, this project is likely to improve recreation and environmental outcomes to existing infrastructure enabling greater access by a wider cross section of the community.

Natural Environment:

This project would reduce restricted and environmental pests on site. Improvements to vegetation cover and type will improve overall environmental sustainability of the site and improve habitat outcomes for birds and other wildlife.

Rubbish, including plastic debris and dumped hard rubbish, is present and would be removed as part of project. It is expected that increased management of the area will reduce unlawful access and associated dumping. Ongoing monitoring of site as part of offset requirements would ensure proposed environmental targets are maintained.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

This project will support outcomes of the Corporate and Operational Plan – Natural Assets, Liveability, Community and Culture.

Statutory:

The proposed offset area (Lot 126 NR5009) is consistent with the purpose of the land and is listed as Reserve Purpose for Park and Recreation. Under the *Land Act 1994*, Parks and Recreational purposes falls under the definition of Community Purpose and allows for conservation, scenic and land management activities.

The offset application is intended to meet the requirements of the *Environmental Offset Act 2014* and any final decision will reside with the State. It has been confirmed with the Department of Resources that Council counts as the landowner for approvals when it comes to offsets as trustee.

Policy:

The area is designated a Parks and Recreational Reserve and is considered bushland/conservation area under Council's Public Open Space Policy suitable for purpose.

This project is in line with the Climate Hazard Adaption Strategy as a natural adaptation outcome increasing marine vegetation in the region to reduce the impacts of tidal inundation.

CONSULTATION:

Extensive consultation has occurred with stakeholders associated with the location identifying no conflicts with current uses. Council's Natural Assets team has consulted with the following:

- Council's Environmental Planning team (confirming no future plans for site), parks maintenance (no maintenance issues identified), property services (land suitability under agreement) and environmental team (advice regarding offsets and desirability).
- External users of the land including Jabirus and stakeholders of Cattana who had an adjacent environmental use interest in the site (does not conflict with current uses).
- Local bird watcher groups, ensuring their interests and activities were considered.

The bird watchers have endorsed the proposed offset, recognizing its potential to enhance local biodiversity and improve birdwatching opportunities. Consultation occurred with volunteer groups maintaining adjacent sites (Cattana).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: DM#[7427635](#) NAM Airport Revegetation in principle support letter as an Environmental Protection Area in order to support the offset.

Attachment 2: DM#[7437064](#) Cairns Airport Offset Delivery Plan Application



Andrew Moore
A/Executive Manager Community Life



Destry Puia
Director Lifestyle & Community

ATTACHMENT 1: DM#7427635 NAM AIRPORT REVEGETATION IN PRINCIPLE SUPPORT LETTER AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE OFFSET.



June 2024 | V1

Offset Delivery Plan

Cairns Airport Business Park

This Offset Delivery Plan details the proponent driven offset project proposed to counterbalance the significant residual impact associated with historic development approval SDA-0516-030021, being 6,515m² of marine plants. The plan, compliant with the *Queensland Environmental Offsets Act 2014*, focuses on hydrologic restoration to promote natural mangrove recolonisation through cost-effective and scientifically validated methods.

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SECTION 1 – SUMMARY INFORMATION

Part A – Departmental Reference Details

Impact Site Reference and Assessment Details		
Department application/reference number: (if applicable)	Authority Number: (if applicable)	Offset ID: (if applicable)
Property address: Cairns Airport, Cairns North, Cairns QLD 4870		
Real property description (Primary Lot on Plan/s): Lot 1 RP736304		
Tenure:	Primary Local Government Area: Cairns Region (division 5)	
Offset Delivery Plan Amendment: In accordance with sections 19(7), 19A(4)(b) and 20(2)(b) of the <i>Environmental Offset Act 2014</i> this Offset Delivery Plan is being submitted as part of an amendment to an agreed delivery arrangement for a proponent-driven offset (yes) <input type="checkbox"/> (no) <input type="checkbox"/>		

Queensland Environmental Offset Act Offset Triggers	
<p><i>Activities prescribed for section 9(c) of the Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a resource activity carried out under an environmental authority under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> for which an amendment application, a site-specific application or a variation application was made <input type="checkbox"/> a prescribed environmentally relevant activity under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i> <input type="checkbox"/> the carrying out of works authorised under the <i>Marine Parks Act 2004</i> in a marine park <input type="checkbox"/> an activity conducted under an authority granted, made, issued or given under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>, section 34, 35, 38, 42AD or 42AE in a protected area <input type="checkbox"/> taking a protected plant within the meaning of the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> under a protected plant clearing permit granted under the <i>Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulation 2006</i> <input type="checkbox"/> development for which an environmental offset may be required under any of the following modules of the State development assessment provisions— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) module 4 (environmentally relevant activities); (b) module 5 (fisheries resources); (c) module 8 (native vegetation clearing); (d) module 10 (coastal protection); (e) module 11 (wetland protection and wild river areas) <input type="checkbox"/> development for which an environmental offset may be required under any of the following— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a local planning instrument; (b) a State planning regulatory provision within the meaning of the <i>Sustainable Planning Act 2009</i>; (c) the State Planning Policy 2013, Part E: Interim development assessment requirements 	<p><i>Matters prescribed for section 10(i) of the Act</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Regulated Vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Connectivity Areas <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands and Watercourses <input type="checkbox"/> Protected wildlife habitat <input type="checkbox"/> Protected areas <input type="checkbox"/> Designated precinct in a strategic environmental area <input type="checkbox"/> Highly protected zones of State marine parks <input type="checkbox"/> Fish habitat areas <input type="checkbox"/> Waterway providing for fish passage <input type="checkbox"/> Marine plants <input type="checkbox"/> Legally secured offset areas <input type="checkbox"/> Matter of Local Environmental Significance <p>Note: Please check all prescribed environmental matters being addressed by the offset delivery plan.</p>

Part B – Offset Area Details

Landowner Details			
Registered Owner/s on Title:			
Real Property Description (Lot and Plan):	Lot 126 NR5009		
Lessee: (if applicable)		Trustee: (if applicable)	Cairns Regional Council
ABN/CAN: (if applicable)			
Phone number:		Mobile Number: (if applicable)	
Facsimile: (if applicable)		Primary contact person (if required):	
Email:			
Postal Address:			

Explanatory Note: In accordance with the *Environmental Offset Act 2014* **land** includes water*.

