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Media Release

Vulnerable Frog Under Immediate Threat

The approved Wallum development will clear 10.7 ha of Wallum Sedge Frog (WSF) habitat

Dr Andrew G. Baker, Principal Ecologist at Wildsite Ecological Services in Northern NSW, is urging the Federal Government of Australia to immediately call in the 'Wallum' development in Brunswick Heads NSW for referral under the EPBC Act.

Specifically, Dr Baker is concerned about the impact on the vulnerable Olongburra Frog, also colloquially referred to as Wallum Sedge Frog. The WSF is listed federally as a Matter of National and Environmental Significance (MNES). Developers are required to 'self refer' to the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water if a project will have a significant impact on this species.

"The Olongburra Frog has not been subject to adequate assessment of the impacts of this development. This approved development will clear most of the species' habitat on the site, exacerbating the primary threatening processes for the species," says Dr Baker.

"The Concept Plan Environmental Assessment severely understates impacts on this species to justify non-referral under the EPBC Act. The affected habitat is of elevated importance given recent wildfires have affected nearly all known populations in the locality."

Renowned frog expert, Associate Professor David Newell has been researching and advocating on the plight of frogs for close to 30 years. Like Dr Baker, he also emphasises the importance of protecting the valuable ecology at Brunswick Heads.

"The Wallum Sedge or Olongburra frog is a unique species in that it is restricted to specialised 'wallum' habitats. We know that urbanisation is a key threat to this species' ongoing survival, leading to its recognition as vulnerable under the federal EPBC Act. Destruction of habitat in the name of a housing development called 'wallum' is a slap in the face to national conservation objectives. I have no doubt that the development will lead to irreversible loss of yet another population and this project should be referred to the Federal Minister as Matter of National Environmental Significance."

Ironically, the word 'wallum' refers to the distinct and rare ecosystem that this development plans to destroy. Sadly with the growing pressures of urbanization and the desire for coastal development, the unique wallum ecology has become increasingly rare.

These experts join thousands of concerned people who believe the not-so-aptly named 'Wallum' development in Brunswick Heads poses a direct threat to the cherished wildlife that calls it home and strongly believe future generations should be able to experience this thriving ecosystem.

Thirteen-year-old conservationist and environmental educator from QLD, Spencer Hitchen @savesunriseglossies visited the Wallum site this month and urged everyone to contact the Federal Minister for the Environment to protect the rare acid frogs in this habitat.

"I'm so excited to tell you all that last week when I was visiting everyone down at Wallum Brunswick Heads, all the amazing Wallum Acid Frogs were calling. I was immediately drawn to their beautiful sedgeland habitat. I knew today was the day I might be able to get some photographs of these cryptic callers to prove to Minister Plibersek that Wallum needs to be saved, Right Now!

"It was so amazing to be greeted by hundreds & hundreds of Acid Frogs. They are so quick to slip away, making them super hard to photograph. You can imagine how excited I was to manage to photograph a Wallum Froglet mating during the day. I'm pretty sure it's the first ever!

"They are such amazing creatures and wallum specialists that can't survive anywhere else but in these acidic waters.

"Please help me get this message through to Minister Tanya Plibersek. It would be so unfair to kids like me and Future Generations to take this magical place from us. Adult Decision Makers & Developers you need to do better. My Generation & beyond will not thank you for all the extinctions you are knowingly causing."

To read more details about the Matters of National and Environmental Significance (MNES) at risk due to the approved wallum development please see [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

**For further information, images or to arrange expert interviews please contact:
Holly Galbraith holly@gofuturemedia.com 0432274846**

About Dr. Andrew G. Baker

As the Director and Principal Ecologist of Wildsite Ecological Services for over 25 years, Dr Baker has extensive experience in environmental impact assessment, conservation planning, management and restoration of native vegetation within coastal Byron Shire, and in particular has specialist expertise in the assessment and management of wallum vegetation and its associated biodiversity Values.

About Dr. D Newell(PHD)

Dr Newell PHD is Associate Professor within the Faculty of Science and Engineering, Southern Cross University in Lismore , NSW. Highly sought for his expertise, he has been researching and advocating on the plight of frogs for close to 30 years. He currently runs the Gondwana Rainforest Amphibian Survival Program and works closely with management agencies to undertake on ground conservation actions. He regularly provides conservation advice to state and commonwealth government on threatened frogs.

About Spencer Hitchen

Spencer Hitchen advocates for the protection of our habitats and ecosystems including the unique wallum ecosystem. . He has appeared on ABC's 7.30 Report, the recipient and winner of many awards and has won praise from celebrity gardener Costa Georgiadis, who said: "Spencer sees the world through a unique lens of compassion and empathy for nature. His love and determination to protect the valuable and unique ecosystem that is the wallum is an inspiration for us all to draw on".

You can find more on his Instagram [@savesunriseglossies](https://www.instagram.com/savesunriseglossies).