# CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE HOSPITAL RESEARCH & TRAINING PRECINCT

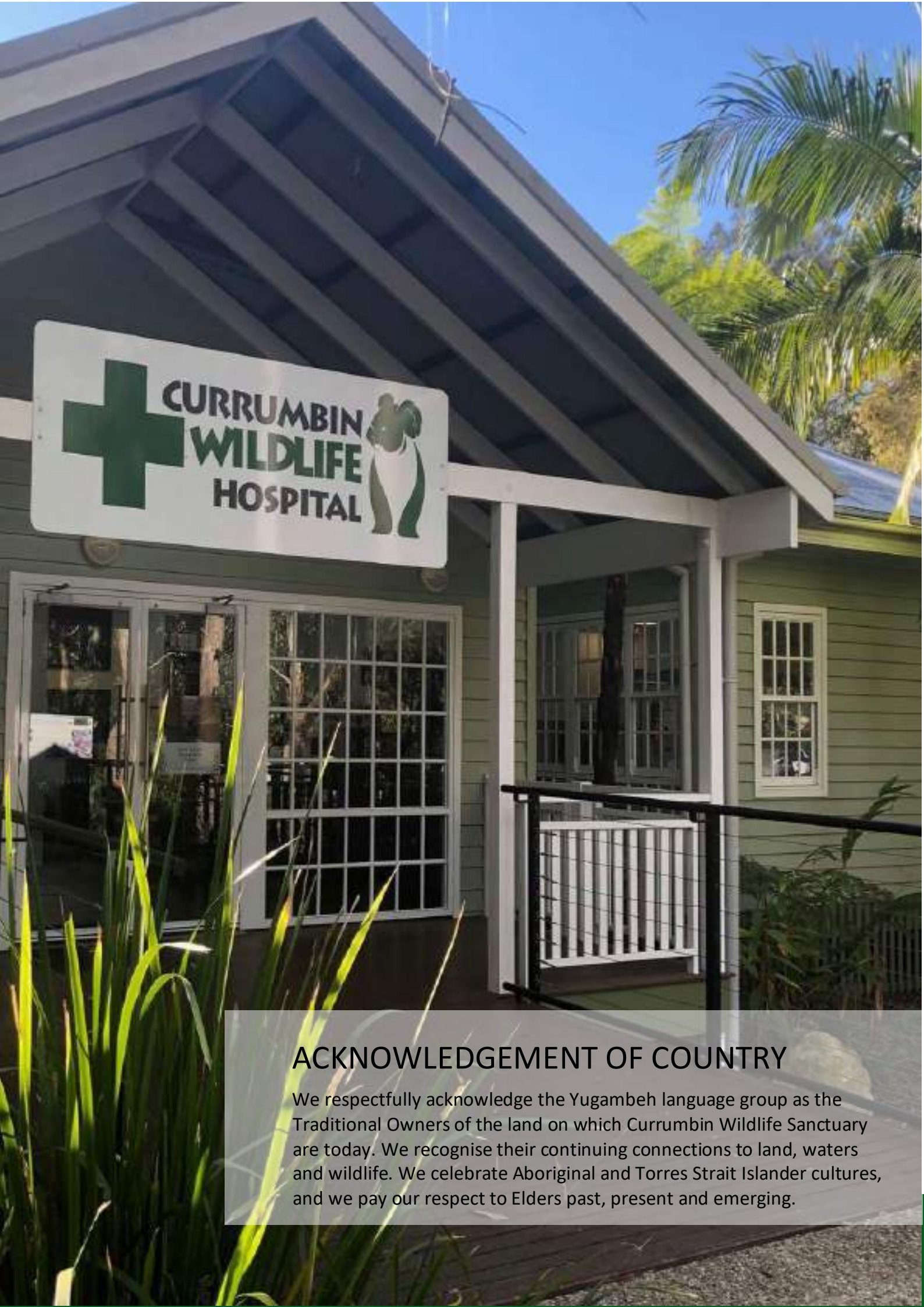
## Business Case


**Final**

**January 2024**

CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE HOSPITAL

CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY
GOLD COAST • AUSTRALIA




# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We respectfully acknowledge the Yugambeh language group as the Traditional Owners of the land on which Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary are today. We recognise their continuing connections to land, waters and wildlife. We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and we pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction & Background

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the longest-running tourist attractions in Queensland, operating continuously for 76 years. In 2019, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary welcomed nearly 600,000 visitors to experience over 150 different types of animals.

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital was originally started to provide care and treatment to the Sanctuary's resident animals, however, quickly it began treating injured native wildlife on behalf of the community. In 2009, a purpose-built wildlife hospital was constructed and today it is one of the busiest wildlife hospitals in the world, treating almost 15,000 sick, injured, and orphaned native wildlife per year. The Hospital delivers these services free of charge to the community and is reaching its maximum capacity.

In its wildlife conservation efforts, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has embarked on a wide range of research projects, using its existing facilities, access to wildlife and partnerships with universities. Equally, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has engaged in bespoke and specialised veterinary training focused on treating injured or sick wildlife. These activities were born out of community need and were never envisioned when the wildlife hospital was designed in 2009. Today, the research and training demands are much greater than the existing wildlife hospital can bear. Currently, these activities operate in a very constrained environment and so much more research and training could be achieved through bespoke, purpose-built facilities.

Today, in a world where the Koala, a symbol of Australia, has been listed as an endangered species, the research and training that could be offered by the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is very much needed and required in order to conserve the unique wildlife of Australia. The existing, very constrained facilities have demonstrated the strong community need for both research and training space.

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary now plans to deliver a purpose built research and training precinct to not merely meet demand but to significantly advance its current conservation programs and generate a new tourism experience for the Gold Coast. The project will deliver a unique piece of community infrastructure that will contribute significantly to wildlife conservation and preservation, which is a priority for the local region, State and nation. The new research and training precinct will contribute to Government priorities such as net zero emissions and wildlife conservation. It will contribute to growing the local economy and enhancing the local environment across the region.

## Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct

The proposed Research and Training Precinct would deliver the fit for purpose facilities that can enable the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital to continue and expand its current research and training programs, to not only save many native wildlife species from extinction but generate a uniquely Queensland experience for visitors.

The new facilities would provide 16 individual research work stations as well as a flexible training space that can accommodate up to 90 students at once.

Specifically, the new Research and Training Precinct would feature the following components:

- Open laboratory area for medical procedures and clinical research
- Multi-purpose lab and workflow space
- Molecular laboratories
- Purpose-built post-mortem facility, with a teaching space to accommodate students and instructors
- Interactive interpretation centre
- Flexible training facility to hold up to 90 students at a time (including primary, secondary and tertiary)
- Separate small meeting room (boardroom)
- Acoustic sound room for podcast and live video streaming to boost the message of the Wildlife Hospital's important work globally
- Additional internal and external animal enclosures
- Team facilities including bathrooms, showers, and break areas
- Office facilities for university staff, students, and veterinary staff

The new Research and Training Precinct is expected to cost $12.7 million to build. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has already invested $570,000 to develop the current plans and concepts, making the project 'shovel ready'.

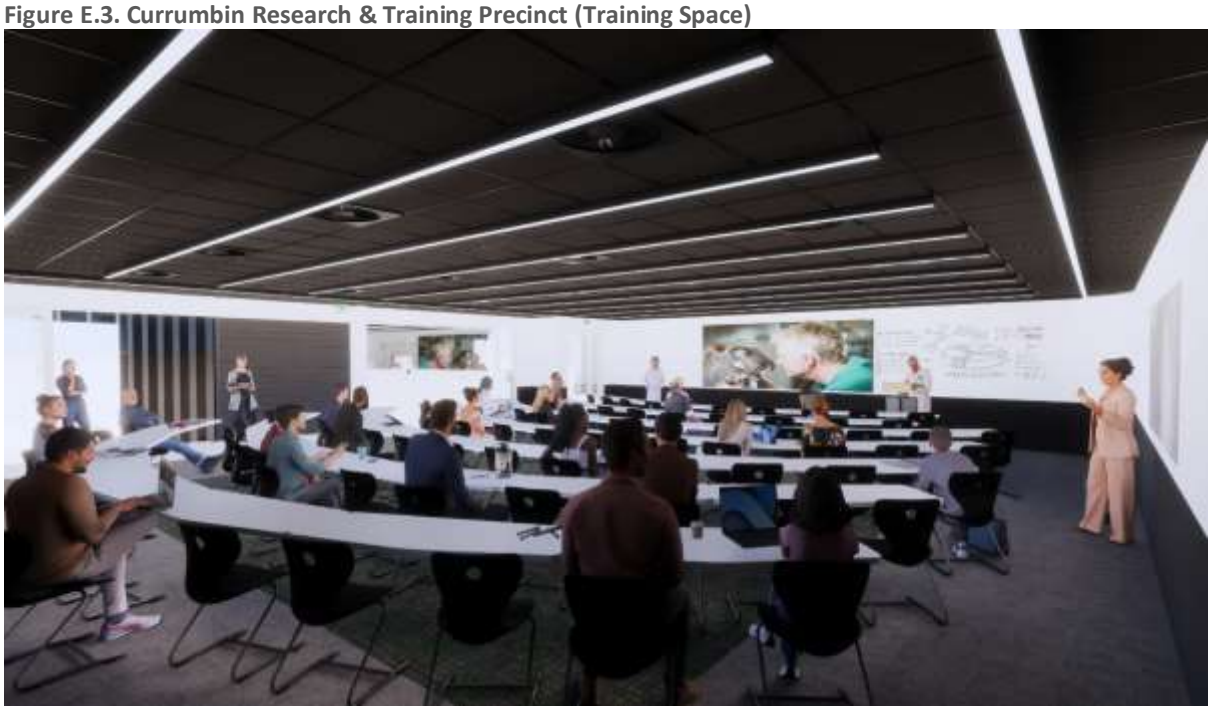
**Figure E.1. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct (Entrance from Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary)**


Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

**Figure E.2. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct (Laboratory)**

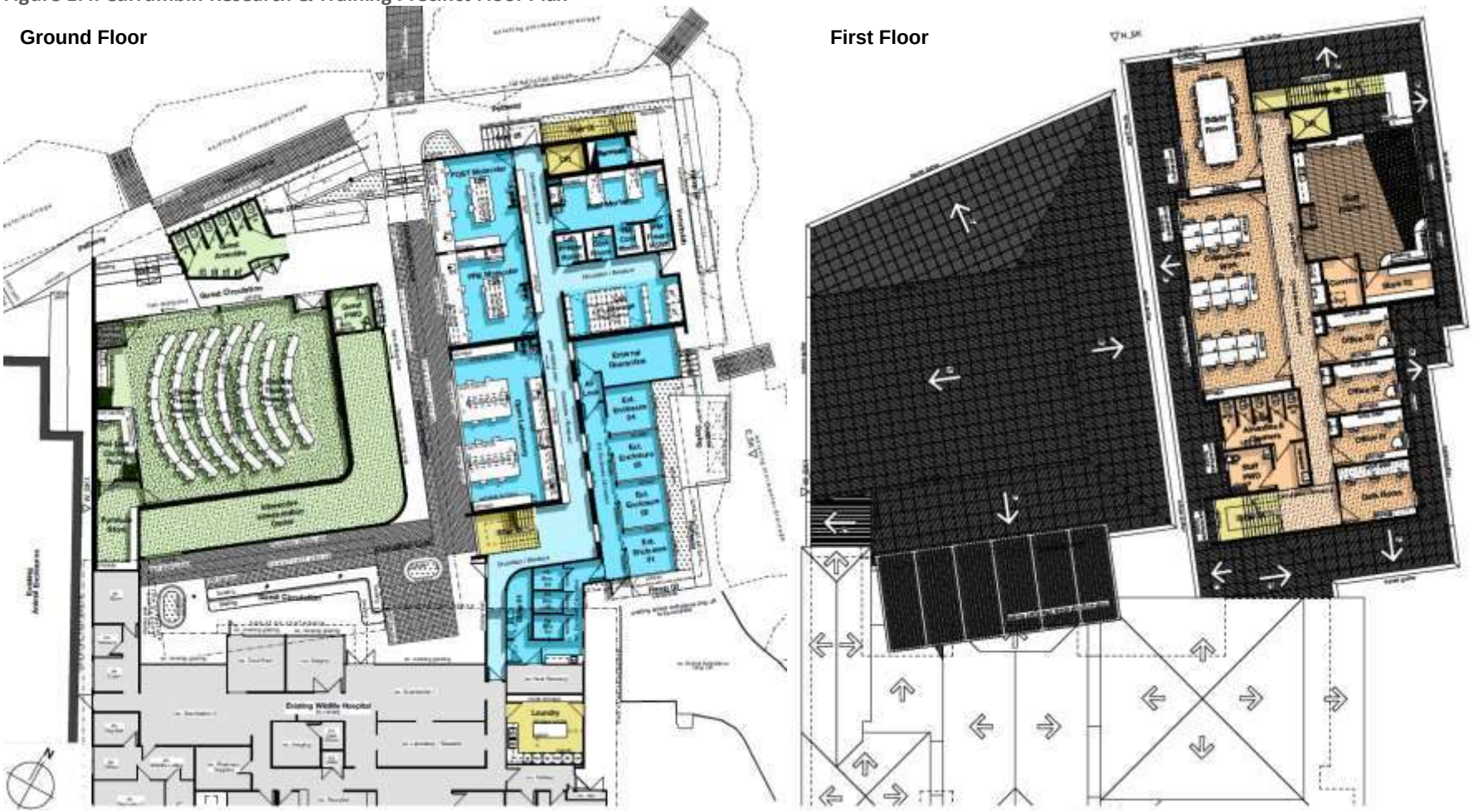
Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

**Figure E.3. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct (Training Space)**



Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

**Figure E.4. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct Floor Plan**




Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

**Cassidy's Storey: Success of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital's Research Program**

In 2020, Cassidy was found on the Pacific Motorway (M1) in bad shape and was admitted to the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, weighing just half her normal body weight. While receiving treatment at the Hospital, Cassidy was approved to enter the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital's Koala Chlamydia Vaccine Program.

Once she recovered at the Hospital, Cassidy was released back into the wild at Elanora, where an existing population of wild Koala reside. This population of Koala is also known to carry Koala Chlamydia. Upon a routine health check as part of the Koala Chlamydia Vaccine Program, not only had Cassidy not contracted the disease, but she had a little joey (Cooly). This surprise represented a major milestone for the Koala Chlamydia Vaccine Program and demonstrated the effectiveness of the vaccine as Chlamydia causes infertility in Koalas.

In total, 30 joeys have been identified amongst the Koala population at Elanora, showing how the research from the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital can save the lives of Koala and greatly increase the numbers of koala in the wild.

## Financial Assessment

An independent financial analysis was carried out by Lucid Economics. **The analysis found that due to the need for research and training, the new facilities could operate in a financially sustainable manner**. The financial model has been designed to support the conservation work of the research and training centre, with researchers charged a rental rate well below the commercial market, and training courses for veterinarians, vet nurses and wildlife carer groups charged at a rate to be attractive and accessible for these groups and at the same time generate a favourable financial outcome for the financially sustainable operation of the new facilities.

The financial assessment also found that neither the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary nor the National Trust of Australia (QLD) has the capability to fund the capital costs associated with this project. **The financial assessment determined that capital funding would need to come from government.**

**Table E.1. Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct, 10-year Cashflow Statement ($m)**

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Revenue** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Vet Sales | $0.053 | $0.054 | $0.056 | $0.057 | $0.059 | $0.060 | $0.062 | $0.064 | $0.065 | $0.067 |
| Education | $0.688 | $0.706 | $0.724 | $0.744 | $0.763 | $0.784 | $0.804 | $0.826 | $0.847 | $0.870 |
| Observers | $0.026 | $0.027 | $0.027 | $0.028 | $0.029 | $0.030 | $0.030 | $0.031 | $0.032 | $0.033 |
| Research | $0.047 | $0.048 | $0.049 | $0.051 | $0.052 | $0.053 | $0.055 | $0.056 | $0.058 | $0.059 |
| Events | $0.159 | $0.163 | $0.168 | $0.172 | $0.177 | $0.181 | $0.186 | $0.191 | $0.196 | $0.201 |
| Voluntourism | $0.450 | $0.462 | $0.474 | $0.487 | $0.500 | $0.513 | $0.526 | $0.540 | $0.555 | $0.569 |
| Donations | $0.205 | $0.211 | $0.216 | $0.222 | $0.228 | $0.234 | $0.240 | $0.246 | $0.253 | $0.260 |
| **Total Revenue** | **$1.628** | **$1.671** | **$1.715** | **$1.760** | **$1.807** | **$1.855** | **$1.904** | **$1.954** | **$2.006** | **$2.059** |
| **Expenses** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Building Costs | $0.149 | $0.153 | $0.157 | $0.161 | $0.165 | $0.170 | $0.174 | $0.179 | $0.183 | $0.188 |
| Conferences | $0.005 | $0.005 | $0.005 | $0.005 | $0.005 | $0.005 | $0.006 | $0.006 | $0.006 | $0.006 |
| Consumables | $0.019 | $0.020 | $0.021 | $0.021 | $0.022 | $0.022 | $0.023 | $0.023 | $0.024 | $0.025 |
| Education Expenses | $0.386 | $0.396 | $0.406 | $0.417 | $0.428 | $0.440 | $0.451 | $0.463 | $0.475 | $0.488 |
| Equipment | $0.139 | $0.142 | $0.146 | $0.150 | $0.154 | $0.158 | $0.162 | $0.166 | $0.171 | $0.175 |
| Feed | $0.000 | $0.000 | $0.000 | $0.000 | $0.000 | $0.000 | $0.000 | $0.000 | $0.000 | $0.000 |
| Events | $0.113 | $0.116 | $0.119 | $0.122 | $0.125 | $0.129 | $0.132 | $0.136 | $0.139 | $0.143 |
| Research Costs | $0.062 | $0.064 | $0.065 | $0.067 | $0.069 | $0.071 | $0.072 | $0.074 | $0.076 | $0.078 |
| Office Expenses | $0.075 | $0.077 | $0.079 | $0.081 | $0.083 | $0.085 | $0.088 | $0.090 | $0.092 | $0.095 |
| Salaries and Wages | $0.371 | $0.381 | $0.391 | $0.401 | $0.412 | $0.423 | $0.434 | $0.445 | $0.457 | $0.469 |
| Sundry | $0.010 | $0.010 | $0.010 | $0.010 | $0.011 | $0.011 | $0.011 | $0.011 | $0.012 | $0.012 |
| Volunteerism | $0.158 | $0.162 | $0.166 | $0.170 | $0.175 | $0.179 | $0.184 | $0.189 | $0.194 | $0.199 |
| Workplace Health & Safety | $0.007 | $0.007 | $0.008 | $0.008 | $0.008 | $0.008 | $0.008 | $0.009 | $0.009 | $0.009 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$1.492** | **$1.532** | **$1.572** | **$1.614** | **$1.657** | **$1.701** | **$1.746** | **$1.792** | **$1.839** | **$1.888** |
| ***Net Profit (Loss)*** | ***$0.135*** | ***$0.139*** | ***$0.142*** | ***$0.146*** | ***$0.150*** | ***$0.154*** | ***$0.158*** | ***$0.162*** | ***$0.167*** | ***$0.171*** |

Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

## Economic Assessment

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct would provide numerous economic benefits. Many of the planned training programs would create new educational tourism products that would attract visitors to the region, including international students. In total, the training and educational programs would include:

- 6,274 participants
- 4,643 visitors
- 7,074 day trip visits
- 3,420 visitor nights
- $2.67 million in total visitor expenditure

In total, the new Research and Training Precinct will annually support 41 new jobs across the local economy and contribute $6.7 million to the local economy, in Gross Regional Product (GRP) terms.

