ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

The above meeting will be held in the Council Administration Building
Cnr Coff and Castle Streets, Coffs Harbour on:

THURSDAY, 8 JUNE 2017

The meeting commences at 5.00pm and your attendance is requested.

AGENDA

1. Opening of Ordinary Meeting
2. Acknowledgment of Country
3. Disclosure of Interest
4. Apologies
5. Public Addresses / Public Forum
6. Mayoral Minute
7. Mayoral Actions under Delegated Authority
8. Confirmation of Minutes
9. Rescission Motion
10. Notices of Motion - General
11. General Manager's Reports
12. Notices of Motion – Business Services
13. Directorate Reports – Business Services
14. Notices of Motion – Sustainable Communities
15. Directorate Reports – Sustainable Communities
16. Notices of Motion – Sustainable Infrastructure
17. Directorate Reports – Sustainable Infrastructure
18. Trust Reports
19. Requests for Leave of Absence
20. Questions On Notice
21. Matters of an Urgent Nature
22. Consideration of Confidential Items (if any)

Steve McGrath
General Manager
Order of Business

DIRECTORATE REPORTS - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

SC17/29 DRAFT COFFS HARBOUR FLYING-FOX CAMPS STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this report is to have Council endorse the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan (Attachment 1) for exhibition.

The draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan will assist Council to strategically manage the three permanent camps on Council managed land and provide direction for temporary camps that may develop.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. **Adopt in principle the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan (Attachment 1) and place it on exhibition for a period of 28 days seeking feedback to enable Council’s final determination on this matter.**

2. **Note that a further report will be brought back to Council for consideration following the public exhibition of the draft Plan.**

REPORT

Description of Item:

The development of the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan was reported to Council on 8 December 2016. At that meeting, it was resolved that Council:

1. **Note the preparation of a Local Government Area wide draft Strategic Flying-fox Camp Management Plan.**

2. **Note that a community steering committee will be established consistent with the Office of Environment and Heritage Flying-Fox Camp Management Plan Template 2016.**

3. **Note that a further report will be brought back to Council for consideration upon completion of the draft Strategic Flying-fox Camp Management Plan, prior to its public exhibition.**

This report is in accordance with the resolution.

The Coffs Harbour Local Government Area (LGA) is home to three permanent flying-fox camps, Woolgoolga Lake Camp (listed as a nationally important flying-fox camp), Coffs Creek Camp, and Barcoo Court Camp at Toormina (also listed as a nationally important flying-fox camp), with temporary camps establishing in other areas from time to time.

Flying-foxes play an important role in pollination and seed dispersal for many plants and are protected in NSW under the **National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act)** and, in the case of
the grey-headed flying-fox, under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act) and the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. However, loss of foraging and roosting habitat has meant that flying-foxes increasingly occur in camps in urban centres and can create conflict with community with common issues relating to health, noise, and odour.

Council received a grant from the State Government to prepare the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan to allow Council to strategically manage all three permanent camps. The grant was matched with funds from the Environmental Levy and allows Council to employ a consistent approach that recognises ecological values while minimising community impacts.

The plan complies with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Flying-Fox Management Policy 2015 and has used the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Flying-Fox Camp Management Plan Template 2016 as a basis.

The plan includes both long-term and short-term strategies for the management of flying-fox camps. Actions include:

- establishing a complaints tracking system within Council;
- ongoing community education and communication with neighbouring residents prior to, during and following implementation of management actions;
- education regarding possible property modifications;
- investigation of service subsidies;
- identification, rehabilitation and protection of flying-fox habitat;
- ongoing maintenance of existing buffers at Coffs Creek and Woolgoolga Lake;
- the production of a detailed Vegetation Management Plan for Barcoo Court; and
- subsequent management of vegetation within the Council easement on the northern side of Barcoo Court.

Issues:

Flying-fox camps can raise concerns about possible health risks for community members. Concerns include flying-fox infections, noise, odour and the impact of flying-fox droppings on houses, cars and washing.

Human infections with viruses borne by flying-foxes are very rare. While Australian bats have been found to carry two viruses, Lyssavirus and Hendra, Lyssavirus is not spread through flying-fox urine or droppings, and can only be spread through the bite or scratch of a flying-fox. In regards to the Hendra virus there is no evidence that people can catch Hendra directly from flying-foxes, the virus must be transmitted from infected horses.

