



Central Coast Council

Coastal Open Space System

Held Remotely - Online

5 December 2023

MINUTES

Attendance

Members

	Status
John Andrews	Apology
Doug Williamson	Present
Paul Links	Present
Barbara Wills	Present
Deb Holloman	Apology

Non-voting member

Gary Chestnut	Present
Stephen Atkins – National Parks & Wildlife Service	Apology
Peter Draper – Crown Lands	Apology
Daniel Keating – Local Land Services	Present

Staff

	Status
Luke Sulkowski - Unit Manager Environmental Management	Present
Larry Melican – Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity	Present
Rochelle Lawson – Senior Ecologist	Present
Phil Foster - Team Leader Bushfire Mitigation and Project Management	Present
Scott Duncan - Section Manager Local Planning and Policy	Present
Rod Mergan - Senior Strategic Planner Local Planning and Policy	Present
Shannon Turkington – Unit Manager Strategic Planning	Present
Rachel Callachor – Meeting Support Officer	Present

Apologies

Alice Howe, Director Environment and Planning	Apology
Jamie Barclay, Unit Manager Economic Development and Property	Apology

The Chairperson, Luke Sulkowski, declared the meeting open at 2.00pm

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1.1 Introduction: Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country, Apologies, Disclosure of Interest

The Chair read an Acknowledgement of Country statement.

Apologies: John Andrews, Deb Holloman, Stephen Atkins – National Parks and Wildlife Service, Alice Howe – Director Environment and Planning, Jamie Barclay – Unit Manager Economic Development and Property,

The Chair acknowledged the recent passing of Audrey Taggart and provided details in relation to Ms Taggart's contribution, involvement in environmental initiatives and membership of the Environment Committee and COSS Task Group of former Gosford City Council, until 2011. Ms Taggart was also a convenor of Katandra Bushcare Group for 15 years, and a life member of the Australian Plant Society.

Larry Melican and Gary Chestnut spoke of the passion and interest in the environment that Audrey had, and her work and contribution.

Resolved

That the Coastal Open Space (COSS) Committee formally acknowledge the passing of Audrey Taggart and her contributions as a former member of local committees, Katandra Bushcare Group and for environmental volunteering.

1.2 Previous business: Confirmation of minutes, review action log

The group confirmed the minutes of previous meeting as noted , which were distributed to members via email and uploaded to Council's website:

[Coastal Open Space System \(COSS\) - Minutes 5 September 2023](#)

Action Log reviewed and updates made (attached below).

REPORTS

2.1 Update on the Airport Master Plan

Jamie Barclay, Unit Manager Economic Development and Property, was not available to attend the meeting. Information and a presentation will be provided at a future meeting of the Committee.

Note: The members of the COSS Committee were subsequently invited to a presentation on the Airport Masterplan to the Catchments to Coast on 13 December 2023.

2.2 Update on the Local Environmental Plan

Rod Mergan and Scott Duncan attended the meeting to present to this item, and along with Shannon Turkington, to answer any questions from the Committee.

Committee members acknowledged the next step in the process was for Council staff to consider submissions and present a further report to Council.

In addition, Committee members expressed their appreciation to Council staff involved for their work with the Local Environment Plan process to date.

Resolved

That the COSS Committee notes the information provided in the report.

2.3 Current Fire Trail Upgrade Projects

Phil Foster attended the meeting to present on this item and answer any questions from the Committee.

In response to a question from committee regarding budget for fire trail maintenance, the committee was advised that there was \$500,000 allocated to the works.

In addition, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) has some funding available under their Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan (FAFT). Should Council undertake work on these trails identified in the FAFT plan they may be eligible to apply for RFS grant funds.

It is to be noted that the RFS area covers Central Coast and Lake Macquarie Local Government areas. There was general agreement that more funds will be required in future financial years for fire trail management works.

Luke Sulkowski spoke to recent changes, restructures, and pleasing to see progress being made in this area of work.

Resolved

That the COSS Committee notes the information provided in the report.

**2.4 Update on Biodiversity Strategy & Land Acquisition & prioritisation
(Standing Agenda Item)**

Larry Melican presented on this item and invited any questions from the Committee, detailed below:

- In relation to the Springfield Pond works: Question from the committee regarding if there was any legislation re: controlling a noxious weed, in relation to the responsibilities of the landowner. The Biosecurity Act being adopted / Greater Sydney strategic weed program both identify priorities and actions. Salvinia is identified as a

widespread weed where containment, asset protection, not selling and not importing into NSW are the key strategies. Salvinia does not need to be eradicated. There are provisions in the Biosecurity Act 2015 to issue biosecurity directions.

Noted that, as part of restructure, the Environmental Management Unit is increasing capacity in relation to biosecurity management / weeds officers – new position: Biosecurity (Pest Animal) Officer. The three Biosecurity Officers (2 x Weeds + 1 x pest animal) will work together particularly where there are new incursions of plants or animals that present a potential biosecurity issue.

- Question regarding is there a monitoring process regarding site management plans? Response provided, there is ongoing monitoring , for example bush re-generation, Feedback regarding it not being formalised in the process as outlined in the presentation is acknowledged.

Resolved

That the information on the Central Coast Council Biodiversity Strategy and the land acquisition and prioritisation be noted by the Committee.

2.5 Climate Adaptation Planning for Council's Natural Reserves

Rochelle Lawson attended the meeting to present on this item and answer any questions from the Committee.

In response to queries, this work is an action of the Biodiversity Strategy, the next steps will be consulting with experts in the field and community members, to gather ideas and further the developed framework, for prioritisation and delivery.

It was also noted by Luke Sulkowski in relation to recent restructure – there is an increase staff in the conservation management team, they will support the delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy.

Resolved

That the COSS Advisory Committee notes the information contained in the report.

2.6 Update from Community Representatives (Standing Agenda Item)

Gary Chestnut – presented the report distributed 4 December 2023 on the two COSS trial workshops that were held in November 2023. The report is provided as an attachment to these Minutes.

Information provided, and spoke to the proposed recommendations in the report.

The Chair will consider further these recommendations, including aspects such as rezoning. It is noted the Draft Central Coast Airport Masterplan may have implications on the foot print of the area – both ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ – for example, E4 zone and conservation concerns, and takes the recommendations of the Committee, below.

