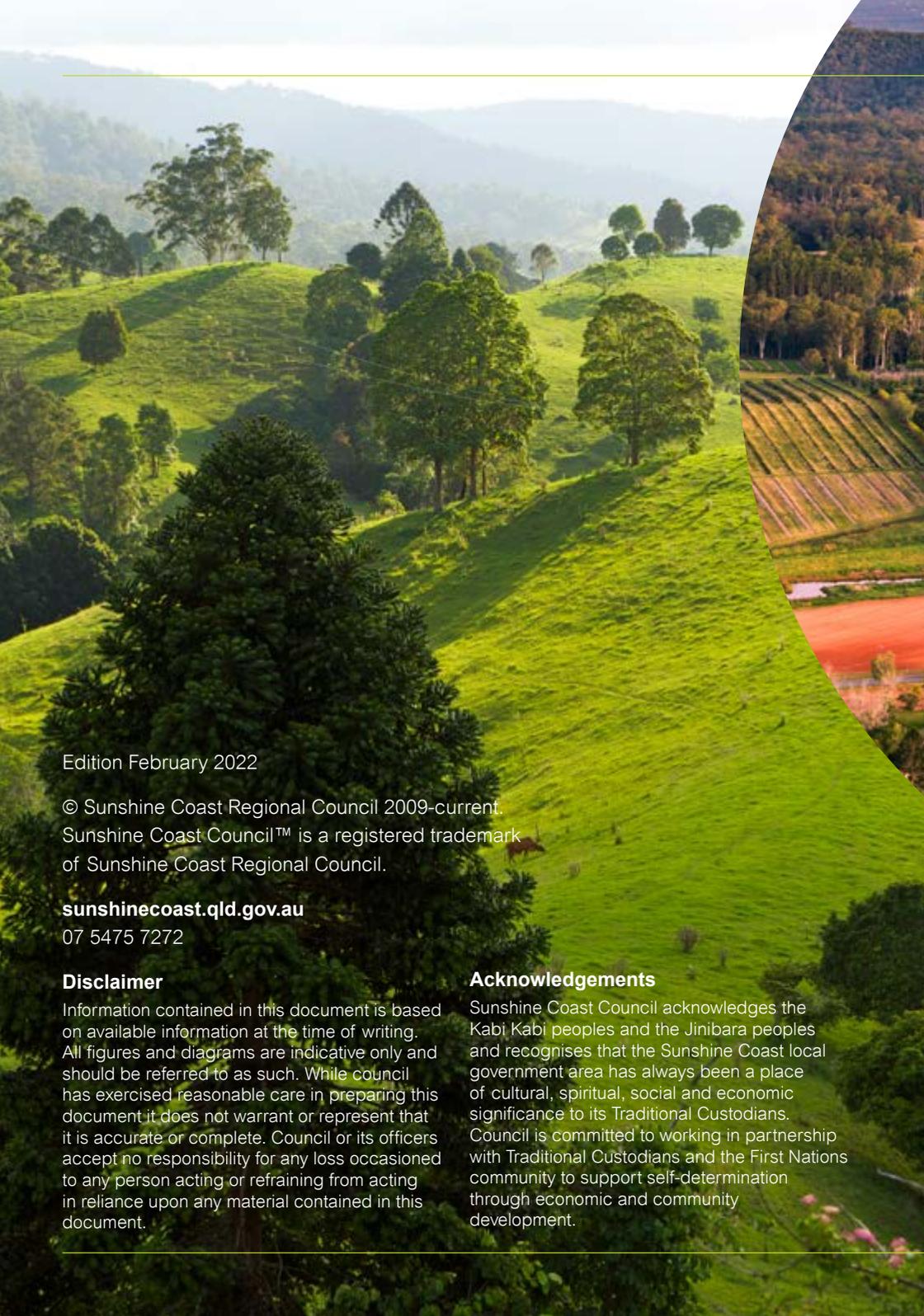


**Rural  
Property  
Landowner  
Handbook**

February 2022



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### **Acknowledgements**

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Kabi Kabi peoples and the Jinibara peoples and recognises that the Sunshine Coast local government area has always been a place of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance to its Traditional Custodians. Council is committed to working in partnership with Traditional Custodians and the First Nations community to support self-determination through economic and community development.

# Rural Property

## Understanding your responsibilities

New owners coming from other parts of Australia to settle on Sunshine Coast rural land need to be aware of the obligations and restrictions that apply to rural property owners in the Sunshine Coast local government area.

Whether you come from other rural areas or from an urban area looking for a green change, a hobby farm or weekend retreat, this handbook will help you understand your responsibilities.

