



Community Engagement Report

Biosecurity Plan Review

November 2023

Compliance Branch

Planning and Regulatory Services Department



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1 Executive Summary

The Biosecurity Act 2014 states that local governments are required to have a Biosecurity Plan to guide the management of pest plants and animals to safeguard our economy, agricultural and tourism industries, environment and way of life.

Ipswich City Council developed the Biosecurity Plan 2018 – 2023 (Plan) and engaged key stakeholders with the purpose of this engagement being to facilitate community participation in the review of the Biosecurity Plan so that management of pest species is relevant to the current environment.

Community engagement occurred through wider public consultation through Council's 'Shape Your Ipswich' online platform. To maximise engagement, \$600 worth of advertisements ran across Ipswich City Council's Facebook between 12 October 2023 and 1 November 2023, in addition to 3 email campaigns. The outcomes of the stakeholder engagement identified common themes present across the stakeholders that were engaged. These were:

- General support for the proposed Draft Ipswich Biosecurity Plan
- Opportunity for greater education across the community on control measures for invasive species
- More detailed information required around General biosecurity obligation and how Ipswich City Council plans to apply this

The themes and stakeholder insights identified in this report will help inform the finalisation of the Ipswich Biosecurity Plan.

1.1 Reach and Scope

The table below details the engagement channel and number of contributions for each stage of the engagement.

Engagement Channels	Contributions
Shape Your Ipswich Contributions	43
Landholder Stakeholder Meetings	1
Internal Stakeholder Meetings	25
Total Contributions Received	69

1.2 Findings

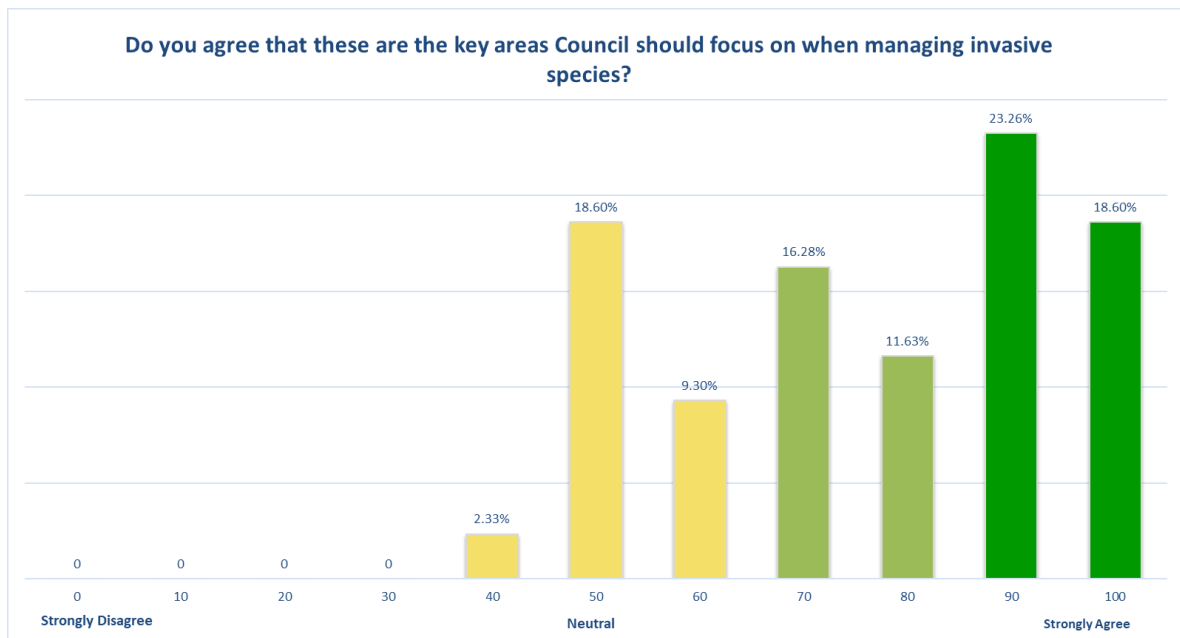
1.2.1 Shape Your Ipswich Findings

Over a four-week period between Wednesday 4 October 2023 and Wednesday 1 November 2023, the wider community were asked to share their experience regarding pests in Ipswich and feedback on the draft Ipswich Biosecurity Plan. Sixty-nine contributions were received through all engagement channels. This included Shape Your Ipswich and face-to-face meetings with internal and external stakeholders.

