



GIRRAWEEEN ESTATE

History and Ecology

How it all started

In the mid-1980s, the then-Noosa Council and State Government were planning the clearing of vacant Crown land known as Girraween Estate for urban development - and a four-lane motorway between Sunrise Beach and the east side of Lake Weyba.

In 1989, a new Noosa Council negotiated with the fledgling Wayne Goss State Government to convert the Crown land to national park. Council added some of its own land to the National Park, to create a continuous link between the original section of Noosa National Park through to Lake Weyba.

The resulting corridor link is now one of the major examples of visionary planning residents and tourists alike love and enjoy.

A Council-owned piece of land at Grasstree Court, adjacent to the Girraween Estate had, since 2006, been set aside to cater for an expanding need for aged care infrastructure.

In 2007 Noosa Council resolved to place a Nature Refuge over sections of the Girraween estate, as a two-staged process. The final stage was gazetted in 2021 bringing the total area protected to 110 hectares.

The Grasstree Court site has long been committed for development, designated for Community Services under the 1997 Strategic Plan, and the Noosa Plan as Community Services. Only the Blue Care development area is committed for community uses.

GLOSSY-BLACK COCKATOO HABITATS

The overall Girraween Estate is a 118-hectare tract of wallum wetland and heath, supporting not only populations of the glossy, but also ground parrots and wallum frogs, also threatened plant species such as Christmas Bells, *Acacia baueri* and *Macarthuria complanata*.

Glossies are found along Australia's east coast, also at Kangaroo Island in South Australia.

Feed tree areas occur in other parts of the shire and include:

- Sunrise Beach, Sunshine Beach, Marcus Beach and Peregian Beach
- Noosa and Noosaville
- Noosa, Tinbeerwah and Tuckekoi national parks
- Coolool National Park.

The total number of she-oaks identified as Glossy feed-trees to be removed from the Grasstree Court site for construction of the Blue Care facility is 56.

This will be offset by ongoing rehabilitation efforts by Blue Care, Council and bushland care groups.

More than 1000 *Allocasuarina littoralis* trees are being planted on the rehabilitation site, which will result in a substantial net gain of she-oaks in the area.

Hundreds of she-oak tree seedlings are also being propagated from seeds to plant on and around the site once construction is complete. The seeds were extracted from cones found on the site.

As it will take some time for these trees to reach maturity, it's believed the other existing feed trees across Sunrise Beach, Sunshine Beach, Girraween Estate, Tinbeerwah and elsewhere may be used more extensively by the Glossies once the work begins.

On a broader scale, as part of a Noosa Council, Queensland Government and Noosa Parks Association purchase of 2400 hectares of the Yurol and Ringtail Creek state forests and turning them into national park, over 88 hectares has been rehabilitated, which includes planting of *Allocasuarina* at McKinnon Drive.

Another planned project will involve a mass planting at the corner of Ringtail Creek Rd and McKinnon Drive, across a huge 200 hectares.

How we got to today!

JUNE 2006

The Girraween Master Plan was endorsed by Noosa Council. It included requirements that identified environmental/rehabilitation areas be changed to "Nature Refuge Areas" under the Nature Conservation Act.

Specific exclusions from the Nature Refuge were a sewerage treatment plant and related future infrastructure; the footprint of a proposed sporting complex on a rapid infiltration basin site;

a 20 metre-wide service track between these facilities; and a works operations stockpile site with buffer and access road off Cooyar Street.

In addition, a parcel of Council's freehold land in the eastern section fronting Grasree Court and Ben Lexcen Drive were again identified in the master plan as a 'future community area' (aged care facility).

JANUARY 2007

A lot reconfiguration was earmarked to allow part of the lot to be sold to a private developer to meet aged care demand.

The developer would be responsible for the lot reconfiguration and obtaining the development permit for an independent living and aged care facility.

MARCH 2007

Noosa Council entered a two-stage Conservation Agreement for gazettal of the Environmental/Rehabilitation area within Girraween as Nature Refuge.