The construction of the precinct will generate additional, once off activity that will support a total of 56 jobs across the economy and $7.5 million in GRP.

**Table E.2: Economic Impact of the Research and Training Precinct, Operational Phase (Total)**

| | Gross Regional Product ($m) | Employment (No.) |
|---|---|---|
| Direct | $3.03 | 29 |
| Indirect | $3.70 | 12 |
| **Total** | **$6.73** | **41** |

Notes: Employment expressed as full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.
Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

**Table E.3: Economic Impact of the Research and Training Precinct, Construction Phase**

| | Gross Regional Product ($m) | Employment (No.) |
|---|---|---|
| Direct | $3.1 | 20 |
| Indirect | $6.2 | 50 |
| **Total** | **$9.3** | **70** |

Notes: Employment expressed as full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.
Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

**The Economic Value of Native Wildlife**

Australia's native wildlife is unique and many species are not found anywhere else in the world. Millions of visitors come to Australia to experience our natural environment and our native wildlife. This market has been recognised by the State and Commonwealth Government through a wide variety of strategic documents. For many visitors, the image of them with a koala or a kangaroo becomes a life-long memory of their trip to Australia. From a tourism perspective, the koala alone is likely worth $1.1 billion in visitor expenditure in Australia annually. The total value of all Australian wildlife would be much greater.

The conservation and preservation of our native wildlife is extremely important, not just to support a balanced and healthy ecosystem, but for our economy.

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct will not only generate positive tourism and visitor outcomes but support the preservation of the koala and many native wildlife species that are endangered, saving billions of dollars in our economy.

A cost-benefit analysis was conducted independently by Lucid Economics and found that the project produces a net community benefit, generating a benefit-cost ratio of **2.50 meaning that it is economically desirable and provides a net benefit to the community**. For every $1 in costs associated with the project, there are $2.50 of benefits.

## Environmental Benefits

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct will contribute to the decarbonisation agenda of the Commonwealth Government. The design of the new facilities have incorporated numerous elements to reduce the carbon footprint of the facility and provide positive environmental benefits, including:

- **Roof-top solar**: a roof-top PV solar system will be installed on the roof of the new building, capable of generating sufficient power for the facility's electrical usage during the day.
- **Rainwater harvesting**: rainwater tanks will be installed to harvest rainwater, further reducing the carbon footprint of the building.
- **Energy-efficient lighting**: energy efficient LED lighting will be used throughout the new facilities to further reduce power consumption and the carbon footprint of the building.
- **Energy-efficient design**: a number of design features, including the floor to ceiling viewing glass windows, will allow for natural day-light to provide some of the interior lighting, further reducing future energy consumption and the carbon footprint of the building.

**Environmental Benefits of Saving Native Wildlife in Australia**

Beyond the environmental and sustainable design features of the new facility, the future research and training conducted at the facility will provide considerable environmental benefits. According to the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF), the new facilities will deliver significant environmental benefits through its contribution to the preservation and conservation of native wildlife, which will far outweigh any future economic benefits.

## The Case for Government Assistance

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary nor the National Trust of Australia (QLD) has the financial capability to fund the Research and Training Precinct. In order to realise this vision, support and government funding will be required. The current Currumbin Wildlife Hospital provides its life saving services for native wildlife free of charge as a community service, which is funded in part by the proceeds of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and generous donations.

The financial analysis has demonstrated that once built, the facility can be operated in a financially sustainable manner, without the need for any further Government assistance. The economic analysis shows the various economic benefits that will stem from the project. It will provide a new and expanded community infrastructure that meets an identified need in the community .

## Project Implementation

The project is 'shovel ready' and can commence upon receipt of Government funding. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has already advanced the project to its current stage and has numerous mechanisms in place to deliver the project by December 2025. The City of the Gold Coast (landowner) is supportive of the project, has given consent for it, has confirmed that the project aligns to current development controls and has signalled a willingness to commit funding towards the project.

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has a strong track record in delivering capital projects similar to this one. It has the necessary governance and project management structures in place. Furthermore, it has a demonstrated history of successfully and sustainably operating similar facilities.

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# 1. Introduction

Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is one of the busiest wildlife hospitals in the world, first opening its doors in 1989 to provide urgent care to Australian native wildlife. Today the team treats, rehabilitates and releases over 15,000 sick, injured, and orphaned native wildlife each year.

The facility operates with the support of an amazing team of 147 volunteers who in 2019 contributed over 24,000 volunteer hours over 5,076 shifts. It also has the expert experience of five full-time veterinarians and 15 vet nurses that perform the lifesaving treatment.

The hospital operates three Wildlife Ambulances that assist in rescuing and releasing those sick and injured animals. In 2022, these ambulances carried out 2,067 rescues and travelled 213,862km.

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital operates as a free service to the community and is financially supported from proceeds from the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, grants and the generosity of so many donors.

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is proposing to develop a research and training precinct at the hospital that will expand this unique community infrastructure as well as create a new tourism experience for the Gold Coast, focused on sustainability and native wildlife. It will significantly contribute to critical research to save a variety of wildlife as well as provide a range of training and education to greatly increase the skills, capacity and capability of future veterinarians (from all over the world). The training and education offering will attract visitors from across Australia and around the world. The facility will work collaboratively with the existing Wildlife Hospital and greatly augment its capability. The Research and Training Precinct will lead to reduced hospital admissions, prevent and treat disease and protect our native wildlife so future generations will know and love them too.

This report provides a detailed business case on the project, including:

- Project background
- Project overview
- Strategic context
- Financial analysis
- Economic and community benefits
- Environmental benefits
- Risk assessment
- Stakeholder support
- Implementation plan

# 2. Proposal Background

## 2.1 Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary History

Beekeeper and floriculturist Alex Griffiths establish Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary in 1947 as a small-scale tourist venture featuring lorikeet feeding displays in which tourists could participate. By at least 1953 it was known as the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary and by the mid-1950s had become an iconic tourist attraction on the Gold Coast. Thousands of Australian families made the Sanctuary a part of their holiday must-do stops. The place had evolved by the early 1970s to offer visitors a variety of experiences.

In 1976 Griffiths gifted the sanctuary to the National Trust of Australia (Queensland), and the terms of this exchange and its ongoing operation are set out in the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary Act 1976. The place was renamed the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary in 1995. It continues to be operated by the Trust as a nature-based tourism enterprise and is recognised as one of the oldest of its kind to remain in operation in the state.

The sanctuary lands gifted by Alex Griffith to the Trust encompassed three main areas:

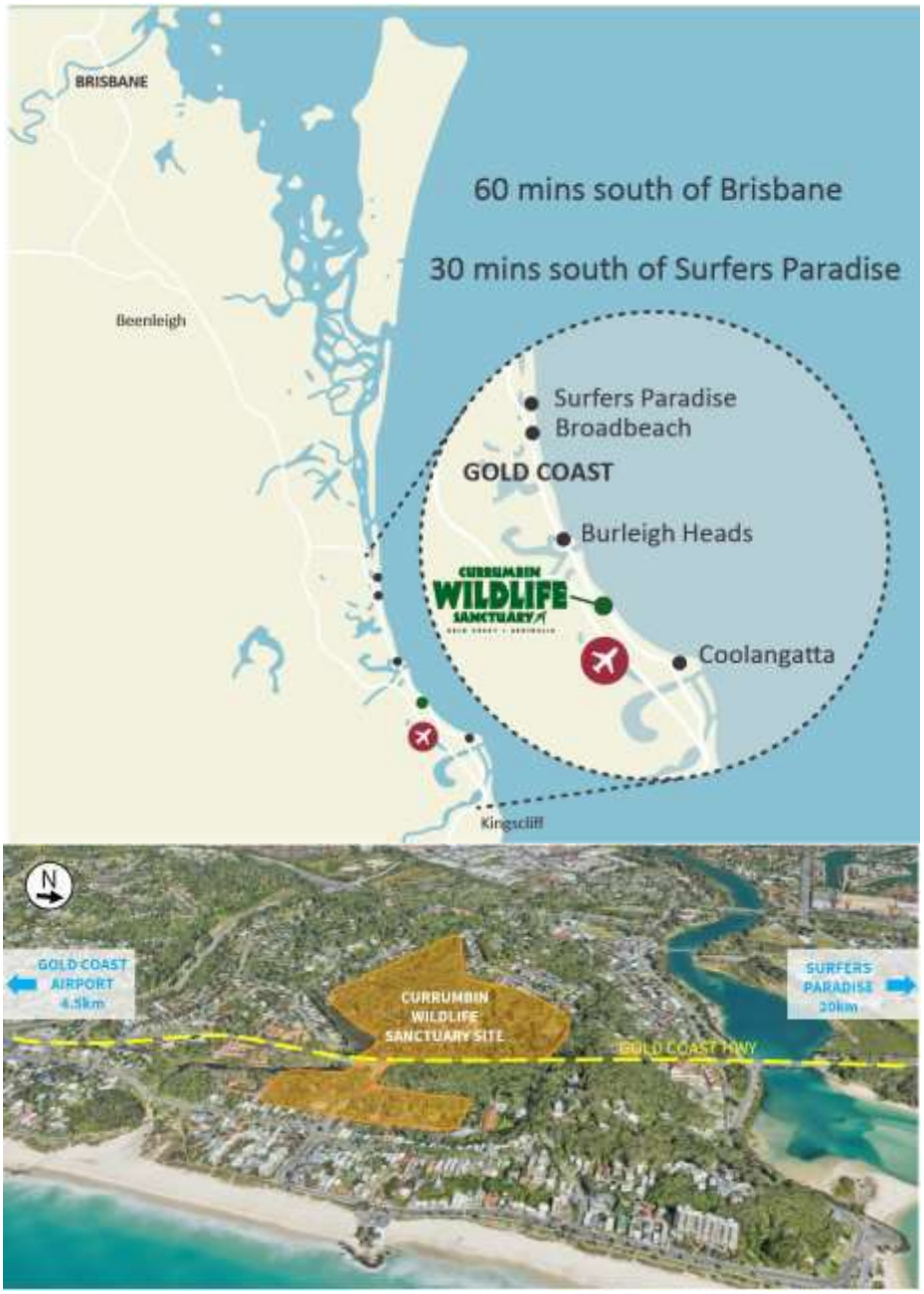
- the original sanctuary site on the southern side of Tomewin Street and three contiguous properties in Teemangum Street, including a house occupied by Alex Griffiths from 1971 until 1998
- a car park and a picnic ground on the northern side of Tomewin Street
- 18.728 hectares (46.28 acres) of heavily treed land on the western side of the Gold Coast Highway, known as the Western Reserve

The Trust also took over the leasehold of the swampy land on either side of Flat Rock Creek formerly leased by Griffiths for sanctuary purposes and a tunnel that Griffith had constructed under the Gold Coast Highway, linking the Tomewin Street site and the Western Reserve.

## 2.2 Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary Overview

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is located directly off of the Gold Coast Highway, only 8 minutes from the Gold Coast Airport. It is one of the longest-running tourist attractions on the Gold Coast, operating for 76 years, and in 2019, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary welcomed nearly 600,000 guests.

**Figure 2.1. Location of Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary**




Source: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has grown and expanded over time and currently includes three major activity areas:

- **Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary**: a major visitor attraction on the Gold Coast featuring over 150 different types of animals and a variety of interactive experiences.
- **Currumbin Wildlife Hospital**: one of the busiest wildlife hospitals in the world, providing care for injured or orphaned wild animals (free of charge as a community service).
- **Conservation & Research Projects**: the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is currently engaged in 15 different conservation projects and 7 research projects.

## 2.3 Currumbin Wildlife Hospital

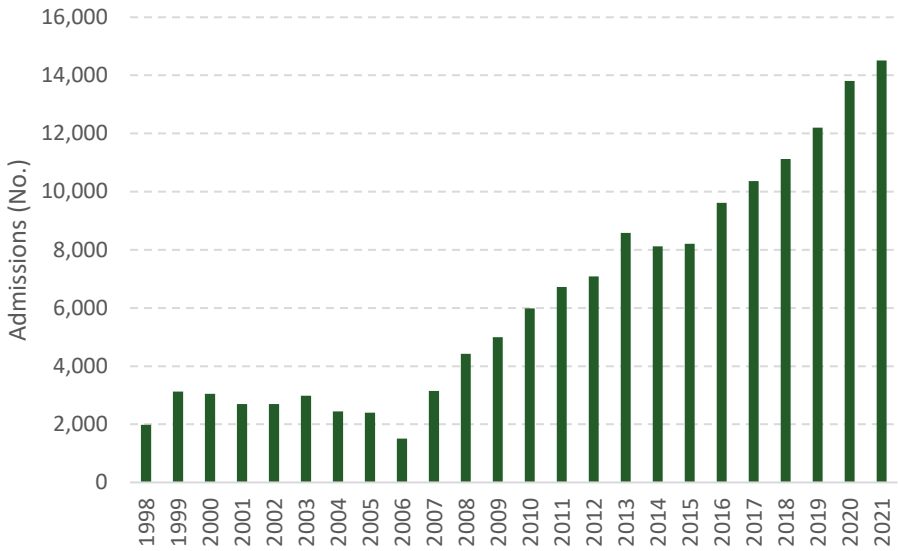

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital was established in 1989 operating out of a small cottage and with specialist veterinarians caring for the Sanctuary animals. In time, the hospital also began treating sick, injured and orphaned wildlife brought in by community members. The original facilities were primitive and only dealt with a handful of animals per day.

In 2009, a purpose-built wildlife hospital was constructed on council land leased to the National Trust of Australia (Queensland) (NTAQ). The Hospital is equipped to ensure that each patient receives a very high level of veterinary care and has gained national and international recognition for the unique care and treatment of injured wildlife. The Hospital also includes extensive outdoor rehabilitation facilities to prepare patients for release back into the wild.

The current Currumbin Wildlife Hospital features a small laboratory, state of the art imagery and x-ray, a surgical room, six examination workstations, triage, intensive care, and rehabilitation facilities. The Hospital's services are performed free of charge and delivered by the incredible team of 147 volunteers who in 2019 contributed over 24,000 volunteer hours over 5,076 shifts. It also has the expert experience of five full-time veterinarians and 15 vet nurses that perform the lifesaving treatment.

Today, the team treats, rehabilitates and releases almost 15,000 sick, injured, and orphaned native wildlife each year. Admissions to the hospital have continued to increase, significantly, over time.

**Figure 2.2. Currumbin Animal Hospital Admissions, All Animals**



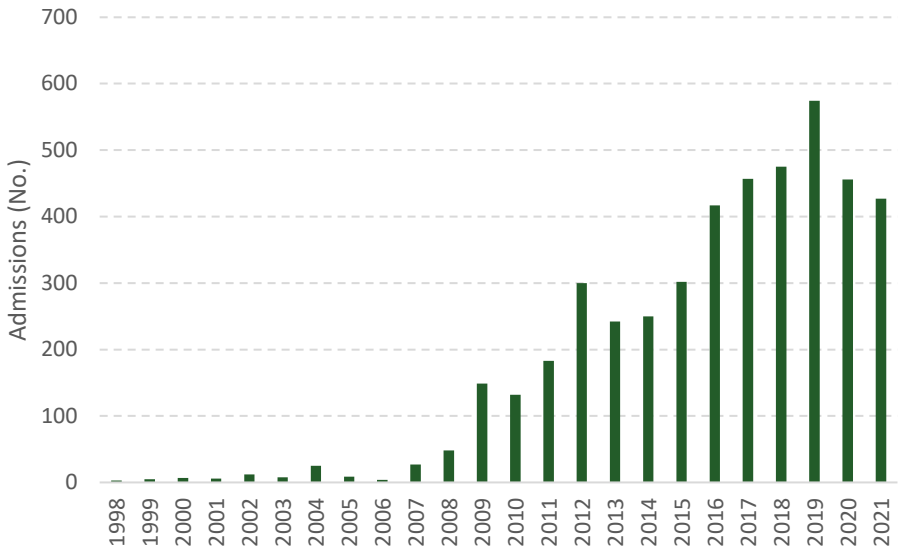

Source: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

The hospital operates three Wildlife Ambulances that assist in rescuing and releasing those sick and injured animals. In 2022, these ambulances carried out 2,067 rescues and travelled 213,862km.

