

Karuah Environmental Volunteers

2023 to 2026



The core objective of this plan, as supported through volunteer actions, is to preserve and maintain the land to meet the current and future needs of the local community in ways that are ecologically, socially and economically sustainable.



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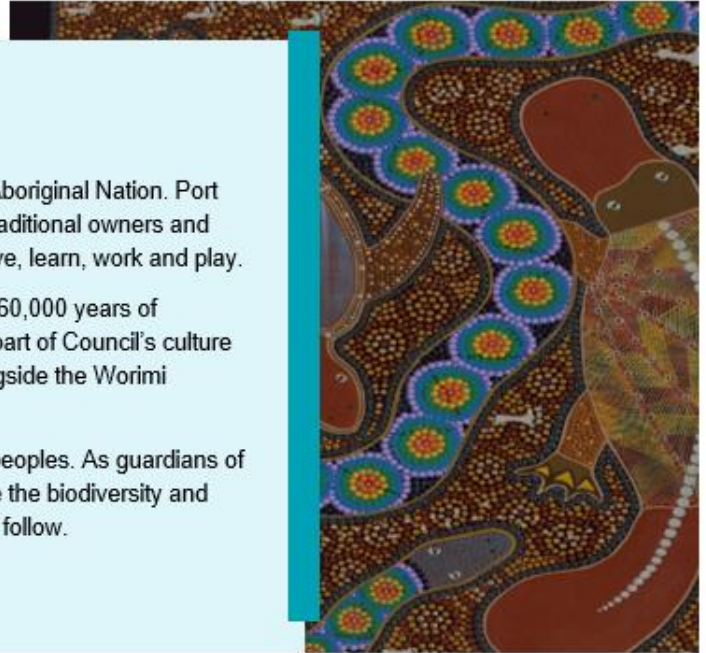
(GOO-JEE IK-KOO)

We welcome you to Port Stephens – part of the Worimi Aboriginal Nation. Port Stephens Council acknowledges the Worimi people as traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waterways on which we all live, learn, work and play.

We value and respect the Worimi people and the legacy 60,000 years of Aboriginal Nation traditions and culture brings with it. As part of Council's culture of acceptance, diversification and harmony we walk alongside the Worimi people on a journey of listening and learning.

Together we will strive to make this a better place for all peoples. As guardians of these lands, we ask that you tread lightly to help preserve the biodiversity and respect those who came before as well as those who will follow.

Artwork by Regan Lilley.



Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide an agreed framework and detailed action plan to support and guide volunteers to undertake works in the Karuah Wetlands, Memorial Park and Longworth Park.

Objectives of the Plan

For the Karuah Landcare and Port Stephens Council to work together to protect and enhance the character of these sites.

Site Details

Table 1: Karuah Wetlands site details

Site Address	31 Franklin Street, Karuah 2324
Lot / DP	Lot 195 DP 753196
Land zoning	C2 – Environmental Conservation
Owner	State of NSW (Crown)* (PSC Trustee)
Crown Reserve	91014 – 13 January 1978
Local Aboriginal Land Council	Karuah LALC
Reserve	Karuah Wetlands (See Action Plan Map)

Table 2: Memorial Park site details

Site Address	1 Memorial Dr, Karuah NSW 2324
Lot / DP	Lot 7309 DP 1156839 and Lot 7009 DP 1050943
Land zoning	RE1-Public Recreation
Owner	State of NSW (Crown)* (PSC Trustee)
Crown Reserve	85047 – 16 October 1964
Local Aboriginal Land Council	Karuah LALC
Reserve	Memorial Park

Table 3: Longworth park site details

Site Address	7 Barclay ST, Karuah NSW 2324
Lot / DP	Lot 7010 DP 1050943

Land zoning	RE1-Public Recreation
Owner	State of NSW (Crown)* (PSC Trustee)
Crown Reserve	85047 – 16 October 1964
Local Aboriginal Land Council	Worimi
Reserve	Longworth Park

Scope of Works

Volunteer works within the Karuah Wetlands, Memorial Park and Longworth Park must be consistent with this Agreed Action Plan. This plan encourages the activities listed in the detailed action plan below.

