

Environment Committee	
Mtg Date: 19.02.19	OAR: YES
<b>Authorisation:</b> Bryce Hines	

TS: TS

14 December 2018

## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: ACTING SPORTS RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGER

FROM: PLANNING OFFICER (BIODIVERSITY)

RE: MASTERPLAN FOR IPSWICH NATURE CENTRE

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

This is a report by the Planning Officer (Biodiversity) dated 14 December 2018 concerning creation and adoption of a new master plan for the Queens Park Nature Centre.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Ipswich Nature Centre has not had any major updates in over a decade. With the City's continued growth in population and tourism numbers, it is timely for Council to consider the next stage in the Nature Centres lifecycle. As a result Council has engaged a team of consultants to propose and develop a master plan for the future of the site.

The Ipswich Nature Centre and Discovery Hub Masterplan creates a vision and documents a series of recommendations and prioritisation for future embellishment of the site.

### **CONTEXT:**

The current iteration of the Ipswich Nature Centre (the nature centre) first opened in 1999 and has grown to become the city's most popular tourist attraction. The nature centre now averages 300,000 visitors a year and is the oldest and only free zoo in south-east Queensland.

Advance Ipswich identified the community's close connection to Ipswich's heritage, bushlands and rural identity. The nature centre is an ideal opportunity to enhance on these themes, creating a 'gateway' to the City's natural heritage, Aboriginal cultural heritage, bushland and iconic species.

## **VISION AND OBJECTIVES:**

The Ipswich Nature Centre and Discovery Hub Masterplan identifies the following visions and objectives:

- Provide an up-close, personal and educational interaction with Australian Wildlife and Ipswich's Iconic Species
- Enhance the overall visitor experience of the Ipswich Nature Centre through the use of smart technology and well-designed enclosures to communicate the environmental and cultural heritage values of Ipswich
- Act as a gateway to the conservation estates and reserves across the City as key habitat areas for native flora and fauna
- Promote the Ipswich Nature Centre as a premier tourist destination in Queensland

## **CORPORATE OBJECTIVES:**

Advance Ipswich recognises that the conservation of the natural environment is a key component in creating a sustainable and liveable community. The following responses identify how the Ipswich Nature Centre rejuvenation project aligns with and responds to Advance Ipswich:

Goal 1		
Strategy 3	Develop the Ipswich City Centre as the regional capital of the Western Corridor of SEQ and as an important regional employment centre.	
Item 3.6	<b>Key Action</b> Ensure the Ipswich City Centre is well served with appropriate infrastructure, including digital infrastructure, transport, parklands and public spaces	<b>Response to Key Action</b> <i>The Ipswich Nature Centre is the City's most visited tourist attraction. Management and upgrading of the facility ensures that the Centre, and associated parkland (Queens Park), services and responds to the growing needs of community within the context of the City Centre's open space requirements.</i>
Goal 4		
Strategy 6	Improve environmental awareness, education and compliance.	
Item 6.1	<b>Key Action</b> Environmental education and awareness programs are planned and promoted to the community, land owners and other key stakeholders.	<b>Response to Key Action</b> <i>As an interface and gateway with the City's conservation areas for key flora and fauna species, the upgraded Ipswich Nature Centre will provide increased education, promotion and awareness of the City's precious natural environment and rich natural heritage and Aboriginal cultural heritage.</i>

### **KEY EMBELISHMENTS:**

The masterplan proposes a number of embellishments of varying size and scale to enhance the visitor experience and meet the visions and objectives for the site. Several embellishments have been identified as being signature projects that are likely to have a major impact on the overall site. These include:

- Creation of a new and more user friendly entrance
- Creation of an aquatic centre and platypus enclosure
- Creation of a koala enclosure
- Enhance nocturnal experience

Attachment A details these projects and includes a staged implementation plan.

### **BUDGET: ESTIMATES OF PROBABLE COSTS:**

Cost estimates have been provided by the consultant team and are included in detail within the masterplan. A summary of cost estimates are as follows:

Description of Works	Value of Works	Contingency	Total
		20%	
Stage 1	\$2,794,588.80	\$558,918	\$3,353,506.56
Stage 2	\$888,816	\$177,763	\$1,066,579.20
Stage 3	\$3,234,032	\$646,806	\$3,880,838.40
Stage 4	\$1,082,608	\$216,522	\$1,299,129.60
Stage 5	\$253,360	\$50,672	\$304,032
Total Cost Estimate			\$9,904,085.76

As detailed in Attachment B, forward portfolio planning has identified an optimal delivery plan for the upgrade of the facility. However, actual sequencing of detail design and construction will be done through future budget builds.

### **CONSULTATION:**



This masterplan has been completed with internal and external consultation with all relevant stakeholders including:

- City Maintenance Staff
- Environmental Education Officer
- Native Title and Cultural Heritage Officer
- Transport Planning
- Built heritage consultants
- Zoo planners and designers
- Biodiversity staff
- Open Space Planning and Design

## **CONCLUSION:**

The Ipswich Nature Centre & Discovery Hub Masterplan sets a vision and clear staged implementation plan for updating the Nature Centre into a modern zoo. If adopted and implemented, the Nature Centre will be transformed into a Queensland landmark with greater representation of Ipswich's Natural and Cultural Heritage. Importantly, the changes will create an exciting and improved visitor experience for the residents of Ipswich and visitors from the entire south-east Queensland catchment. Importantly, the masterplan is designed to preserve the heritage of viewing animals for free in Queens Park.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Name of Attachment	Attachment
Ipswich Nature Centre & Discovery Hub Masterplan	 ATTACHMENT A
Ipswich Nature Centre: 7 Year Delivery Program	 ATTACHMENT B

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Amended at Enviro Ctee No. 2019(02) of 19 February 2019

That the Interim Administrator of Ipswich City Council resolve:

- That consideration of the Ipswich Nature Centre Masterplan as detailed in Attachment A to the report by the Planning Officer (Biodiversity) dated 14 December 2018 be deferred and a report prepared and submitted to a future meeting of the Environment Committee outlining a strategy and supporting business case for reinvigoration of the Ipswich Nature Centre.
- A. ~~That the Ipswich Nature Centre and Discovery Hub Masterplan, as shown in Attachment A to the report by the Planning Officer (Biodiversity) dated 14 December 2018, be adopted.~~
- B. ~~That the Strategy Team work with the Tourism Branch to investigate and apply for any relevant grant funding as appropriate.~~
- C. ~~That the Planning Officer (Biodiversity) work with the Supervisor (Open Space Queens Park) and the Principal Officer (Natural Resources) to draft CapEx Project Identification Forms based on the staged implantation plan contained within section 5 of Attachment A to the report by the Planning Officer (Biodiversity) dated 14 December 2018.~~

Tim Shields

**PLANNING OFFICER (BIODIVERSITY)**

I concur with the recommendation/s contained in this report.

Kaye Cavanagh

**ACTING SPORT RECREATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGER**

I concur with the recommendation/s contained in this report.

Bryce Hines

**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (WORKS, PARKS AND RECREATION)**