All persons with a registered interest in the land on which the environmental offset will be undertaken must be recorded in the table below.

Registered Interest Details		
Lot and Plan*	Type of Registered Interest	Registered interest holder's name and contact details
Lot 126 on NR5009	Landowner	State Lands - Department of Resources
Lot 126 on NR5009	Trustee	Cairns Regional Council

Note: A person with an interest in the land which is for the purposes of an offset delivery plan means:

- a person with a registered interest, under the *Land Act 1994* or the *Land Title Act 1994*, in the land area; or,
- if the land is subject to a lease, mining interest, geothermal tenure or GHG authority – the lessee, interest holder, tenure holder or authority holder;
- if the land in the area is forest entitlement area, State forest or timber reserve under the *Forestry Act 1959* or land prescribed under a regulation for the purpose of identifying a person with an interest in land– the chief executive of the department in which the *Forestry Act 1959* is administered.

A mining interest means a:

- mining claim, mineral development licence or mining lease granted under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989*; or
- petroleum lease granted under the *Petroleum Act 1923* or the *Petroleum and Gas (production and Safety) Act 2004*.

Part C – Offset Type Details

A proponent may deliver an offset through the following offset delivery options:

- **proponent-driven offset** (i.e. standard land-based offset, and/or an offset using an advanced offset, and/or actions in a Direct Benefit Management Plan (DBMP));
- financial settlement offset; or
- a combination of proponent-driven offset and financial settlement offset.

Note: Identification of the type of offset delivery allows the administering agency to determine whether the plan is designed to benefit the full extent of impacted matters or whether a financial settlement offset or other proponent-driven offsets will also be used to counterbalance the impact of development.

i) Offset Delivery

The offset, the subject of this delivery plan, will be delivered using a:

proponent-driven offset (Please specify how the proponent-driven offset will be delivered.

You may deliver a proponent-driven offset by using one or more of the following offset delivery approaches):

- land-based offset;
- actions in a DBMP; and/or
- an advanced offset. Or,
- combination of a proponent-driven offset (identified above) and a financial settlement offset.

SECTION 2 – PROPORTIONATE OFFSET SIZE AND SCALE

The offset, the subject of this delivery plan, must be of a size and scale proportionate to the significant residual impacts on the *prescribed environmental matter(s)*.

i) Description of the prescribed environmental matters impacted

Impact site

Please complete the following table identifying the *prescribed environmental matters* impacted and the extent of the significant residual impact on each of the *prescribed environmental matters*.

Impact Site Particulars: (please insert lot and plan and / or map co-ordinates of impact site)				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marine or freshwater		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Terrestrial		
Impact Area (ha)	0.6515 ha	Habitat Quality Score*	3.5 (34% marine plant coverage, regrowth)	
Local Government Area	Cairns Region (division 5)			
Matter	Matter Group	Bioregion	Subregion	Area (ha)
1.1.1	Marine Plants	Inshore (non-remote)	Wet Tropics Coast	0.6515 ha

*Please see the *Guide to determining terrestrial habitat quality* available [here](#)

Impact Site Particulars are attached

Note: Particulars of the *prescribed environmental matters* contained on the impact site may be provided using the online impact site assessment tool available at www.qld.gov.au (search 'environmental offsets'). The online assessment tool generates a report and a csv file, which can be accessed via email, containing the results of the site assessment.

CSV data results of matters contained on the impact site are attached

Offset site

For all land-based offsets, please complete the following table identifying the *prescribed environmental matters* contained on the offset site.

Offset Site Particulars: Lot 126 NR5009 (see map attached)				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marine or freshwater		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Terrestrial		
Offset Area (ha)	4.31 ha	Habitat Quality Score*	0.5 (up to 5% marine plant coverage)	
LGA	Cairns Region (division 5)			
Matter	Matter Group	Bioregion	Subregion	Area (ha)
Non-remnant vegetation/ cultivated or built environment/ sparse marine plant regrowth		Inshore non-remote	Wet Tropics Coast	4.31 ha

*Please see the *Guide to determining terrestrial habitat quality* available [here](#)

Offset Site Particulars are attached

Note: Particulars of the *prescribed environmental matters* contained on the offset site may be provided using the online offset site assessment tool available at www.qld.gov.au (search 'environmental offsets'). The online assessment tool generates a report and a csv file, which can be accessed via email, containing the results of the site assessment.

CSV data results of matters contained on the offset site are attached

ii) Offset size and scale

Please specify how the offset, the subject of this delivery plan, is of a size and scale proportionate to the significant residual impacts on the *prescribed environmental matters* identified in i) above.

Response

The impact area is partly vegetated by marine plant re-growth and the proposed offset area currently has little conservation value due to significant anthropological disturbance inhibiting re-growth. Both sites were completely cleared pre 2000s. Although mapping indicates that sections of the proposed offset site is covered by Regulated Vegetation – Category R, these sections have been historically cleared for use as marginal cane agriculture. No Regulated Vegetation – Category R exists within the proposed offset area.

Size: According to the *Queensland Environmental Offsets Act 2014*, the size of the offset area must be proportionate to the significant residual impacts on the prescribed environmental matters. Typically, this requires an offset area at least equal to or greater than the impact area, commonly using a ratio of 4:1. In this case, the proposed offset area is approximately 4.3 hectares, resulting in a ratio of about 6:1. Providing a larger offset area increases the likelihood of achieving minimum conservation outcomes by accounting for uncertainties and risks associated with the offset implementation.

A like-for like offset is proposed; not just for the marine plants but for the ecological communities and community values that rely on them. The proposed offset area is within the same Local Council Area, bioregion and subregion as the impact area and addresses impact to the same matter group (marine plants).