Sadly, almost all the patients admitted to the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital come to it because of human impact causing injury, illness, or displacement. Habitat destruction, vehicle hits, domestic animal attacks, the introduction of pest species, poisoning and carelessly disposing of fishing tackle are just some of the ways humans are harming our precious wildlife. The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is proud to be saving our native wildlife and helping restore the balance.

Following the devastating 2019/2020 bushfires, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital received an increase of 20% of koala admissions. While car strike continues to be a major cause of koala admissions, the impacts of chlamydia in koalas are having a devasting effect on this iconic native species. Chlamydia often causes blindness (as well as infections and infertility) in koalas, which increases their chance of coming into contact with vehicles. In 2020, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital launched the koala vaccine research program and is now vaccinating all koala patients against chlamydia prior to their release back into the wild, signifying a major milestone for the protection of koalas.

**Figure 2.3. Currumbin Animal Hospital Admissions, Koalas**




Source: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital receives limited Local and State Government funding for the treatment of the ever-growing number of wildlife cases. The Hospital relies on donations and corporate sponsors to fund the crucial work of the veterinary team, in treating, rehabilitating and releasing, sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife.

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has been a leader in research for many years and is involved in not only koala chlamydia research but various important and ethically approved research projects that foster an understanding of Australia's unique wildlife species and will support their on-going conservation.

Given the development of the Hospital over time, the research is limited to a small laboratory that was originally designed for the clinical pathology assessment of animals that were admitted to the Hospital. **There are no purpose built animal research facilities within the current Hospital**.

## 2.4 Wildlife Research

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has been a leader in research for many years and is involved in a variety of research projects on an annual basis. These projects are providing a better understanding of Australia's unique wildlife species and creating pathways to support greater levels of wildlife conservation.

> **"Only through understanding and knowledge can we truly hope to save Australia's vulnerable species."**
>
> - Dr. Michael Pyne, Senior Veterinarian at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital

Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is committed to applied research that is developing real, practical outcomes to current wildlife threats and challenges. We have a long history of working closely with leading universities and researchers to contribute meaningfully to saving our unique native wildlife.

Some of our current research projects include:

- **Echidna Research**: the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has been working with the University of Queensland for the past 15 years to unlock the secrets of echidna reproduction. The Australian Short-beaked Echidna is one of only three mammals worldwide that lay eggs, making them incredibly unique and until recently very difficult to breed in captivity.

  The many years of investigation have led to now being able to reliably breed the Short-beaked Echidna through assessment of the individual echidna fertility, careful attention to diet and husbandry along with close observation of behaviour in the lead up to mating. The Sanctuary has now bred a world record 19 puggles and a total collection of 25 Short-beaked Echidnas.

  A significant Australian Research Council Grant is funding this research team over the next 3 years. The long-term goal of this research is to use our knowledge to help save the endangered Long-beaked Echidna of Papua New Guinea.

- **Chytrid Fungus Testing**: the Kroombit Tinkerfrog, along with many amphibian species worldwide are at risk from a fungal disease (B. dendrobatidis or chytrid). Currently, the only available tests are through universities and test results can be very slow. Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has partnered with the University of Queensland to develop a "point of care" test that can be performed on site or in the field. This test is expected to be fully available within the next 2 months and will then be available to all wildlife hospitals and research groups allowing rapid detection of chytrid and therefore a quick start to treatment.

- **Eastern Bristle Bird Lamp Testing**: During the recovery and breeding of the Eastern Bristle Birds at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, a previously unknown pathogen "atoxoplasma" was found to be endemic in the population and greatly impacting the health of young growing birds. As atoxoplasma can be very difficult to diagnose, a specialised "point of care" test was developed with The University of Queensland that now allows us to monitor of evidence of atxoxplasma in both captive and wild populations.

With the existing Currumbin Wildlife Hospital research space reaching full capacity, it is now critical to expand further to provide the appropriate laboratories to further unlock the secrets of our native wildlife. The welfare of many endangered species depends on this.

**Koala Chlamydia Vaccine Research Program**

**The Issue**

Koala chlamydia is a true threatening process contributing largely to the listing of koalas as endangered. The disease can often be difficult and expensive to treat, and many subclinical infections can lead to infertility.

**Our Research Program**

In 2020, CWH launched the 5-year koala vaccine research program and is now vaccinating all koala patients against chlamydia prior to their release back into the wild, signifying a major milestone for the protection of koalas. The project also involves focusing on recovering a very diseased local population of koalas (Elanora) through the vaccination of young koalas and tracking these animals to demonstrate the efficacy of the vaccine. The hospital has now vaccinated over 260 koalas released back into the wild.

This research is being done in close collaboration with Professor Ken Beagley (Queensland University of Technology), who has developed the vaccine over the past 10 years and drives the vaccine production and analysis of all results.

Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Senior Vet Dr Michael Pyne (pictured) is leading the way in this urgent koala research and working hard to prevent the imminent localised extinction of the koala. Dr Pyne has been treating koalas for more than twenty years and believes prevention is better than cure.

**The Results**

Three years into the 5-year Research program and the CWH and QUT Research team is seeing very positive results. The data collected from the recapture of vaccinated koalas is supporting that the vaccine is protecting against chlamydia. Not only are koalas remaining chlamydia free but most importantly, 30 baby joeys have been born to vaccinated females in the Elanora population alone. Ultimately the improved fertility rates will help this previously highly diseased and barren population recover.

The success of the vaccine research has allowed an application for vaccine registration to be submitted and is currently under review by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). This application has been made in collaboration with Zoetis and CSIRO.

Currently, the vaccine is only available for ethically approved research projects which greatly limits the use of the vaccine. When the vaccine is registered it will become available to all wildlife vets treating koalas throughout Australia hugely increasing the roll out of the vaccine as well as the protection against koala chlamydial disease and greatly increasing fertility rates to improve the koala population in the wild.

The koala vaccine research project is a great example of the applied research and practical outcomes that is the goal of Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

In addition to the Koala Chlamydia Vaccine Research Program, in 2021, the University of Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology, in association with wildlife parks in the Gold Coast region completed a successful pilot program called the "Living Koala Genome Bank" in which we demonstrated the role that zoos, and more broadly, captive breeding can contribute to koala conservation.

This project represented a paradigm shift in koala conservation in SE Queensland, designed to deliver more immediate and practical solutions for the genetic exchange and recovery of koala populations on the Gold Coast and to serve as a working model for koalas across the east coast of Australia.

The living koala genome bank project focussed on two key areas:

- The role existing captive koalas might have in conserving the genetic diversity of koala populations that were under the threat of local extinction (genetic reservoirs); and
- The logistics and practicalities of establishing a breeding program for wild koalas and the release of their offspring back into the wild.

**There is so much more research work to be done to save the koala. This important work can be facilitated by the new Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct.**

- **Koala Genetics SNP Chip**: Prof Jenny Seddon is currently Associate Dean Research in the Faculty of Science at the University of Queensland and has published widely on koala population genetics. Prof Seddon and Dr Lyndal Hulse are currently developing a koala genetics SNP chip for purposes of genetic management across a range of geographic scales. They work closely with interstate partners (University of Sydney) associated with refinements of the koala genome, other QLD and interstate koala research groups and will see the translation of this information into real world management tools.

- **Further Koala Chlamydia Vaccine Research**: Professor Ken Beagley (Queensland University of Technology), who developed the koala chlamydia vaccine, will work to extend the development of a one-shot delivery mechanism for the vaccine, which will form the basis of protection from Chlamydia of all pouch young produced at and released as part of breeding programs. Prof Beagley will also continue to monitor chlamydia strain changes in the wild population and adjust the vaccine accordingly. In collaboration with Dr Lyndal Hulse (UQ), Prof Beagley's group will also continue the development of further rapid diagnostics based on LAMP for chlamydia and other pathogens.

- **Koala Retrovirus (KoRV)**: The extent to which Koala Retrovirus (KoRV) is a threat to the overall koala population is still uncertain but this can be explored at the new Wildlife Research Precinct by A/Prof Keith Chappell and Dr Michaela Blyton, in addition to the synergistic interaction of KoRV with stress physiology (Dr Tamara Keeley) and Chlamydia infection (Prof Ken Beagley and Dr Lyndal Hulse). A/Prof Keith Chappell's team have recently published on the geographic patterns and genomics of the KoRV subtypes, the association between KoRV and Chlamydia and its transmission and management within captive populations. His team will explore the possibility of antiviral treatments applied to breeding females to prevent transmission to the joeys, as his team's work has demonstrated that the exogenous KoRV subtypes (those subtypes thought to be associated with pathology) are likely to be transmitted from mother to joey.

- **Koala Microbiome**: Another key benefit of this research collective is the expertise of Dr Michaela Blyton and Prof Jenny Seddon who have been working on establishing the importance of the koala microbiome to the rehabilitation, release and translocation of koalas. Koalas can be quite "picky" when it comes to their nutrition, and there is now evidence that this preference for certain food trees may be associated with the microbes present in the koala digestive system. Koalas in different habitats have different microbiomes and captive born koalas have an overabundance of a particular family of bacteria not seen in wild koalas. Further, the gut microbiome is negatively impacted during antibiotic therapy, leading to reduce koala survival. Dr Blyton is currently trialling the use of faecal inoculation capsules to support the koala gut microbiome during antibiotic treatment to improve rehabilitation outcomes. These inoculations could also serve to optimise the gut microbiomes of joeys produced through the breeding programs.

- **Decontamination of Koala Semen**: A/Prof Stephen Johnston, Dr Hulse and Dr Blyton have also been experimenting with the techniques that might allow the decontamination of semen samples from koalas infected with Chlamydia and exogenous KoRV subtypes. An ability to decontaminate koala semen for the purposes of cryo-storage (Frozen Genome Bank) and artificial insemination would be a world first and a major advance in the use of assisted breeding for the reproductive and genetic management of the koala, and a perfect example of the interdisciplinary application of the collective expertise that could be possible at the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research Precinct.

**Koala Health and Rehabilitation Collaborative**

The new Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research Precinct could become the home of a Koala Health and Rehabilitation Collaborative that could house the above programs in one place, providing considerable opportunities for research synergies and the development of further research programs to save the koala.

**Currumbin Frog Lab**

In November 2022, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary opened the new Frog Lab, a state-of-the-art, breeding facility. This purpose-built facility demonstrates the capability and expertise of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary to deliver new research oriented facilities.

Now up and running, the Frog Lab will help the Currumbin Wildlife Conservation team continue their vital work of saving frog species for future generations to come.

In 2020, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary was the first organisation in the world, to successfully breed a critically endangered Kroombit Tinkerfrog in captivity. There are potentially less than 150 individual frogs of this species in existence today.

> "Frogs might be very small, but they play a massive role on our planet. Not only for the greater ecosystem but for us humans as well. This new Frog Lab Facility will be a huge boost to the conservation work we're doing here at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary."
>
> - Michael Vella, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary Amphibian Specialist

## 2.5 Conservation Projects

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has a proud heritage of conserving native wildlife through the lifelong efforts of our founder, Alex Griffiths. Every year, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary conducts a number of wildlife conservation projects complemented by the vital work of Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

Sadly, there are many native and exotic animals that are currently classified as a threatened or endangered species. The Sanctuary participates in 15 conservation projects to help save some of these amazing species from extinction, including endangered Australian animals.

**The Research and Training Precinct will enable the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary to do more conservation work.**

Current conservation projects include:

- **Kroombit Tinker Frog**: there are less than 150 individual frogs in existence today. Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary was the first institution in the world to successfully breed the Tinker Frog in captivity.
- **Eastern Bristlebird**: the Eastern Bristlebird is currently endangered with just an estimated 35 birds left in the wild. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has been involved in a captive breeding program for this species since 2013 and is seeking to build the population up to a level that they can be released back into the wild.
- **Bilby**: the Queensland Wild Bilby is listed as endangered with an estimated population of between 400 and 600 in the wild. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has a successful bilby breeding program.
- **Tasmanian Devil**: 90% of the Tasmanian Devil population has been wiped out by the Devil Facial Tumour Disease (DFTD) making it now listed as endangered. Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has been involved in the captive breeding of devils and contributing to the education process to help save this species from extinction in the wild.
- **Coxen's Fig Parrot**: the Coxen's Fig Parrot is one of Australia's most endangered parrots. Over the last 20 years, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has worked on breeding and husbandry protocols to support the bird's return to the wild.
- **Brush-Tailed Rock Wallaby**: nationally, the Brush-Tailed Rock Wallaby is listed as vulnerable. Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has bred this species previously, including releasing animals back into the wild.
- **Regent Honeyeater**: the Regent Honeyeater is a critically endangered species and the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is contributing to maintaining and enhancing the captive population through educating guests about the loss of habitat and competition with other honey eating animals.

- **Orange-bellied Parrot**: this species is listed as critically endangered due to habitat loss, noxious weeds, cat and fox predation as well as inbreeding due to small population size. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is conducting captive breeding program to support the efforts of landholders in the winter breeding grounds for the bird in Victoria and South Australia.
- **Glossy Black Cockatoo**: this bird is listed as vulnerable as it feeds almost exclusively on the seeds of nine species of trees and nests in large hollows. The continuing loss of habitat is impacting on the wild population of these birds. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary breeds this species.
- **Koala**: listed as endangered, the koala is under threat from habitat destruction, dog attacks and vehicle strikes. The koala is iconic and the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has had a healthy population of koalas for many decades and work continues to care for and highlight the need for koala conservation.
- **Cassowary**: the Southern Cassowary is found in Tropical North Queensland and is listed as endangered through loss and fragmentation of habitat, attacks by dogs, vehicle strikes, disease and natural adverse weather events. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is endeavouring to successfully breed the bird into the future.
- **Goodfellow's Tree Kangaroo**: a native to Papua New Guinea, this species is listed as endangered. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has successfully bred this species for many years.

- **Ring-Tailed Lemur**: the ring-tailed lemur is native to Madagascar and the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has been helping to maintain a sustainable and genetically strong captive population for many years.
- **Red Panda**: the Red Panda are found in South and Southeast Asia and listed as vulnerable. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary participates in a global conservation breeding program to maintain a healthy and genetically viable population into the future.
- **Cotton-Top Tamarin**: this species is listed as critically endangered with less than 1,000 in the wild (native to Northwest Colombia). The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is supporting the species through education and promotion of the role the animal plays in the environment.

## 2.6 Training and Education

Training is an important part of Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and one that has developed organically over time based on community need. As the expertise grew at the Hospital, practicing vets, vet nurses as well as a range of domestic and international students started to inquire about the opportunity for veterinary training specifically for wildlife care.

Today, the team welcomes hundreds of students annually including veterinary interns, TAFE students undertaking veterinary nursing and university research students. The Hospital also welcomes students and participants from countries around the world wanting to understand more about native wildlife and how to care for them. These visitors complete a variety of multi-day training programs that the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has created.

Training is a large component of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital's daily activities, which includes providing placement opportunities for tertiary students undertaking veterinary science or vet nursing. The Hospital also participates in paid experiences from international students wanting to work in an Australian wildlife hospital for 1-2 weeks. International student groups also travel to the Hospital to undertake a 1 or 2 week training program, including theory and traditional classroom learning that is augmented from time observing in the Hospital and the Sanctuary.

Volunteer carer groups also benefit from on-site training. These volunteers are a great asset to the wider community offering rescue and care to troubled wildlife. They are critical to care and rehabilitation of the injured wildlife that is admitted to the Hospital.

Unfortunately, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital cannot keep up with the need and interest in training. Given the development of the existing Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, there are no purpose-built training areas. As such, students numbers are tightly capped and very limited. Beyond the limitations of a lack of classroom learning facilities onsite, there is also a lack of office accommodation for visiting professors, trainers and researchers. The existing Hospital, which is experiencing ever rising admissions, was not designed to be used for education and training.

However, education and training has become a critical component of future conservation work. The training of local veterinarians and vet nurses in injured wildlife care will enable them to provide this care to these animals, which will allow only the most seriously injured animals to be admitted to the Hospital. Increasing the knowledge of local veterinarians will increase the conservation of our native wildlife and help to kerb the ever growing flow of injured wildlife into the Hospital.

## 2.7 Existing Capacity Constraints

With an ever-increasing demand on the Hospital from injured wildlife, there are considerable capacity constraints for research and training.

The existing laboratory was never intended to be used for research, but rather to carry out testing and analysis for patients. There is only space for two researchers to work in the laboratory at any one time, but there is significant demand for research spaces and the access to the existing Hospital and Sanctuary makes the location ideal.

There are no classroom spaces, nor any formal office accommodation at the current site. The existing Hospital features a post-mortem room, however, it is too small for the numbers of animals passing through and provides limited training opportunities for students. Students can gain so much knowledge and understanding of our unique native wildlife through the post- mortem process and having a dedicated space that allows trainers to work with students would provide positive outcomes.

There is significant demand for training from various student groups, particularly international students, who are attracted to the high quality of the Hospital facilities (and a complete lack of similar infrastructure in their home countries). Currently student numbers are capped at 15 per group and given the space available, these groups are very tight, which impacts the experience and quality of their learning.

Providing dedicated research and training facilities at the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital will greatly increase our conservation efforts and allow us to save and preserve so many native species for generations to come.

## 2.8 State of Australian Wildlife

Nearly three billion animals (3 billion) – mammals, reptiles, birds, and frogs – were killed or displaced by Australia's devastating 2019-20 bushfires, according to a report by the World Wildlife Fund. It's almost three times an earlier estimate released in January 2020.