It contains helpful links to areas of concern including weeds, vegetation clearing, bushfire management, earthworks (including dams), on-site disposal and water supply.

## Navigating document links



### **Using your mobile camera:**

Hover over the QR Code and then click on the webpage link that appears.



### **Using a web browser:**

Enter the website then search the key term provided.



### **Using a digital document:**

Click or tap anywhere within the QR Code or search term area. This will link directly to the webpage required.

## Weed management

### Invasive plants and weeds on private land

All residents are responsible for managing invasive plants on their properties, this also includes aquatic weeds. This can sometimes seem complicated if you are a new rural property owner.

The Sunshine Coast Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan helps you to understand your responsibilities to manage invasive plants and offers you guidance to develop a plan to protect your property.

### Biosecurity program

Each year, council undertakes a biosecurity planning process to identify and prioritise invasive plant management programs. This includes a surveillance program where council may inspect your property to identify or monitor invasive weeds and issue any biosecurity orders in accordance with the Biosecurity Act 2014.

## Weed identification

To help you identify and control weeds, visit council's website for a number of handy tools, such as the Weeds of South East Queensland App.

If you would like to speak directly with a council officer to assist with weed identification, please contact council on 07 5475 7272 or 1300 007 272.

If you suspect a plant is a prohibited invasive plant, you can seek extra advice from Biosecurity Queensland.

Another option is to send a sample directly to the Queensland Herbarium for identification. This is a free service provided by the Herbarium and includes instructions on how to collect a sample.

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Invasive weeds: Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*)  
Foreground: Dutchman's Pipe (*Aristolochia elegans*)



European red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)



## Pest Animals

Council encourages the reporting of all pest animals, including invasive fish, feral cats, deer, pigs, foxes, rabbits, and wild dogs. Visit council's website to know what to do if you find one, how to report them and what control measures can be put in place.



Feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*)



Cane toad (*Rhinella marina*)



## Vegetation clearing

Vegetation clearing is sometimes necessary and unavoidable. However, some vegetation is protected from being cleared in our region. This includes vegetation and trees on your property. A number of Queensland Government and Sunshine Coast Council planning regulations inform what can and can't be done.

To understand the requirements about tree clearing on private property, including if you need a permit to remove trees, visit the guide on council's website.

You can also contact council's Development Services to speak directly with a Development Information Officer on 07 5475 7526 or you can lodge a request online.

## Erosion and Sediment

During rainfall, large amounts of sediment is washed into local waterways. The sediment can come from the exposed soil on land being cleared for weed management, housing, roads, and other infrastructure work. Having the right control measures in place is vital, the link below lists suitable options for different situations. Fines can apply to those who do not use correct erosion- and sediment-control measures.



## Bushfire management

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services is the principal agency for bushfire preparedness and response in Queensland.

Council is responsible for identifying development conditions and the associated bushfire hazard overlay. Council also conducts fire management activities within their own reserves.

## Bushfire management plans

It's your responsibility to prepare your property for a potential bushfire, including maintaining fire breaks, removing flammable material that poses a fire risk, and taking steps to buy and maintain firefighting equipment.



It's a safe and sensible idea to create a bushfire management plan for your property.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' website offers guidance in developing these plans for private property.



It can also be important to think about what type of vegetation you have in your yard and how close it is to buildings.

The link below will take you to a map of the Sunshine Coast region. Simply click on the area you would like to find further information about and scroll until you find the Bushfire Hazard Overlay Map.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' website also has more information, insights and support resources to help with bushfire planning and preparedness.

The bushfire overlay code outlines the potential conditions that need to be addressed when council is assessing development in these areas.

The Rural Fire Brigade Officer in your area can also offer extra advice. Visit the QFES website for contacts for various brigades for the Sunshine Coast and surrounding areas (North Coast Region).

You can also contact council's Development Services to speak directly with a Development Information Officer on 07 5475 7526 or you can lodge a request online.

## Development and bushfire management requirements

The Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme provides planning direction for bushfires through the Bushfire Hazard Overlay.

The bushfire hazard overlay maps can help you to understand the bushfire hazard for your location.

Council's website has more information on its fire management program for its reserves.

## Earthworks and dams

If you are planning to undertake earthworks or import fill onto your property, it is important to be aware of council permit requirements, and the possible impacts these activities can have on your neighbours.

In some cases, importing fill material onto a property can alter existing drainage and may lead to local flooding and stormwater problems.

Many properties in our region, especially in low lying areas, are located on flood plains.

Importing fill material in the floodplain is not advised because it reduces the available flood storage area, which can lead to an increase in flood levels and affect flood behaviour on other properties.

Undertaking earthwork activities and importing clean fill material onto private property is regulated through the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014.

