SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND SCIENCE

1 February 2024

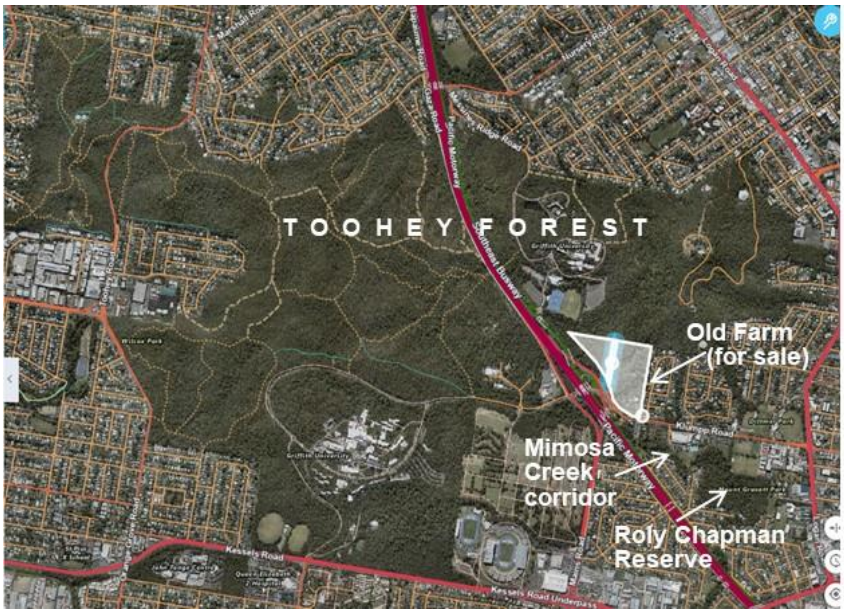
Cr Krista Adams:
hollandpark.ward@bcc.qld.gov.au; Shop 13, 1290 Logan Rd, Mt Gravatt, Qld 4122
Cr Tracy Davis (Chair Environment):
Chair_EPS@brisbane.qld.gov.au; Level 8, Brisbane Square, 266 George St, Brisbane, Qld 4000

Re: Unique conservation land acquisition opportunity – Toohey Forest

Dear Councillors Adams and Davis

I write concerning a unique and significant land acquisition opportunity, to secure and enhance the ecological values and sustainability of southern Brisbane's bushland. I write as an expert in ecological science and local bushland management (see Bionote below).

The subject site is about 10.5 hectares of partly vegetated former farmland, in the southeastern corner of Toohey Forest (see "Old Farm" on the image below); specifically Lots 2 and 3 RP 138498, Lot 1006 SL9128, and Lot 60 RP 12378).




The size, condition and location of this land parcel are of immense strategic importance to conservation and restoration in the City of Brisbane. Securing this land for its habitat values, and thereby avoiding its urban development, would have the following beneficial outcomes.

1. **To avoid compromising the longer-term ecological integrity, flora and fauna of Toohey forest**.
Toohey Forest is an exceptionally large and significant area of native bushland in southern Brisbane (Catterall & Wallace 1987). Its conservation importance has been recognised at local, regional and State levels. This importance is due to its relatively large and consolidated area, diverse vegetation types, and range of topographies and physical features. It currently supports iconic fauna species such as the Koala and Powerful Owl, as well as a very high diversity of birds, and plant species that occur at few other locations. These features enable Toohey Forest to not only sustain viable populations of its own flora and fauna, but also underpin recolonisation into, and viability of, other smaller remnant bushland patches in its vicinity.

Development of the subject site would severely compromise this ecological role, and substantially degrade the ecological integrity and values of Toohey Forest, by almost disconnecting the Forest's two subsections (west and east of the southeast freeway). This fragmentation would occur because continuously developed land would extend from Klumpp Road to the northernmost extent of the Griffith University Mt Gravatt buildings (see map).

Not only would this be ecologically hostile for the many bushland-dependent species currently found in large habitat remnants such as Toohey Forest (Catterall et al. 2010), it would also encourage further incursions into the forest by Noisy Miner birds (Piper & Catterall 2003). "*Aggressive exclusion of birds from potential woodland and forest habitat by over-abundant noisy miners*" is an Australian Commonwealth Key Threatening Process (DCCEEW 2014).

