Dear Mr Nigel Hutton MP and Councillor Shane Latcham,

Thank you both for your ongoing engagement regarding the CQUniversity Rockhampton Sports Precinct Master Plan and the concerns raised by local residents and Capricorn Conservation Council (CCC).

I would firstly like to sincerely acknowledge and thank Andrew Collins, Manager Project Delivery, Rockhampton Regional Council, and his team for meeting with myself and a concerned local resident.

Andrew and his colleagues were excellent to meet with. They took considerable time to clearly explain the project, land ownership, development stages, Council's responsibilities and broader planning considerations. Their professionalism, transparency and willingness to listen to community concerns were greatly appreciated. The meeting was extremely informative and helped clarify several matters that have contributed to confusion and concern within the community.

Following this constructive discussion, CCC respectfully requests that Council and the Queensland Government work together to provide a coordinated **community media release**, supported by updated project documentation, to address misconceptions, improve transparency and reassure residents about the environmental management of the development.

We recognise the importance of investment in sporting and recreational infrastructure for Rockhampton. Our intention is to ensure this development proceeds with appropriate environmental safeguards, meaningful community engagement and clear communication.

We would particularly appreciate action on the following five priorities.

1. Public Release of Updated Project Information, Vegetation Clearing and Revegetation Plans

We request the release of the most current Sports Precinct Master Plan, project maps, environmental assessments and relevant briefing documents.

Importantly, we recommend installing clear, accessible **information signage at the development site, including a QR code linking directly to a regularly updated project information page**.

This would allow residents and visitors to readily understand the project and access information about:

- The different development stages, including Stage 1 netball facilities, future sporting infrastructure, car parking, road upgrades and recreational facilities.
- Which stages are approved, funded or proposed for future development.
- The distinction between Council-owned sporting facilities and surrounding land within the Priority Development Area managed by Economic Development Queensland, including areas associated with CQUniversity and potential future residential development.
- The extent and timing of proposed vegetation clearing, including maps showing areas to be cleared and retained.
- Environmental assessments, significant habitat trees, tree retention criteria and ecological recommendations.
- Council's proposed commitment to plant 10 trees for every tree removed, including the number, species and locations of replacement plantings, maintenance arrangements and long-term survival monitoring.

We welcomed learning about the proposed 10:1 tree replacement initiative during our meeting with Andrew and his team. However, the community would benefit from understanding exactly where these trees will be planted and how the initiative will contribute to long-term habitat restoration.

We encourage prioritising locally native species, retaining mature habitat trees wherever possible and directing revegetation towards areas that strengthen ecological connectivity.

The existing publicly available Master Plan can be accessed here:

https://www.rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/regional-services/strategic-planning/rockhampton-sports-precinct-masterplan-report.pdf

We request confirmation of whether this remains the current approved version and the publication of any subsequent amendments, environmental recommendations and updated maps.

2. Wildlife Management, Fauna Spotter-Catchers and Community Reporting

A significant concern for residents is the displacement of native wildlife during vegetation clearing, particularly where animals may move into surrounding residential neighbourhoods and onto roads.

We request the public release of the wildlife management arrangements, including:

- The ecological surveys and fauna assessments undertaken.

- Whether appropriately qualified fauna spotter-catchers will be present during clearing operations and the procedures they will follow.
- How clearing will be staged to minimise wildlife displacement and retain access to suitable habitat.
- How injured, distressed or displaced wildlife will be assessed, rescued, rehabilitated or relocated where appropriate.
- The proposed locations and ecological suitability of any wildlife release areas.
- Arrangements for monitoring wildlife impacts during and following clearing.

Importantly, **the community needs clear information about what to do when encountering injured, distressed or displaced wildlife**.

We request that the media release and onsite QR-code information provide contact details for the responsible wildlife rescue organisations, qualified wildlife carers, project contractors and relevant authorities, together with practical guidance about reporting wildlife incidents.

We also ask that Council and relevant State agencies urgently investigate temporary wildlife warning signage and reduced speed limits, including the feasibility of 40 km/h limits on surrounding roads where clearing may increase wildlife movement.

We strongly recommend that clearing be undertaken progressively, with appropriate ecological supervision, rather than extensive simultaneous removal of vegetation.

3. Immediate Engagement with Darumbal Traditional Custodians and Rangers

We respectfully request that Council and the relevant project authorities **contact Darumbal Traditional Custodians and the Darumbal Rangers immediately** to discuss opportunities for their involvement in the environmental and ecological management of the development.

This should include confirming that all relevant cultural heritage obligations and consultation requirements have been appropriately addressed, and identifying opportunities for Darumbal leadership throughout the project.

In particular, we encourage consideration of Darumbal Rangers undertaking or contributing to:

- Ecological monitoring, vegetation assessments and identification of culturally and environmentally significant areas.
- Native vegetation management, weed control and habitat restoration.
- Wildlife monitoring and management activities within their qualifications and relevant authorisations.
- Selection and planting of locally native species as part of the revegetation commitment.

- Long-term environmental monitoring, rehabilitation and Caring for Country activities.
- Cultural guidance and involvement in future environmental planning and community education.