Comments received identified positive sentiment towards the draft Ipswich Biosecurity Plan.

When asked the question on the Shape Your Ipswich survey, “Do you agree that these are the key areas council should focus on when managing invasive species?”, 41.86% of respondents strongly agreed (90-100), and 27.91% respondents agreed (70-80), with all other responses sitting under neutral (40-60).

No responses disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed key areas.



Where a neutral response was provided, the most common concerns centred around whether Council will effectively deliver on the plan, concerns around how enforcement will be approached and need for greater education on controlling pests.

When asked what plants and animals the community would like to be see prioritised for controlling by Council, 51 unique plants and animals were identified. The species with most mentions were:

- Feral cats
- Asparagus fern
- Fireweed
- Fire ants
- Lantana
- Cat's claw creeper

- Madeira vine
- Cadaghi
- Leucaena
- Foxes

Of the most mentioned species, all are already prevalent within the draft plan except for Cadaghi. Other species that were mentioned that are not currently specifically mentioned in the plan are:

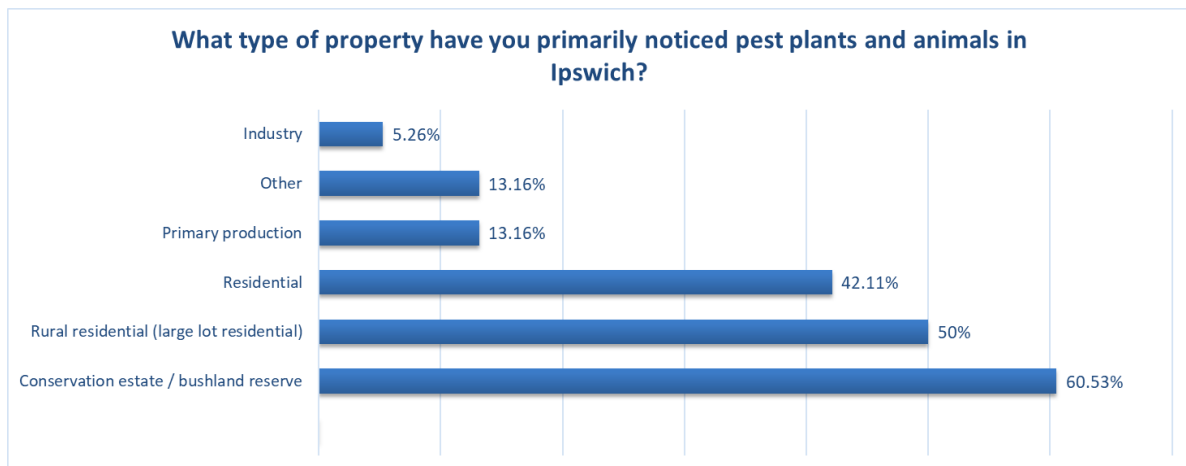
Considered Pests	Not Considered Pests
Bathurst Burr	Cockatoo
Brazilian Peppers	Crow
Cane toad	Jacaranda
Carp	Pigeon
Chinese Elm	
Cobbler's Pegs	
Coralberry	
Corky Passion Vine	
Creeping inch plant	
Green panic	
Monkey's comb	
Noogoora Burr	
Pride of Bolivia	
Racehorse Tree	

Tilapia	
Tree Lucerne	
White Cedar	

The survey questions also explored the individual's personal experience and understanding of invasive pests. Of those who completed the survey, there was a strong sentiment that agreed controlling pest plants and animals is important, and 88% have noticed pest plants and animals at their home, workplace or another location they frequently visit in Ipswich. These pests have been noticed in all suburbs of Ipswich, with the most common suburbs selected by respondents being:

- Rosewood (32%)
- Ipswich (21%)
- Bundamba (18%)
- Kholo (18%)
- Karalee (18%)
- Pine Mountain (18%)
- Swanbank (18%)

These pests have been noticed on all types of property but seem most prevalent on conservation estate / bushland reserve, which was selected by 61% of survey respondents.