If a volunteer group would like to undertake a project or activity that is outside of this plan, authorisation will be required from Council. The Volunteers Support Officer (VSO) will assist groups to liaise with Council for any activities outside of this plan.

This plan does not provide permission to erect, place or repair any structures, nor remove any trees or native vegetation unless authorised under this plan.

Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with the Karuah Landcare group and internal Council departments in the preparation of this plan.

Safety Considerations

All activities should be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Council, including Work Health and Safety processes such as site induction and daily attendance records.

Site inductions are required prior to the commencement of any works at the subject site for volunteers. First Aid kits are to be on site during working bees.

All volunteers are to sign attendance sheets and maintain an understanding of applicable Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) and Specific Worksite Assessment Toolbox (SWAT) forms. These forms are provided to volunteers by the coordinator and are also available by request from Council's VSO.

Prior notification is to be given by the coordinator to all group members and VSO for any working bees including date, time and meeting location.

The table below lists the key safety hazard considerations for the sites and the controls that are to be put in place to mitigate these hazards.

Hazard considerations	General controls
Outdoor work	Fitness for work, appropriate PPE (as per 4.11 of volunteer WHS Handbook).
Working near water	Caution around drainage channels and waterways.
Working near access ways (vehicle and pedestrian)	Use of 'volunteers working' signage, yellow vests to be worn.
Pollution	Green waste to remain on site, only approved chemical use (if applicable).
Wildlife hazards	Awareness of surroundings, First Aid kit on site at all times.
Weather conditions	Reschedule works in unsuitable weather.
Antisocial behaviour	Maintain PSC Code of Conduct, report any dangerous behaviour to local police.
Fatigue	Rest breaks and hydration.

The following activities are prohibited: confined space entry, excavation, use of machinery/ unapproved power tools, tree removal, working at heights, burning and unapproved chemical handling.

In the event that an individual would like to use chemicals or power tools, approval from Council must be sought, followed by training and sign off by the VSO prior to use. It is up to the discretion of Council to determine if chemical or power tool use is appropriate for the activity proposed.

All hazards, incidents, near misses, injuries and unsafe practices should be reported immediately, and documented and reported in writing to Council within 24 hours.

For further information, consult the Work Health & Safety Handbook (PSC 2020).

Action Plan Map – Karuah wetlands

The below Action Plan Map is to be read in conjunction with the Detailed Action Plan below. There is a detailed PCT map in Appendix B.



Detailed Action Plan

The below detailed action plan is to read in accordance with the action plan map above.

Zone	Objective	Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline	Status
Work zone	Weed removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of identified weeds and management of grasses 	Karuah Landcare	Routine working bees Green waste to remain on site	Ongoing	Encouraged
	Fix boardwalk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace rotting/damaged boardwalk with more durable material 	Council and community	Works on Council land application Karuah Place Plan (action 1.9)	Ongoing	Pending funding and further investigation
<i>Applies to all sites within this plan.</i>	Monitoring and reporting to support group resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and record activities undertaken by group Reporting on areas weeded, areas planted, success rates, new and emerging weeds, fauna sightings, etc. 	Karuah Landcare	Reporting should be undertaken through councils online CRM tool for <u>Environmental Works Records</u> Regular working bee check-ins with VSO	Ongoing	Encouraged

Key site considerations – Karuah Wetlands

Environmental

Threatened species

Over the last 20 years, there have been 10 records of the Slaty Red Gum (*Eucalyptus glaucina*) within 200 metres of the Reserve. Over the last 20 years, there has been 1 sighting of the Eastern Cave Bat (*Vespadelus troughtoni*) within 200 metres of the site (NSW DPIE 2023).

Slaty Red Gum (*Eucalyptus glaucina*) is listed as Vulnerable under NSW and Federal legislation. The Eastern Cave Bat (*Vespadelus troughtoni*) is listed as Vulnerable under NSW legislation.

The site is mapped as 'Marginal' Koala habitat under the Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM) (PSC 2002) which falls under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021.

