

Point Cartwright Reserve and La Balsa Park Draft Master Plan

Project summary

Point Cartwright Reserve and La Balsa Park are much loved and used areas with significant environmental, recreational, and cultural heritage values.

People use the reserve and park for a variety of recreational experiences including nature trails, the beach, pet walking, boating, cycling, paragliding, picnics, playgrounds, snorkelling, surfing, fishing, diving, and enjoying the views and open space.

Considering that more than 500,000 people are expected to call the Sunshine Coast home by 2041, and that up to 4,500 people may visit the reserve and park each day, a long-term plan is needed to guide the sustainability and liveability of the area.

The plan must enhance the protection and management of the site and balance the needs of all user groups.

Developed with extensive feedback from our community, along with specialist research, the 2023 Point Cartwright Reserve and La Balsa Park Draft Master Plan is a vision for the future (from now until year 2041).

While construction is not currently funded, community feedback on the plan will help Council determine the final master plan, including the community's priorities for staging improvements and to seek potential grant and funding opportunities.

Community feedback

The need for a master plan was initiated in 2020 in response to community safety concerns, and concerns regarding precinct management and conflict between user groups in the area.

The site serves as both an environmental area and a recreational space, which at times leads to differences about permitted activities, particularly dog off-leash activity.

Extensive community feedback gathered since 2021 has helped to inform the draft master plan. Feedback has been provided via online survey responses, community and school visioning workshops, pop-up events, stakeholder meetings, a Community Reference Group and independent petitions.

What we've learnt

Safety for our community and our wildlife – including our migratory shorebirds – plus a balanced approach for all user groups are both high priorities.

Many people want to preserve or enhance what they already love or value rather than wanting dramatic change in the area. For this reason, the draft master plan proposes minimal infrastructure changes.

Key themes expressed by our community included:

The environment – to preserve and enhance the site's natural environmental values and scenic amenity.

Inclusivity – to create an inclusive place for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy.

Social and recreational – to maintain social connections, exercise opportunities and pet-friendly activities.

Improved awareness – to provide education and awareness of the rich history of the site, the environmental values, and the cultural significance of the land for Kabi Kabi people.

Independent cultural, environmental and recreational studies identified other key considerations for the draft Master Plan including environmental protection with special consideration to:

Littoral Rainforest and other vegetation – areas of natural closed forest near the ocean and high value fauna and flora.

Migratory shorebirds – the world's most threatened group of birds. They travel 20,000-30,000 km each year to spend the summer on the Sunshine Coast before returning to their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere.

Nudibranch (new-dih-bronk) – a type of sea slug with many sporting brilliant colours and eye-catching patterns on their skin.

Turtles – all turtles, particularly Australia's eastern population of nesting loggerheads (around 500 nesting females).

The beach – protecting the beach and dunal areas.

Fauna – the reserve and surrounding area is home to native fauna that is under threat by human impacts.

Recreational Activities – the reserve and park area are used for a diverse range of activities by a diverse range of user groups. Finding a 'middle ground' to maintain these recreational activities and reduce conflict between users.

Cultural Heritage – the parkland holds profound cultural heritage importance including culturally significant sites and flora and fauna. Although the area has experienced substantial alterations dating from the 1960s, much of the cultural and ecological value is intact.

Master Plan response

The draft Master Plan can be found on Council's website. Key improvements include:

Sustainable pet access – by allowing dog on-leash areas, prohibiting dog access to some areas, and allowing additional dog off-leash beach access.

Enhanced community safety – ensuring a safer public space for all to enjoy.

Enhanced environmental protection – for areas of significant habitat or cultural heritage.

Enhanced accessibility and recreational opportunities – improved pathway network (wider paths, improved surfaces, improved alignment).

More interpretive and educational elements – for nature based passive recreation and cultural heritage appreciation.

Improved facilities – upgraded park furniture, equipment, improved barbeque and shelters

More shade – for pathways, furniture, playground, picnic areas.

