

<b>INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE</b> <b>15 FEBRUARY 2012</b>	<b>2</b>
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BRAMSTON BEACH ROAD – REVIEW OF SPEED LIMIT AND TRIAL TO REDUCE TRAFFIC SPEED ADJACENT TO CASSOWARY HABITAT

Ian Pearl: 1/3/21: #3482731

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council:**

- 1) Notes the work undertaken to improve safety for motorists and Cassowaries on Bramston Beach Road.**
- 2) Continues to monitor the effectiveness of the improvements.**

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**INTRODUCTION:**

On 4 September 2010 a vehicle travelling on Bramston Beach Road came into contact with a Cassowary, resulting in the death of the bird. The incident prompted calls from the public to the media and Council. C4 (The Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation), Terrain and other interested local parties also contacted Council voicing their concern. The Chief Executive Officer presented the matter to Council at its Ordinary Meeting held on 15 December 2010, resulting in the following resolution, *“That speed limits on Bramston Beach Road be reviewed due to Cassowary habitat with a report back to Council.”* In response, Council Officers investigated the incident and presented a subsequent report to Council’s Ordinary Meeting (27 January 2011). At this meeting, Council resolved that:

*“That Council:*

*1) Notes the work undertaken to review the circumstances surrounding the death of a Cassowary in September 2010 and the works planned to change warning, community and advisory speed signage in early 2011.*

*2) Reviews the effectiveness of these initiatives to improve safety for motorists and Cassowaries and report back to Council within twelve months.”*

This report is provided in response to point two of this resolution.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Council Officers inspected the site on 8 September 2010, meeting a local wildlife enthusiast who had visited the scene and spoken to the driver shortly after the accident. Officers were informed that the vehicle was travelling in an easterly direction on the Bramston Beach Road (towards Bramston Beach) rounding a right hand bend in the road when the car contacted the bird. The driver of the vehicle did not see the bird and only became aware of the bird as it impacted the vehicle. The condition of the road was inspected and found to have no obvious defects. Council Officers sought the advice from experts at the CSIRO, Members of the Cassowary Recovery Team, C4, Council's Coordinator Natural Areas Management and have reviewed research into local Cassowary movement undertaken by L. A. Moore (MSc, PhD) formally of James Cook University (Townsville). Published information regarding research on wildlife protection along road corridors has also been reviewed.

Cassowaries are an iconic Wet Tropics species. As well as playing an important ecological role, they are of considerable cultural significance and their conservation status is a cause of much concern among Wet Tropics communities. The Southern cassowary *Casuarius casuarius johnsonii* is listed as Endangered under the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and under the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NC Act) the Wet Tropics population is listed as 'Endangered' and the Cape York populations are listed as 'Vulnerable'.

Cairns Regional Council is represented on the Cassowary Recovery Team which has the role of coordinating implementation of the Cassowary Recovery Plan.

The solution that was subsequently adopted was the use strategically placed warning signs. In addition, new, highly reflective advisory bend signage was also installed. The three design types used are shown below. These signs were located at the start of each of the three crossing corridors.



Sign Code: "G"



Sign Code: TC9866



Sign Code: TC1196

The green sign "G" is a new design initiated by Council based on similar wildlife signs for possums and echidnas.

*Getting the message to the community:* There will be a local media release outlining the changes. This will coincide with the installation of the new signage. Information will be sent to local groups so that they can include this information in their own networks to further alert people of the proposed changes. Should funding for a community sign be available, it may be possible to liaise with the local school community to help design the sign and raise awareness amongst pupils, teachers and parents who are likely to use the road.

**COMMENT:**

Council Officers took a traffic accident investigation approach to the September 2010 incident as opposed to a Cassowary conservation approach. To date, the measures implemented appear to be having the desired affect (refer to attached letter from Cassowary Recovery Team). While there are no guarantees that further Cassowary fatalities will not occur in the future, Council Officers are not aware of any incidents occurring since the signage has been installed. Subsequently, Council Officers will continue to monitor the area, but there are no plans at this stage to alter the current approach.