Endangered Ecological Communities (EEC) / Biodiversity value

An Endangered Ecological Community is present, identified by an independent contractor as 'Swamp Oak swamp forest of the coastal lowlands of the NSW North Coast Bioregion'.

This vegetation community is rare in New South Wales as it has been largely cleared for urban development. It is highly susceptible to invasion of weeds due to animal and human encroachment resulting from walking tracks and roads, fragmentation and degradation, which threaten the health of the community (NSW DPIE 2022).

This vegetation is listed as endangered under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, and is federally protected.

Only permitted works under this plan may be undertaken within this vegetation type because it is highly sensitive.

Other Plant Community Types present on the site include:

- 'Broad-leaved Paperbark - Swamp Mahogany - Swamp Oak - Saw Sedge swamp forest of the Central Coast and Lower North Coast', classed as Coastal Floodplain Wetlands. There is an associated Threatened Ecological Community (TEC).

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NOTE

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- 'Grey Mangrove low closed forest of the NSW North Coast; Sydney Basin', classed as Mangrove Swamps. There is no associated TEC.

Priority weeds

Karuah Wetlands is managed by the PSC Environmental Operations team in accordance with the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Identified priority weeds within and directly adjoining this site include; African Olive and Paterson's Curse. Asparagus Weed, Salvinia and Giant Parramatta Grass has also been identified in proximity to the site.

Additional weeds on site managed by volunteer activities include Tradescantia, Asparagus species and alien grass species.

A specific licence is required under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, and applies to nominated individuals carrying out activities involving threatened ecological communities or areas of outstanding biodiversity value in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's scientific licensing policy. **Please check with VSO to ensure a license has been obtained prior to the commencement of works.**

Property management

Native Title Act (1993) applies to the site however for the purposes of some volunteer activities, subdivision 24LA (2)(b) low impact future acts may be employed. Exclusions under the Act includes the clearing of introduced plant species, regeneration and environmental protection activities. Any other activities outside of these exclusion will require detailed assessment. Please contact the Volunteers Support Officer if you require further information.

Aboriginal Land Claim/s – YES

Claim/s currently remain undetermined. In the event that the land claim is determined in the Local Aboriginal Land Council's favour, volunteers will be notified that all access and approvals to undertake maintenance on the site are to cease immediately.

Native Title Claims – NO

No current claims over this site. This does not negate the need for assessment of actions against Native Title Act requirements.

Heritage

The Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) (DPIE 2022) lists no recorded Aboriginal sites or Aboriginal places in proximity to the subject site. The site does not contain state or locally listed heritage items.

Unexpected Finds - if Aboriginal heritage items are uncovered during the works, all works in the vicinity of the find must cease and the Volunteers Support Officer must be contacted.

Bushfire

Part of the reserve falls within a Category 1 vegetation and vegetation buffer and is identified as Bushfire Prone Land in the NSW ePlanning Spatial Viewer. The Lower Hunter Bush Fire Risk Management Plan (BFMC 2009) identifies the local area as linked to a nearby human-residential asset.

There are no asset protection zones (APZ) or strategic fire advantage zone (SFAZ) impacting the subject site.

Care should be taken to avoid the creation of bushfire hazards directly adjoining residential allotments. This action plan does not provide guaranteed commitment to future management as required by Planning for Bushfire Protection (PBP) (2019).

Waterways and soil

The site adjoins an identified Wetland and is within the buffer zone under the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013. The nearby Coastal Wetland is listed under NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021 and would require a Development Application for any works in this area. No works are permitted outside of the subject site.

Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS) are not likely to be present on the Karuah Wetlands site but is classified as within 500m of adjacent ASS land. Volunteers are directed to stop digging and fill any holes that indicate ASS presence (indicated by the scent of sulphuric acid/rotten eggs).

Infrastructure

Infrastructure within the reserve is owned and managed by Council. Council is responsible for erecting and repairing any structures within the reserve. No structures are to be erected by the group. The VSO is to consult with the Parks Supervisor and the Community Assets Officers on any infrastructure work requested on the land.