Comment from a Committee member that expanding the COSS into former Wyong LGA was a long time coming, but a worthwhile exercise.

Moved: Doug Williamson

Seconded: Barb Willis

Voting: Unanimous

Resolved

A. Porters Creek Wetland and Warnervale Wetland (also referred to as Warnervale Floodplain R0360) is selected as the preferred site to trial the expansion of COSS into the northern section of the Central Coast Council.

B. In selecting this site:

a. The area of the proposed COSS extension is illustrated on the accompanying map titled ‘Porters Creek and Warnervale Wetland’ consisting of lots (Lot 4 DP 1275094 at 17 Virginia Road, Warnervale; Lot 3 DP 1230740 at 15 Jack Grant Ave, Warnervale; Lot 2 DP 1234942 at 30 Jack Grant Ave, Warnervale; Lot 2 DP 1059616 at 88-98 Alison Road, Wyong)

b. It is noted that the railway line and the proposed Wyong to Warnervale link road that runs parallel to the railway line physically separates the wetland into Porters Creek Wetland and the Warnervale Wetland. Notwithstanding the physical separation the Porters Creek Wetland and the Warnervale Wetland is the same ecological unit.

c. The Porters Creek wetland is restricted and limited to the C2 Environmental Conservation zoned land and does not include any of the E4 General Industrial land associated with the Central Coast Airport or any industrial use.

C. That Council:

a. Rezone the area of land currently zoned C3 Environmental Management on Lot 704/DP 1275094, to C2 Environmental Conservation.

b. Subdivide 15 Jack Grant Ave, Warnervale, 2259 identified as Lot 3 DP 1230740 and 30 Jack Grant Avenue, Warnervale, 2259 identified as Lot 2 DP 1234942 along the zone boundary to separate the Central Coast Airport and industrial land from Porters Creek Wetland.

D. That Council staff:

a. Bring a report back to the COSS Advisory Committee within 3 months on the implementation of the recommendation.

b. Bring a report back to the COSS Advisory Committee within 9 months presenting a preliminary strategy on concepts and engagement of the community for the rehabilitation of the Warnervale Wetland.

It is noted that a separate Council report will be provided early 2024 as a result of the above recommendation.

2.7 Update from External Representatives (Standing Agenda Item)

Update provided by Daniel Keating, Local Land Services.

Natural Resource Management (NRM) – Assessment Panel meeting was held 20 November 2023. There was allocation of NSW treasury funding, totalling a bit under \$200,000 .

Projects were assessed, however the outcomes are still pending. Further funding allocation are proposed to be announced in the next week or so.

LLS has a new staff member in their Biosecurity team – Luke Mitchell. This will boost their team, which currently is very busy in biosecurity and pest-animal space.

Discussion amongst the Committee regarding Cane Toad and acoustic monitoring which will be occurring at Avoca. No further specific information available, however it is noted there is regular cane toad surveillance in Mandalong and Glenorie.

Fire ants and species are also being monitored.

2.8 General Business

Question in relation to any updates re: Seawall at Wamberal.

Response provided that there are no new updates available – noting this is more a Catchments to Coast Advisory Committee topic under their Terms of Reference.

There is a Wamberal and Coastal Erosion Seawall and history page that has the latest updates available from Council, here:

<https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/environment/coastlines/coastal-zone-management/coastal-erosion>

Gary Chestnut – In relation to different conservation agreements across COSS lands, requests a refresher to be presented at a future Committee meeting.

Advice provided that information provided regarding Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) at Mt Alison can also be included.

Resolved

Council's Senior Ecologist Conservation Management Lead to present at the next COSS Committee meeting with a refresher in relation to conservation agreements across COSS lands, including information regarding property vegetation plans.

The Meeting concluded at 3.35pm.

Next meeting: 5 March 2024 – 2pm – 4pm – online via *Microsoft Teams*

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
132	9/6/2021	The Committee request the Project Manager provide a briefing on the airport masterplan, plan of management and subdivision plan at the next meeting.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Airport Masterplan update emailed to members 14 February 2022. Verbal update provided on 15 March 2022 meeting.	Complete
139	21/9/2021	Luke Sulkowski to confirm whether the letter sent from Council to National Parks is able to be distributed and will review what information has previously been provided to the COSS Committee regarding this matter.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	The Land Transfer Council to National Parks Chronology was discussed at the 13 December 2021 COSS meeting. Amy Walpole to double check, it seems we may have already provided a copy of the letter to the Minister/National Parks. 16/02: LM to reconfirm that a copy of the letter was circulated to the committee Update as at 07/06/2022 meeting: Follow up regarding letter and circulation to Committee. Update as of 13/09/2022 meeting: Distributed and complete	Complete
140	21/9/2021	Section Manager Flood Strategy and Planning to obtain more information regarding the two Conservation areas and provide feedback to Gary Chestnut.	Section Manager Flood Strategy and Planning	Peter Sheath currently liaising with Gary Chestnut on this matter. 9/08: An update has been provided to Gary via the AG	Complete
141	21/9/2021	Staff to provide a presentation to the Committee at a future meeting on the way these property sale negotiations are carried out and possible new ways of thinking for Council negotiating on land that has high environmental values.	Unit Manager Economic Development and Property	Item to be pushed back to early 2022. Economic and Property development to take the lead on this action. EMU to provide advice and input as required. Update as of 13/09/2022 meeting:	Complete

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
				Complete	
143	21/9/2021	Staff to investigate the unauthorised clearing activities at Matcham and report back to the next COSS meeting advising what action has been taken against people who undertook the clearing.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	<p>A registered surveyor was engaged by Council to carry out a boundary survey to ascertain the extent of clearing on Council land reserve, R0056 Wambina/Matcham Road Reserve. This survey was undertaken on the 26 October 2021.</p> <p>On the 8 December 2022 an onsite meeting was held with Council officers Rhys Richards, Team Leader, Development Control, Brent Evans, Project Officer, Natural Assets and Biodiversity and Chris Ross a representative of the owners of 293 Matcham Road.</p> <p>The representative was asked to provide a Vegetation Management Plan which is to outline how they are to revegetate/regenerate/manage the area that they have admitted to clearing. It is understood that the representative has sourced three quotes from qualified ecologists to carry out the investigation</p>	Complete