Where specialist qualifications or permits are required, opportunities could be explored for Darumbal Rangers to work alongside appropriately accredited ecological consultants and fauna specialists.

We believe this presents an important opportunity to support First Nations leadership, recognise Traditional Custodians' ecological knowledge and create meaningful employment and professional development opportunities for Darumbal Rangers.

We would appreciate confirmation of existing engagement with Darumbal representatives and whether further discussions can be arranged as a priority.

4. Proposed Wildlife Corridor – CQUniversity to Limestone Creek

CCC would also like to formally propose the investigation of a **permanent ecological and wildlife corridor connecting suitable habitat within the CQUniversity precinct across towards Limestone Creek, the Limestone Creek conservation area and surrounding bushland**.

This is particularly important given the proposed future development of land within the broader Priority Development Area.

We request that Council, Economic Development Queensland, CQUniversity, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and relevant environmental agencies work collaboratively to identify existing vegetated land that is not currently earmarked for future residential development or infrastructure.

The objective would be to investigate whether this land could be retained and protected as a connected wildlife corridor, allowing animals to move safely between remaining habitat within the university precinct and the Limestone Creek conservation landscape.

We recommend that this investigation consider:

- Mapping existing vegetation, habitat trees, drainage lines, undeveloped land and proposed future housing areas.
- Identifying suitable corridor alignments connecting the university precinct with Limestone Creek and surrounding conservation areas.
- Retaining established native vegetation and significant habitat trees wherever possible.

- Assessing suitable corridor widths, habitat quality and ecological requirements for locally occurring wildlife.
- Investigating safe wildlife crossings, including fauna underpasses, canopy connections or other appropriate infrastructure where the corridor intersects roads.
- Working with TMR to consider wildlife movement in existing and future road upgrades.
- Directing appropriate replacement tree planting and habitat restoration towards strengthening this corridor.
- Exploring planning protections or conservation mechanisms to prevent future fragmentation.
- Involving Darumbal Traditional Custodians, ecological specialists and local conservation organisations in planning and ongoing management.

We recognise that the feasibility, alignment and long-term protection of such a corridor would require further ecological, planning and land-tenure assessments.

However, we believe it is important to investigate these opportunities **now, before future development and vegetation clearing potentially remove the remaining options for meaningful habitat connectivity**.

A permanent corridor could provide a valuable environmental legacy for Rockhampton, complement future development and help protect biodiversity across the broader Limestone Creek landscape.

We would welcome a discussion with the relevant authorities about progressing an initial feasibility assessment and identifying land that may be suitable for conservation rather than future housing.

5. Community Media Release, Construction Impacts and Further Consultation

We request that the matters outlined above be communicated through a coordinated public media release from Council and the relevant State Government representatives- funded by the State Government, not at the expense of Council.

This should clearly explain the current development plans, land ownership, environmental assessments, vegetation clearing, wildlife management, Darumbal engagement, revegetation commitments and opportunities to investigate the proposed Limestone Creek wildlife corridor.

We also request that the media release address **construction noise, permitted working hours and impacts on neighbouring residents**, some of whom are already experiencing significant disturbance.

In particular, residents require clarification of the applicable noise limits, whether construction hours are restricted to 6:00 am–6:00 pm, the days on which works are permitted, arrangements for particularly noisy activities and the process for reporting excessive noise or works outside approved hours.

We understand previous consultation associated with the Sports Precinct Master Plan largely involved sporting organisations and facility stakeholders. While this engagement is important, neighbouring residents, environmental organisations, wildlife carers and other affected community members also have a legitimate interest in the development.

We therefore encourage Council and the relevant State Government representatives to consider an **additional community information and Q&A session**, with broader participation from residents, environmental stakeholders, Darumbal representatives and relevant project authorities.

This would provide an opportunity to explain the project, respond to environmental concerns, address misconceptions and discuss practical solutions directly with the community.

We believe an accessible onsite information display, regularly updated project webpage, coordinated media release and community Q&A session would collectively demonstrate a strong commitment to transparency and constructive engagement.

Moving Forward Together

CCC recognises the importance of improving sporting facilities and recreational opportunities for Rockhampton. We support responsible regional development that considers community needs, biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage and residential wellbeing.

Our recent meeting with Andrew Collins and his team demonstrated the value of respectful, transparent communication. We would again like to thank Andrew and his colleagues for their professionalism and the time they dedicated to explaining the project and listening to the concerns raised.

We believe there is now an opportunity to extend that clarity to the broader community and establish a constructive pathway forward.

In particular, we respectfully seek your assistance in progressing the five priorities outlined above, with immediate attention to the release of updated project information, wildlife management arrangements, engagement with Darumbal Traditional Custodians and Rangers, and investigation of the proposed CQUniversity–Limestone Creek wildlife corridor.

We would appreciate your advice on whether a coordinated media release can be prepared, an anticipated timeframe for publication, and whether a broader community information session could be facilitated.

Thank you both for your time, engagement and commitment to our region.

CCC remains willing to work collaboratively with Rockhampton Regional Council, the Queensland Government, CQUniversity, Darumbal Traditional Custodians, local residents and environmental stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes for our community and local environment.

We look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

S George

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Capricorn Conservation Council