The continuation of climate change and changing weather patterns such as El Niño and La Niña will mean that extreme weather events will likely increase in frequency and intensity. These global climate features will continue to put considerable pressure on the native wildlife and their habitat.

Most of Australia's wildlife is found nowhere else in the world, making its conservation even more important. The Australian Wildlife Conservancy states that 87% of our mammal species, 93% of reptiles, 94% of frogs and 45% of our bird species are found only in Australia (AWC, 2023).

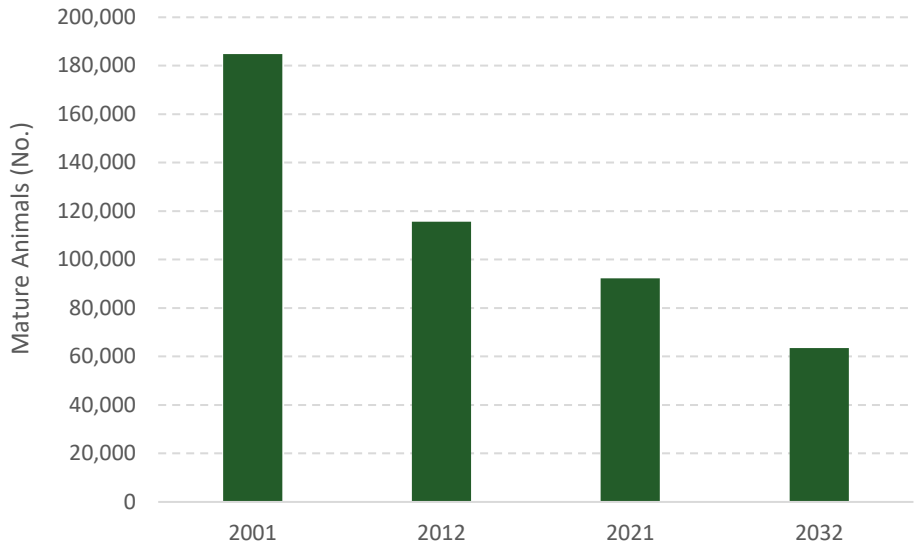
According to The Nature Conservancy Australia, over the past 200 years, one-third of all mammal extinctions around the world have occurred in Australia as a result of human impacts. In March 2021, the Australian Government listed an extra 13 species as extinct under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, which brings the total number to 100 of Australia's endemic species declared as extinct (or extinct in the wild) since the colonisation of Australia by Europeans in 1788 (The Nature Conservatory, 2023).

The actual number of extinctions is likely to be far more than those recognised in formal lists.

The Threatened Species Scientific Committee, which advises the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment regarding protection under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, recently downgraded the koala from 'vulnerable' to 'endangered'. The Committee estimated the population of koalas in the wild to be 92,200 in 2021, a decrease of 50% since 2001. By 2032, it is expected there to be just 63,500 koalas (a further decrease of over 30%), if direct action is not taken.

***The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct can help support the conservation of the koala in Australia and save this iconic species from extinction.***

**Figure 2.4. Koala Population, Australia**




Source: Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (2022)

Habitat loss, climate change, and a lack of biodiversity can all make ecosystems unhealthy, putting wildlife at greater risk for disease. Every day the by-products of our daily lives make their way via the air and water into the natural environment and become pollutants.

As species go extinct, they are taken out of the food chain. Animals that ate the newly-extinct species have to find new food sources or starve. This can damage the populations of other plants or animals. Furthermore, if a predator goes extinct, its prey's population can proliferate, unbalancing local ecosystems.

**Conservation and research will help to support our native wildlife**

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital – Research and Training Precinct's main aim is to protect and conserve our wildlife. By conserving wildlife, we're ensuring that future generations can enjoy our natural world and the incredible species that live within it. To help protect wildlife, it's important to understand how species interact within their ecosystems and how they're affected by environmental and human influences. Through research we can find ways to save a number of species that are currently threatened and/or endangered.

The need for research and training is greater than ever. Increasing environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change destroys nature and impacts human well-being and our wildlife. Increased facilities are critical to achieve practical solutions to conservation problems through original scientific research, which will be conducted at the new Research and Training Precinct. The training facilities can help to disseminate research learning more broadly to enhance conservation efforts around the country and the world.

The recent listing of the koala as endangered is a stark warning to society that the time to act is now. ***The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct can play a major role in saving the koala (and many more species) from extinction***.

## 2.9 Important Tourism Trends

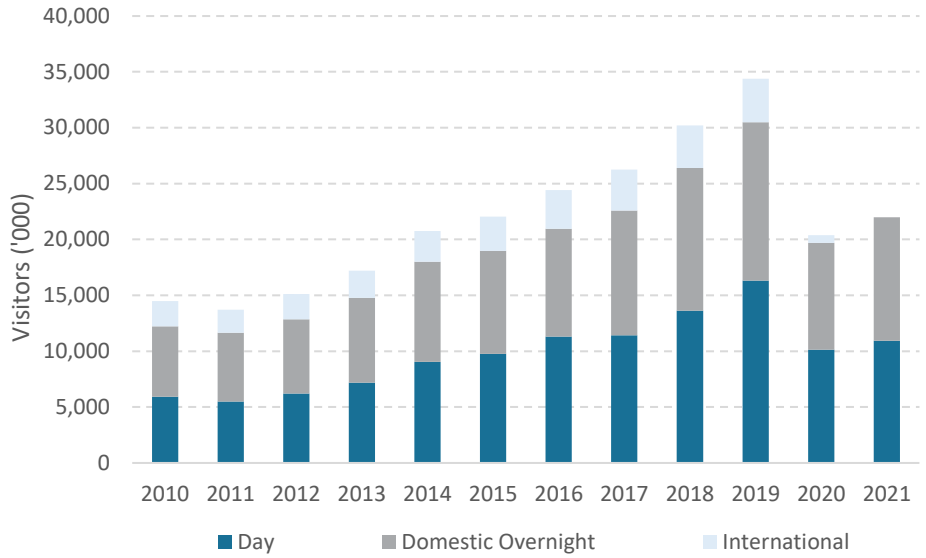
Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism contributed $60.8 billion to Australian Gross Domestic Product (GDP), provided jobs for 666,000 people and represented $39.1 billion in exports (fourth highest) (TRA, 2020). Tourism remains a very important industry across Australia.

Our native wildlife continue to play an important role in Australian tourism. Recent consumer research from Tourism Australia confirms that viewing wildlife in their natural habitat is a key visitor experience for Australia, ranking 13th out of 89 defined visitor experiences globally and 11th within Australia (TA, 2022). Given the uniqueness of our wildlife, for many international visitors, interacting with a kangaroo or a koala or seeing these animals in their natural habitat has extreme appeal and attracts millions of visitors to Australia every year.

Visitation trends reflect this research as well, with visitors to National or State Parks growing at an average annual rate of 9.9% or more than doubling over the decade before the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The conservation of our unique, native wildlife is not only an important environmental value but also important to the tourism industry.**

**Figure 2.5. Visitors to National or State Parks, Australia**




Source: Tourism Research Australia (2023); Lucid Economics (2023)

One of the top travel trends is 'Travel as a force for good' or 'Travelling for Purpose'.

Today's travellers are increasingly seeking out brands and experiences that are not only good for them, but good for the world around them. Tourism Australia's consumer research supports this "force for good" trend, showing that 91% like to travel to become more open-minded and knowledgeable about the world, and 74% are actively seeking out travel experiences that allow them to give back to a destination.

Voluntourism, otherwise known as Volunteer Tourism, continues to be a popular alternative to the normal vacation. A traveller can visit some exotic region with the purpose of volunteering. It can be an excellent way for individuals to learn about a different culture and explore a country while helping those in need or needy causes.

Volunteering at CWS

Volunteers already make an important contribution to the work of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. Voluntourism is an existing market segment for the attraction and the development of the Research and Training Precinct will improve this offering and help to increase voluntourism to the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary.

# 3. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct

## 3.1 Project Overview


In order to continue its life saving work, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital needs to expand its research and training capabilities. The proposed Currumbin Research and Training Precinct would deliver important infrastructure that can assist the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital to not only better manage existing demand for research and training, but indeed to leverage its research and training capabilities to greatly advance its work of wildlife conservation.

As highlighted previously, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is currently heavily constrained in terms of research space and purpose-built areas for training. Beyond the current capacity issues, the Currumbin Research and Training Precinct will also play a pivotal role in reducing admissions to the Hospital. Through research, existing diseases that greatly impact wildlife, such as koalas, can help to prevent them from being admitted to the Hospital in the first place. Additionally, many of the admissions to the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital could be treated by veterinarians, vet nurses and animal carers in the community (if they had the proper training), again, preventing admission into the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

Most of all, the new precinct would greatly enhance the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary's existing conservation work and directly aid in saving a number of vulnerable or endangered species.

Following a detailed analysis of the needs of the community and Hospital into the future, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary proposes to build purpose-built structures adjacent to, and connected to, the existing hospital facility. The new Research and Training Precinct would feature the following components:

- Open laboratory area for medical procedures and clinical research
- Multi-purpose lab and workflow space
- Molecular laboratories
- Purpose-built post-mortem facility, with teaching space
- Interactive interpretation centre
- Flexible training facility to hold up to 90 students at a time (including primary, secondary and tertiary)
- Separate small meeting room (boardroom)
- Acoustic sound room for podcast and live video streaming
- Additional internal and external animal enclosures
- Team facilities including bathrooms, showers, and break areas
- Office facilities for university staff, students, and veterinary staff

A key feature of the proposed project will be the walk-through experience featuring large, glazed windows for visitors to view the inner workings of the laboratories and research facilities, allowing hundreds of thousands of people to view and understand the crucial work of the hospital and research teams.

This will allow visitors to view applied research programs taking place so they can learn about the crucial need for research and conservation, and how they can get involved.

The proposed facility would feature a flexible training space that will be used to conduct wildlife and environmental training linked with hands-on teaching for universities, TAFE, school groups, community groups, carer groups and businesses.

### 3.1.1 Research Laboratory

The molecular and open laboratories would allow space for research specialists and assistants to conduct clinical lab work in a specially designed space that provides the necessary equipment and tools to undertake the research. This facility would provide a glass frontage, allowing guests to see the work of the researchers, veterinary staff, and honours students.

This space would be used by major Queensland universities to undertake world leading research projects with staff and students based onsite. These facilities would enable the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital to greatly increase its research capacity. Through these facilities, work could be done to greatly advance the Koala Chlamydia Vaccine and Koala Retrovirus (KoRV), which could greatly boost the wild koala population. Diseases affecting other wildlife would also be explored.

**Figure 3.1. Open Laboratory Concept**

Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

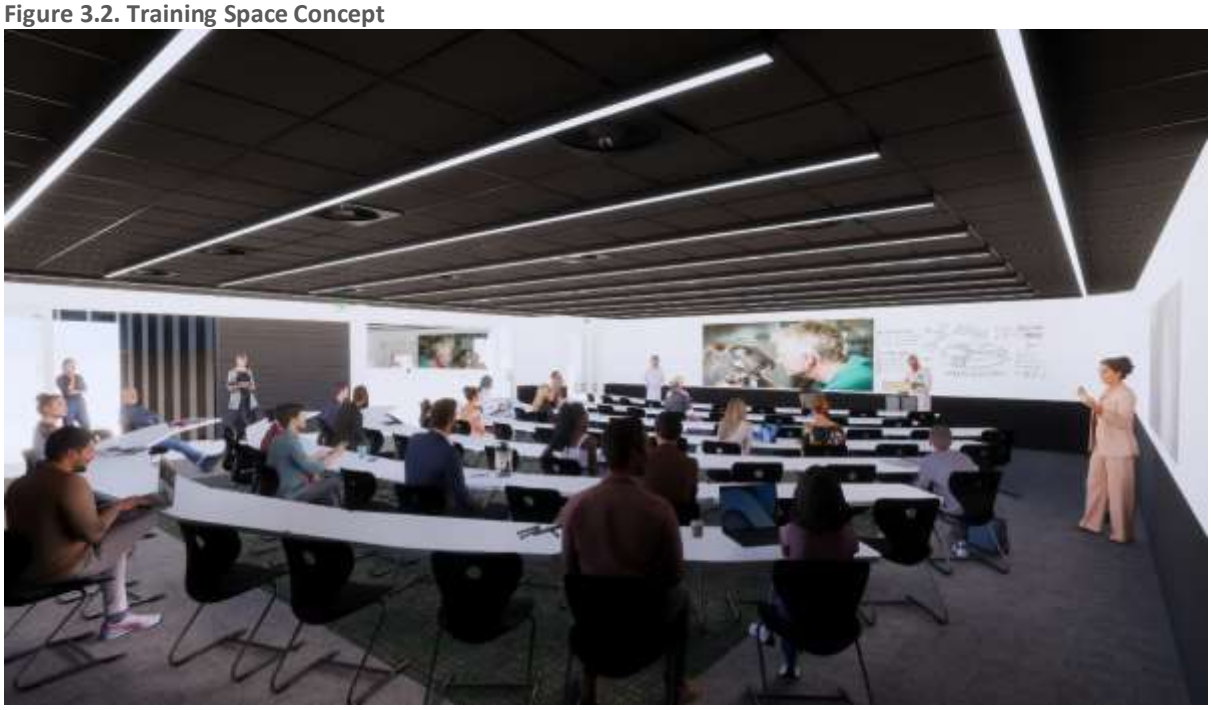
### 3.1.2 Training Facility

A large component of what the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital does currently is training. This includes providing placement opportunities for tertiary students undertaking veterinary science or vet nursing as well as hosting international student groups.

Currently, there is no adequate training space for students to have the opportunity to gather and undertake off-the-job training by teachers. A multi-purpose, flexible space would provide a training space for up to 90 students and provide a space for universities and other wildlife organisations and institutions to meet for specific projects and training. This bespoke area, located directly adjacent to the existing Wildlife Hospital and embedded in the Sanctuary provides the unique opportunity to combine traditional classroom learning with practical study in the Hospital and Sanctuary. Training undertaken at this facility will also provide tourism benefits, with students visiting from interstate and overseas staying on the Gold Coast for extended periods, which will provide an economic benefit for the region.

The training space will also be able to host workshops and seminars. Beyond hosting typical corporate workshops, it is envisioned that the training space will also host major Wildlife and/or Conservation workshops and conferences throughout the year.

**Figure 3.2. Training Space Concept**



Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

**International Student Groups**

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital currently offers the opportunity to spend time onsite with our large Veterinary team in our purpose-built Wildlife Hospital. However, these programs are largely restricted and capped given the current facility constraints.

The new facility will allow for more and larger groups of students, including international students, who bring with them lucrative tourism benefits.

With the new facility, students would get to have normal lectures and then to see the applied learning in practice in the Hospital and the Sanctuary. As the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is one of the busiest wildlife hospitals in the world, there are no shortage of cases to be involved with. Students will be able to visit on an individual or group basis.

### 3.1.3 Visitor Experience

Spaces directly opposite the laboratories and surgery rooms will include interpretation that is interactive and engaging. This helps promote certain messages, along with promoting the work that the Hospital does for the community and how individuals can make a difference. This walk-through experience takes guests on a journey, educating them on our Australia's native wildlife, the threats to wildlife and what the Hospital is doing to prevent further extinction.

Local Indigenous story-telling will be used to connect visitors with native wildlife and their traditional importance as a mechanism for them to appreciate a healthy natural ecosystem and the role that native wildlife plays. This process will not only promote the conservation and preservation of the native wildlife, but further reconciliation and support Indigenous advancement through employment at the new precinct.

### 3.1.4 Offices

As the hospital has grown over the past few years, so too have the staffing resources required. Currently, there are 147 volunteers, 15 vet nurses and five veterinarians. On any given day there are over 40 staff, volunteers, and students on site. The new facilities will provide vital amenities and office space to support the existing operations, along with the increased number of staff and students within the proposed research facility. Office space will also be created for researchers and university staff to be based at the hospital to ensure efficiencies and dedication to the projects.

## 3.2 The Site

The site is located at 27 Millers Drive, Currumbin QLD 4233 and comprises Lot 1 & 2 RP192133 and Lot 2 RP116371. The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is built on land owned by the City of Gold Coast and leased to NTAQ. This land has been leased since the 1970's and has been held by NTAQ for the core purposes of operating the Wildlife Sanctuary and the delivery of the services provided by the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital.

The current lease expires in 2030 and as part of this project, an extension to the lease will be secured to safeguard the future of this facility.

City of Gold Coast are strong supporters of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (refer to Letter of Support from Mayor Tom Tate). We do not foresee any issues related to the renewal of the lease.

As the land owner of the site, City of Gold Coast is supportive of this project and has provided their consent to proceed with the development (refer to Letter of Consent from City of Gold Coast).