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
				<p>and provide the Vegetation Management Plan and have now engaged Travers Bushfire and Ecology to provide the consultancy services. This plan is to be reviewed by Council before it is accepted. Once accepted the representative has stated that they will then carry out the recommendations of the report.</p> <p>It is expected that the draft plan will be available for review in the next few weeks.</p>	
144	13/12/2021	Regarding previous action 124, Council to send a follow up letter to the Minister advising of the significant community concerns regarding the clearing of land (public and private) and request that if the legislation isn't going to be changed, that regulatory control of deferred matters zoned land be given back to Council as opposed to DPIE and LLS.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	<p>At the 8 February 2022 Council Meeting, Council resolved:</p> <p>That Council send a follow up letter to the Minister advising of the significant community concerns regarding the clearing of land (public and private) and request that if the legislation isn't going to be changed, that regulatory control of deferred matters zoned land be given back to Council as opposed to DPIE and LLS. Letters sent 2 March 2022 to Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Planning and Homes.</p>	Complete
145	13/12/2021	The Coastal Open Space System (COSS) Committee members would like to express to Council their rejection of any mountain biking	The Committee / Meeting Support Officer	At the 8 February 2022 Council Meeting, Council resolved:	Complete

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
		trails being established in COSS land or being identified for inclusion in COSS land as part of the Central Coast Mountain Biking Plan which will be reported to Council at the Ordinary Meeting on 14 December 2021.		That Council note the COSS Committee's rejection of any mountain biking trails being established in COSS land or being identified for inclusion in COSS land as part of the Central Coast Mountain Biking Plan that was reported to Council at the Ordinary Meeting on 14 December 2021.	
147	13/12/2021	Staff to follow up with the Economic Property Development Team request that they meet with the COSS Sub-Committee to discuss property sale negotiations and the acquisition process, prior to presenting to the Committee in the new year.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Update as of 13/09/2022 meeting: Complete	Complete
148	13/12/2021	The Committee request that Council write to the Minister noting concerns about lots that were left off the list for potential land transfer to NPWS and request that further consideration be given to private land, not just public land. Furthermore, representations should be made to local members requesting support of this.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	At the 8 Feb 2022 Council Meeting, Council resolved: That Council write to the Minister noting concerns about lots that were left off the list for potential land transfer to NPWS and request that further consideration be given to private land, not just public land. Furthermore, representations should be made to local members requesting support of this. Letters sent 2 March 2022 to Minister for Environment and Heritage, The Member for Terrigal, The Member for Gosford, The Member for The Entrance and The Member for Wyong.	Complete

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
149	13/12/2021	Staff to arrange a further meeting with Gary Chestnut with a view to identifying some existing conservation reserves in the former Wyong LGA that may be considered for trial under the COSS branding and to identify likely tasks required in order to proceed with such a project.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	9/08: Due to scheduling conflicts, a meeting will be scheduled for early October 11/11: Meeting yet to be arranged 6/12: Noted meeting scheduled for Thursday 8/12	Complete
150	15/03/2022	Staff to collate a list of initiatives taken by Council regarding QR codes and provide an update to the Committee at the next meeting. Consideration to also be given to other possible applications software (e.g., Hovr).	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Update provided at 07/06/2022 Committee meeting and outcomes included in meeting minutes	Complete
151	15/03/2022	Committee members are invited to provide any suggestions or feedback on the plan (Environmental Education Strategy) to advisorygroups@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au by Friday 25 March 2022	The Committee	<i>COSS Committee - NAB Environmental Education Strategy</i> emailed to members 18/3/2022 Update provided to Carlita Dhillon and Nick Carson via email 30/3/2022 – final confirmation of all feedback received – one email from Gary Chestnut.	Complete
152	15/03/2022	Copies of the letters sent to Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Planning and Homes regarding Deferred Matters Land to be sent to Adam Crouch Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and Member for Terrigal, for his information	Unit Manager Environmental Management	9/08: Larry to follow up and confirm if and when these letters were sent to the Members of Parliament Update as of 13/09/2022: Larry to draft correspondence to Adam Crouch MP (including letters to Ministers) to Director for Approval	Complete

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
				5/10/22: Letter sent to Adam Crouch MP	
153	15/03/2022	A copy of all presentations from today's meeting to be provided to Committee Members	Meeting Support Officer	COSS Committee Presentations emailed to members 16/03/2022	Complete
154	07/06/2022	A copy of all presentations from today's meeting to be provided to Committee Members.	Meeting Support Officer	9/08: AG to update	Complete
155	07/06/2022	Refresher regarding opportunities for committee members to become involved, suggestions and feedback welcomed, please send via Advisory Groups email address.	COSS Committee members	9/08: AG to update	Complete
156	07/06/2022	Chair will seek advice from Team Leader Landcare and SM Natural Assets and Biodiversity regarding whether this is to be re-introduced.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	9/08: Update to be provided during the Action Log item. This program is not being re-introduced at this stage. Current resourcing levels for the nursery only allow for plants to be supplied to environmental volunteering program groups for restoration of their worksites. Further consideration will be given to the potential for plant giveaways to be incorporated as part of the 2023 National Tree Day	Complete

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
157	13/09/2022	Chair to convene a workshop with staff from Environment Management Unit, Economic and Property Unit and Finance as well two to three Committee members consider acquisition process and report back to committee	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Workshop organised for 1/12/22	Complete
158	13/09/2022	Larry Melican and Andrew Bayley coordinating visit to Wambina with Committee members	Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity	As of 11/11: Inspection yet to be arranged. Update 6/12 – rescheduled to Feb 2023	Complete
159	13/09/2022	Presentations to be distributed to Advisory Group members.	Meeting Support Officer	18/7/2023 – forward presentations to committee members for every meeting.	Ongoing
160	13/09/2022	That the COSS Advisory Group support for the dedication of the C2 Environmental Conservation Zoned land at 39 Dell Road, West Gosford, pending the determination of the Planning Proposal, be noted by Council.	COSS Committee members	Council noted COSS minutes of the 13 September meeting. This was not specifically noted by Council. Update 6/12 – Query regarding if advice is provided to Planning staff. Proposed action to convey this information. To be discussed in meeting at item 5? 18/07/2023 – Completed.	Completed
161	13/09/2022	Chair to provide update on website improvements at next meeting and master plan regarding mountain bike riding.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	Agenda Item for 6 December meeting Update 6/12 – to be postponed until the New Year	Complete