Scoring: A habitat quality analysis was conducted to demonstrate that the proposed offset effectively counterbalances the impact of historically approved SDA-0516-030021, in accordance with the *Queensland Environmental Offsets Act 2014*. The analysis involved assessing the ecological value of both the impact and offset sites through field surveys, desktop analysis, and aerial mapping. Marine plant recolonisation is used as a proxy for new aquatic habitat accessible to fish and other aquatic biota, due to shared reliance on hydrological connectivity. For this project, habitat quality scoring is directly linked to marine plant cover (10% coverage equals 1 habitat quality point). The marine plant coverage is approximately 35% at the impact site and approximately 5% at the proposed offset site, correlating to habitat quality scores of 3.5 and 0.5, respectively. To achieve the proposed offset, marine plant coverage will reach at least 45% at the offset site within 20 years, resulting in a final habitat quality score of 4.5. This exceeds the requirements of the *Queensland Environmental Offsets Act 2014* and associated policy framework, which stipulates that the offset site needs to achieve a habitat quality score >1 point greater than the impact site and a habitat quality gain >2 points relative to the starting habitat within 20 years. This ensures a net gain in biodiversity and ecological function, effectively compensating for the development's environmental impacts.

Note: For example, you may wish to include the following detail:

- Evidence of a habitat quality analysis being undertaken to determine an appropriate offset ratio;
- Identification of co-location of matters, and how this was derived;
- Scientific or expert evidence from a suitably qualified person or organisation.

Please consider whether all impacted *prescribed environmental matters*, to which the offset condition relates, are offset to a size and scale which is necessary to achieve a conservation outcome for the impacted matters.

Guidance on determining the size and scale of the offset is provided in section 2.1.2 of the Queensland Environmental Offset Policy.

SECTION 3 – ACHIEVING A CONSERVATION OUTCOME

A conservation outcome can be achieved by selecting, designing, and managing an offset that maintains the viability of the impacted *prescribed environmental matter*. That is, to maintain the status quo of the matter as if the development and offset had not occurred. A conservation outcome may be achieved through a range of actions, which must be additional to those already occurring, funded, or required (e.g. by law or a condition of authority) for the impacted *prescribed environmental matter*.

Part A – Offset Site Particulars

i) Detail of the offset land

In relation to a land-based offset, please attach your completed [EOD3 - Environmental Offset Delivery Form 3: Offset Area Details](#) that provides the legal description and other relevant details relating to the land that is the subject of this delivery plan.

Note: This allows the administering agency to identify which matters the Plan is designed to benefit, and to compare this against the matters permitted to be impacted in the authority.

EOD3 – Environmental Offset Delivery Form 3: Offset Area Details is attached

ii) Existing land use

Please describe the existing land use of the land* subject to this delivery plan and whether the land use could have any impact on the delivery of the offset.

Response

The proposed offset area is listed as Reserve Purpose for Park and Recreation (see figure 1 below). Under the *Land Act 1994*, Parks and Recreational purposes falls under the definition of Community Purpose and allows for conservation, scenic and land management activities. The proposed offset is consistent with the purpose of the land, according to checks carried out by Cairns Regional Council and the Department of Resources.


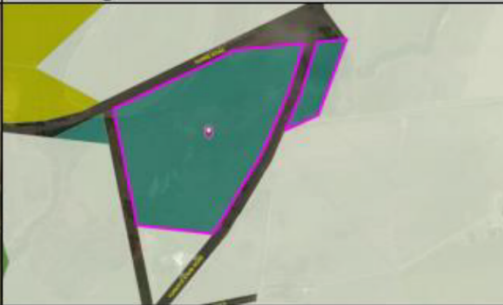
Yorkeys Knob Road, YORKEYS KNOB			
Lot/Plan	Lot 126 on NR5009		
Site Details			
Reserve Purpose	PARK AND RECREATION		
Asset owner	Community, Sport and Cultural Services		
Division	8	Area	17.6ha
Zone	Conservation	Tenancy	N/A
Aerial Image		Zone Image	
			
Recommendation			
Retain - The land is core to Council's CURRENT business objectives and utilised to at least 80% capacity.			
Asset Owner Comments			
This land is known as Dunne Road Park and is considered bushland / conservation area under Council's Public Open Space Policy. It should be retained to complement the natural surrounding areas.			

Figure 1: Proposed offset site purpose, confirming that the proposed offset is consistent with the purpose of the land.

The proposed offset area is marginal land, situated between existing mangrove wetlands and public roads and cane fields. Sediment and debris build-up has encouraged invasive weeds, such as Singapore daisy, to become the dominant vegetation type. Rubbish, including plastic debris and dumped hard rubbish, is present and further inhibits ecological function. It is expected that increased management of the area will reduce unlawful access and associated dumping.

The sole known users of the proposed offset area is a recreational bird watching group that visits the site intermittently. Cairns Regional Council formally consulted this group, ensuring their interests and activities were considered. The bird watchers have endorsed the proposed offset, recognizing its potential to enhance local biodiversity and improve birdwatching opportunities. They have actively participated in site surveys, contributing valuable local ecological knowledge, and supporting the monitoring efforts. Their involvement ensures the offset's implementation aligns with community interests, promoting both conservation and recreational use of the area.

Note: This allows the administering agency to consider whether the existing land use is in any way incompatible with achieving the offset objectives. For example, where there is a state resource, such as forestry or quarrying on the land, agreement of the appropriate State agency will be required to ensure the proposed offset is compatible with planned use and management of State-owned resources.

iii) Map of proposed offset site and management zones

Please attach a map of the proposed offset site and related management zones (if relevant).

Note: Management zones are defined areas within the offset site that that will be subject to different management, for example, in order to manage a localised threat or habitat for a particular threatened species.

Map is attached



(Note: Please attach GPS shapefiles and/ or spatial files of both the offset site and management zones)

iv) Threatening processes

Please identify the key threatening processes impacting the habitat quality of the offset site for each *prescribed environmental matter* that is subject to this offset delivery plan.