Playground improvements – including interpretive/educational elements and increased play value.

Have your say on the draft master plan

The draft master plan endeavours to strike a **balance** between environmental and cultural protection and continued recreational activities that do not impact the site.

To participate in the online survey or have your say, visit Council's Have your Say website haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au or scan the QR code by 2 July 2023.



Project Timeline



Stage 1 COMPLETE Investigation and analysis

A study assessing how the area is being used to help inform the development of the Master Plan.



Stage 2 COMPLETE Community Engagement Phase 1

a) Values and vision

Community and stakeholder engagement to understand the key values and future vision for the area.

b) Ideas and opportunities

Community and stakeholder engagement to identify ideas and opportunities for inclusion in the Master Plan.



Stage 3 COMPLETE Development of the draft master plan

The development of the draft master plan based on specialist investigation recommendations and community and stakeholder feedback.



Stage 4 WE ARE HERE Community Engagement Phase 2 (June 2023)

Draft master plan

The community is invited to provide feedback on the draft master plan through the online survey.



Stage 5 Master Plan

The final master plan will be developed and presented to council for consideration.

Pet access

Community engagement for the master plan identified significant and opposing feedback about pet access (mainly dogs) in these areas. Some people wanted dog access retained, while others wanted it minimised or stopped completely.

Community feedback, along with Council's civic responsibility to protect and preserve areas of environmental and cultural significance for the benefit of generations to come, means that some pet access changes are proposed in the area. These changes are subject to the local law amendment process and will be undergo a separate community engagement process later this year (2023).

Further information

You can find further information about the Point Cartwright Reserve and La Balsa Park project on Council's website at www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

To contact Council's project team please email PtCartwright-LaBalsa-MasterPlan@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

Or contact Council's customer service via the details below (please quote Point Cartwright Reserve and La Balsa Park Project).

T 07 5475 7272 **F** 07 5475 7277

Locked Bag 72 Sunshine Coast Mail Centre
Qld 4560

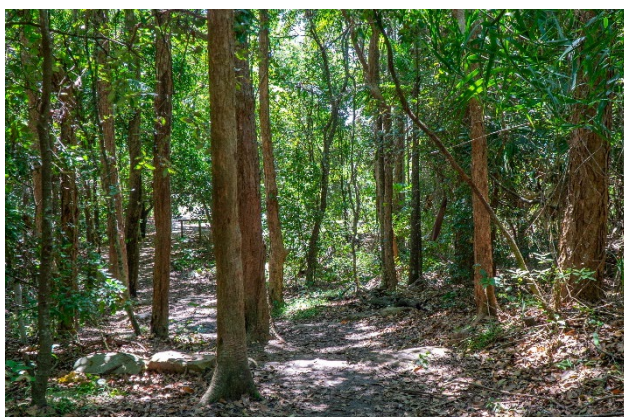


Image 1: Littoral Rainforest at Point Cartwright

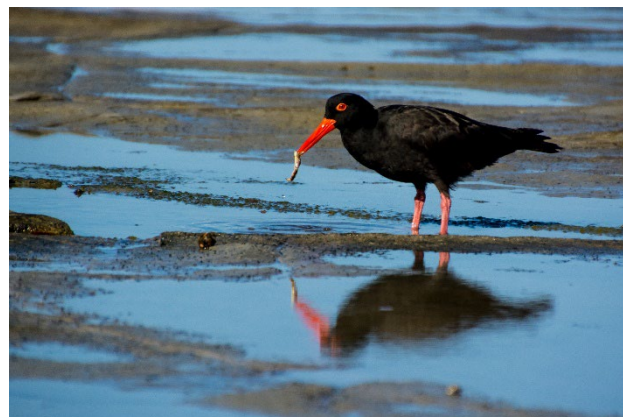


Image 2: Sooty Oystercatcher – migratory shorebird