There are a number of assets present at the site including a boardwalk and plant ID signage. Please note that NBN cables, Telstra network route cables and other sewer mains have been identified at the south-eastern end of the site. Land management activities should not negatively impact these. "Before You Dig" should be consulted prior to any ground breaking activities and advice sought from Council if any assets are present.

*State of NSW (Crown) land may require additional permits and approvals as Port Stephens Council is not the land owner. Native Title Act 1993 applies to the land however under Subdivision L, clearing of noxious or introduced plant species, regeneration and environmental protection activities are exclusions under the Act. Any activities proposed outside of these exclusions will require assessment under the Act.

Action Plan Map – Memorial Park



Detailed Action Plan

The below detailed action plan is to read in accordance with the action plan map above.

Zone	Objective	Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline	Status
Work zones	Weed removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of weeds across both sites (north and south) 	Karuah Landcare	Routine working bees Green waste to remain onsite	Ongoing	Encouraged
	Planting maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watering and mulching of northern planting area 	Karuah Landcare	Routine working bees Green waste to remain onsite	Ongoing	Encouraged

Key site considerations – Memorial Park

Environmental

Threatened species

Over the last 20 years, there have been 0 recordings of any threatened species in proximity to the site.

The site is mapped as 'Mainly Cleared' Koala habitat under the Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM) (PSC 2002) which falls under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021.

Endangered Ecological Communities (EEC) / Biodiversity value

There is no identified Plant Community Type as this site is cleared open space parkland.

Priority weeds

Identified priority weeds at this site include African Olive. This reserve is managed by the PSC environmental operations team in accordance with the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Asparagus Weed has also been identified in proximity to the site.

Property management

Native Title Act (1993) applies to the site however for the purposes of some volunteer activities, subdivision 24LA (2)(b) low impact future acts may be employed. Exclusions under the Act includes the clearing of introduced plant species, regeneration and environmental protection activities. Any other activities outside of these exclusion will require detailed assessment. Please contact the Volunteers Support Officer if you require further information.

Aboriginal Land Claim/s – NO

No registered Land Claims over site. Assessment and advice under the Native Title or ALRA Acts is in addition to and does not negate the need for compliance with Aboriginal Cultural Heritage requirements under the NPWS Act.

Native Title Claims – NO

No current claims over this site. This does not negate the need for assessment of actions against Native Title Act requirements.

Heritage & Culture

The Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) lists 0 recorded Aboriginal sites or Aboriginal places in proximity to the subject site.

There are no recorded European heritage items under the State Heritage Inventory (SHI, 2023).

Under the Port Stephens Local Environment Plan 2013 the Karuah Town War Memorial is listed as local heritage significance within the site.

Bushfire

The site is not identified as Bush Fire Prone Land in the NSW ePlanning Spatial Viewer. This action plan does not provide guaranteed commitment to future management as required by Planning for Bushfire Protection (PBP) (2019).

Waterways and soil

The site falls within the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 Wetlands 40 m buffer zone. Care should be taken to avoid any runoff of chemicals or green waste produced during working bees.