Please provide details in relation to each *prescribed environmental matter* present on the offset site, the management zone of each threatened matter and the details of each threat.

Note: This information will assist you to identify the necessary management actions required to achieve a conservation outcome for the impacted matter(s) to be offset on the site.

'Threatening Processes' is defined under s.12 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* as:

A **threatening process** is any process that is capable of—

(a) threatening the survival of any protected area, area of major interest, protected wildlife, community of native wildlife or native wildlife habitat; or

(b) affecting the capacity of any protected area, area of major interest, protected wildlife, community of native wildlife or native wildlife habitat to sustain natural processes.

Response

The prescribed environmental matter is marine plants (matter group 1.1.1). A number of threatening processes are impacting the habitat quality for marine plants on the proposed offset site.

Primary threat to marine plants: The proposed offset area has been extensively modified and no remnant vegetation remains. Changed hydrological conditions caused by historical filling and cane farming, the development of adjacent roads, and the influx of sediment and debris has made the area largely unsuitable for marine plants and fish habitat. Furthermore, sediment and debris build-up was worsened by the December 2023 severe flood event, which caused increased marine plant damage and suffocation in the adjacent wetlands and has likely contributed to additional sediment build-up and weed growth within the proposed offset area.

Secondary threat - weeds: Change to ground levels and therefore hydrology has encouraged invasive weeds, such as Singapore daisy, to become the dominant vegetation type. Extensive thickets of weeds slows water flow and traps stuff, further encouraging sediment and debris build-up. Additionally, unlawful dumping of domestic green waste has accelerated weed establishment.

Secondary threat - invasive biota: Invasive fish, such as tilapia and mosquito fish, have been identified in nearby waterways. These species may benefit from disturbances to natural ecosystems, such as those observed at the proposed offset site.

Secondary threat - rubbish: Rubbish, including plastic debris and dumped hard rubbish, is present at the proposed offset site and inhibits ecological function and community enjoyment. Large items, such as tires, white goods, and agricultural waste has been unlawfully dumped at the site over several decades.

Secondary threat - pollution: Chemical and/or nutrient run-off from adjacent roads and cane fields is expected to impact the ecology at the site. An active fuel station is located directly beside the proposed offset area, and major roads boarder the area on both sides. Although it is likely that natural acid sulphate soils exist beneath the site, there is no evidence of acid sulfate soil oxidation and associates sulfuric acid pollution at the site.

Details of threatening processes are attached



v) Conservation Outcome

What is the intended conservation outcome for the offset, the subject of this offset delivery plan?
Please provide a statement which outlines the intended end-state of the offset.

Note: For example, if seeking to manage a site where weeds and pests were the primary threat to the ongoing viability of the matter:

The offset, the subject of this delivery plan, will achieve a conservation outcome for the impacted matters by achieving a 2 point condition gain in habitat quality score over 70% of the offset site in 20 years. This will be achieved by managing the identified threatening processes, with specific focus on weed and pest eradication.

Note: This information will assist the administering agency to identify the overall intended conservation outcome to be provided on the offset site.

Response

The proposed offset, the subject of this Offset Delivery Plan, will achieve a conservation outcome for the impacted matters (marine plants) by achieving a minimum 2 point condition gain in habitat quality score over 100% of the offset site in 20 years. This correlates to a 20% increase in marine plant coverage at the offset site. This will be achieved by managing the identified threatening processes, with specific focus on reprofiling the modified land to restore hydrological connectivity and enable natural recolonisation of marine plants. The delivery of this project will have a direct benefit on fisheries habitat, connecting catchment habitat with Yorkeys Creek, and the Coral Sea/ Great Barrier Reef.

Conservation Outcome statement is attached



vi) Management actions

Please detail the management actions you intend to undertake in each management zone to achieve the conservation outcome, outlined in item (v), for each *prescribed environmental matter* included on the offset site. As a minimum, management actions should address each of the threatening processes identified in item (iv) of this plan.

Please provide the following details for each management action:

- management zone;
- priority proposed management action(s) based on the year & management zone;
- method;
- timing (e.g. certain actions to occur in years 1-5, followed by actions undertaken in years 5-7);
- frequency of those actions (e.g. annual, bi-annual, quarterly);
- who will undertake it;
- indicative cost (\$) of proposed management actions;
- evidence attached to support indicative costs;
- key performance criteria (e.g. to measure the efficacy of the management actions); and
- scientific evidence to support management actions where relevant.

Note: Where the offset will be a land-based offset, the management actions should be clearly linked to those attributes of the 'habitat quality' score that will be improved to achieve the conservation outcome.

The management actions should also be clearly linked to how the offset provides additionality. This means the plan should identify how the proposed actions are additional to any other benefits the land is receiving through any other requirements or authorities, or under requirements under another Act.

Response

The prescribed environmental matter is marine plants (matter group 1.1.1). Management actions will be implemented to address the identified threatening processes to achieve the conservation outcome. Considering that the proposed offset site is not actively managed for conservation, all management actions are additional and independent of any other benefits the land might be receiving through other requirements or authorities under different Acts.

The primary management action required to address the primary threat and most secondary threats is the reprofiling of the land surface. This process will remove any imported fill, sediment build-up, debris, weeds, and rubbish from the site. Reprofiling will restore hydrological connectivity, which will suppress regrowth of freshwater weeds, enable natural marine plant recolonisation, provide habitat for native species, and facilitate the flushing of sediment, chemicals, and debris. This management action aligns with the recommendations published in "*Mangrove Restoration - Costs and Benefits of Successful Ecological Restoration*" by Roy R. Lewis III.