JULY 2007

Blue Care contracts to purchase the land, the contract being subject to gaining a development approval.

MARCH 2008

Noosa Council is amalgamated into Sunshine Coast Regional Council along with the former Maroochy and Caloundra shires.

JUNE 2008

Blue Care lodges a development application subject to a protracted assessment process including referral to state agencies due to the site's vegetation, and amendments to the Noosa Plan to address zoning anomalies.

The lengthy process resulted in the application remaining dormant until May 2011 when the scheme amendments were adopted and the

then-Department of Natural Resources and Mines issued its approval in June 2011.

The application being impact-assessable, public notification was required, attracting five properly made submissions - all of which were primarily concerned with stormwater treatment and vegetation removal.



DECEMBER 2011

The application is approved by Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

The approved development included the 96-bed residential aged care facility, medical/respice facility, 54 apartments with basement car parking, 55 single level villa style independent living units and a central facility building comprising 20 serviced apartments and a recreation centre.

Numerous conditions were imposed to address the habitat loss including:

- Identification of all active Glossy Black Cockatoo food trees within the development footprint or areas likely to be impacted

- A vegetation clearing offset program with a five-year required maintenance period
- The offset program was required to include topsoil and mulched vegetation from the site to be translocated to a degraded receiving site within the Girraween estate for rehabilitation purposes and transfer of rare and threatened plant species
- Identified Glossy Black Food trees to be propagated at a ratio of 8:1 from the parent tree and replanted.

NOVEMBER 2017

Noosa Council (now de-amalgamated) approves an extension to the currency period to December 2021 for the first stage.

Staff reviewed the development's compliance with regulations and requirements as at 2017 and

found it remained compliant apart from updated Bushfire Management requirements.

The applicant responded with an updated fire management plan showing greater setbacks to adjoining reserves.

2018, 2019

Blue Care-appointed environmental consultant Biodiverse Environmental, with assistance from Coolum Community Nursery, began collecting she-oak seeds from Glossy Black-Cockatoos feed trees on the lots to be cleared for construction, to be planted in Girraween Nature Refuge.

Ongoing collections of she-oak and other Australian native seeds are occurring to ensure additional plants can be grown from seeds from the project site.

As previously stated, a development approval condition was that Blue Care deliver back a propagation of she-oaks at the rate of 8 to 1 for each she-oak removed from the construction site.

JANUARY 2022

Clearing work begins on the site.

The clearing is to be done in stages to minimise the impact on Glossy Black-Cockatoos with lot 9 being the southern lot not permitted to be cleared until the offset planting has been undertaken at Girraween estate.

The first clearing will be 0.8 hectares of a total of approximately 4.6 hectares in total to be cleared.



Protecting the species

UnitingCare has distributed over 2000 she-oak seedlings to the community.

A further 1000 seedlings have been propagated from seed collected from Glossy Black-Cockatoos feed trees on Lots 6 and 9 of Grasstree Court. These will be planted in Girraween Nature Refuge.