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
				18/7/2023 – addressed by chair during general business. Council to provide links on the COSS information page on Council's website to include walking trails. 5/9/2023 – All maps were updated. Action is now completed.	
162	13/09/2022	Civic Support Team to update Terms of Reference and call for new members	Meeting Support Officer	New members can only be added via an EOI process per the Terms of Reference. 5/9/2023 – Terms of Reference updated to remove Councillor references.	Completed
163	27/03/2023	Additional feedback requested in relation to the Davistown Wetlands Acquisition Fund	Civic Support Staff	No feedback was received. 18/07/2023 – addressed by chair during meeting	Complete
164	18/07/2023	The Committee be invited to a site inspection of the recently acquired land known as Warnervale Floodplain R0360. The members are to also be invited to a separate workshop to identify measures of success and failure of the proposed COSS trial in relation to Report 2.3 tabled at the meeting.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	5/9/2023 – Site Inspection completed. Workshop to be arranged. 5/12/2023 – Completed, workshop took place on 21 and 28 November 2023.	Completed
165	05/09/2023	The Committee be invited to a site inspection of Mount Alison for public recreation opportunities with the same representatives who attended the site inspection at Action 164.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	5/12/2023 – Inspection completed 14 November 2023.	Completed

Action Number	Meeting Date	Action	Responsible Party	Action Update	Status
166	05/09/2023	An update to be provided to the Committee on the Local Environmental Plan from Council's Strategic Planning at the December meeting.	Unit Manager Environmental Management	5/12/2023 – Strategic Planning staff to present to Committee at today's meeting.	Completed
167	05/12/2023	Report to Council, and in turn back to the Committee, on the report from the Committee and the Recommendations regarding Porters Creek Wetland and Warnervale Wetland.	Unit Manager Environmental Management and Environmental management staff		
168	05/12/2023	Senior Ecologist Conservation Management Lead to present at the next COSS Committee meeting (5 March 2024) with a refresher in relation to conservation agreements across COSS lands, including information regarding property vegetation plans.	Senior Ecologist Conservation Management Lead		

Title: COSS Advisory recommendation on proposed trial of COSS in the former LGA of Wyong Shire Council

Authors: John Andrews
Gary Chestnut
Paul Links
Deb Holloman¹
Doug Williamson
Barbara Wills

The community members of Council's COSS Advisory Committee met on Friday 1 December 2023, to discuss the selection of a site to recommend to Council for a proposed trial of COSS in the northern section of the Central Coast Council within the former LGA of Wyong Shire Council.

All committee members are aware of the Council Report 2.3 dated 6 June 2023, (copy presented in Attachment A), which resulted in the adoption of the following Action 164 on 18 July 2023:

The Committee be invited to a site inspection of the recently acquired land know as Warnervale Floodplain R0360 (Commonly referred to as the Warnervale Wetland). The members are to also be invited to a separate workshop to identify measures of success and failure of the proposed COSS trial in relation to Report 2.3 tabled at the meeting.

In accordance with Action 164 a site inspection was conducted on Monday 4 September 2023. The Warnervale Wetland outlined in yellow is illustrated in the following aerial photo.



Fig 1 – Aerial Photo of Warnervale Wetland

¹ Please note that Deb Holland was unable to participate at the meeting held on 1 December 2023, however a copy of this report was circulated to all community members and endorsed.

The following cadastre map shows the Warnervale Wetland outlined in blue. Its location is known as 107 Virginia Road, WARNERVALE identified as Lot 704 of DP 1275094.



Fig 2 Cadastre boundary of Warnervale Wetland

Following the site inspection of 4 September 2023, at the COSS Advisory Committee meeting conducted on 5 September 2023, the committee resolved Action 164:

The Committee be invited to a site inspection of Mount Alison for public recreation opportunities with the same representatives who attended the site inspection at Action 164.

In accordance with Action 164 a site inspection of Mt Alison was conducted on 14 November 2023. The Mt Alison Reserve is illustrated in the following aerial photo.

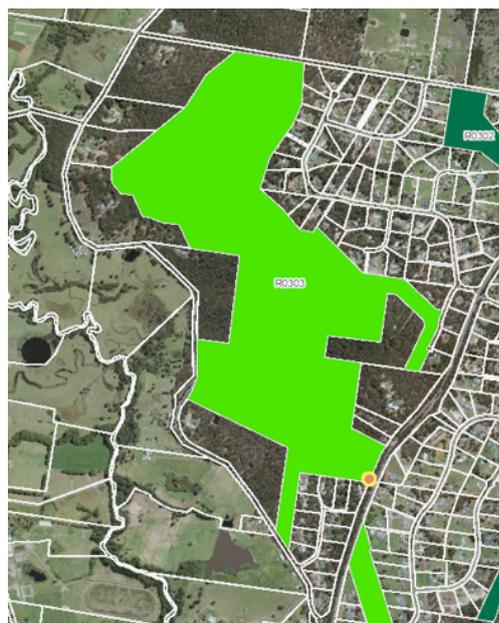


Fig 3 Mount Alison Reserve

In accordance with the second part of Action 164, COSS members consisting of both staff and community representatives participated in two workshops conducted on 21 and 28 November 2023, to identify measures of success and failure of the proposed COSS trial in relation to Report 2.3.