Reprofiling works will be done within the first year of the project. Light machinery will be used for larger areas, assisted by manual digging in areas close to existing marine plants or waterways. An experienced earthworks contractor engaged by Cairns Airport will complete reprofiling under the guidance of an experienced third-party engineer (Douglas Partners) following extensive acid sulfate soil testing. Reprofiling depth will vary based on depth of excess soil/ sediment/ debris present at each specific location. Excavation is intended to return land surface to natural levels and/ or minimum levels required for hydrological connectivity and will not remove more than the recommended 0.5m cover over any known acid sulfate soils, essentially leaving a buffer zone. This is best practice, in accordance with the *Queensland Acid Sulfate Soil Technical Manual* guidelines. A lump sum of \$50,000 has been allocated for reprofiling works and the key performance indicator is hydrological connection throughout the proposed offset area. Hydrological connectivity will be measured by tide loggers and marine plant growth.

Minor debris, rubbish, weed, and invasive fish removal will be completed monthly during routine maintenance at the site. Routine maintenance will be completed by a contractor on behalf of Cairns Airport and preference will be given to local land care groups and Traditional Owners. \$15,000 has been allocated for maintenance during year 2, and \$10,000 per year has been allocated for maintenance during years 3, 4, and 5. Once marine plants have established at the site after 5 years, it is assumed that maintenance works will not be required on an ongoing basis. This marine plant re-establishment rate was observed at the impact site and assumed to be relatively applicable to the proposed offset site.

Details of management actions are attached



Part B – Risks to Offset Delivery

This delivery plan should effectively account for and manage the risks of the offset failing to achieve the conservation outcome for each impacted *prescribed environmental matter*. This includes any potential risks that will compromise delivery of the management actions specified in this plan.

i) Risk Analysis

Please attach a risk analysis which details the potential risks to delivering a successful conservation outcome through this offset delivery plan. At a minimum, the risk analysis should define the various risks, determine the extent of vulnerabilities and devise remedial actions should the risk eventuate. The risk analysis should effectively account for and manage the level of risk associated with each threat identified in section (iv) Threatening Processes and any other threats that may impact the management of maintaining the viability of each *prescribed environmental matter*.

Risk analysis is attached



Note: There are some threats - like natural disasters - that are not easy to predict or manage. Where these events may be likely to occur, the risk analysis should include a range of general strategies to address restoration of the site after a natural disaster.

Part C – Monitoring and Reporting

In order to identify whether or not an offset site is successfully being managed to maintain the viability of each matter, the delivery plan needs to include a program of monitoring and a reporting program to the administering agency on the performance against the stated outcomes and objectives included in Section 3, Part A, (v) Conservation Outcomes. Where there are multiple matters on the offset site the monitoring needs to be designed in a way that enables reporting on the conservation outcomes for all of the matters subject to the offset delivery plan.

The actions listed below provide examples of monitoring and reporting activities that will assist in demonstrating the success of a delivery plan.

i) Types of monitoring actions

Please select the types of monitoring actions that will be undertaken and reported on to the administering authority in accordance with the prescribed 'schedule of proposed monitoring actions'.

- Habitat quality monitoring report (Mandatory for all land-based offsets)
Note: for further information on habitat quality, please refer to the habitat quality guide found on the Queensland Government website, which can be accessed [here](#)
- Baseline monitoring reports (e.g. species, water quality, soil etc.)
- Visual monitoring (e.g. GPS shapefiles of monitoring sites) and record keeping
- Water quality testing
- Photo monitoring
- Flora quadrants
- Flora/Fauna monitoring
- Other monitoring requested and/or approved by the administering agency

If other monitoring has been requested and / or approved by the administering agency, please detail the reporting requirements in the space provided below.

Other monitoring will be provided as follows:

Response

Additional performance monitoring will include LiDAR and/or photogrammetry scanning to show pre- and post-earthworks ground levels, marine plant vegetation cover, and above-ground biomass. The use of remote sensing technology will negate the need for physical flora quadrants, which will reduce damaging to immature marine plants. This scanning will be completed by a third-party specialist at a cost of \$5,000 per scan. The program allows for a baseline scan in year 1, a follow up scan in year 2 after reprofiling works are complete, and a final scan in 2044 to document change and quantify habitat quality score increase.

Data loggers will be purchased and placed at the site in year 2, after reprofiling work has been complete. This will allow reporting on hydrology at the site over time and demonstrate the effectiveness of the reprofiling work. A total of \$5,000 has been allocated to purchase the loggers in year 2.

Community engagement will be tracked to demonstrate alignment with the listed purpose of the land. This will be recorded as volunteer hours contributed by members of the community for community clean-up events, flora and fauna surveys, and light debris removal.

Monitoring actions area attached

ii) **Schedule of proposed monitoring actions**

Please provide details below (or attach details) of the proposed schedule of monitoring actions for the life of the offset. The purpose of the schedule is to evaluate whether the proposed management actions are succeeding. The schedule should have regard to the existing status of the offset site, using it as a benchmark to measure the success of the proposed management actions to achieve a conservation outcome for the site.

The schedule of monitoring action should include:

- Monitoring timeframe (from beginning to end);
- Management zone(s);
- Proposed management action(s);
- Monitoring frequency (e.g. annual, biennial);
- Reporting frequency;
- Proposed reporting date; and
- Any other documents or relevant information.

Proposed schedule of monitoring actions are attached

SECTION 4 – LEGALLY SECURED OFFSET AREA DETAILS

Legal security is generally required for offset sites to enable the protection and management of the *prescribed environmental matter* on the offset site. Where legal security is required, offsets must be legally secured for the duration of the impact on the *prescribed environmental matter*.

i) **Legally security to be obtained**

Legally Binding Mechanism			
Type of mechanism proposed			
Voluntary Declaration (<i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Covenant (<i>Land Act 1994 / Land Title Act 1994</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protected Area* (<i>Nature Conservation Act 1999</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental Offset Protection Area (<i>Environmental Offset Act 2014</i>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Declared fish habitat area (<i>Fisheries Act 1994</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Highly protected area of a marine park (<i>Marine Parks Act 2004</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nil (e.g. DBMP)	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Note: A protected area cannot be a legally secured offset area unless it was declared after the offset condition has been imposed.