Regardless, high levels of community concern can occur and care has been taken throughout the development of the plan to listen to community concerns and respond appropriately.

Options:

1. **Support the recommendation** in this report and adopt the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan for the purpose of exhibition; or
2. **Amend the recommendation** in this report and/or elements of the plan; or
3. **Reject the recommendation**.

This report recommends Option 1.
Sustainability Assessment:

- **Environment**

  Flying-foxes play an important role in pollination and seed dispersal for many plants which ensures the survival of our native forests. They do this over much larger distances than birds or insects and establish permanent and semi-permanent camps near food sources and for birthing. Campsites where young are born can become very important to flying-foxes with some camp-sites in NSW having recorded use for over a century. The draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan will assist council to maintain these environmental values.

- **Social**

  Residents living nearby flying-fox camps can be affected by noise and odour which reduces social amenity. The draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan discusses these issues and includes actions to reduce conflict through actions relating to education and maintenance of buffer and camp areas.

- **Civic Leadership**

  Local Government has an essential role to play in managing and planning for biodiversity and amenity on both public and private land. The LGA wide draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan will assist Council to deliver on the following objectives of the Coffs Harbour 2030 Community Strategic Plan:

  - LC3 - We have strong civic leadership and governance
  - LE1 – We share our skills and knowledge to care for our environment
  - LE3 - Our natural environment and wildlife are conserved for future generations
  - PL 2 - Our public spaces are enjoyed by all our people

- **Economic – Broader Economic Implications**

  The draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan, if adopted by Council, will assist the management of resources by ensuring a consistent approach for both permanent and temporary camps.

- **Economic - Delivery Program/Operational Plan Implications**

  The draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan, if adopted by Council, will streamline the management of the existing camps and provides guidance in the day to day management of council assets.

**Risk Analysis:**

Inappropriate management of flying-fox camps may increase the prevalence of disease within flying-fox populations, and consequently the risk of transfer to humans. The draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan uses a risk assessment approach to determining the appropriate level of management and the associated mitigation measures required.

It is possible that the exhibition process may be an outlet for community concern regarding nearby flying-fox camps. Implementation of the draft plan involves an educational component which will need to be an ongoing process.
Consultation:

Considerable effort has been made to engage with the community regarding the development of the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan to ensure that Council understands the issues directly and indirectly affecting the community.

The types of engagement that have been undertaken in the development of this plan include:

- promotion of contact details of responsible officers;
- telephone conversations to record issues and complaints;
- face-to-face meetings and telephone calls with adjacent residents and complainants;
- media (print and social media);
- brochures and other educational material;
- website pages and links;
- direct contact with adjacent residents and stakeholders via letter;
- a public meeting / workshop; and
- feedback form available at the public meeting / workshop.

Invitations to attend the workshop were sent to residents living in streets surrounding each camp (generally within 500m of the Coffs Creek and Barcoo Court Camps, and up to 1km from the Woolgoolga Camp). Special interest groups such as the Coffs Harbour Chamber of Commerce, the Northern Beaches Residents Association, National Parks Association, and Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service (WIRES) were also invited. This workshop formed the community steering committee as noted by Council at the meeting of 8 December 2016.

Residents and interest groups who attended the workshop will also be contacted to inform them of the exhibition of the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan.

Related Policy, Precedents and / or Statutory Requirements:

Management of flying-foxes requires recognition that, as native fauna, they are protected in NSW under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act) and, in the case of the grey-headed flying-fox, under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act) and the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

A license under the TSC Act is generally required to undertake work, such as vegetation pruning or removal, in an area used by flying-foxes. The development of the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan will streamline the licensing of flying-fox camp management actions with approvals issued for five years. This avoids land managers having to repeatedly seek approval from the State Government for ongoing camp management actions.

Implementation Date / Priority:

Once the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan has completed the proposed exhibition period, a report will be provided for Council summarising any submissions received. Once this report has been considered the plan can be adopted and implemented.

Conclusion:

This report has provided Council with an overview of the draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan (Attachment 1) and seeks Council’s approval to place it on exhibition.

Management of flying-fox camps is complex, and adaptive management informed by ongoing community engagement and education will be needed over the long term. The draft Coffs Harbour Flying-Fox Camps Strategic Management Plan will allow Council to strategically manage the three permanent camps and provide direction for temporary camps.