**Figure 3.3. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct Site Plan**


Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

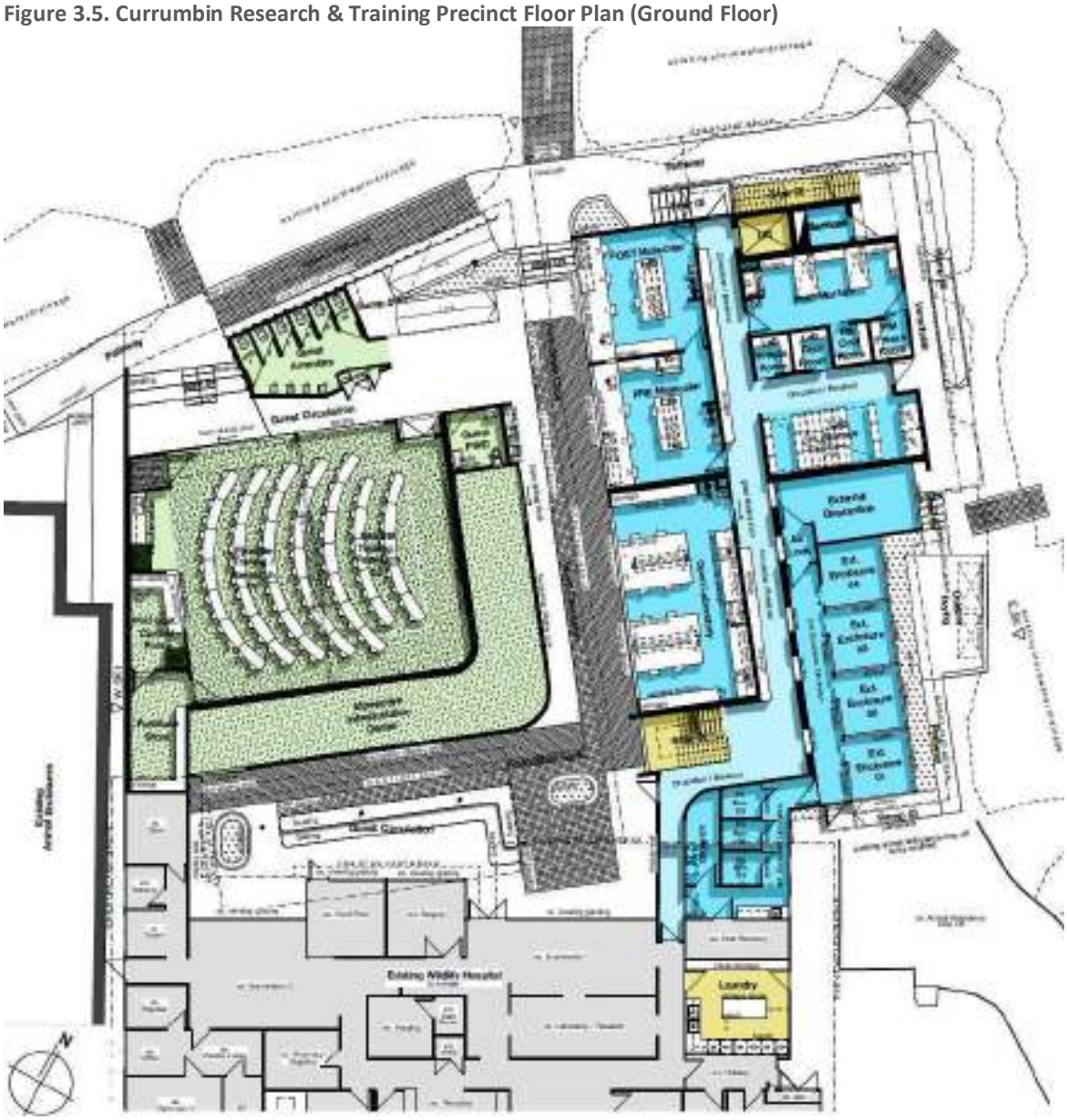
## 3.3 Concept and Layout

The following figures (Figure 3.4, Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6) show the layout and elevations of the proposed building to house the research and training centre.

**Figure 3.4. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct Concept (Entrance from Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary)**

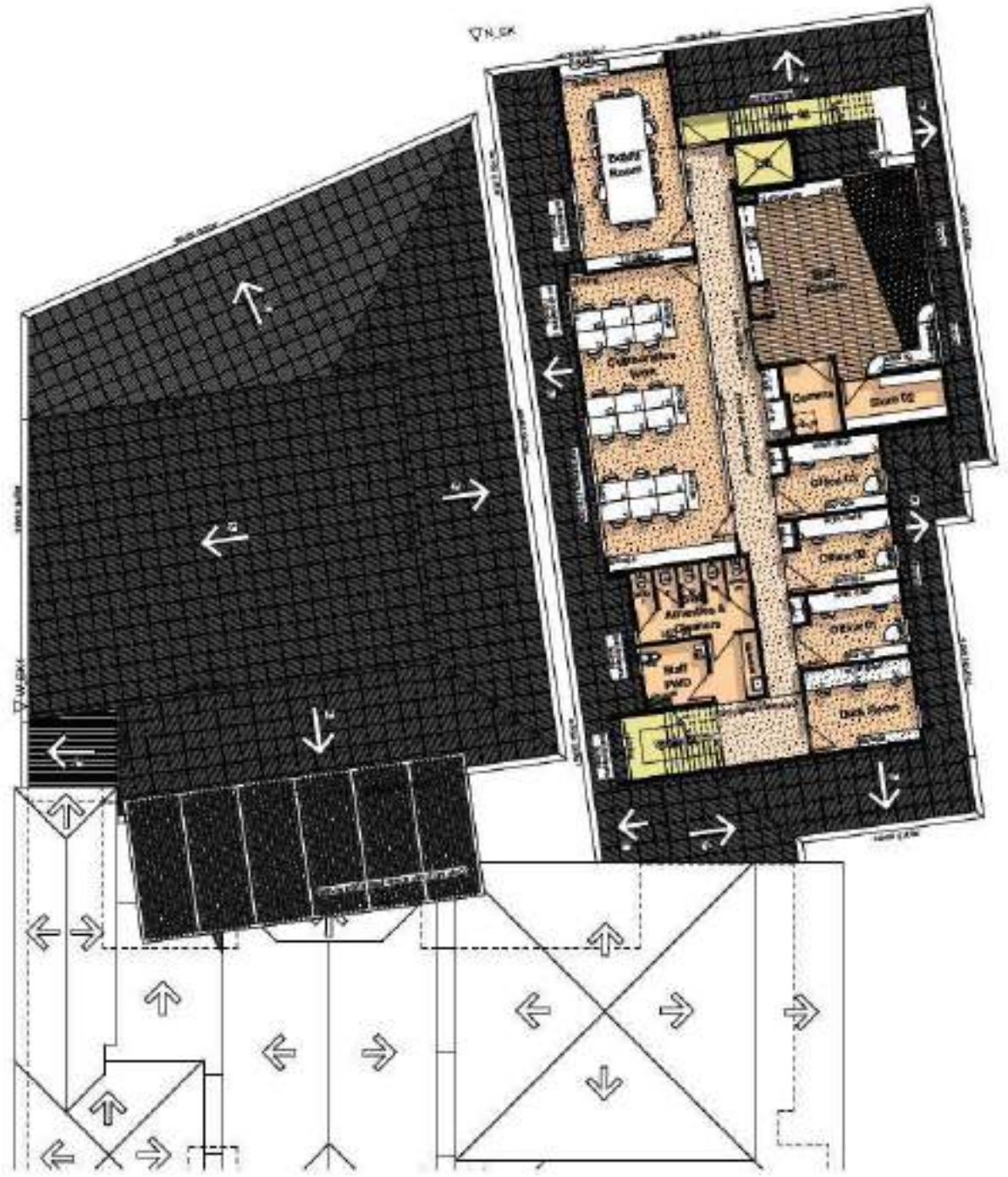

Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

**Figure 3.5. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct Floor Plan (Ground Floor)**




Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

**Figure 3.6. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct Floor Plan (First Floor)**



Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

**Figure 3.3. Currumbin Research & Training Precinct Floor Plan (Elevations)**

Source: Burlingbrown (2023)

## 3.4 Capital Expenditure

The proposed Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct is expected to cost $12.7 million. This estimate has been provided by Quancept Consulting Services, an experienced quantity surveyor with considerable experience on the Gold Coast.

NTAQ has invested $570,000 into the design and development phase of the project to date, which is why these costs have been excluded from the capital expenditure highlighted below. NTAQ does not have capacity to fund the construction costs of the building. As highlighted earlier, proceeds from the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary already contribute to the current operations of the Wildlife Hospital (that offers its services free of charge as a community service).

The capital cost estimate include 10% contingency and over 12% in escalations, accounting for the rapid pace of recent construction cost increases.

**Table 3.1. Capital Expenditure, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct**

| | Costs ($) |
|---|---|
| Trade Works | $7,041,623 |
| External Works | $569,617 |
| Car Park | $207,079 |
| Design Allowance | $390,916 |
| Preliminaries | $985,108 |
| Margin | $551,661 |
| Escalation | $1,180,891 |
| Construction Contingency | $976,548 |
| Authority Fees | $25,000 |
| Visitor Experience Fitout | $700,000 |
| Portable Long Service Leave (PLSL) Levy | $72,614 |
| Rounding | $3,943 |
| **Total Costs** | **$12,705,000** |

Source: Quancept Consulting Services (2023)

## 3.5 Delivery Schedule

The following project delivery schedule demonstrates how the project can commence in May 2024 and be completed by December 2025.

**Figure 3.7. Project Delivery Schedule**

| Month | Feb-24 | Mar-24 | Apr-24 | May-24 | Jun-24 | Jul-24 | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 | Nov-24 | Dec-24 | Jan-25 | Feb-25 | Mar-25 | Apr-25 | May-25 | Jun-25 | Jul-25 | Aug-25 | Sep-25 | Oct-25 | Nov-25 | Dec-25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Development Application | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detailed Design and Engineering | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Construction Tendering | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Civil and Heavy Engineering | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Building Works | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Building Fitout | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Equipment and Interior Fitout | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Building Opens | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

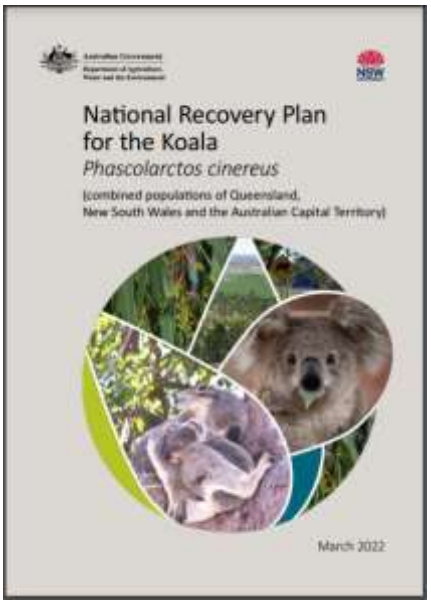
Source: CWS (2023)

# 4. Strategic Alignment

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct aligns with broader Government and regional strategic priorities. In many cases, the development of the Research and Training Precinct fulfills identified goals and outcomes of specific strategies.

## 4.1 National Strategic Priorities

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct aligns with a variety of Commonwealth Government priorities, particularly those involving the environment and wildlife conservation.




**This National Recovery Plan for the Koala** was made jointly with the NSW Government under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). The purpose of this plan is to provide for the research and management actions necessary to stop the decline, and support the recovery, of the listed koala so that the chances of its long-term survival in nature are maximised. It is the road map to recovery.

Its goal is to stop the trend of decline in population size of the listed koala, by having resilient, connected, and genetically healthy metapopulations across its range, and to increase the extent, quality and connectivity of habitat occupied.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project aligns with the National Recovery Plan for the koala and can greatly assist in increasing koala populations.


**Australia's Long-term Emissions Reduction Plan** is the Australian Government plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

The plan takes a practical, whole of economy approach across four action areas; driving down technology costs, enabling deployment at scale, seizing opportunities in new and traditional markets and fostering global collaboration.

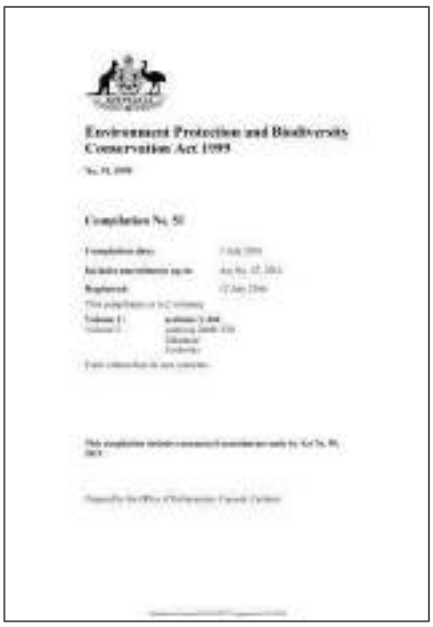
**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project will contribute to achieving net zero emissions through the implementation of a number of environmentally friendly technologies including roof-top solar, energy efficient design, energy efficient lighting, rainwater harvesting and other measures.

**National Priority: First Nations Advancement**
The Government has four priorities for First Nations Advancement, including jobs, health, education and housing. The new research and training precinct of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital will support Indigenous inclusion, advancement and reconciliation in a number of ways.

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary Procurement Policy provides provisions for supporting Indigenous businesses that will be utilised for the construction phase of the project. The National Trust of Australia (Queensland) has recently released a new Reconciliation Action Plan and proactively supports Indigenous advancement.

The new research and training precinct will support inclusion and reconciliation through providing non-Indigenous visitors with local Indigenous stories of native wildlife, its importance in their belief system and how Traditional Owners worked in coordination with their natural environment. Through a variety of interpretive experiences, non-Indigenous people will gain a greater understanding of Indigenous culture and its connection to the natural environment, including wildlife. These experiences will not only support reconciliation but will support the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary's broader messages of wildlife conservation and preservation.

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has already engaged with Traditional Owners about this project and look forward to working with them to involve local Traditional Owners in the project moving forward.


Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Compilation No. 51

**Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999** is the current Commonwealth legislation to protect the environment.

It seeks to promote ecologically sustainable development and conserve biodiversity. It is the legislation that protects native species and has listed the koala as endangered.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project will greatly aid in the conservation of native wildlife, including the koala. The research conducted at the future facility will allow for greater protection and conservation of Australia's unique wildlife.


**Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC)** now delivers and influences effective conservation across more than 12.9 million hectares in Australia. AWC protect some of the nation's most iconic and endangered wildlife including 74% of Australia's terrestrial mammal species, 88% of native bird species and over 54% of reptile species and 56% of frog species.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project supports the goal of AWC to protect native species and much of the future research work will support native mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs.


**Australia: State of the Environment 2021**
Over the past 2 centuries, Australia has lost more mammal species than any other continent and continues to have one of the highest rates of species decline among countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. For some species, it is too late, with more than 100 Australian species listed as Extinct or Extinct in the Wild under Australian national, state or territory legislation. The true number of extinctions is likely to be significantly higher, since many species are poorly surveyed or poorly described, or both.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project will support the protection and conservation of Australian wildlife through its research and training programs.

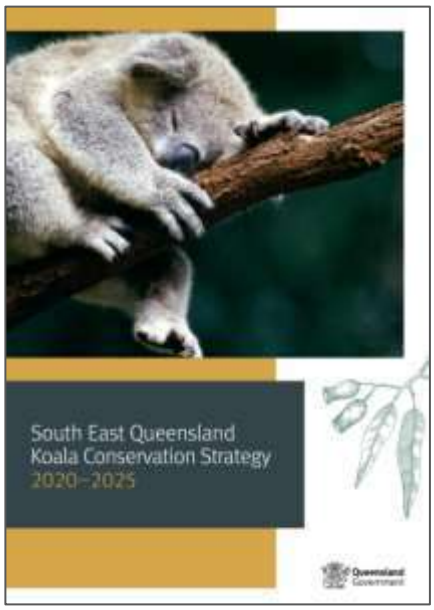

**Thrive 2030** is Australia's national strategy for the long-term, sustainable growth for the visitor economy.

The strategy supports the development of new and innovative visitor experiences and refreshing existing ones. Nature and wildlife is a key visitor experience for Australia. The strategy also has a focus on international education.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project will support Australia's nature and wildlife visitor offering through its contribution to wildlife conservation. It will also help to directly grow the international education market through its unique training offering.

## 4.2 State Government Strategic Priorities

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct aligns with State Government strategic priorities as highlighted across a number of plans and strategies, particularly around wildlife conservation and the tourism industry.

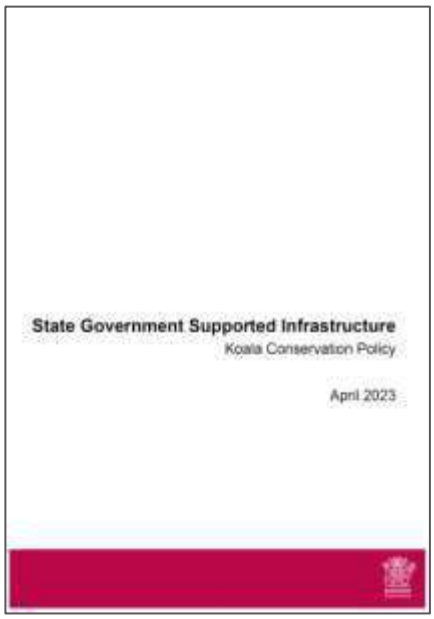



**South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025** is the Queensland Government's plan to protect the koala in the South East region.

It provides new regulations to protect koalas and also increases both the area and level of protection given to koalas in the region.

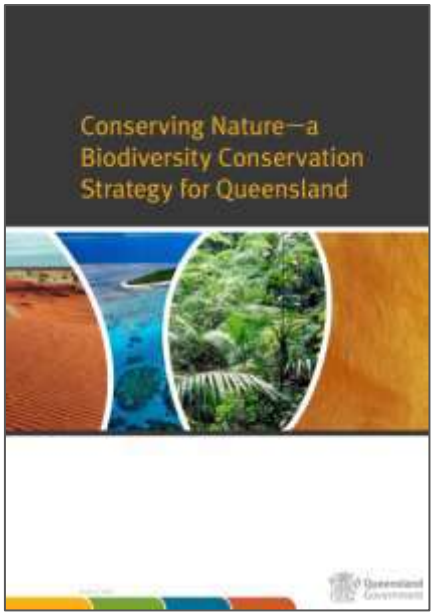
The strategy seeks to halt the decline in South East Queensland koala populations, preserve and restore key koala habitat with the goal to increase koala populations in the future.

The **Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project strongly supports this regional priority through conducting lifesaving research on koalas and supporting a number of programs that will increase the future koala population of South East Queensland.