Please attach the following information in relation to the legal security mechanism selected:

- Details of land* which the legal security mechanism is to be placed over;
- Evidence of the relevant agency’s in-principle support for the proposed mechanism;
- The timeframe proposed for obtaining legal security after the agreed delivery arrangement has been entered into and an explanation why this timeframe is suitable;
- Explanation as to why that type of legally binding mechanism has been selected, and how the stated measures are reasonable and practical;
- If the legal security mechanism is a protected area, provide evidence that the area will be declared after the offset condition is imposed;
- Where the offset is already a legally secured offset for another purpose, please provide details of the legal security; or
- Where no legal security is proposed, provide evidence that legal security is not required or consider reasonable or practical.

Explanatory Note: In accordance with the *Environmental Offset Act 2014* land includes water*.

All relevant legally security details have been attached

In order to demonstrate that the stated legal security measures are reasonable and practical it is recommended that evidence of preliminary approval for the use of the proposed legal security measure has been provided from *persons with an interest in the land*.

Preliminary approval from *persons with an interest in the land* to legally secure the offset area through the legally binding mechanism indicated above has been attached

Note: Consent from all relevant parties is required prior to declaring all legally secured offset areas. Where no lot or plan information is available in relation to *persons with an interest in the land*, please provide spatial information to identify the area of land the registered interest is over.

SECTION 5 – SIGNATORIES AND DECLARATION

Part A – Signatories

The authority holder, any owner of the land, and the proponent (if different from the landowner), on which the offset will be undertaken, must sign and date this section.

By signing this form, you are accepting the responsibility for the delivery of the proposed offset should it be deemed acceptable in meeting the offset obligation by the administering agency.

i) **Landowners**

All *owners* of each parcel of land proposed to be included as part of the offset delivery plan must sign and date this section.

Statement

I/We

- agree to the offset being undertaken over my/our land identified in Section 1, Part B, of this offset delivery plan in the manner outlined in this offset delivery plan;
- request the approval of this offset delivery plan under the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*;
- consent to the collection and use of the personal information in this form for the purposes of assessing this offset delivery plan made under the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*;
- solemnly and sincerely declare that the information provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true; and
- understand that all information supplied on or with this application form may be disclosed publicly in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Evidence Act 1977*.

Lot and Plan	Lot 126 NR5009		
Owner (trustee)	Cairns Regional Council		
Signature of owner		Date signed	

Additional details of landowners have been attached

ii) **Proponent**

The proponent (if different from the landowner) who is delivering the offset the subject of this offset delivery plan must sign and date this section.

Statement

I/We

- request the approval of this offset delivery plan under the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*;
- consent to the collection and use of the personal information in this form for the purposes of assessing this offset delivery plan made under the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*;

- solemnly and sincerely declare that the information provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true; and
- understand that all information supplied on or with this application form may be disclosed publicly in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Evidence Act 1977*.

Full Name	Richard Barker, CEO Cairns Airport		
Address	Level 2, Airport Administration Centre, Cairns Airport, Cairns Queensland 4870		
Phone	0468 579 769		
Email	Richard.Barker@cairnsairport.com.au		
Signature of Proponent		Date signed	

Part B – Applicant Declaration

Note: If you deliberately provide false information in this application you may be liable for prosecution under the relevant Acts or Regulations.

- I do solemnly and sincerely declare that the information provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true.
- I understand that all information supplied on or with this application form may be disclosed publicly in accordance with the *Right to Information Act 2009* and the *Evidence Act 1977*.
- I confirm that the offset delivery plan provides benefits in relation to the prescribed environmental matters located on the offset site that are additional to any other benefit provided under a requirement of an Act, or agreed to under other schemes or programs and are also additional to the conditions of the approval associated with the prescribed activity held by the authority holder.

Full Name	Lucy Friend, Environment Manager Cairns Airport		
Address	Level 2, Airport Administration Centre, Cairns Airport, Cairns Queensland 4870		
Phone	0400 899 342		
Email	Lucy.Friend@cairnsairport.com.au		
Signature of Applicant		Date signed	/06/2024