At the workshops all participants were asked to respond, via the Menti System, to the following questions:

- Q1. *What are the top five outcomes you want to achieve by applying the COSS name to a natural reserve in the former Wyong LGA?*
- Q2. *Identify two key actions required to help achieve each of the five desired outcomes?*
- Q3. *For each of your ten key actions:*
 - a. *Who/which organisation(s) would actively support delivery?*
 - b. *What duration of delivery would be required for effectiveness?*
 - c. *What types of resources are required to implement the actions? Feel free to also estimate quantity.*
- Q4. *For each of the top five desired outcomes:*
 - a. *How would success and failure be measured?*
 - b. *What data would need to be collected to accurately measure success or failure?*
 - c. *What thresholds (e.g. percentage) would determine success/failure?*
 - d. *What resources are required to collect and analyse the appropriate data to assess success/failure?*
- Q5. *Which reserve or reserve groupings is your preferred location for any future COSS trial?*
- Q6. *What are your top reasons for choosing your preferred trial site?*
- Q7. *Do your reasons for nominating your preferred trial site align with your responses to Q1?*
- Q8. *If your preferred site is formally protected with a conservation agreement or similar, would you choose another site for the trial? Please include your reasons for why or why not?*
- Q9. *Can you identify any risks associated with applying the COSS name to a non-COSS reserve(s)?*
- Q10. *Can you identify any risks associated with not applying the COSS name to a non-COSS reserve(s)?*

Based upon the site inspections, subsequent discussions undertaken, along with a review of Council’s adopted Biodiversity Strategy, the following recommendation is presented. In presenting the following recommendation the Community members have relied upon:

- 1) Map 1 in Council’s Biodiversity Strategy to identify the Council owned land at Porters Creek Wetland.

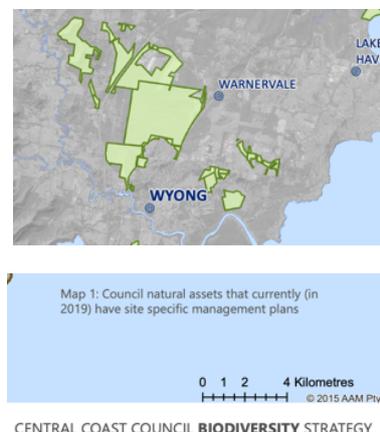


Fig 4 Council Natural Asset land of Porters Creek Wetland

- 2) Combining Fig 1 with Fig 4 identifies the Committees understanding of the boundary of Porters Creek Wetland and Warnervale Wetland



Fig 5 Porters Creek and Warnervale Wetland

- 3) Examining Council's Online Mapping it is noted that Lot 3 DP 1230740, includes native vegetation of Porters Creek Wetland and part of the Central Coast Airport.

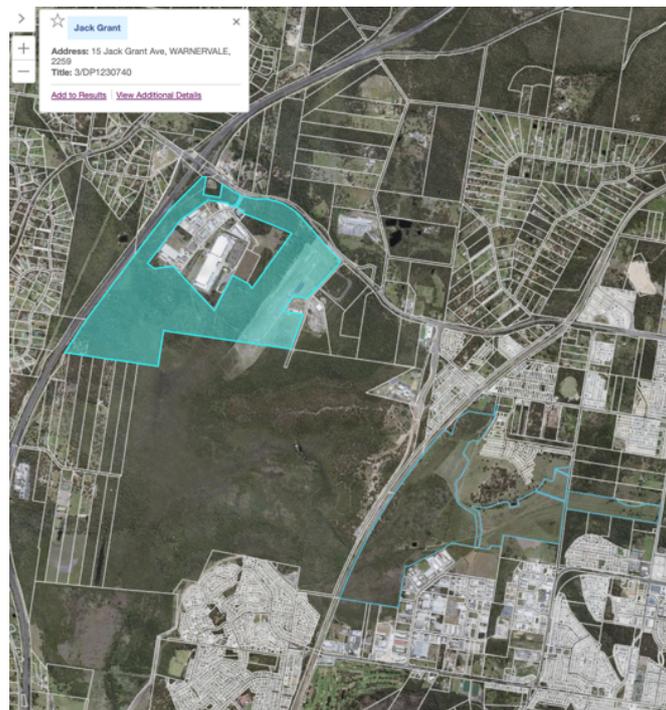


Fig 6 – Location of 15 Jake Grant Avenue, WARNERVALE identified as Lot 3 DP 1230740

- 4) Examining Council’s Online Mapping it is noted that Lot 2 DP 1234942, includes native vegetation of Porters Creek Wetland and part of Central Coast Airport.

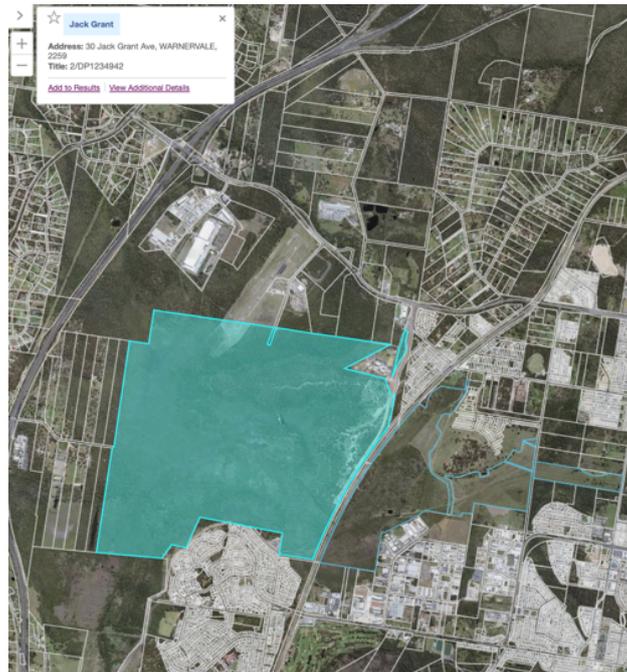


Fig 7 – Location of 30 Jake Grant Avenue, WARNERVALE identified as Lot 2 DP 1234942

In presenting the following recommendations the Community Representatives recognise that:

- The Warnervale Wetland on Lot 704 DP 1275094 is a modified landscape and has only recently been transferred to Council via dedication to allow the development of the adjacent residential release and requires extensive rehabilitation. Although the site is modified, the committee considers it is a significant site for protection and rehabilitation in order to maintain the health and biodiversity values of Porters Creek wetland. This is consistent with a “nature positive” approach as recommended by the Henry Review (Final Report – Independent Review of the Biodiversity conservation Act 2016, August 2023). As a result, the committee recommends its inclusion as part of the COSS in tandem with Porters Creek Wetland.
- We understand that Council has received development contributions for the rehabilitation of wetlands, we respectfully request that all funds collected for this purpose should be directed towards Porters Creek and Warnervale Wetlands.
- Vegetation contained on Lot 2 DP 1234942 contained in the Porters Creek Wetland within the glide path of the approved runway length of 970 metres of the Central Coast Airport will be required to be trimmed.
- To ensure there is a clear delineation between Porters Creek and Central Coast Airport that both Lot 3 of DP 1230740 and Lot 2 of DP 1234942 will need to be subdivided along the zoning boundary of the C2 Environmental Conservation and the E4 General Industrial.