The **Queensland Koala Conservation Policy 2023** outlines how Queensland Government Departments and entities will consider koala conservation outcomes in the planning and delivery of Government supported infrastructure in South East Queensland.

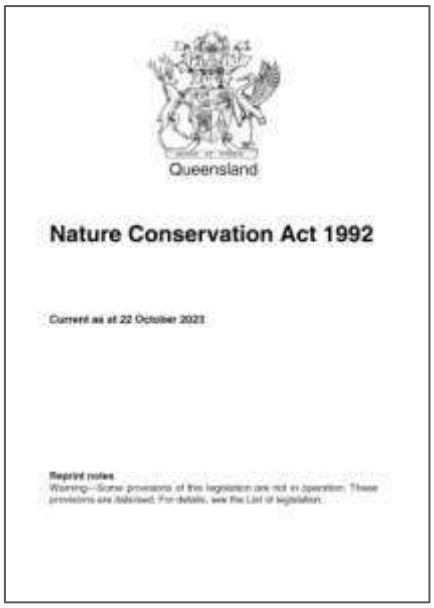
The **Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project strongly aligns with this policy through its future conservation and research work to support future koala populations in South East Queensland.




**Conserving Nature – a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Queensland** is the State Government's strategy to conserve nature and protect native animals.

The strategy includes numerous measures to support the koala populations of South East Queensland.

The **Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project strongly aligns with this strategy, particularly its future activities to support and conserve native wildlife.

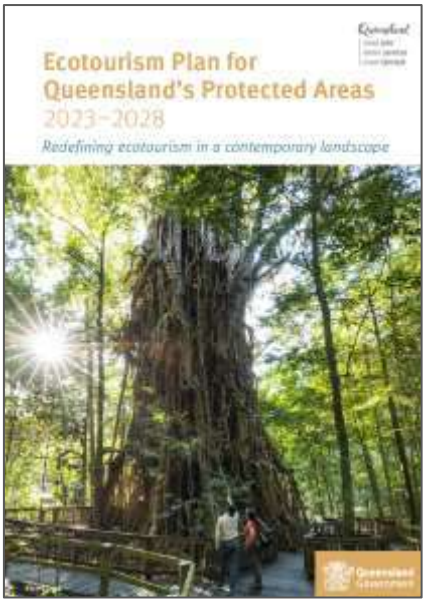



The **Nature Conservation Act 1992** provides for the conservation of nature through the education of the public, declaration of protected areas, management of protected areas and the protection of wildlife and its habitat.

The **Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project strongly supports the objective of this act through its future research and training work that will conserve wildlife.


**Towards 2032** is the Queensland Government's plan to reshape Queensland's visitor economy to add an additional $12 billion of visitor expenditure by 2032.
Part of this plan is for Queensland to become a regenerative tourism leader, contributing positively to the unique and special natural environments that attract people to the State. Voluntourism was also identified as a key opportunity in Towards 2032. Beyond this niche, the plan speaks to not only maintaining the natural environment in Queensland, but to enhance it through on-going conservation efforts and 'leave no trace' tourism.
The **Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project will greatly increase voluntourism as well as support the conservation of unique wildlife in Queensland in the wild, which will help to deliver the goals identified in the Towards 2032 Plan.


**Tourism and Events Queensland's Nature-based Tourism Strategy 2021-24**
The Nature-based Tourism Strategy seeks to support the revitalisation of the Queensland nature-based tourism offering to capitalise on growing market demand and leverage Queensland's natural and cultural assets more effectively.
The Strategy embraces an ethos of 'travel for good' and provides a number of initiatives to support ecotourism, sustainability and other nature-based experiences.
**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct** aligns with this strategy and will contribute to making Queensland tourism more sustainable and contributing directly to ecotourism in the State.




**Ecotourism Plan for Queensland's Protected Areas 2023–2028**

The Ecotourism Plan supports the various natural landscapes across the State and the important role they can play in tourism. The Plan champions the sustainability of these natural places and the native wildlife in them.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct** supports this plan through its conservation work that will be greatly expanded through the new facilities.


**Queensland Tourism Strategic Plan 2022-26**

To be effective leaders and partners in managing, protecting and restoring Queensland's VISION natural environment and heritage is one of Queensland Government's key strategies. It includes to Conserve and protect Queensland's biodiversity, threatened species and critical natural assets.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project aligns strongly with this strategy.


**TEQ Marketing Strategy 2025**

Events generate enormous economic and social value for local communities and bring people together to explore Queensland's unforgettable experiences. Events form an important aspect of the TEQ Marketing Strategy 2025.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project aligns strongly with this strategy by creating more spaces for conferences, such as international vet conferences.

## 4.3 Regional Strategic Priorities

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct strongly aligns with a number of regional priorities as evidenced by the following strategies and plans.

**Aligning to Regional Priorities**

RDA Gold Coast is progressing four specific projects to grow the regional economy:

- Sustainable Gold Coast
- Gold Coast Industry 4.0
- Gold Coast Biomedical
- Gold Coast Regional Jobs Committee

While the Research and Training Precinct has not been cited as part of any of these projects, it does align strongly to the goals of these projects, which is to grow the local economy and create future jobs. The project does have alignment with the Regional Jobs Committee, particularly given it's future oriented research and the jobs associated with this project. The project also aligns with the Biomedical project, given the future linkages the research lab will have with the veterinary pharmaceutical manufacturing sector.


The **Gold Coast Regional Jobs Committee** (GCRJC) seeks to create the jobs of today and the future, improving training pathways and driving economic activity on the Gold Coast. The GCRJC is managed by RDA Gold Coast.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct** aligns with the GCRJC as it will deliver not only future jobs but new and innovative jobs of the future.


The **Gold Coast Our Natural City Strategy 2032** seeks to protect the local natural eco-system and its wildlife.

The strategy seeks to restore the area to 51% native vegetation cover, purchase land to secure habitat and corridors, design the city to protect the natural environment and understand / response to climate change.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct** aligns with this regional priority through its ability to contribute to protecting native wildlife into the future.


**Destination Gold Coast Action Plan 2023-24**

The Action Plan recognises that the Gold Coast requires rejuvenation in terms of its visitor experiences and offering. The Action Plan has a focus on driving growth, providing leadership and further destination development.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct** provides outcomes identified in the action plan, including the development of a new visitor experience, focus on attracting international visitors and a dedication to the sustainability of the region's natural assets.


**Destination Gold Coast COVID-19 Recovery Strategy**

The strategy recognises the important role that tourism plays for the Gold Coast economy and the significant losses that have been experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The four-phase plan seeks to claw back losses suffered through a targeted marketing campaign within specific markets in Australia and New Zealand in order to entice visitors back to the Gold Coast. The Plan seeks to deliver a return to growth in 2022.

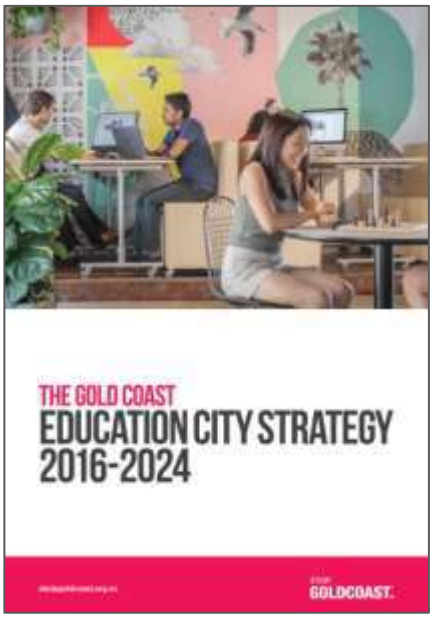
**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project aligns with Destination Gold Coast COVID-19 Recovery Strategy in helping to boost tourism through offering new experiences for visitors as well as facilitating increases in educational tourism and voluntourism.


**The Gold Coast Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027**
This Strategy reinforces the importance of the city's economic core, including the role that industries such as tourism, property and construction, manufacturing, screen, health, education and sport have played in making the city what it is today.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project aligns with Gold Coast's Economic Development Strategy by targeting more year-round business and training and development opportunities.


The **Gold Coast Council Plan 2022-2027** has a 'diverse and thriving economy' as one of six key themes with the goal of increasing visitation, education and gross regional product.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project aligns with Gold Coast City Council's Plan by increasing visitation and diversifying the economy through new research and training programs.




The **Gold Coast Education City Strategy** has the goal for the Gold Coast to be recognised as a city with a vibrant, cutting-edge education and training sector that produces world and work ready graduates.

**The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital** project aligns with this regional priority and actually delivers on four out of the eight goals.

# 5. Financial Analysis

An independent financial analysis for this project was carried out by Lucid Economics. The following sections summarise the results of this analysis.

## 5.1 Approach

A ten year discounted cashflow model (DCM) has been constructed for this project. This modelling approach allows the up-front investment and development costs to be considered alongside the operational revenues and costs in order to identify a potential return on investment over the 10 year term. The analysis seeks to evaluate the overall attractiveness of the project (for investment purposes) as well as test the on-going financial sustainability of the new precinct, in terms of annual operating results.

The assessment focuses on the net incremental increase (both in terms of revenues and costs) related to just the Research and Training Precinct. As such, the assessment does not consider any existing revenues or costs associated with the existing Currumbin Wildlife Hospital or the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. It is unlikely that the Research and Training Precinct will generate additional gate sales for the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary (i.e. it is unlikely that the new precinct will by itself attract net new visitors), but rather may present the opportunity to generate additional revenues from 'behind the scenes' tours. However, given the planned training and research activities of the precinct, these tours may be somewhat limited given the students and researchers that will be visiting the precinct. As such, no revenues (nor costs) for these tours has been included in the modelling.

**Investment Decision Making**

Two commonly used techniques to identify a return on investment are identifying a project's Net Present Value (NPV) or its Internal Rate of Return (IRR).

**Net Present Value (NPV)**

Net present value uses a discount rate (often the weighted average cost of capital, a hurdle rate and/or a measure of risk) to capture and identify future project cash flows and compare them with the upfront investment costs. This analysis considers the time value of money (i.e. a dollar today is worth more than one in the future because it can be invested). Applying the discount rate to future cash flows takes into consideration the time value of money as well as project risk.

If the result of the analysis is zero or positive the analysis shows that future cash flows from the project are worth the identified level of risk or the hurdle rate and the project should be pursued. If the result is negative, then the analysis has identified that the future cash flows are insufficient to warrant the investment (based on the discount rate and level of investment).

**Internal Rate of Return (IRR)**

IRR can be defined as the annualised effective compounded return rate of an investment. It can often be used to quantify a return on investment (in percent terms). IRR is closely related to NPV in that if a project returns the desired IRR, the NPV will be zero.

In some circumstances, a project can have a negative NPV but a positive IRR. This situation would signal that the project does have a positive return on investment, however, the return is not high enough to reach the desired hurdle rate or to warrant the level of risk (as identified by the discount rate).

Both of these measures are often used as tools to evaluate investments and should not be taken as hardened rules of investment but rather a perspective on the potential profitability of an investment.

## 5.2 Assumptions

Section 3 provided a detailed description of the physical spaces that the new precinct would deliver. The following information provides a detailed description of the future activities that will take place in the new facilities that have financial implications. The future Research and Training Precinct will offer a range of programs and experiences, including:

- **Research programs**: given the bespoke research laboratory space, the precinct will host a number of native wildlife research programs. These programs would be conducted in conjunction with major university partners, such as the University of Queensland. The partner university would fund the wages for the researcher as well as pay a fee to the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital for use of the space.
- **Wildlife care short course**: these courses would be 1-2 days in duration and targeted at veterinarians, vet nurses as well as wildlife carers. The courses will provide an entry level understanding of how to treat and rehabilitate injured wildlife. By increasing the local capabilities of veterinarians, vet nurses and wildlife carers from around South East Queensland, Northern New South Wales and beyond, we will increase the local capacity to care for and rehabilitate injured wildlife, thereby directly contributing to increase in conservation. Another goal of this course is to upskill existing veterinarians and vet nurses to be better equipped to deal with injured wildlife, thereby ensuring capacity at the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is reserved from the more critically injured animals that require the specialist care that only the hospital can provide. As such, these short courses will assist to manage the rapidly growing admissions to the Hospital through the provision of local care.
- **International student groups**: international student groups currently visit the Hospital, but the Research and Training Precinct allows the Hospital to offer these services in a bespoke manner, combining access to classroom space and practical learning in the Hospital and the Sanctuary. The new facilities will greatly increase the capacity to host additional and larger student groups.
- **Observers**: the Hospital currently receives observers, who are often veterinarians or international students, that shadow staff at the Hospital, usually for one week. The expansion of the Research and Training Precinct will provide additional facilities that can be used by these observers and increase the capacity to host these observers.
- **School groups**: the new 90 seat training space will enable to the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary to cater programs for students through combining formal lectures in the training facility combined with practical understanding at the Hospital and in the Sanctuary. The new facilities will allow the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary to welcome more student groups and provide a more meaningful visitor experience for these students.

- **Vocational training**: working in conjunction with TAFE, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital would leverage the new training facility to deliver a range of vocational courses, including:
    - Certificate I in Conservation and Ecosystem Management
    - Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management
    - Certificate II in Animal Care
    - Certificate III in Wildlife and Exhibited Animal Care
    - Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing
    - Certificate IV in Leadership and Management
- **Events**: the new training centre would also allow the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital to host a range of events, including Wildlife focused conferences and other corporate events for local businesses. The venue would have the appropriate layout and technology to host these events as well as the ability to add in various wildlife features from the Sanctuary to produce very unique corporate events or celebrations.
- **Voluntourism**: the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary already benefits greatly from volunteers, however, the new facilities will allow us to tap into the growing trends of visitors 'travelling for purpose', which would see visitors paying to donate their time to wildlife conservation. The training facility would allow volunteers to receive initial training and briefing before conducting their volunteer work.

The following tables (Table 5.1 and Table 5.2) highlight the assumptions for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct financial analysis.

The revenue assumptions (Table 5.1) are based on the current understanding of future demand that has been developed through the existing demand for research and training at the existing, constrained facilities. As highlighted previously, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital was never designed to cater for research and training but has been providing limited services given the strong demand for these services. The revenue and demand assumptions represent the net increase in demand (and revenue) and have been further informed through discussions with existing users about their usage needs and the proposed new facilities. As such, the market demand assumptions are real and based on market participant interest. Pricing for various training and research services has been based on historical achieved rates as well as informed through discussions with future potential users.

Operating cost assumptions (Table 5.2) have been based on actual operating costs within the existing Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (which has been providing these services). These actual operating costs have been apportioned to the existing footprint of the current facilities to establish a benchmark, per square metre cost, which has then been applied to the new facilities.

In order to establish a 10-year cash flow statement of revenues and costs, inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been applied to both prices and operating costs (ABS, 2023).

As highlighted previously, the work of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital is provided free of charge as an important community service for South East Queensland. The Hospital can only operate through the generous donations of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Foundation. The Hospital does not have surplus funds to contribute to the building and operating of the Research and Training Precinct. In recognition of this situation and in order to support the overall conservation goals and objectives of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, the financial model has been designed to generate sufficient revenue from operations to cover the majority of operating costs. As highlighted in Table 5.1, it is anticipated that additional donations will also be required.

At the same time, the financial model has been designed to make vet training courses affordable (and thereby attractive to vets and vet nurses). Equally, the research space will be largely leased to university researchers at a rate that is well below commercial terms (i.e. $75 per researcher per week, which equates to $278/sqm/annum, which is well below the average commercial rent on the Gold Coast of $486/sqm/annum (Colliers, 2022)).

As such, the financial model has been designed to support our overall conservation goals and to ensure we can protect native wildlife species from becoming extinct, while at the same time being financially viable.

**Table 5.1. Revenue Assumptions**

| | Base Rate ($/sqm, $/unit) | Basis | Unit/ Demand | Revenue |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Revenue** | | | | |
| Sales Revenue Vet Shop | $10.01 | per sqm | 1,697 | $16,989 |
| Sales Revenue External Sales | $21.18 | per sqm | 1,697 | $35,944 |
| Education Vet Training | $495 | per course | 200 | $99,000 |
| Education International Students | $584 | per week | 300 | $175,193 |
| Observers | $1,000 | per week | 26 | $26,000 |
| Research | $75 | per week[1] | 624 | $46,800 |
| Wildlife Conference and Seminars | $27,435 | per event | 3 | $82,305 |
| Functions/Workshops | $1,918 | per event | 40 | $76,700 |
| School Groups | $15 | per student | 4,500 | $67,500 |
| Vocational Training | $2,109 | per student | 164 | $345,924 |
| Voluntourism | $3,000 | per visitor | 150 | $450,000 |
| Donations | $120.88 | per sqm | 1,697 | $205,175 |
| **Total Revenue** | | | | **$1,627,531** |

Note: 1 – base rate per researcher per week (for 52 weeks per year).
Source: CWS (2023); Lucid Economics (2023)

Many of the pricing assumptions highlighted in Table 5.1 are based on current prices that are achieved for these services, including:

- $1,000 per week for observers and overseas students
- $495 per vet/vet nursing courses at the Taronga Zoo

Function and event pricing is based on the current pricing structure for events and functions held at the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. Demand for events has been estimated based on previous event experience of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary as well as engagement with industry experts regarding wildlife conferences.