Appendix 1 – Proposed Offset Site Map

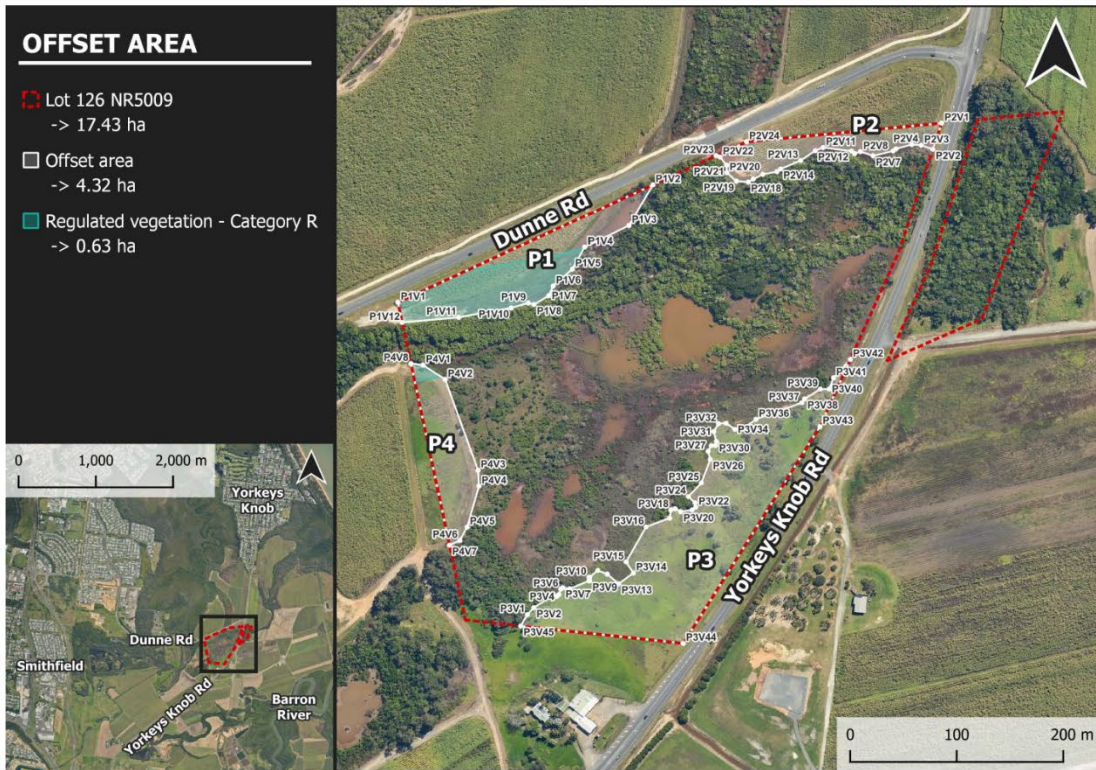


Figure 2: The proposed offset site is located in Yorkeys Knob, adjacent to the Cattana Wetlands, within Lot 126 NR5009. Management actions apply to all four sections of the proposed offset area (4.32ha).

Appendix 2 – Images of Threatening Processes

Site modification

*aerial mapping over time

Weeds

Images from site

Invasive fish

*Reports of tilapia and mosquito fish nearby

Rubbish

*images from site

Pollution

*map showing proximity to roads and fuel station

Appendix 3 – Management Schedule

Table 1 – Management action schedule to meet habitat quality increase at the proposed offset site

Management Action	Start Date	End Date	Method	Frequency	Undertaken by	Indicative cost	KPI
Re-surfacing	August 2024	September 2024	Removal of fill, weeds, sediment, debris and rubbish from the surface by machinery and hand	Once	Earthworks contractor	\$50,000	All ground cover inhibiting hydrological connectivity removed
Maintenance	January 2025	January 2030	Debris, rubbish, weed, and invasive fish removal by hand as required	Quarterly through years 2-5	Landcare contractor (option for volunteer participation)	\$15,000 year 2, \$10,000 year 3, \$10,000 year 4, \$10,000 year 5 Total \$45,000	All rubbish, invasive biota, and build-up inhibiting hydrological connectivity removed

Appendix 4 – Risk Analysis

Table 2 - Project Risk Assessment

Risk	Cause	Owner	Inherent			Control	Residual		
			Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating		Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating
Financial deficit	Project cost exceeds available money	Cairns Airport	Possible (3)	Major (4)	High (H)	Document requirements, obtain cost estimates, and commit funds within project budget	Rare (1)	Major (4)	Moderate (M)
Scope Creep	Project objectives aren't well defined, resulting in uncontrolled expansion of objectives beyond original intentions	Cairns Airport	Likely (4)	Minor (2)	High (H)	Scope well-considered and clearly defined in Offset Delivery Plan	Rare (1)	Minor (2)	Low (L)
Failure to obtain downstream approvals	Lack of support from regulatory authorities/ key stakeholders	Cairns Airport	Possible (3)	Major (4)	High (H)	Understanding of regulation; robust planning; early consultation with regulatory authorities/ key stakeholders	Unlikely (2)	Major (4)	Moderate (M)
Enduring hydrological constraint	Physical barrier due to fill, sediment build-up and/ or debris	Land Management Contractor	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	High (H)	Quarterly maintenance budgeted and included in Offset Delivery Plan	Unlikely (2)	Moderate (3)	Moderate (M)
Insufficient marine plant uptake	Engineered environmental conditions unsuitable for marine plants	Land Management Contractor	Unlikely (2)	Major (4)	Moderate (M)	Surplus land area to required minimum; quarterly maintenance budgeted and included in Offset Delivery Plan; on-site monitoring	Rare (1)	Major (4)	Moderate (M)
Physical damage to re-growth	Severe weather event; unlawful access	Land Management Contractor	Unlikely (2)	Moderate (3)	Moderate (M)	Surplus land area to required minimum; quarterly maintenance budgeted and included in Offset Delivery Plan; on-site monitoring	Unlikely (2)	Moderate (3)	Moderate (M)

Table 3 - Environmental Value Risk Assessment

Risk	Cause	Owner	Inherent			Control	Residual		
			Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating		Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating
Sulfuric acid pollution	Unmanaged disturbance of Acid Sulfate Soils	Earthworks Contractor	Possible (3)	Major (4)	High (H)	Implementation of Queensland Acid Sulphate Soil Technical Manual guidelines; Extensive Acid Sulfate Soil testing completed prior to any	Unlikely (2)	Major (4)	Moderate (M)

						earthworks; Acid Sulfate Soil Management Plan included in contract requirements; on-site monitoring			
Invasion of pest species	Conditions favourable to invasive weeds and animals (fish)	Land Management Contractor	Unlikely (2)	Minor (2)	Moderate (M)	Quarterly maintenance budgeted and included in Offset Delivery Plan; Invasive Species Management Plan included in contract requirements; on-site monitoring	Rare (1)	Minor (2)	Low (L)
Illegal dumping	Public discarding unwanted rubbish and household items to avoid dumping fees	Land Management Contractor	Likely (4)	Minor (2)	Moderate (M)	Increased presence and monitoring at site; timely removal of dumped items to reduce impact on wetlands	Possible (3)	Minor (2)	Moderate (M)
Rubbish	Build-up of plastics and other rubbish due to proximity to urban areas, littering, and general environmental pollution	Land Management Contractor	Almost certain (5)	Minor (2)	High (H)	Quarterly maintenance budgeted and included in Offset Delivery Plan; rubbish removal included in contract requirements; on-site monitoring	Possible (3)	Minor (2)	Moderate (M)
Pollution	Elevated chemical/nutrient levels due to proximity to urban areas, agricultural land, public roads, and fuel station	Land Management Contractor	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Moderate (M)	Quarterly maintenance budgeted and included in Offset Delivery Plan; rubbish removal included in contract requirements; on-site monitoring	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Moderate (M)