In accordance with the above report the Community Representatives of Council's COSS Advisory Committee presents the following recommendation to Council.

A. *Porters Creek Wetland and Warnervale Wetland (also referred to as Warnervale Floodplain R0360) is selected as the preferred site to trial the expansion of COSS into the northern section of the Central Coast Council.*

B. *In selecting this site:*

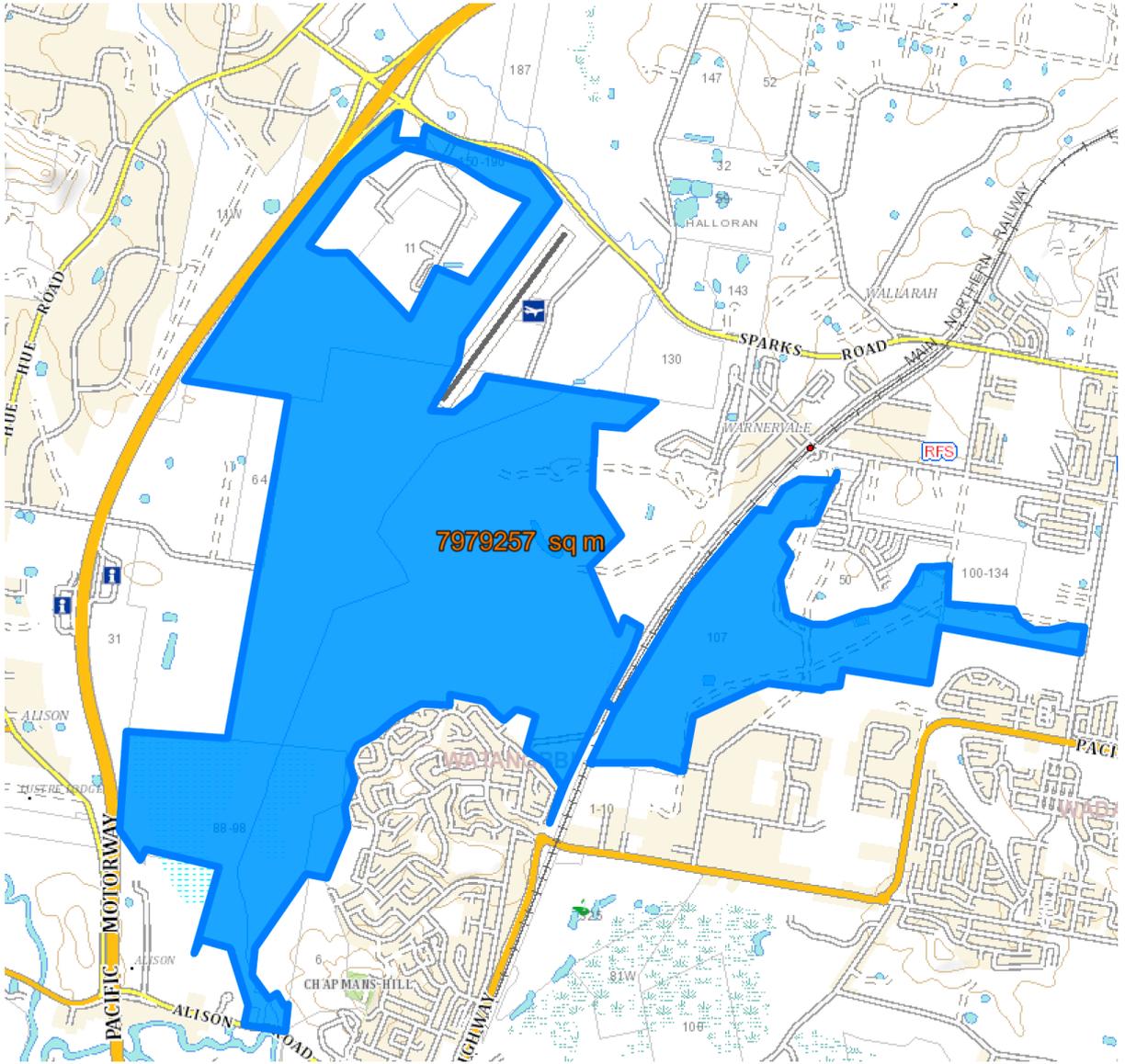
- a. *The area of the proposed COSS extension is illustrated on the accompanying map titled 'Porters Creek and Warnervale Wetland' consisting of lots (Council staff to insert lot and DP numbers)***
- b. *It is noted that the railway line and the proposed Wyong to Warnervale link road that runs parallel to the railway line physically separates the wetland into Porters Creek Wetland and the Warnervale Wetland. Notwithstanding the physical separation the Porters Creek Wetland and the Warnervale Wetland is the same ecological unit.***
- c. *The Porters Creek wetland is restricted and limited to the C2 Environmental Conservation zoned land and does not include any of the E4 General Industrial land associated with the Central Coast Airport or any industrial use.***

C. *That Council:*

- a. *Rezone the area of land currently zoned C3 Environmental Management on Lot 704/DP 1275094, to C2 Environmental Conservation.***
- b. *Subdivide 15 Jack Grant Ave, Warnervale, 2259 identified as Lot 3 DP 1230740 and 30 Jack Grant Avenue, Warnervale, 2259 identified as Lot 2 DP 1234942 along the zone boundary to separate the Central Coast Airport and industrial land from Porters Creek Wetland.***

D. *That Council staff:*

- a. *Bring a report back to the COSS Advisory Committee within 3 months on the implementation of the recommendation.***
- b. *Bring a report back to the COSS Advisory Committee within 9 months presenting a preliminary strategy on concepts and engagement of the community for the rehabilitation of the Warnervale Wetland.***



Porters Creek Wetland and Warnervale Wetland

Attachment A Updated on proposed trial of COSS in the former Wyong LGA (Action 149)

Item No: 2.3
Title: Update on proposed trial of COSS in the former
Wyong LGA (Action 149)
Department: Environment and Planning



6 June 2023 Coastal Open Space System

Reference: F2018/00099-002 - D15662372
Author: Larry Melican, Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity
Manager: Luke Sulkowski, Unit Manager Environmental Management
Executive: Alice Howe, Director Environment and Planning

Recommendation

- 1. That the information be noted***
- 2. That based on the discussions held between Council staff and Gary Chestnut tabled in this report, and presented at this meeting, that the COSS Committee provide feedback on the discussion points addressed in order to determine a suitable way to proceed***

Report purpose

To provide the COSS Committee with an update of the meetings held between Council Officers and Gary Chestnut about the potential to apply the COSS name to a reserve or reserves in the former Wyong LGA on a trial basis.