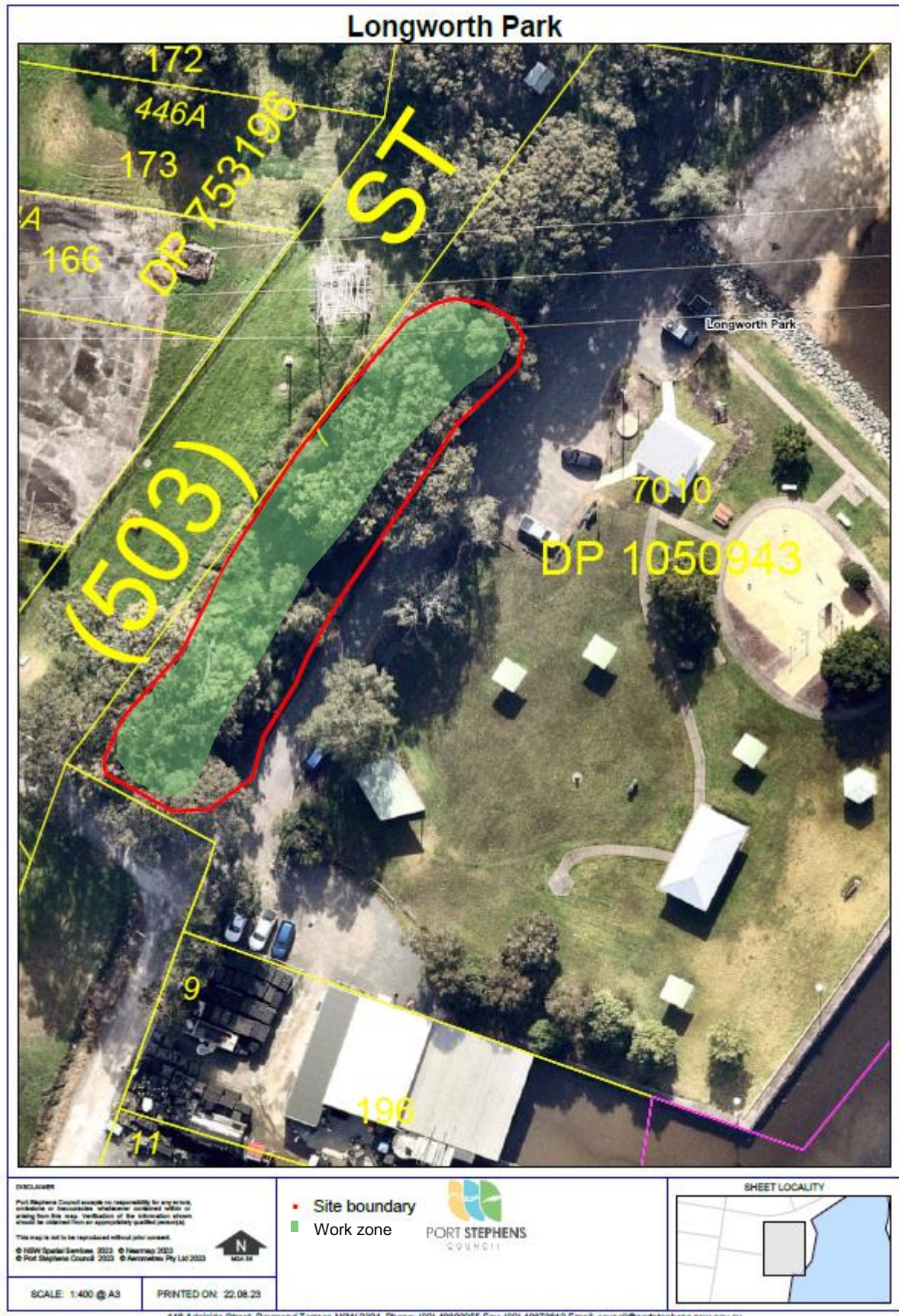
Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS) are not likely to be present on the Karuah Wetlands site but is classified as within 500m of adjacent ASS land. Volunteers are directed to stop digging and fill any holes that indicate ASS presence (indicated by scent of sulphuric acid/rotten eggs).

Infrastructure

There are a number of assets present at the site such as the playground, toilet block, carparks and park benches that have a recreational use in the area. Please note that there has been Telstra network routes identified at the site. Land management activities should not negatively impact these. "Before You Dig" should be consulted prior to any ground breaking activities and advice sought from Council if any assets are present.

*State of NSW (Crown) land may require additional permits and approvals as Port Stephens Council is not the land owner. Native Title Act 1993 applies to the land however under Subdivision L, clearing of noxious or introduced plant species, regeneration and environmental protection activities are exclusions under the Act. Any activities proposed outside of these exclusions will require assessment under the Act.

Action Plan Map – Longworth Park



Detailed Action Plan

The below detailed action plan is to read in accordance with the action plan map above.