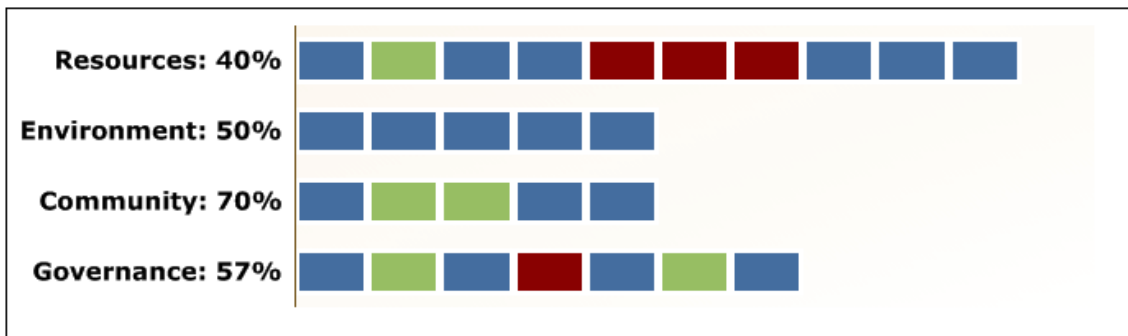
**CONSIDERATIONS:**

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Goal 1 – ‘Caring for the environment’ – Objective 1.2 recognises the natural environment as being integral to the regions identity and fundamental to quality of life.

Goal 4 – ‘Delivering services and infrastructure’ references the need to maintain roads and footpaths.

Sustainability:



Financial and Risk:

The only cost associated with the monitoring phase of this project is sign maintenance and office time in conducting inspections (minimal).

**CONSULTATION:**

In preparation of the initial report to Council, Officers were in contact with the Local Traffic Police, C4 (The Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation), Terrain NRM, CSIRO, Councils Parks and Wildlife Officers, Wet Tropics Management Authority and local wildlife enthusiasts. In the preparation of this follow up report, the local Councillor, the Babinda Maintenance Supervisor and the Coordinator Natural Areas Management were consulted.

**CONCLUSION:**

Council is very concerned about the impact of traffic on Cassowary numbers. As a result, Council has funded new road signage on Bramston Beach Road to alert drivers of the possible presence of Cassowaries. Officers will continue to monitor and maintain this signage.

**Attachment:**

Attachment 1 - Letter from Mr Andrew Maclean – Chair, Cassowary Recovery Team  
Attachment 2 – Photos of signage in place

IAN PEARL  
**INVESTIGATIONS COORDINATOR**

STEPHEN TYTER  
**MANAGER INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT**

ROSS McKIM  
**GENERAL MANAGER INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES**

## Attachment - Letter from Mr Andrew Maclean – Chair, Cassowary Recovery Team

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### Cassowary Recovery Team

Secretariat hosted by  
Wet Tropics Management Authority  
PO BOX 2050 Cairns QLD 4870  
Telephone: (07) 4052 0555



11 October 2011

Alan Krumin  
Technical Officer - Investigations  
Cairns Regional Council  
PO Box 359  
Cairns QLD 4870

Dear Alan,

#### RE. CASSOWARIES AND BRAMSTON BEACH ROAD

The Cassowary Recovery Team (CRT) has requested that I write to thank you for the presentation you gave at the CRT meeting on 9 September 2011, in response to community concerns about the threat to cassowaries by traffic along Bramston Beach Road.

Members of the CRT are concerned about the loss of any of our region's iconic birds, but recognise that regulatory changes don't necessarily translate into behaviour changes by drivers. The CRT is satisfied that in this instance Cairns Regional Council has thoroughly analysed the situation along Bramston Beach Road and look forward to the results of the 12 month review of the cassowary protection measures taken on Bramston Beach Road.

The CRT recognises the need for different treatments according to the nature of each road and its location and would like to commend Cairns Regional Council for the very thorough approach taken to evaluating road treatments for Bramston Beach Road.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Maclean".

Andrew Maclean  
Chair, Cassowary Recovery Team

File: WTMA1943

Attachment 2 – Photos of signage