2. **To enable enhancement of the currently tenuous south-east ecological linkage through riparian bushland extending from Toohey Forest** into the bushland of nearby Roly Chapman Reserve, and thence connecting through the fringing vegetation along Mimosa Creek into other significant bushland remnants in the Bulimba Creek catchment (see image above).

A more functional linkage through this site would benefit both Toohey Forest and all the other thereby networked bushland areas. Acquisition of the subject land would enable strategic restoration to enhance its function. Development of this land would irrevocably break this linkage.

3. **To enable preservation and enhancement of the riparian and aquatic habitats, and water quality, in Mimosa Creek**. Urban development of the subject site will inevitably degrade water quality in Mimosa Creek, and potentially exacerbate its potential for flooding.

4. **To provide a significant potential for consolidating and enlarging the habitat area of Toohey Forest, with the incorporation of lowland riparian vegetation** which has been almost completely lost from this forest patch (and from the city more widely).

There is scientific evidence that low lying riparian vegetation in Toohey Forest is of exceptional value in supporting a higher diversity and abundance of plants and animals than do the steep slopes and ridges, including a range of species that depend on the riparian habitat (Catterall et al. 2001). However, most reserved bushland in the Forest, and in southern Brisbane more generally, is situated on higher, drier ground.

The subject land is low lying and riparian, and currently contains regenerating vegetation. It has a high potential for strategic restoration into a more natural ecological community, of especially high value due to its location adjacent to conserved bushland of slopes and ridges.

I hope that you will be able to facilitate the timely acquisition of this land by Council, in order to secure and enhance such an important part of Brisbane's natural heritage, for future generations. Please contact me if you need further information about the issues raised above.

Sincerely

Professor Carla Catterall
School of Environment and Science, Griffith University, Nathan campus.

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**Catterall bionote:**

Carla Catterall is a wildlife ecologist with expertise in conservation and environmental management. She holds the position of Emeritus Professor at Griffith University (Brisbane), where she has designed and taught a range of university courses. Her research focus is on how a diverse flora and fauna might be encouraged to persist within landscapes used by people. She has significant research leadership in ecological restoration and biodiversity recovery.

During her 50-year career, working in a variety of ecosystems, the findings of her research have been communicated in about 160 scientific publications, 40+ in other formats for land managers and the wider community, and 30+ consultancy reports. For her published work on birds in the Australasian region, Professor Catterall was awarded the 2009 Birdlife Australia D.L. Serventy Medal. During 2008-10 she was President of the Ecological Society of Australia.

Professor Catterall has served on over 30 government or community advisory bodies, including ministerial advisory committees for Queensland's Nature Conservation and Vegetation Management Acts, the scientific advisory Committee for the Wet Tropics Management Authority, and the Commonwealth Threatened Species Scientific Committee.

She also has worked extensively in bushland of the Brisbane region, including Toohey Forest, and lives in Brisbane's inner south, where she is an active member of the Norman Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee.

**References cited:**

Catterall, C.P. & Wallace, C.J. (eds) 1987. *An Island in Suburbia: the Natural and Social History of Toohey Forest.* IAER Griffith University, Brisbane. 210 pp.

Catterall, C.P., Piper, S.D. Bunn, S.E. and Arthur, J.M. 2001. Flora and fauna assemblages vary with local topography in a subtropical eucalypt forest. *Austral Ecology* 26: 56-69.

Catterall, C.P., Cousin, J.A., Piper, S. and Johnson, G. 2010. Long-term dynamics of bird diversity in forest and suburb: decay, turnover or homogenisation. *Diversity and Distributions* 16: 559-570.

DCCEEW 2014. *Aggressive exclusion of birds from potential woodland and forest habitat by over-abundant noisy miners (Manorina melanocephala)*. Listing Advice and Information Sheet. Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/key-threatening-processes/overabundant-noisy-miners

Piper, S.D. & Catterall, C.P. 2003. A particular case and a general pattern: hyperaggressive behaviour by one species may mediate avifaunal decreases in fragmented Australian forests. Oikos 101: 602-614.