In addition to the property types listed in the survey, respondents also mentioned waterway corridors and roadsides as areas of concern.

When looking at control methods, 84% of respondents said they have attempted to control pest plants and animals, with the most common approach being either physical removal or poison. Other methods mentioned included:

- Trapping of pest animals
- Professional support
- Introducing predators to the area
- Educating others
- Reporting to Council
- Volunteering with local bush care groups

The key barriers in controlling pest plants and animals included the cost and time commitment for control methods, concerns around environmental impact and lack of control by others making it harder to control pests on their own property.

There was generally limited awareness or use of council-led assistance programs and resources currently available, suggesting an opportunity for greater engagement required. The exception to this was the free fire ant treatment kit program, which was well-recognised by the community, although has not been used by most at this stage.

Of those who had used the programs, those that were perceived as most valuable included the free fire ant treatment kit program, Habitat Gardens Partnership, and 100+ Invasive weeds of Ipswich – A guide for landholders.

There were also several comments requesting more support from Council to help manage invasive species across Ipswich.

Program	I was not aware	I am aware of this but have not used it	I have used it but did not find it valuable	I have used it and found it valuable
Biodiversity Conservation Agreement	65%	33%	2%	-
Corridor Conservation Agreement	67%	28%	-	5%
Free fire ant treatment kit program	-	77%	2%	21%
Free permit to dispose of fireweed at a waste facility	84%	16%	-	-
Habitat Gardens Partnership	42%	28%	-	30%

Land for Wildlife	37%	49%	5%	9%
Voluntary Conservation Covenant	63%	35%	2%	-
100+ Invasive weeds of Ipswich - A guide for landholders	56%	5%	2%	37%

1.2.2 Internal Stakeholder Meeting Findings

Two internal stakeholder meetings were held as part of the engagement period, which were:

On 24 October 2023, a Councillor briefing was held to share the planned approach for the draft Ipswich Biosecurity Plan. The briefing highlighted the differences between the previous Biosecurity Plan and the integration into the framework provided by the Natural Environment Strategy.

On 30 October 2023, the Natural Environment Branch of Ipswich City Council was invited to a Strategic Management Actions meeting to discuss the draft Ipswich Biosecurity Plan. This meeting primarily focused on the development of actions to inform the implementation of the Biosecurity Plan.

1.2.3 External Stakeholder Meeting

An external stakeholder meeting was held on 10 October with a key community member who has shown high engagement in this area previously.

The discussion focused on:

- The importance of Council's functions under the Biosecurity Act 2014;
- Alternative ways to communicate the General Biosecurity Obligation with land holders;
- The need for State Departments to meet their obligations under the Biosecurity Act 2014;
- The benefits associated with establishing a community panel to discuss how Council is undertaking its functions established in the Biosecurity Act 2014.

The feedback and discussion provided valuable insights into how the plan could be improved.



2 Why we engaged

Ipswich City Council developed the Biosecurity Plan 2018 – 2023 (Plan) and engaged key stakeholders with the purpose of this engagement being to facilitate community participation in the review of the Biosecurity Plan so that management of pest species is relevant to the current environment.

Engagement for the Biosecurity Plan aimed to:

- Help guide the list of species to be included in the Biosecurity Plan
- Gain information on control methods which may assist all stakeholders with their General Biosecurity Obligation
- Raise awareness on the management of pest species in the community.