Table 4 - Likelihood of risk occurring

Likelihood	Qualitative description	Quantitative description
Almost Certain	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances	May occur once a month or more frequently
Likely	The event will probably occur in many circumstances	May occur once every year
Possible	Identified factors indicate the event could occur at some time	May occur once every 2 or 3 years
Unlikely	The event could occur at some time but is not expected	May occur once every 5 years
Rare	The event may occur only in exceptional circumstances	May occur once every 10 years

Table 5 - Qualitative Risk Analysis Matrix

RATING	CONSEQUENCES Environmental Value Project Success		LIKELIHOOD				
			Rare - 1	Unlikely - 2	Possible - 3	Likely - 4	Almost certain - 5
5 Severe	Permanent and/or very long term damage to areas of significant value, e.g. permanent loss of vegetation through pest invasion.	Project abandoned entirely/ conservation outcome not met	H	H	E	E	E
4 Major	Significant and/or long term damage to areas of high value, e.g. significant loss of vegetation through pest invasion.	Significant impact on project success/ delay to project compromising compliance with agreed (and legislated) timeframes	M	M	H	H	E

3 Moderate	Moderate or medium term damage to areas of value, e.g. moderate loss of vegetation through pest invasion.	Moderate impact on project success/ moderate delay to project schedule. Conservation outcome can still be reached, with legislative compliance as a minimum	M	M	M	H	H
2 Minor	Minor and/or short term damage to areas of low value, e.g. minor loss of vegetation through pest invasion.	Minor impact on project success/ minor delay to project schedule. Conservation outcome can still be reached with minor amendments	L	M	M	M	H
1 Insignificant	Insignificant or very short term damage to areas of very low or negligible value, e.g. insignificant loss of vegetation through pest invasion.	Insignificant impact on project success/ insignificant delay to project schedule. Conservation outcome will be reached	L	L	L	M	M

Low Risk (L)	Moderate Risk (M)	High Risk (H)	Extreme Risk (H)
Requires routine action	Requires moderate action < 1 Month	Requires priority action < 2 Weeks	Requires immediate action < 1 Week

Appendix 5 – Schedule of Monitoring Actions

Table 6 – Monitoring action and reporting schedule to demonstrate the success of the Offset Delivery Plan

Timeframe	Monitoring Action	Description	Frequency	Responsible	Report date	Indicative cost
June 2024	Baseline Habitat Quality Scoring	% marine plant cover and health at proposed offset site and impact site in accordance with agreed methodology for marine plants	Once	Cairns Airport	July 2024	Internal
July 2024	Acid sulfate soil sampling	Soil sampling to determine presence and depth of any acid sulfate soils across the site	Once	Douglas Partners	September 2024	\$20,383
July 2024	Hydrology assessment	Site assessment to determine reprofiling required to return the site to favourable hydrology for marine plants	Once	Neilly Group	September 2024	\$20,300
July 2024	Baseline Photogrammetry	Remote sensing by drone to capture baseline ground levels and above-ground biomass	Once	NQ Drones	September 2024	\$5,000
July 2024 – September 2024	Baseline environmental assessment	Flora and fauna species, including weeds and pests. Visual inspection, photography, e-DNA	Once	Cairns Airport + volunteers	September 2024	Internal + \$1000 e-DNA
October 2024	Post-resurfacing photogrammetry	Remote sensing by drone to capture post-resurfacing ground levels and above-ground biomass	Once	NQ Drones	October 2024	\$5000
January 2025 – December 2028	Tide/ hydrology	Deployment of in-situ tide loggers to monitor hydrology across the site, in accordance with advice from hydrology assessment	Ongoing/ in-situ	Landcare contractor	Results included in annual report	\$5,000 capex
January 2025 – December 2028	Progress environmental monitoring	On-site surveying of flora and fauna species, including weeds and pests; community clean-ups; debris removal; marine plant recolonisation monitoring	Quarterly	Landcare contractor	Results included in annual report	\$45,000
January 2044	Final photogrammetry/ relevant technology	Remote sensing by drone/ similar to capture final ground levels and above-ground biomass	Once	TBA	Included in annual report	\$5000

Appendix 6 – Cost Breakdown

The cost estimate is as follows:

Year 1 (2024)

Acid Sulphate Soil sampling \$20,383
Hydrology assessment \$20,300
Baseline Photogrammetry \$5,000
e-DNA \$1000
Re-surfacing \$50,000
Post-resurfacing photogrammetry \$5,000
Total \$101,683

Year 2 (2025)

Tide loggers (seasense) \$5,000
Field work (community clean-ups, surveys, debris removal) \$15,000
Total \$20,000

Year 3 (2026)

Field work (community clean-ups, surveys, debris removal) \$10,000
Total \$10,000

Year 4 (2027)

Field work (community clean-ups, surveys, debris removal) \$10,000
Total \$10,000

Year 5 (2028)

Field work (community clean-ups, surveys, debris removal) \$10,000
Total \$10,000

Subtotal \$150,683

Year 20 (2044)

Photogrammetry \$5,000
Total \$5,000

Total \$156,683

Please note that the largest cost (resurfacing) will be able to be refined after Acid Sulphate Soil and hydrology results are available.

ATTACHMENT 2: DM#[7437064](#) CAIRNS AIRPORT OFFSET DELIVERY PLAN APPLICATION



ENQUIRIES: Jade Monda
PHONE: 4044 3372
OUR REF: #7427635

29 May 2024

Dear Sir/ Madam

In-principle landowner (trustee) support

I am writing to confirm that the proposed listing of Lot 126NR5009 as an Environmental Protection Area under the Environmental Protection Act 2014 has in-principle landowner (trustee) support.

It is understood that the listing is required to legally secure the land to serve as an offset to counterbalance the destruction of marine plants caused by development at Cairns Airport (SDA-0516-030021).

Please accept this letter as evidence of consent from the relevant owner of land to have the land used as an offset.

John Andrejic
Acting Chief Executive Officer