Zone	Objective	Actions	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline	Status
Work zone	Remediation of overgrown site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of weeds Installation of native plant species Maintenance watering and weeding of plantings 	Karuah Landcare	Routine working bees Green waste to remain onsite	Ongoing	Encouraged
	Weed removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going weed removal and maintenance of site as required 	Karuah Landcare	Routine working bees Green waste to remain onsite	Ongoing	Encouraged
	Maintain accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure works do not compromise the accessibility of park and car park as a space for community events 	Karuah Landcare Advice from Council	Routine working bees Consultation with Council	Ongoing	Encouraged

Key site considerations – Longworth Park

Environmental

Threatened species Over the last 20 years, there have been 0 recordings of any threatened species in proximity to the site.

The site is mapped as 'Mainly Cleared' Koala habitat under the Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM) (PSC 2002) which falls under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021.

Endangered Ecological Communities (EEC) / Biodiversity value There is no identified Plant Community Type as the surrounding area is cleared open space and parklands.

Priority weeds Identified priority weeds at this site include African Olive and Asparagus Weed. This reserve is managed by the PSC environmental operations team in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 2015.

Moth vine has also been identified at the site.

Property management

Native Title Act (1993) applies to the site however for the purposes of some volunteer activities, subdivision 24LA (2)(b) low impact future acts may be employed. Exclusions under the Act includes the clearing of introduced plant species, regeneration and environmental protection activities. Any other activities outside of these exclusion will require detailed assessment. Please contact the Volunteers Support Officer if you require further information.

Aboriginal Land Claim/s – NO

No registered Land Claims over site. Assessment and advice under the Native Title or ALRA Acts is in addition to and does not negate the need for compliance with Aboriginal Cultural Heritage requirements under the NPWS Act.

Native Title Claims – NO

No current claims over this site. This does not negate the need for assessment of actions against Native Title Act requirements.

Heritage

The Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) lists 0 recorded Aboriginal sites or Aboriginal places in proximity to the subject site.

There are no recorded European heritage items under the State Heritage Inventory (SHI, 2023) or the Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan.

Bushfire

The site is not identified as Bush Fire Prone Land. This action plan does not provide guaranteed commitment to future management as required by Planning for Bushfire Protection (PBP) (2019).

Waterways and soil

A part of the site falls within the 40 m buffer of the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Park General Use Zone.

Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS) are not likely to be present on the Longworth Park site as it is classified as within 500m of adjacent ASS land. Volunteers are directed to stop digging and fill any holes that indicate ASS presence (indicated by the scent of sulphuric acid/rotten eggs).

Infrastructure

There are a number of assets present at the site such as the playground, toilet block, carparks, Karuah wharf swimming area, BBQ facilities and park benches that have a recreational use in the area. Please note that underground LV cables and a private sewer main have been identified in proximity to the site. Land management activities should not negatively impact these. “[Before You Dig](#)” should be consulted prior to any ground breaking activities and advice sought from Council if any assets are present.

*State of NSW (Crown) land may require additional permits and approvals as Port Stephens Council is not the land owner. Native Title Act 1993 applies to the land however under Subdivision L, clearing of noxious or introduced plant species, regeneration and environmental protection activities are exclusions under the Act. Any activities proposed outside of these exclusions will require assessment under the Act.

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1	17 August 2023	Volunteers Support Officer / Kelly Meredith	Created document.
2	27 October 2023	Strategy and Environment Section Manager	Document reviewed internally. Volunteer feedback to be requested.
3	6 November 2023	Volunteers Support Officer / Karuah Landcare coordinator	Final consultation with group and adoption.