3 How we engaged

Over a four-week period between Wednesday 4 October 2023 and Wednesday 1 November 2023, community were able to contribute their preferences and sentiments related to the project through the online engagement platform (Shape Your Ipswich), and internal and external stakeholder meetings.

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from participants during the engagement phase, in accordance with council's Information Privacy Policy. Quantitative data was downloaded from the various digital platforms and/or transcribed into a master Excel database by project staff. The data was cleaned, de-identified, aggregated and charted in the master database. Open thematic analysis of qualitative comments was carried out using Excel.

4 What the community told us

Over the engagement for the project, interest from the community was somewhat below average in comparison with other engagement campaigns.

Awareness of this project was triggered by \$600 worth of paid advertising across Facebook between 12 October 2023 and 1 November 2023. Community had the choice to respond directly to the post comment thread or following the link to Shape Your Ipswich, which provided more detailed information and the opportunity to comment and make suggestions.

In addition, two email campaigns were sent out via Shape Your Ipswich. The first campaign went out the same day as publication of the page, and was sent out to Shape Your Ipswich members who have indicated an interest in one or more of the following categories:

- Animals
- Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change
- City Design and Planning

This campaign was sent to a total of 591 members, of which 295 opened the email (49.9%).

The second campaign was sent out on 17 October 2023 and had a more general audience as it shared a variety of projects that were open for community engagement at the same time. This campaign was sent to a total of 771 members, of which 351 opened the email (45.5%).

A third email campaign was sent out on 18 October 2023 via Land Conservation Partnership Program newsletter. This campaign was sent out to a total of 160 subscribers, of which 22 recipients clicked the link to the Draft Biosecurity Plan page on Shape Your Ipswich.

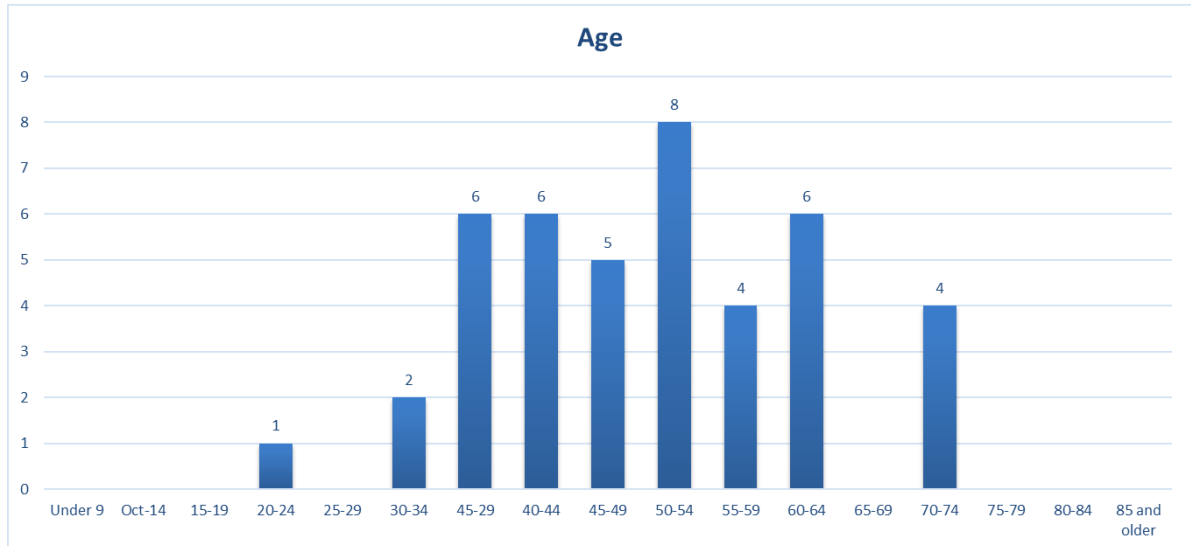
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5 Who engaged?

