

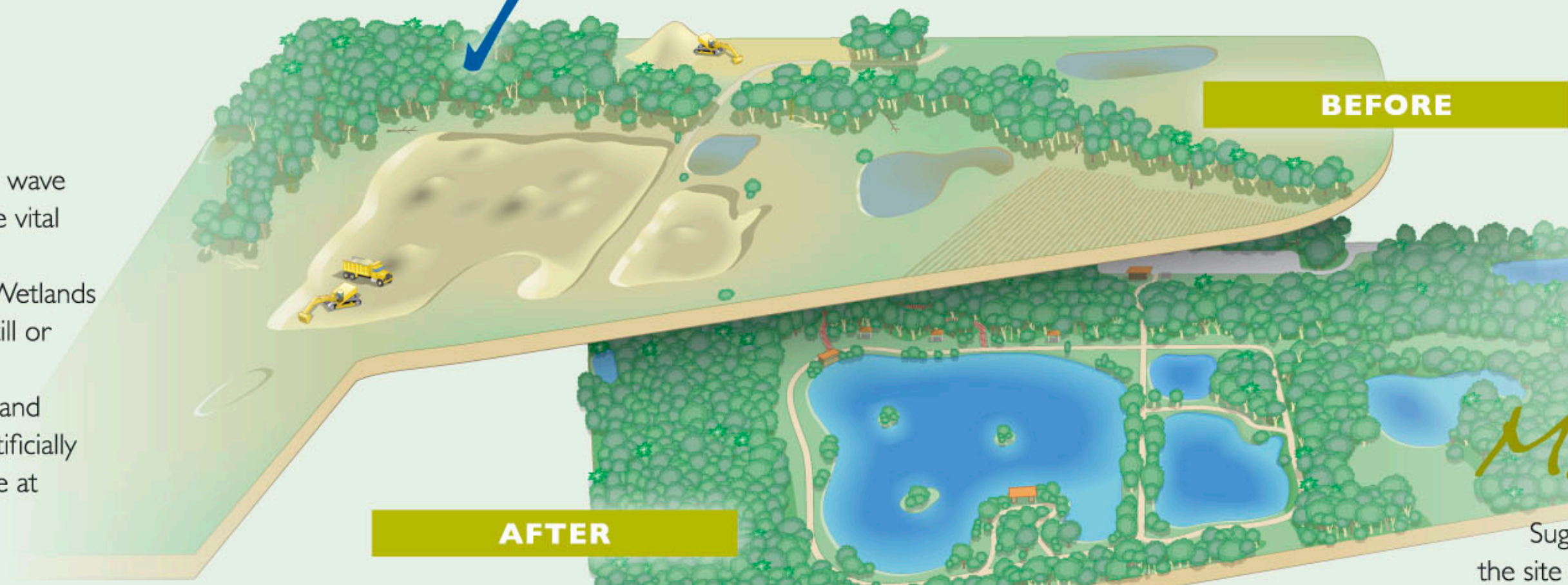
Rehabilitation of a Wetland

Introduction

Wetlands are vital to Australia. They protect our shores from wave action, reduce the impacts of floods, absorb pollutants and provide vital habitat for plants and animals.

A wetland area is an area of land covered by shallow water. Wetlands can be natural or artificial, permanent or temporary and can be still or flowing with fresh, brackish or salty water.

While the lowland areas of the site probably had natural wetland characteristics prior to settlement, Cattana Wetlands is now an artificially created wetland with several lakes including a large freshwater lake at the western end and smaller freshwater and brackish lakes scattered on the eastern end of the site. These lakes are likely to be a major habitat for several wetland species including birds, frogs and insects such as dragonflies and butterflies.



Pacific Black Ducks

Making a viable wetland

Sugar cane farming and gravel extraction was eventually phased out at the site and Cairns Regional Council has been busy rehabilitating the area and protecting the significant remnant Feather Palm Forest.

Over 10,000 trees have been planted and weeds that once infested the site have been removed. After establishing a master plan, and with extensive consultation with the local community, the wetlands now boast quality facilities that provide both residents and visitors with a fantastic opportunity to experience passive, nature-based recreational activities.

Sand and gravel extraction

Prior to 1993 the site was a productive sugar cane farm run by the Cattana family. When the then Mulgrave City Council purchased the land some of the degraded areas were used for sand and gravel extraction. Thousands of tonnes of sand and gravel were taken from the site and much of this material was used for the Cairns Esplanade project.