**Table 5.2. Operating Cost Assumptions**

| | Base Rate ($/sqm, $/unit) | Basis | Unit/Demand | Expense |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Expense** | | | | |
| Building Maintenance | $18.92 | per sqm | 1,697 | $32,111 |
| Cleaning | $21.34 | per sqm | 1,697 | $36,216 |
| Conferences | $2.82 | per sqm | 1,697 | $4,784 |
| Consumables | $11.47 | per sqm | 1,697 | $19,477 |
| Education Expenses | $10.74 | per sqm | 1,697 | $18,223 |
| Electricity Usage | $37.42 | per sqm | 1,697 | $63,510 |
| Equipment Maintenance | $25.21 | per sqm | 1,697 | $42,799 |
| Functions/Workshops | $1,361 | per event | 40 | $54,457 |
| Medical Expenses | $0.00 | per sqm | 1,697 | $0 |
| Memberships & Subscriptions | $2.96 | per sqm | 1,697 | $5,031 |
| Motor Vehicle Expenses | $31.05 | per sqm | 1,697 | $52,709 |
| Office Expenses | $2.65 | per sqm | 1,697 | $4,492 |
| Permits & Licences | $2.65 | per sqm | 1,697 | $4,492 |
| Plant & Equipment | $56.46 | per sqm | 1,697 | $95,831 |
| Professional Services | $6.11 | per sqm | 1,697 | $10,374 |
| Research Project | $30.90 | per sqm | 1,697 | $52,450 |
| Salaries and wages | $74,345 | per employee | 4 | $297,380 |
| Salaries and wages - On Costs | $16,933 | per employee | 4 | $67,733 |
| School Groups | $12.48 | per student | 4,500 | $56,160 |
| Security | $3.33 | per sqm | 1,697 | $5,660 |
| Staffing Expenses | $18.34 | per sqm | 323 | $5,931 |
| Sundry Animal Expenses | $0.17 | per sqm | 1,697 | $285 |
| Sundry Expenses | $5.44 | per sqm | 1,697 | $9,228 |
| Telephone | $4.45 | per sqm | 1,697 | $7,558 |
| Travel | $4.17 | per sqm | 1,697 | $7,070 |
| Vocational Training | $1,898.36 | per student | 164 | $311,332 |
| Volunteer Programs | $0.15 | per sqm | 1,697 | $262 |
| Voluntourism | $1,050.00 | per visitor | 150 | $157,500 |
| Waste Disposal | $2.21 | per sqm | 1,697 | $3,744 |
| Wildlife Conference and Seminars | $19,479 | per event | 3 | $58,437 |
| Workplace Health & Safety | $4.22 | per sqm | 1,697 | $7,171 |
| **Total Expenses** | | | | **$1,492,407** |

Source: CWS (2023); Lucid Economics (2023)

As highlighted in Table 5.2, the majority of operating costs are based on the per square metre benchmark from the current operations of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. However, costs have been amended to include specific (and additional) costs associated with the Research and Training Precinct, specifically:

- A much higher cost for consumables, given the much larger research space. The increased costs is based on the proportional increase in research space.
- Increases wages for new staff, including:
    - Three researchers who will work directly for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. The majority of researchers will be university researchers who will pay to lease the research space and also pay the wages of their researchers.
    - A training coordinator to work with the greatly increased volume of training clients
- Increased costs to support new events that will take place at the new facilities. These costs have been estimated by the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary based on the current cost to host similar style events on the property.
- Increases costs for providing the various future education and training services, per user group.

All assumptions are based on demonstrated market evidence to ensure accuracy and eliminate broad speculation. Based on the ABS, the 10-year average CPI of 2.6% has been applied to future revenues and costs (ABS, 2023).

## 5.3 Findings

The findings of the financial analysis are provided in the following tables (Table 5.3 and Table 5.4).

As a research and training facility, it is not surprising that the project does not provide any sort of commercial return, which demonstrates the need for government support. It should be noted that the financial analysis does demonstrate that the new Research and Training Precinct can operate in a financially viable manner, generating a positive operating surplus every year.

**Table 5.3. Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct, Financial Analysis**

| | **Outcome** |
|---|---|
| Capital Expenditure | $12,705,000 |
| | **Year 1** |
| Revenue | $1,627,531 |
| Operating Costs | $1,492,407 |
| Operating Surplus/Shortage | $135,124 |
| | **10-year** |
| Internal Rate of Return (IRR) | -27% |
| Net Present Value (NPV) | -$11,479,223 |

Note: Discount rate 4%, which reflects the community driven nature of the project.
Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

The National Trust of Australia (QLD), the owner of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, is a non-profit organisation and has limited capacity to fund large capital projects. Money that is generated by the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary funds not only its operations, but also the existing conservation and research work of the Hospital.

Without Government assistance, this important project cannot and will not be realised. The important work of the research and training to save the iconic koala in the wild, as well as many more species, will simply not be possible.

**Table 5.4. Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct, 10-year Cashflow**

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Revenue** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sales Revenue Vet Shop - Vets | $16,989 | $17,439 | $17,901 | $18,375 | $18,861 | $19,360 | $19,873 | $20,399 | $20,939 | $21,493 |
| Sales Revenue External Sales - Vets | $35,944 | $36,896 | $37,872 | $38,875 | $39,904 | $40,960 | $42,044 | $43,157 | $44,299 | $45,472 |
| Education Vet Training | $99,000 | $101,620 | $104,310 | $107,071 | $109,905 | $112,814 | $115,801 | $118,866 | $122,012 | $125,241 |
| Education International Students | $175,193 | $179,830 | $184,590 | $189,476 | $194,491 | $199,639 | $204,923 | $210,347 | $215,915 | $221,630 |
| Observers | $26,000 | $26,688 | $27,395 | $28,120 | $28,864 | $29,628 | $30,412 | $31,217 | $32,044 | $32,892 |
| Research | $46,800 | $48,039 | $49,310 | $50,615 | $51,955 | $53,330 | $54,742 | $56,191 | $57,678 | $59,205 |
| Wildlife Conference and Seminars | $82,305 | $84,484 | $86,720 | $89,015 | $91,371 | $93,790 | $96,272 | $98,821 | $101,436 | $104,121 |
| Functions/Workshops | $76,700 | $78,730 | $80,814 | $82,953 | $85,149 | $87,403 | $89,716 | $92,091 | $94,528 | $97,030 |
| School Groups | $67,500 | $69,287 | $71,121 | $73,003 | $74,935 | $76,919 | $78,955 | $81,045 | $83,190 | $85,392 |
| Vocational Training | $345,924 | $355,081 | $364,479 | $374,127 | $384,029 | $394,194 | $404,628 | $415,338 | $426,332 | $437,617 |
| Voluntourism | $450,000 | $461,911 | $474,137 | $486,687 | $499,570 | $512,793 | $526,366 | $540,298 | $554,600 | $569,279 |
| Donations | $205,175 | $210,606 | $216,181 | $221,903 | $227,776 | $233,805 | $239,994 | $246,347 | $252,867 | $259,560 |
| **Total Revenue** | **$1,627,531** | **$1,670,610** | **$1,714,830** | **$1,760,220** | **$1,806,811** | **$1,854,636** | **$1,903,726** | **$1,954,116** | **$2,005,840** | **$2,058,933** |

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Expenses** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Building Maintenance | $32,111 | $32,961 | $33,833 | $34,729 | $35,648 | $36,591 | $37,560 | $38,554 | $39,575 | $40,622 |
| Cleaning | $36,216 | $37,174 | $38,158 | $39,168 | $40,205 | $41,269 | $42,362 | $43,483 | $44,634 | $45,815 |
| Conferences | $4,784 | $4,910 | $5,040 | $5,174 | $5,310 | $5,451 | $5,595 | $5,743 | $5,895 | $6,052 |
| Consumables | $19,477 | $19,992 | $20,522 | $21,065 | $21,622 | $22,195 | $22,782 | $23,385 | $24,004 | $24,639 |
| Education Expenses | $18,223 | $18,706 | $19,201 | $19,709 | $20,231 | $20,766 | $21,316 | $21,880 | $22,459 | $23,054 |
| Electricity Usage | $63,510 | $65,191 | $66,917 | $68,688 | $70,506 | $72,372 | $74,288 | $76,254 | $78,272 | $80,344 |
| Equipment Maintenance | $42,799 | $43,932 | $45,094 | $46,288 | $47,513 | $48,771 | $50,062 | $51,387 | $52,747 | $54,143 |
| Functions/Workshops | $54,457 | $55,898 | $57,378 | $58,897 | $60,456 | $62,056 | $63,698 | $65,385 | $67,115 | $68,892 |
| Memberships & Subscriptions | $5,031 | $5,164 | $5,301 | $5,441 | $5,585 | $5,733 | $5,885 | $6,041 | $6,200 | $6,365 |
| Motor Vehicle Expenses | $52,709 | $54,105 | $55,537 | $57,007 | $58,516 | $60,064 | $61,654 | $63,286 | $64,961 | $66,681 |
| Office Expenses | $4,492 | $4,611 | $4,733 | $4,859 | $4,987 | $5,119 | $5,255 | $5,394 | $5,537 | $5,683 |
| Permits & Licences | $4,492 | $4,611 | $4,733 | $4,859 | $4,987 | $5,119 | $5,255 | $5,394 | $5,537 | $5,683 |
| Plant & Equipment | $95,831 | $98,368 | $100,971 | $103,644 | $106,387 | $109,203 | $112,094 | $115,061 | $118,107 | $121,233 |
| Professional Services | $10,374 | $10,649 | $10,931 | $11,220 | $11,517 | $11,822 | $12,135 | $12,456 | $12,786 | $13,124 |
| Research Project | $52,450 | $53,839 | $55,264 | $56,726 | $58,228 | $59,769 | $61,351 | $62,975 | $64,642 | $66,353 |
| Salaries and wages | $297,380 | $305,252 | $313,332 | $321,625 | $330,138 | $338,877 | $347,846 | $357,054 | $366,504 | $376,206 |
| Salaries and wages - On Costs | $67,733 | $69,526 | $71,366 | $73,255 | $75,194 | $77,184 | $79,227 | $81,324 | $83,477 | $85,687 |
| School Groups | $56,160 | $57,646 | $59,172 | $60,738 | $62,346 | $63,996 | $65,690 | $67,429 | $69,214 | $71,046 |
| Security | $5,660 | $5,810 | $5,963 | $6,121 | $6,283 | $6,450 | $6,620 | $6,796 | $6,976 | $7,160 |
| Staffing Expenses | $5,931 | $6,088 | $6,249 | $6,415 | $6,584 | $6,759 | $6,938 | $7,121 | $7,310 | $7,503 |
| Sundry Animal Expenses | $285 | $292 | $300 | $308 | $316 | $325 | $333 | $342 | $351 | $360 |
| Sundry Expenses | $9,228 | $9,472 | $9,723 | $9,980 | $10,244 | $10,515 | $10,794 | $11,079 | $11,373 | $11,674 |
| Telephone | $7,558 | $7,758 | $7,964 | $8,174 | $8,391 | $8,613 | $8,841 | $9,075 | $9,315 | $9,562 |
| Travel | $7,070 | $7,257 | $7,450 | $7,647 | $7,849 | $8,057 | $8,270 | $8,489 | $8,714 | $8,944 |
| Vocational Training | $311,332 | $319,572 | $328,031 | $336,714 | $345,626 | $354,775 | $364,165 | $373,805 | $383,699 | $393,855 |
| Volunteer Programs | $262 | $269 | $276 | $283 | $291 | $299 | $307 | $315 | $323 | $331 |
| Voluntourism | $157,500 | $161,669 | $165,948 | $170,341 | $174,849 | $179,477 | $184,228 | $189,104 | $194,110 | $199,248 |
| Waste Disposal | $3,744 | $3,843 | $3,945 | $4,049 | $4,157 | $4,267 | $4,380 | $4,495 | $4,614 | $4,737 |

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wildlife Conference and Seminars | $58,437 | $59,983 | $61,571 | $63,201 | $64,874 | $66,591 | $68,353 | $70,163 | $72,020 | $73,926 |
| Workplace Health & Safety | $7,171 | $7,361 | $7,556 | $7,756 | $7,961 | $8,172 | $8,388 | $8,610 | $8,838 | $9,072 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$1,492,407** | **$1,531,910** | **$1,572,458** | **$1,614,080** | **$1,656,803** | **$1,700,657** | **$1,745,672** | **$1,791,878** | **$1,839,308** | **$1,887,992** |
| **Net Profit (Loss)** | ***$135,124*** | ***$138,700*** | ***$142,371*** | ***$146,140*** | ***$150,008*** | ***$153,979*** | ***$158,054*** | ***$162,238*** | ***$166,532*** | ***$170,940*** |

Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

# 6. Economic Benefits

An independent economic assessment for this project was carried out by Lucid Economics. The following sections summarise the results of this analysis.

## 6.1 Construction Phase

As highlighted in Section 3.4, the Research and Training Precinct will cost $12.7 million to build. The key assumptions used to identify the economic impacts from the construction phase are highlighted in Table 5.2.

**Table 6.1: Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct, Key Assumptions, Construction**

| Industry | Split (%) | Local Capture (%) | Local Expenditure ($m) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Residential Building Construction | 60% | 85% | $5.20 |
| Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction | 15% | 85% | $1.30 |
| Construction Services | 20% | 85% | $1.73 |
| Professional, Scientific & Technical Services | 5% | 85% | $0.43 |

Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

The construction phase is expected to create a total of 70 jobs on the Gold Coast (20 directly and 50 indirectly) and contribute $9.3 million to GRP ($3.1 million directly and $6.2 million indirectly).

**Table 6.2: Economic Impact of the Research and Training Precinct, Construction Phase**

| | Gross Regional Product ($m) | Employment (No.) |
|---|---|---|
| Direct | $3.1 | 20 |
| Indirect | $6.2 | 50 |
| **Total** | **$9.3** | **70** |

Notes: Employment expressed as full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.
Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

## 6.2 Operational Phase

The operational phase of the project will create new visitor expenditure on the Gold Coast in two distinct ways:

- **Onsite Expenditure**: onsite expenditure represents the money spent onsite (i.e. identified revenues) for the new and expanded visitor services identified in Section 5.2. This expenditure includes money spent by visitors to the Gold Coast as well as local residents undertaking training. The majority of the expenditure would come from visitors to the Gold Coast.
- **Offsite Expenditure**: offsite expenditure captures visitor expenditure spent with businesses on the Gold Coast as a result of the participant coming to the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct.

**Onsite Expenditure**

Onsite expenditure is represented by the identified future revenue for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct (refer Section 5). In its first year of operations, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct is expected to generate $1.6 million in revenue. 74% of future education and training participants are expected to be visitors to the Gold Coast. The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital will directly employ a training coordinator as well as three researchers. Additionally, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary will create seven new jobs associated with the increased demand from the new research and training precinct. In total, 11 total jobs will be directly created as part of this project.

In addition to the visitor expenditure (onsite and offsite), the new Research and Training Facility will enable a number of research positions. There are 16 individual research work stations available and it has been assumed that these will be filled the majority of the time. As highlighted earlier (refer Section 5.2), most of these work stations will be leased by universities to support their own researchers. It has been assumed that there will be 12 university funded researchers on an annual basis. Given the high level of current demand for the existing limited research space, it has been assumed these positions would not be possible if it were not for this new space. These jobs have been added to the onsite expenditure estimates to capture their economic impact.

**Offsite Expenditure**

Offsite expenditure has been estimated using the identified demand for services as well as estimates regarding the proportion of participants and attendees that would travel to the Gold Coast for these services (i.e. excludes residents). The visitation estimates have been combined with the visitor expenditure benchmarks for the associated activity based on data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA). In its first year of operations, the Research and Training Precinct is expected to generate $1.0 million in visitor expenditure offsite, at local businesses on the Gold Coast.

**Table 6.3: Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct Visitor Expenditure, Offsite**

| | Participants | Visitors | Day trip Visits | Visitor Nights | Offsite Expenditure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | | | | | |
| Local Vet Courses | 200 | 120 | 180 | 60 | $51,868 |
| International Students | 300 | 300 | 0 | 2,100 | $350,250 |
| Observers | 26 | 26 | 0 | 130 | $55,806 |
| Wildlife Conferences/Seminars | 120 | 144 | 96 | 80 | $33,899 |
| School Groups | 4,500 | 3,600 | 3,600 | 0 | $0 |
| Vocational Training | 164 | 131 | 131 | 0 | $220,508 |
| **Research** | | | | | |
| Researchers | 14 | 12 | 2,880 | 0 | $269,095 |
| **Other** | | | | | |
| Functions | 800 | 160 | 160 | 0 | $12,468 |
| Voluntourism | 150 | 150 | 0 | 1,050 | $50,896 |
| **Total** | **6,274** | **4,643** | **7,047** | **3,420** | **$1,044,789** |

Sources: Lucid Economics (2023)

**Results**

The operational phase of the new Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct will create a total (direct and indirect) economic impact of $6.7 million in GRP terms and 41 jobs, on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis.

**Table 6.4: Economic Impact of the Research and Training Precinct, Operational Phase (Onsite Expenditure)**

| | Gross Regional Product ($m) | Employment (No.) |
|---|---|---|
| Direct | $2.59 | 23 |
| Indirect | $3.35 | 10 |
| **Total** | **$5.94** | **33** |

Notes: Employment expressed as full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.
Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

**Table 6.5: Economic Impact of the Research and Training Precinct, Operational Phase (Off-Site Expenditure)**

| | Gross Regional Product ($m) | Employment (No.) |
|---|---|---|
| Direct | $0.44 | 6 |
| Indirect | $0.35 | 2 |
| **Total** | **$0.79** | **8** |

Notes: Employment expressed as full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.
Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

**Table 6.6: Economic Impact of the Research and Training Precinct, Operational Phase (Total)**

| | Gross Regional Product ($m) | Employment (No.) |
|---|---|---|
| Direct | $3.03 | 29 |
| Indirect | $3.70 | 12 |
| **Total** | **$6.73** | **41** |

Notes: Employment expressed as full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.
Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

**The Economic Value of the Koala**

The koala is an iconic Australian native species and together with the kangaroo, Sydney Opera House and Uluru represent the most recognisable symbols of Australia.

Studies have been done over the years to identify the economic value of the koala. These studies have identified values ranging from $1.1 billion[1] to $3.2 billion[2]. These and other studies have also demonstrated the popularity of the koala amongst international visitors, often being the most popular and the native wildlife that international visitors most want to experience.

