



Rachel Heaton <rachheaton@gmail.com>

RE: 🐸 Wallum froglet habitat in danger of development - seeking advice /support /resources

David Newell <David.Newell@scu.edu.au>

Tue, Sep 12, 2023 at 2:02 PM

To: Rachel Heaton <rachheaton@gmail.com>

Cc: K G <earthxpression@gmail.com>, James Barrie <jamesbarriemusic@gmail.com>

I just sent the following

Byron Shire Councillors

I am writing to you to express my concerns regarding habitat management for threatened frogs at the 'Wallum' development [15 Torakina Road Brunswick Heads](#). I am an ecologist with nearly 30 years' experience dealing with threatened frog management in the region. I also worked briefly as Byron Council's ecologist before taking up a position with Southern Cross University.

I have serious concerns about the further loss of Wallum frog habitat associated with the development (amongst other ecological concerns). There are two species of threatened frogs that occur at the site and are associated with 'Wallum' habitats. Namely the Wallum froglet (*Crinia tinnula*) and the Olungburra or Wallum Sedge frog (*Litoria olongburensis*). Both are threatened by coastal development. The developer has put forward a plan to offset the loss by creating additional frog habitat, for the Wallum froglet but largely discounts the presence of the Wallum Sedge frog. The plan is named the 'revised wallum froglet management plan' It appears that the records of Wallum sedge frog are recent and the plan was developed solely for the Wallum froglet. The Wallum sedge frog is listed under the EPBC Act and is of national significance and must be adequately protected. The developers plan is completely inadequate and needs to be thoroughly reviewed by an ecologist with experience dealing with these species.

Council should be aware that creating habitat for these frogs is not a simple process (remember frog gate?). Council actually attempted this at the waste treatment facility. Yes frogs will briefly exploit a water body, but for long term success the habitat needs to sustain a breeding population for decades (not a one off sighting). Will council be ensuring that frogs use these compensatory habitats beyond the single season monitoring proposed by the developer? Council will be given the responsibility to manage these sites into the future. The developer needs to demonstrate examples of where this compensatory approach has actually been used successfully and that frogs remain present and breeding longer term. Why is there no acknowledgements of the likely pressures placed on the frogs by domestic pets at the site into the future? They acknowledge a threat posed by the amphibian chytrid fungus but neglect to actually state how they will manage the threat during construction phase. Roads are a recognised threat to Wallum Sedge frogs (see [Goldingay and Taylor 2006](#)) but get little mention in the plan.

I urge council to reject the plans put forward by the developer and suggest that they seek an independent review of the 'wallum froglet management plan'. Otherwise this is yet another example of death by a thousand cuts to the biodiversity of Byron Shire. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss further 0432047590

regards

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