Between the Wednesday 4 October 2023 (engagement opened) and Wednesday 1 November 2023 (engagement closed), the Shape Your Ipswich project page was viewed **1,693** times by **1,358** visitors, with **89.3% (1,213)** of visitors being first time users of the Shape Your Ipswich platform.

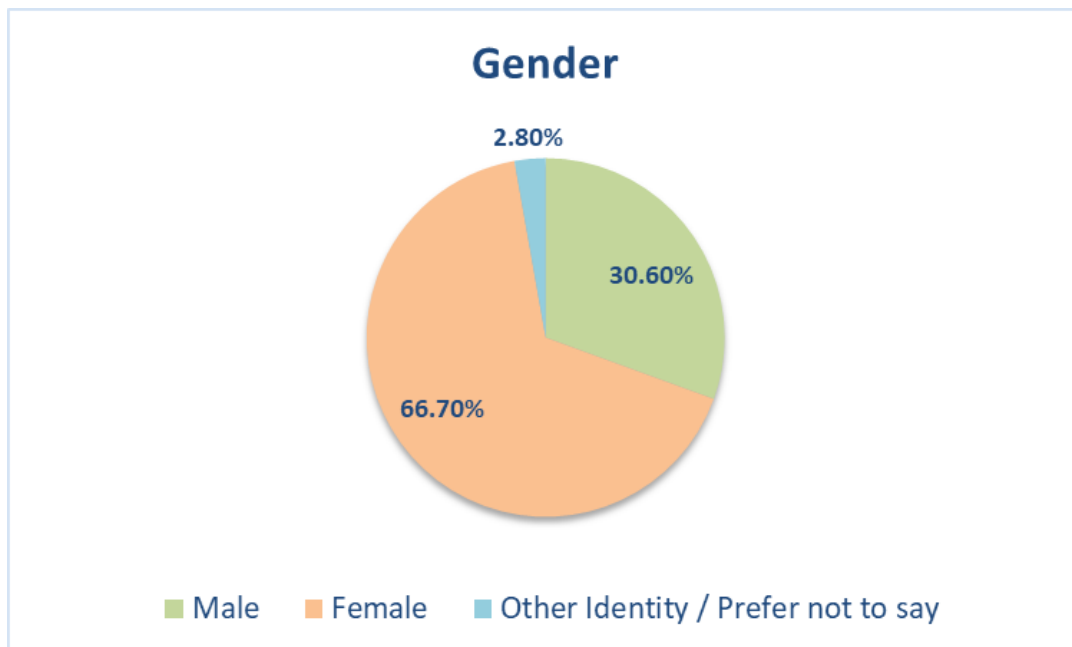
Age

Engagement in this project had diverse and relatively even age representation, ranging from contributors within the 15-29 years age bracket, up to 75–79-year age bracket.



Gender

Most contributors identified as female (66.7%) with 30.6% identifying as male. The remaining 2.8% identifying as gender variant or preferred not to specify.





Locality

95% of respondents confirmed place of residence was in Ipswich. Other respondents were from suburbs neighbouring Ipswich just outside of Ipswich.

Cultural Background

83% of respondents identified as Australian. In addition, other cultural backgrounds represented in the survey included Aboriginal (4%), American (2%), New Zealander (4%). Other respondents preferred not to say.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

Review and analysis of the data from all engagement activities identified the following key findings from the community.

- a. The primary sentiment identified through the community engagement was an overall agreement with the Ipswich Biosecurity Plan focus areas proposed by Ipswich City Council, with the majority selecting that they agree or strongly agree. All other responses were considered neutral, with no responses within disagree or strongly disagree.
- b. Survey responses identified an opportunity for greater education across the community around invasive species. This would include support in identifying pests in the area and the various steps available that can support the management of species including promoting the use of the assistance programs and resources, as well as other steps community members can take such as reporting to Council and volunteering.
- c. One of the key concerns from community centres around general biosecurity obligation and how this will be implemented. Recommendation is sharing further details around when authoritative action would be taken and how this will be effectively managed.