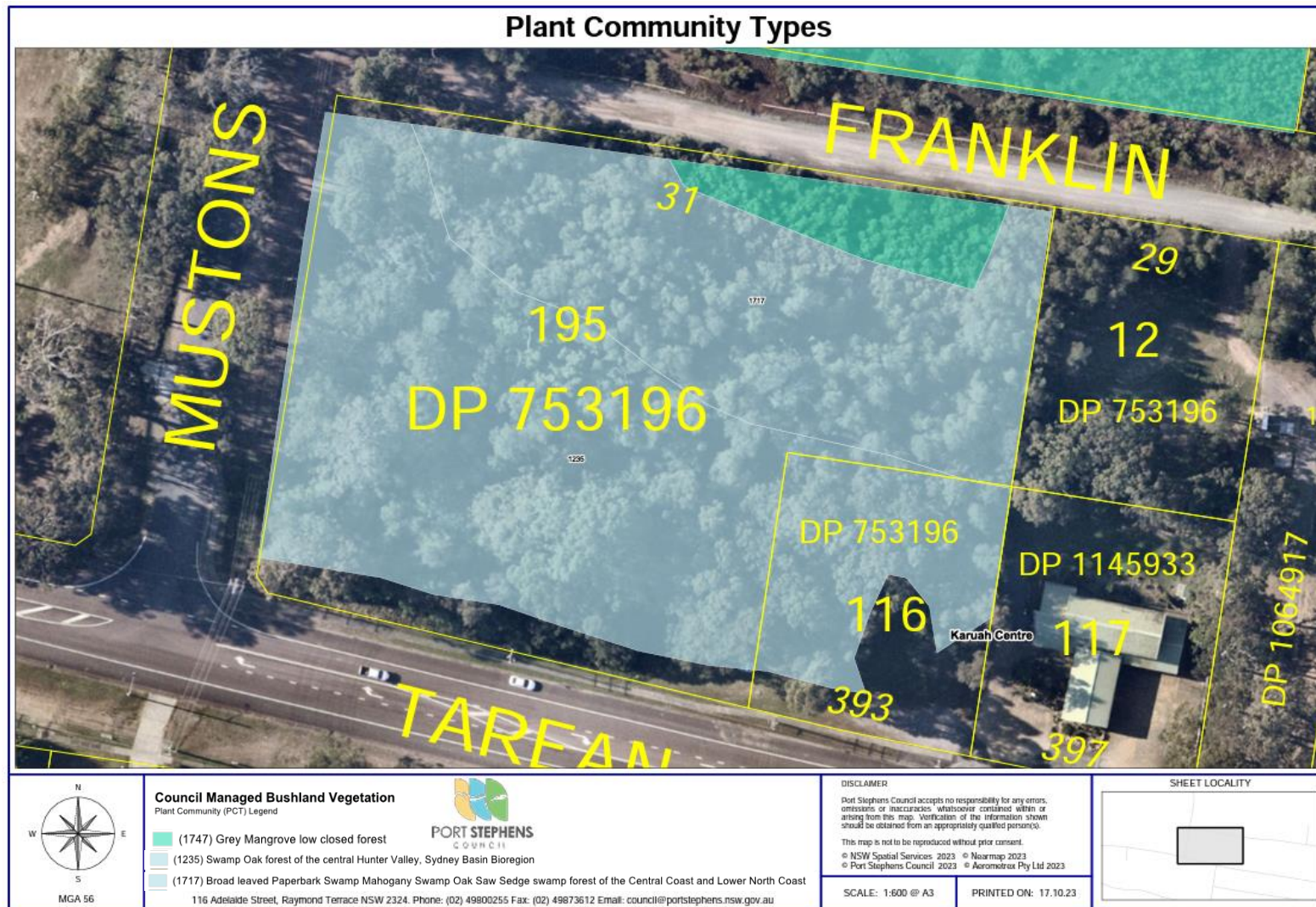
Appendix A – Species list

Any plantings should be in consideration of the relevant Plant Community Type (PCT) at the site and species that are local to the area. Genetic provenance refers to the use of locally sourced and grown seedlings, preferred for any plantings.

The below species list is relevant to the identified PCT.

- *Casuarina glauca*
- *Melaleuca quinquenervia*
- *Eucalyptus tereticornis*
- *Eucalyptus robusta*
- *Livistona australis*
- *Goodenia ovata*
- *Hibiscus diversifolius*
- *Melaleuca ericifolia*
- *Melaleuca styphelioides*
- *Parsonia straminea*
- *Melaleuca linariifolia*
- *Glochidion ferdinandi*
- *Baumea juncea*
- *Enydra fluctuans*
- *Fimbristylis ferruginea*
- *Gahnia clarkei*
- *Ischaemum austral*
- *Juncus kraussii*
- *Entolasia marginate*
- *Imperata cylindrical*
- *Lomandra longifolia*
- *Dianella caerulea*

Appendix B – Plant Community Type (PCT) map





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