Certain work can be undertaken without a permit from council. This, however, depends on a number of factors, such as zoning, lot size, flood hazard mapping and drainage deficiency.

If you are considering earthworks on your property, please contact council's Development Information team on 07 5475 7526. They can provide guidance and advice on permit requirements.

The earthworks fact sheet has further information on the applicable codes and permits.

## Dams

Building a dam on your property is also considered earthworks and it's important you get all relevant approvals before you start any construction. More information on building a dam on your property is available on council's website.

You can also contact council's Development Services to speak directly with a Development Information Officer on 07 5475 7526 or you can lodge a request online.



Sunshine Coast hinterland landholder environment grant project

## On-site sewage disposal and grey water use

Many rural properties are not connected to public sewage infrastructure. If that is the case for your property, you will need an on-site sewage facility.

Visit Council's website for more information about the requirement and council's approval process.

You can also contact council's Development Services to speak directly with a Development Information Officer on 07 5475 7526 or you can lodge a request online.

Unity Water also provides some useful suggestions on the use of grey water and bore water.



## Water tanks

Installing rainwater tanks requires prior approval by council to ensure rainwater tanks connected to internal plumbing follow the correct building standards and codes.

Visit council's website for more information on council's application and approval process for rainwater tanks.

The Australian Government has developed a handy overview and guide for landholders interested in water tank installation on their property.

Unity Water also provides some helpful information associated with rainwater tanks and testing requirements along with fill station locations for water carriers in times of low rainfall.

In times of low rainfall, water tanks may require supplementary filling by registered water carriers.

While council can not recommend any one provider to you, the Yellow pages or Google is a good starting point to find water carriers in your area.

To find a provider search water cartage, Sunshine Coast, Queensland.



## Waterways

The management and care of waterways on private property is your responsibility as the landowner.

Activities within a waterway are governed by the Queensland Government and permits and approvals may be required under Water Act 2000 and/or Planning Act 2016.

## Riparian protection permits

You will generally need a riverine protection permit before you excavate, place fill, or destroy native vegetation in any watercourse, lake or spring unless you meet the exemption requirements.

## Stock and domestic rights

A riparian right in Queensland is the riparian landholders' access to stock and domestic water via riparian water authorisations.

The basic right, as stipulated in the Water Act 2000 (also known as 'riparian right'), is the right of an owner of land adjoining a watercourse, lake or spring, to take from that stream for stock or domestic purposes.

This riparian stock and domestic access is separate from an entitlement.

A riparian water acknowledgement must be submitted to Queensland Government to access this right to take water.

## Water licence

You may need a water licence for taking or interfering with surface water, overland flow water or underground water.

## Woody debris

Large woody debris, such as branches and logs, serve an important ecological function in river systems.

In general, they are best left where they are for insects to live on and fish to breed in.

However, occasionally large logs in the watercourse are considered a safety hazard in areas with high recreational use or may contribute to localised bank erosion.

Advice and permits to remove dangerous debris from a watercourse can be obtained from your local Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water office.

## Crossings (waterway barrier works)

Constructing waterway crossings (waterway barrier works) may need development approval under the Planning Act 2016.

## Sand and gravel extraction

Before starting works to excavate quarry sand, gravel and other materials in watercourses and lakes, you will need to get the required authorisations and ensure you meet all associated requirements.



## Tidal zones

Tidal works generally include the construction or demolition of structures such as jetties, pontoons and marine basins. Before you undertake a development application or any work in a tidal zone, consent by the landowner is required. Please check the requirements before any works are done.

## Fish habitats

A declared fish habitat area (FHA) is an area protected against physical disturbance from coastal development, while still allowing legal fishing. All habitats within a declared FHA, including marine plants like mangroves and saltmarshes, are protected. Only limited development is allowed; private development is restricted.

Before any work is done in a fish habitat area, please check the requirements.

## Constructing and modifying levee banks

Levees play an important role in floodplain management. They also have the potential to impact on neighbouring properties, the community and the catchment as a whole.

Because of this, construction or modification of levees is regulated by Queensland Government planning laws. The level of assessment required depends on the potential impacts of the levee.

## Waterway works associated with emergencies and disasters

Natural disasters, such as floods and cyclones, can significantly impact watercourses and adjacent properties.

You can reduce these impacts by carrying out certain activities. Find out more about the legal requirements for undertaking activities in a watercourse before, during and after an emergency or disaster on the Queensland Government website.



## Conservation

There are a couple of programs that landholders can become involved in that supports them in conserving bushland on their properties, including Land for Wildlife and Voluntary Conservation Agreements.

You can also volunteer to conserve and restore natural bushland in council's environmental reserves. Join with other volunteers to plant trees, create habitat corridors and restore local waterways.



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