To request feedback from the COSS Committee on the parameters for assessing the outcomes of the trial, the data required to demonstrate the outcomes of the trial, the thresholds for achievement/non-achievement of each of the parameters, the management actions required to support the trial, the resources required to implement the management actions, the length of time required to assess the effectiveness of the trial and any information relevant to the trial.

Executive Summary

The COSS Committee has discussed the potential to expand the COSS into the former Wyong Local Government Area (LGA) at various times over the past two years. The COSS Committee has been reminded, on these occasions, that bushland reserves and other conservation lands do exist in the former Wyong LGA, they are just not branded as COSS or under any other moniker. On 2 March 2021 the COSS Committee considered Item 9 titled Findings of COSS Report undertaken by the Community Environment Network (CEN).

2.3 Update on proposed trial of COSS in the former Wyong LGA (Action 149) (contd)

In response to Action Item 149 from the COSS Meeting of 13 December 2021, meetings were held with Gary Chestnut as per Action Item 149 on 8 December 2022 and 27 April 2023.

Feedback is sought from the COSS Committee on the parameters for assessing the outcomes of the trial, the data required to demonstrate the outcomes of the trial, the thresholds for achievement/non-achievement of each of the parameters, the management actions required to support the trial, the resources required to implement the management actions, the length of time required to assess the effectiveness of the trial and any information relevant to a potential trial.

Background

The COSS Committee has discussed the potential to expand the COSS at various times over the past two years.

On 2 March 2021, during discussion on Item 9 titled Findings of COSS Report, Jackie Pearson from the CEN provided the COSS Committee with a presentation on the report titled "Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges and Opportunities of the Coastal Open Space System (COSS)" which had the following objectives:

- To explore the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities of the COSS
- To present a recommendation on the possibility of expanding the COSS into the former Wyong local government area.
- To present a recommendation on establishment of a Regional Park for the existing COSS.

The relevant action arising following the presentation was:

Action 127: Gary Chestnut to liaise with Luke Sulkowski to clarify the points of difference in the COSS report compared to the Biodiversity Strategy.

Action Item 127 of 2 March 2021 was updated on 9 June 2021 to reflect the actions taken:

A meeting was held, and the differences of interpretation were acknowledged. It was noted that the COSS report and Biodiversity Strategy were drafted concurrently. Gary gave an undertaking that he would review the recommendations in the COSS report with actions that are in the Biodiversity Strategy. Gary to present a combined report on Council's Biodiversity Strategy and future recommendations from the COSS report.

As part of the Action Log update in Agenda Item 1 at the COSS Meeting of 21 September 2021 a new action (no. 136) was recorded in the minutes. Action item 127 was marked as complete.

2.3 Update on proposed trial of COSS in the former Wyong LGA (Action 149) (contd)

Action 136: The Comparison undertaken by CEN of the COSS Report and Council's Biodiversity Strategy to be circulated to Committee Members. Unit Manager Environmental Management to investigate the option of an Extraordinary Meeting to discuss the report.

On 13 December 2021 the COSS Committee considered Item 8 titled 'Comparison between CEN COSS Report and Central Coast Council Biodiversity Strategy'. A decision was made to discuss the item at the ordinary meeting on 13 December 2021 rather than hold an extraordinary meeting for the item. Action 136 was marked as complete in the Action Log, with a new action (149) being recorded:

Action 149: Staff to arrange a further meeting with Gary Chestnut with a view to identifying some existing natural assets and other conservation reserves in the former Wyong LGA that may be considered for trial under the COSS branding and to identify likely tasks required in order to proceed with such a project.

This report is prepared in response to Action Item 149.

Current Status

In response to Action Item 149 from the COSS Meeting of 13 December 2021 meetings were held with Gary Chestnut as per Action Item 149 on 8 December 2022 and 27 April 2023. The Council representatives at the two meetings were Luke Sulkowski, Unit Manager, Environmental Management Unit, Larry Melican, Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity and Rochelle Lawson, Senior Ecologist.

Report

The two meetings held on 8 December 2022 and 27 April 2023 were open and constructive. The following summarises the points of discussion covered:

Key advantages of COSS brand

- The COSS brand offers a level of political or reputation protection, rather than legislative protection.
- The use of the COSS brand may be a simpler way for the community to understand and talk about environmental protection, rather than having detailed knowledge of environmental legislation and ecology.
- The former Gosford City Council received government grants to purchase land. Political kudos resulted from federal government grants, which were especially able to be applied for or lobbied for because of the named system.

2.3 Update on proposed trial of COSS in the former Wyong LGA (Action 149) (contd)

Potential risks associated with applying the COSS brand to other reserves

- The COSS brand does not provide legislative protection for the land, nor a legally binding commitment to manage the land for biodiversity. Community classification of land provides a level of legislative protection under the Local Government Act.
- The COSS branding may not be quite as familiar and well embraced in the north of the LGA. The pilot or broader reserve branding could change that, but the benefits would need to be better understood first.
- Stronger legislative protection of environmentally important land is available under the Biodiversity Conservation Act through establishing Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements or Conservation Agreements. Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements provide an in-perpetuity source of funds for management and include a legally binding commitment to manage the land for its biodiversity values.
- The name itself may present potential disadvantages as not all of the land is coastal, and it is not actually open space (in the sense of open parklands, or having the primary purpose of recreation), but is primarily intended to support native vegetation, biodiversity and habitats.
- If we want to draw attention to bushland reserves, the brand could be applied to areas with established recreational opportunities (e.g. formalised walking trails or lookout opportunities). This would potentially allow for promotion of the environment and compatible nature-based recreation. There are risks in advertising the location of environmental land which have no recreational infrastructure and are held almost exclusively for conservation purposes.
- Naming a reserve COSS may increase expectations that the site will be more intensively managed.

