

PROGRAM: PARKS AND FACILITIES

POLICY NO. PAR19

TITLE: ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PURPOSES FUNDED BY  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY POLICY

SUB-TITLE:

ADOPTED: 14.02.2007 FOLIO 39690

AMENDED:

REVOKES:

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### Objective

To provide guidelines and identify criteria for the acquisition of land utilising funds from the Natural Environment Levy.

### Strategic Goals

The strategic goals of the land acquisition fund are to purchase significant land to;

- Maintain and enhance Mackay's natural areas,
- Protect and restore Mackay's biodiversity and ecological processes,
- Secure a world class natural area reserve system,
- Reduce the loss of significant native vegetation and habitat areas
- Provide appropriate opportunities for nature-based recreation, education and learning.

### Criteria

The nature conservation significance of nominated lands will be assessed against the criteria detailed below. The assessment criteria consist of Principal and Supplementary Criteria. Lands purchased **must** meet at least one of the Principal Criteria and one or more of the Supplementary Criteria.

### Principal Criteria

#### *Nature Conservation Significance*

- The land supports native vegetation and other ecological features identified as being of State, Regional or Local significance through Council's application of an approach based on the Common Nature Conservation Classification System (CNCCS). The approach, developed by Chenoweth EPLA and modified by EPA, has been adopted by EPA for use in Queensland and is also known as the Biodiversity Assessment and Mapping Methodology (BAMM).
- The land supports a threatened regional ecosystem and its acquisition would contribute to the protection of Endangered or Of Concern regional ecosystems as defined by the

Vegetation Management Act (1999) administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Water.

- The land provides the opportunity to consolidate or link existing elements of the City's natural area reserve system and enhance the long-term viability and resilience of the biodiversity, which these lands conserve.
- The land provides habitat for a significant floral or faunal species (including aquatic species) within the Mackay region.

### **Supplementary Criteria**

#### ***Ecosystem Services***

Important ecological processes are protected, including:

- Natural flow regimes of waterways and wetlands – biodiversity protection, water quality maintenance, reduced weed invasion, etc
- Natural movement of energy and nutrients through the City's ecosystems – natural succession of vegetation communities, maintenance of wildlife habitat, etc.
- Stabilisation of land surfaces and maintenance of natural erosion and soil formation processes.

#### ***Level of Threat***

- The identified biodiversity conservation values are likely to be irrevocably lost or diminished in the foreseeable future and are best managed for their long term viability and integrity as part of the City's world-class natural area reserve system.
- No alternative prudent or feasible mechanism is at Council's disposal is available to secure the identified nature conservation values and/or functions.

#### ***Financial Considerations***

- The acquisition of the subject land represents a cost-effective solution to the protection of the identified nature conservation values and/or functions.
- On-going management obligations and associated costs can be readily accommodated into Council's existing natural area reserve management programs.
- Supporting grants are available from other funding bodies or organisations (i.e. State or Federal Government).

#### ***Education and Learning***

- The land provides opportunities for the community to experience, enjoy, explore and better understand Mackay's unique diversity of wildlife, ecosystems and natural processes in a manner that conserves the land's identified nature conservation values and/or functions.
- The land provides opportunities for Council and the whole community to undertake practical and relevant research and learning activities that assist Council to better understand and manage Mackay's biodiversity.

#### ***Landscape Amenity***

- Land exhibits significant topographic, landscape and natural aesthetic values and plays an important role in defining the natural landscape character of the City.
- The land is identified in local or regional planning documents as a significant natural heritage site.

#### ***Ecotourism and Nature-Based Recreation***

- Land provides opportunities for nature-based recreational pursuits that do not compromise the lands biodiversity conservation values and which cannot be adequately provided for elsewhere in the City or region.

#### **Landowner Negotiation and Acquisition**

Preference is to purchase lands at fair market value through negotiation with the landowner. However, Council may use compulsory acquisition powers of the Acquisition of Land Act 1967 and Section 8.1 of the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act 1990, to acquire these significant lands. Council's process for acquiring land outlined in Policy AD05 Acquisition of Land for Council Projects will be followed.

#### **Management Plan**

A management plan will be prepared for the subject land, which secures and/or restores the land's identified biodiversity and other values and identifies ongoing maintenance activities required.

Funds from the Natural Environment Levy may be used to undertake essential maintenance activities within the subject land.