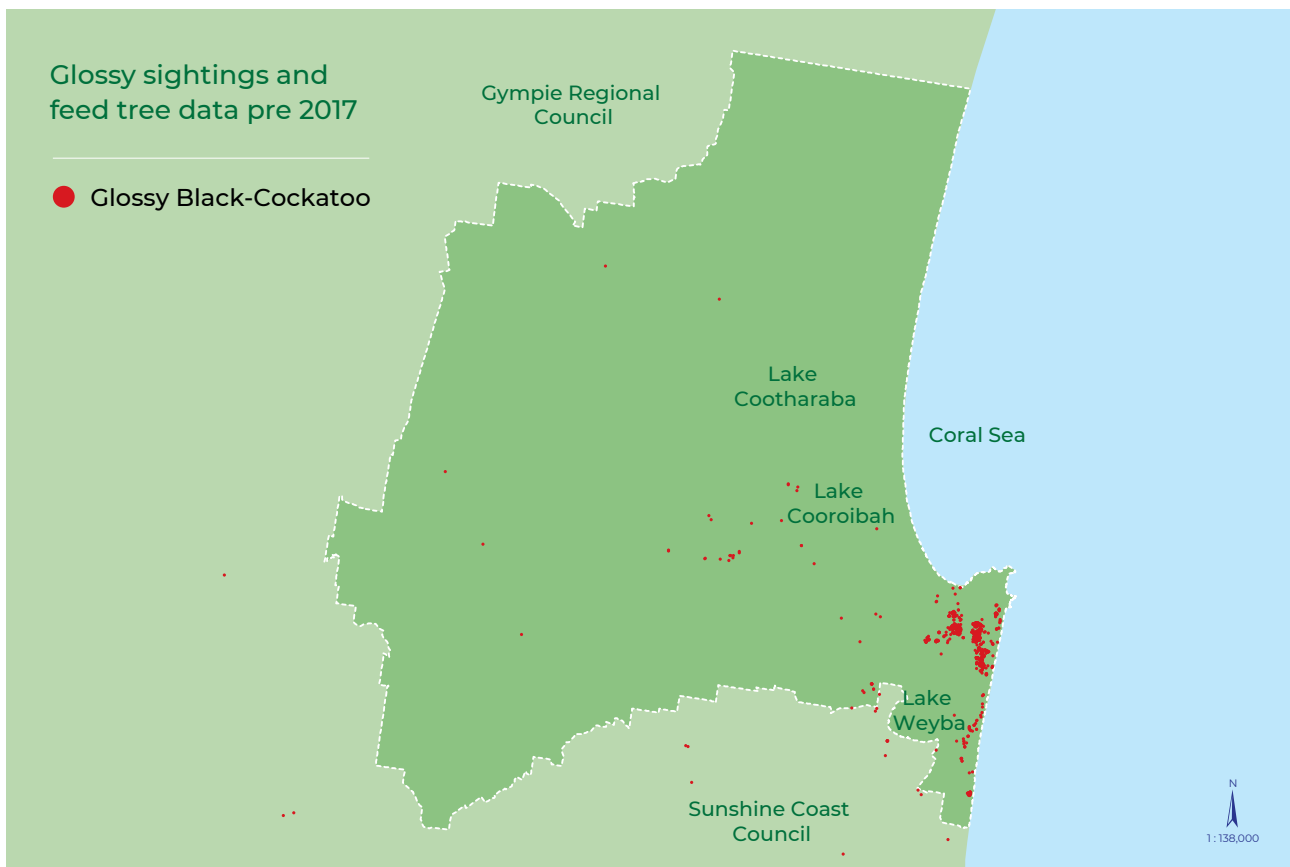
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Noosa Council also has a program to substantially increase plantation and propagation of the Glossy's favourite food.

Specific numbers of trees in general locations around the development site are not available, but many are visibly situated in adjacent areas and in close proximity – on both public and private land, as the trees are a popular choice for many residential gardens - indicating the development site is not an exclusive location for Glossy feeding trees.

The map below shows a large presence of Glossy feed trees along the coastal strip from Noosa Heads to Peregian.

These mapped sightings are based on the 2017 Birding Day results. The 2022 Birding Day's results, to be collected in March, will update this map accordingly.



Some feeding trees were temporarily lost in 2019-20 due to the bushfires – and which may have exacerbated glossy presence at the development site of late – but major regeneration is well under way.

The general lifespan of a she-oak is around 25 years – not a long life – but it is a fast-growing species which will readily establish nearly anywhere.

The rehabilitation site will provide nesting, foraging and watering resources for the glossy black-cockatoo - and other threatened fauna.

Bushland Care Groups and volunteers have also been active, and will continue to be active, with a variety of plantings across Noosa Shire.

Blue Care is to continue ongoing management of the environmental rehabilitation of its site, and the rehabilitation site to the south-west, for a period of five years, which will then revert to Noosa Council's environmental management.