Strategic documents that refer to expansion of the COSS

- Community Strategic Plan - Objective F2: Promote greening and ensure the wellbeing of communities through the protection of local bushland, urban trees, tree canopies and expansion of the COSS.
- Central Coast Regional Plan 2041
 - Strategy 6.3: Local strategic planning should consider opportunities to strengthen the Coastal Open Space System by expanding its links and extending new corridors to balance growth in the north of the region and protect the network of natural areas across the region.

2.3 Update on proposed trial of COSS in the former Wyong LGA (Action 149) (contd)

- Planning Priority 4: Protect vegetated ridgelines and enhance the enjoyment of conservation areas for passive recreation activities compatible with the natural environment
 - Council can strengthen connections between the natural areas of the COSS and lesser vegetated areas within the urban environment by implementing the Central Coast Greener Places Strategy, including planting trees on private land or around schools, health facilities, parks and golf courses.
- Central Lakes Precinct
 - Planning Priority 4: Enhance the blue and green grid
 - Expanding the Central Coast's COSS into the Central Lakes District will secure biodiversity corridors and high environmental value areas to maintain viability.
 - Any development in new growth areas will need to maintain the integrity of the biodiversity corridors and not compromise the movement of wildlife between the mountains and the ocean. This will reinforce the landscape and visual setting for urban development.

Planning Priority 4 for the Central Lakes Precinct is about reserving high environmental value land for the on-going viability of biodiversity in the precinct, rather than applying the COSS name to existing natural reserves.

Expanding the COSS within the existing footprint in the former Gosford LGA

The COSS could be expanded by acquiring identified proposed COSS properties and by reviewing the existing COSS boundary to include properties that support native vegetation which have not been identified on the proposed COSS site list. Council staff are aware of a number of private properties that support bushland in the former Gosford LGA that are not identified for future voluntary acquisition and may have values consistent with the COSS.

Potential Trial location for COSS in the former Wyong LGA

- The transfer of 94.48 hectares of land in 'Precinct 7A' land at Warnervale to Council occurred on 21 October 2022 and was reported to the COSS Committee on 6 December 2022 (see Attachment 1).
- The COSS criteria would need to be applied to proposed reserve(s) for consistency, and the reserves would need to achieve a sufficiently high score that exceeds the 'cut off', which was the process used in the review of the COSS during 2006.

What are the potential indicators of success of a trial in the former Wyong LGA?

The following indicators were put forward for consideration (on the basis that we can demonstrate behavioural and other change resulting from the proposed 'COSS' branding)

2.3 Update on proposed trial of COSS in the former Wyong LGA (Action 149) (contd)

- Increased community understanding and value of the local natural environment?
- Increased community understanding of the threats to biodiversity and the actions that individuals and groups can take to reduce the threats?
- Active community engagement in environmental volunteering?
- A reduction and reversals of encroachments from neighbouring properties into public areas managed for nature conservation?
- A reduction in unauthorised activities on land managed for nature conservation – vegetation lopping/removal, firewood collection, bush rock collection, reptile and other animal poaching, track construction etc.?
- Increased populations numbers of key animal, plant and/or other populations of biota?
- Increased use of the land by the community for activities consistent with biodiversity conservation?

What data needs to be collected to determine the success of the trial?

- This very much depends on what the defined indicator(s) of success are.
- How long would data need to be collected for to be able to provide an evidence-based understanding of trends with biodiversity, as well as community and Council behaviours and activities?
- What resources are required to collect the required data?
- How do we ensure and preserve data integrity in regard to the trial (i.e. to produce an objective results to guide further direction)

Management actions to support the trial

- Budgets and staff time are both already limited, and a trial of applying the COSS name to other reserve(s) and the associated actions, which may include promotional activities, of the site require staff and budget resources.
- Management actions applied to the trial reserve would need to be consistent with those of similar COSS reserves.

Consultation

Meetings were held with Gary Chestnut as per Action Item 149 on 8 December 2022 and 27 April 2023. The Council representatives at the two meetings were Luke Sulkowski, Unit Manager, Environmental Management Unit, Larry Melican, Section Manager Natural Assets and Biodiversity and Rochelle Lawson, Senior Ecologist.

Feedback is sought from the COSS Committee on the parameters for assessing the outcomes of the trial, the data required to demonstrate the outcomes of the trial, the thresholds for achievement/non-achievement of each of the parameters, the management actions required to support the trial, the resources required to implement the management actions, the length of time required to assess the effectiveness of the trial and any information relevant to a potential trial.

2.3 Update on proposed trial of COSS in the former Wyong LGA (Action 149) (contd)

Financial Considerations

At its meeting held 19 October 2020, Council resolved the following:

1108/20 That any motions put before Council for the remainder of this term of Council that have financial implications require the Chief Executive Officer to provide a report on how those additional costs will be met.

The following statement is provided in response to this resolution of Council.

The recommendations of the report do not have a financial impact on Council's General Fund. Implementations of the outcomes of the discussion around a trial may have resource implications, which would need to be considered against Council's other priorities.

Link to Community Strategic Plan

Theme 3: Green

Choose Focus Area

G-F2: Promote greening and the wellbeing of communities through the protection of local bushland, urban trees, and expansion of the Coastal Open Space System (COSS).

Risk Management

The recommendations of this report are not considered to present a potential risk to Council.

Options

The recommendations present the opportunity for the COSS Committee to provide feedback and be active in defining a robust way of assessing the effectiveness of and the resourcing of a potential COSS naming trial in the former Wyong LGA. **Recommended.**

That only Council officers define the detail of the assessment and operation of a potential COSS naming trial in the former Wyong LGA. **Not recommended since the COSS Committee's involvement and support of the process is important for the trial.**

That a trial proceed without any assessment criteria and data collection to assess its outcomes. **Not recommended as there will be no way to undertake an evidence-based assessment of a potential trial.**