The initial 1997 study that evaluated the economic value of the koala focus on its tourism value and surveyed international visitors to ascertain those visitors that travelled to Australia to see a koala. The 2014 study used these proportions and updated international visitor expenditure to identify the value of $3.2 billion. The basis for this information is very dated, which could lead to an inaccurate understanding of the value. Furthermore, the travelling global population has increased significantly and these previous studies were conducted before the koala became endangered.

While no more current survey data exists, it is possible to understand a more current economic value of the koala through analysis of visitor attractions and using recent future demand analysis conducted by Tourism Australia.

There are 13 wildlife attractions in Australia that are focused on the koala and have an estimated annual attendance of 3.6 million people. There are another 14 wildlife attractions that feature the koala and have an estimated annual attendance of 4.2 million people. Given the koala focus of the 13 wildlife attractions that focus on koalas, it can be assumed that people go to these destinations to experience koalas. Assuming that 15% of the attendance to other wildlife attractions that feature koalas, it can be estimated that a total of 4.2 million people visit these attractions to experience the koala. Applying the historical split of visitors across day trip, domestic overnight and international visitors across these venues as well as their historical expenditure patterns, it is estimated that $937 million in visitor expenditure is generated from the koala today. This level of visitor expenditure would directly support over 112,000 jobs across the Australian economy.

This economic impact would only include koalas that are in various wildlife centres and would not include koalas in the wild. Recent demand research from Tourism Australia identified the future pool of international visitors that were planning a trip to Australia (within the next two years) and were interested to experience Australian native wildlife in their natural environment. This research identified over 9 million potential visitors for this specific experience (TA, 2022). Tourism Australia has identified eight species of iconic Australian animals, which included the koala. Apportioning equally (which is very conservative given the popularity of the koala), seeing a koala in the wild would equate to 1.1 million visitors and assuming this experience would require a full day ($138 per visitor night expenditure), the ability to see a koala in the wild would be worth $156 million in visitor expenditure over the next two years ($1,692 per koala in the wild). Naturally, over time, this value would increase, however, as fewer and fewer koalas are in the wild, there is a danger that this future expenditure is at risk and may not eventuate.

**Combining the visitor expenditure associated with wildlife centres and the value of seeing a koala in its natural environment, the economic value of the koala is easily over $1 billion per year**. The shrinking numbers of koalas in the wild and its endangered status easily risks billions of dollars over time into the future.

***The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct can help save and preserve the koala, which can equate to billions of dollars in future visitor expenditure.***

## 6.3 Cost-Benefit Analysis

The cost-benefit analysis (CBA) considered a number of project costs and benefits over time, including:

- Project Costs
  - Capital expenditure to build the Research and Training Precinct
  - Operational expenditure to operate the Research and Training Precinct
  - Maintenance costs to maintain the new infrastructure
- Project Benefits
  - Operational revenue of the Research and Training Precinct
  - Ancillary tourism benefits arising from the Research and Training Precinct
  - Benefits from supporting the wild koala population in Australia

The assumptions underpinning the CBA model are highlighted in the following Table 6.7.

**Table 6.7: Definition of Costs and Benefits, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct**

| Impact | Description | Assumption | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Costs** | | | |
| Construction Capex | Capital expenditure to build and deliver the new facilities. | • $12.7 million in capital expenditure. | Quancept (2023) |
| Operational costs | Annual costs to operate the new facilities. | • Currumbin Wildlife Hospital estimates it will cost $1.5 million to in operating expenses per year. | CWS (2023) |
| Ongoing maintenance costs | Annual building maintenance costs for the new facilities. | • Currumbin Wildlife Hospital estimates annual building maintenance to be $32,111. | CWS (2023) |
| **Benefits** | | | |
| Operational revenue | Revenue generated annually from the new facilities, including training revenue, leasing of research space, events and some minor vet sales. | • CWS expects to generate $1.6 million in operational revenue per year. | CWS (2023) |
| Offsite Tourism Benefits | Increase in offsite visitor expenditure within the Gold Coast region through the operation of the new facilities, generated principally through visitation to the new facility for training purposes. | • Estimated increase of 7,511 visitors and 3,420 visitor nights to the Gold Coast region.<br>• Estimated total increase in visitor expenditure of $1.0 million.<br>• Estimated increase in direct gross value added of $0.4 million. | CWS (2023), TRA (2023), TRA (2023a), Lucid Economics |

[1] Koalas and Tourism: An Economic Evaluation, the Australian Institute (1997)
[2] The Economic Value of the Koala, Australian Koala Foundation (2014)

| Impact | Description | Assumption | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| Koala Benefit | The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct will be central in progressing the Chlamydia Vaccine for Koalas. With the new research precinct, it may be possible to get approval for the vaccine in the next 5-6 years. Initially, the vaccine would be distributed across all wildlife hospitals in Australia and any koalas that are admitted would be vaccinated. Based on the results of the vaccine trial that CWS has run, where the vaccine has led to the birth of 30 joeys over three years in a koala colony that was plagued by Chlamydia and subsequently infertility amongst its female members. | • Estimated tourism value of koalas in the wild of $156 million (or $1,692 per wild koala) (refer Section 6).<br>• Koala vaccine is approved in year 6 of the new research and training precinct operating<br>• Estimated 3,786 koalas admitted to wildlife hospitals in Australia per year<br>• 50% of admitted koalas are female<br>• 50% of female koalas get pregnant<br>• Female koalas will mate by the age of 3 or 4, get pregnant at least every 2 years and have an average lifespan of 12 years<br>• Despite the vaccine, one-third of the females die due to other factors (i.e. car strike, dog attack, another disease, etc.)<br>• Cumulative increase in wild koala population of almost 14,000 animals by the 20$^{th}$ year of the precinct's operations | CWS (2023), TRA (2023a), TA (2022); Lucid Economics |

Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

The results of the CBA for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Expansion are highlighted in the following table (Table 6.8).

**Table 6.8. Cost-Benefit Assessment Results, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct ($m)**

| Discount rate | 4% | 7% | 10% |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Benefits** | | | |
| Operating revenue | $22.1 | $17.2 | $13.9 |
| Tourism Benefit | $5.4 | $4.2 | $3.4 |
| Koala Benefit | $77.3 | $49.7 | $32.7 |
| *Total Benefits* | *$104.9* | *$71.2* | *$50.0* |
| **Costs** | | | |
| Capex | $12.7 | $12.7 | $12.7 |
| Operating expenses | $19.8 | $15.5 | $12.4 |
| Maintenance expenses | $0.4 | $0.3 | $0.3 |
| *Total Costs* | *$33.0* | *$28.5* | *$25.4* |
| **Net Present Value** | | | |
| NPV | $71.9 | $42.7 | $24.6 |
| **Benefit to Cost Ratio** | | | |
| BCR | 3.18 | 2.50 | 1.97 |

Source: Lucid Economics (2023)

**At the selected real discount rate of 7% for this project, the analysis yields a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.50 meaning that it is economically desirable and provides a net benefit**. Even at the higher discount rate of 10%, the project still yields a positive NPV and BCR. At 7% discount rate, for every $1 in costs associated with the project, there are $2.50 of benefits.

Under the baseline scenario (without project scenario), none of the identified benefits would be captured nor any of the costs incurred. As such, the scenario with the project provides positive economic and social benefits.

# 7. Environmental Benefits

The design of the new research and training precinct has incorporated numerous elements to reduce the carbon footprint of the facility and provide positive environmental benefits, including:

- **Roof-top solar**: a roof-top PV solar system will be installed on the roof of the new building, capable of generating sufficient power for the facility's electrical usage during the day.
- **Rainwater harvesting**: rainwater tanks will be installed to harvest rainwater, further reducing the carbon footprint of the building.
- **Energy-efficient lighting**: energy efficient LED lighting will be used throughout the new facilities to further reduce power consumption and the carbon footprint of the building.
- **Energy-efficient design**: a number of design features, including the floor to ceiling viewing glass windows, will allow for natural day-light to provide some of the interior lighting, further reducing future energy consumption and the carbon footprint of the building.

Given the environmental and sustainable features of the new facilities, the new research and training precinct will support the Australian Government's Net Zero Plan.

**Environmental Benefits of Saving Native Wildlife in Australia**

Beyond the environmental and sustainable design features of the new facility, the future research and training conducted at the facility will provide considerable environmental benefits. According to the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF), the new facilities will deliver significant environmental benefits through its contribution to the preservation and conservation of native wildlife.

As highlighted by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy, the majority of native mammals and reptiles in Australia are found nowhere else in the world. The Nature Conservancy Australia has estimated that over the past 200 years, one-third of all mammal extinctions around the world have occurred in Australia as a result of human impacts. In 2021, the Australian Government listed an additional 13 species as extinct.

The protection and conservation of Australia's native wildlife is an immediate concern and can only be addressed by urgent action. The new research facilities will allow the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital to greatly increase its capacity and capabilities that can save numerous native species, including the koala.

As the WWF states in their letter of support, the environmental benefits from the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct will be 'immeasurable'. The WFF expands further on the environmental benefits of the new facility to say:

> "The proposed project is poised to be a significant asset for Australia, in the realm of conservation. The research and training conducted at the Campus will undoubtedly have a profound impact on the preservation of native wildlife species, including the critically endangered koala."

# 8. Risk Assessment

## 8.1 Risk Assessment Framework

There are three main areas of risk for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct project:

- Development risk
- Operational risk
- Governance risk

A Likelihoods and Consequences-based matrix approach has been used for assessing the risk profile of the project. This approach considers both:

- The likelihood that a risk will occur
- The subsequent consequences to the project

By doing so, a weighted assessment of project risk is undertaken, allowing for risks to be ranked in terms of their seriousness and management initiatives and actions appropriately targeted.

**Table 8.1. Likelihood and Consequences Risk Assessment Matrix**

| | | Likelihood | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Consequence | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| | 3 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| | 4 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| | 5 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |

There are three different categories of risks:

- **Low Risk (Total Scores 1-4)** – risks with a low likelihood and consequence
- **Moderate Risk (Total Scores 5-10)** – risks that have a more moderate likelihood/consequence combination (either both having moderate scores or one has a high score and the other a low score)
- **High Risk (Total Score 12-25)** – risks where both likelihood and consequences scores are moderate or high

The treatment of each of these risks categories varies. While low to moderate risks can often be mitigated in a relatively straightforward fashion, identified high risks required considered and often more robust mitigation strategies. Naturally, for some risks, such as natural disasters, it is impossible to manage the likelihood of the risk occurring, however, the consequences can be mitigated. Similarly, sometimes the likelihood of a future risk can be mitigated, but the consequence may be the same.

## 8.2 Risk Identification

The following major risks for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct project have been identified:

**Development Risk**

1. **Capital Expenditure Costs**: Capital costs on built infrastructure can have variances for a variety of reasons and can exceed identified estimates.

2. **Development Timing**: A specific development timeframe has been established for this project and if the timeframe is extended due to some sort of complication during the development period, project costs could escalate and project revenues (and other benefits) could be delayed.

3. **Financing**: the project will rely on Government funding. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has consulted with all three levels of Government about the project and its importance and benefits are well understood. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has applied for funding from the Commonwealth Growing Regions Program ($6.4 million) and is awaiting a response. The Gold Coast City Council has also indicated interest to contribute funding to the project, together with the State and Commonwealth Governments. The project progressing is contingent upon accessing funding from the three levels of Government.

**Operational Risk**

4. **Operating Variability**: the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital provides free services to the community to rescue and treat injured wildlife. It operates through fundraising and through the profit generated by the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. As highlighted above (Section 5), the research and training precinct seeks to provide a cost neutral operation by raising revenue through the various education and event tourism aspects of the precinct. As a tourism asset, operating assumptions can vary and the operating environment can change rapidly. There are a variety of factors (beyond the control of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary) that can impact the operations of the business (as a whole) and the Research and Training Precinct (specifically), including:

    a. **Lower demand/revenue**: An estimate of future demand for education and training programs as well as future conferences and events has been established (based on current experience). However, as demonstrated with the COVID-19, demand can be highly volatile. Even though future demand is based on the past experience and current levels of demand, variances can still take place year to year. Any variance regarding demand for education and training experience, events and/or the potential uplift in voluntourism would have impacts on revenues, costs as well as the economic benefits identified.
    b. **Higher than expected operating costs**: Similar to demand and revenues, operating costs could vary into the future. Variations in operating costs will impact the on-going profitability of the precinct.

c. **Adverse Events**: Tourism is a very volatile industry that is often impacted through major adverse events. Major weather events (i.e. floods, storms, etc) or natural disasters (i.e. cyclones, bushfires, etc.) can force business closure. Furthermore, other geo-political events, such as immigration policy, trade embargos or military events can equally impact future business, particularly given the importance of international visitors. Lastly, pandemics, such as COVID-19, can have an immediate and profound negative impact on the business. All of these adverse events would be unforeseen and would have a significant impact on business operations.

**Governance Risk**

5. **Governance Risk**: Having the appropriate governance structure is important for any project to succeed. Governance provides organisations with clear responsibility, which can help to ensure project success. Ensuring appropriate structures are in place within the organisation as well as having the necessary experience are important for the success of projects like the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct.

## 8.3 Risk Assessment

The following table provides an assessment of the identified risks.

**Table 8.2. Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct Risk Assessment**

| Risk | Likelihood | Consequence | Description | Risk Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Higher than expected capital expenditure costs | 3 | 3 | Capital costs on built infrastructure can increase unexpectedly for a variety of reasons such as supply chain issues | Moderate |
| Development timing is extended | 3 | 3 | A specific development timeframe has been established for this project and if the timeframe is extended due to some sort of complication during the development period, project costs could escalate. | Moderate |
| Financing (accessing Government funding) | 3 | 5 | The project is contingent upon grant funding from Governments, which (to date) have not yet been secured. | High |
| Low demand / revenue | 3 | 4 | Future research and training demand has been estimated based on current interest and unmet demand. Actual demand could be lower than what is expected, decreasing revenues and the economic benefits expected. | High |
| Higher than expected operating costs | 2 | 4 | Operational costs could be higher than expected. | Moderate |

| Risk | Likelihood | Consequence | Description | Risk Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adverse events | 2 | 4 | Adverse events can force business closure or have a significant impact on demand and revenue. | Moderate |
| Operational governance | 1 | 3 | Mismanagement of the development and operations of the project could greatly impact project costs, revenues and returns. | Low |

Source: CWS (2023)

## 8.4 Risk Mitigation

The following table identifies various risk mitigation strategies and the resultant risk rating.

**Table 8.3: Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct, Risk and Mitigation Matrix**

| Risk | Proposed mitigation | Risk rating after mitigation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Likelihood | Consequence | Rating |
| Higher than expected capital expenditure costs | The costings have been estimated by quantity surveyor who has considerable local experience and has based the costs on detailed drawings provided by Burlingbrown and included a 10% contingency and over 12% for cost escalations to reduce the risk of cost increases. Furthermore, the tender (and subsequent contracts for construction) will require the project be delivered within the identified budget. | 2 | 2 | Low |
| Development timing is extended | A detailed project management will be developed to guide the development timeframe. A highly experienced internal project manager will be assigned to the project and various milestones will be established in the contract with the selected builder. Conservative timeframes have been identified in the current project schedule. | 1 | 2 | Low |
| Financing (accessing Government funding) | The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has engaged with a variety of Commonwealth and State Government Ministers and senior bureaucrats, as well as Council regarding the project. All three levels of Government are generally supportive of the project. However, the risk remains.<br>The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary fundraising team will run a variety of campaigns to augment funding, once Government funding has been secured. | 3 | 5 | High |

| Risk | Proposed mitigation | Risk rating after mitigation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Likelihood | Consequence | Rating |
| Low demand / revenue | The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the longest trading tourist attractions in Australia. The management team has the benefit of extensive experience with various attractions. Furthermore, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has already been hosting students and providing training to a range of groups. The future demand is estimated on current interest and in consideration of existing capacity constraints. Finally, a detailed marketing plan will be developed to promote the new training facilities through various well-established channels. Interest in the research facilities has already been verified by partners. | 2 | 4 | Moderate |
| Higher than expected operating costs | The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the longest trading tourist attractions in Australia and has a strong grasp on the labour required to operate the future attraction. Furthermore, management staff are very experienced at operating the park and Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and have a firm understanding of the operational costs required.<br>A detailed P&L plan, based on detailed historical operations, has been developed for the project. | 1 | 4 | Low |
| Adverse events | The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital has endured a wide variety of adverse events, including COVID-19. The management staff are experienced at operating the business through a crisis and various contingency plans are already in place. | 2 | 3 | Moderate |

| Risk | Proposed mitigation | Risk rating after mitigation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Likelihood | Consequence | Rating |
| Operational governance | The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has a highly skilled and experienced team in place to manage the development and operations of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct. The National Trust of Australia Queensland has a number of governance processes in place.<br>A detailed project management plan has also been developed. | 1 | 2 | Low |

Source: CSW (2023)

# 9. Stakeholder Support

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has engaged with a range of stakeholders and partners about this project. These stakeholders have shown overwhelming support for the project.

The following stakeholders have provided letters of support for the project (which are attached to this business case):

- Regional Development Australia Gold Coast
- City of Gold Coast
- Destination Gold Coast
- Karen Andrews MP
- Laura Berger MP
- Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC)
- SEQ Wildlife Hospital Network
- Study Gold Coast
- TAFE NSW
- University of Queensland
- Wildcare Australia
- Wildlife Information Rescue and Education Service
- Yugambeh Region Aboriginal Corporation Alliance

In general, the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital enjoys strong community support, as evidenced by its strong social media presence, including:

- Instagram: 146,287 followers
- Facebook: 67,714 followers
- LinkedIn: 894 followers

The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital enjoys a strong reach through these platforms, including:

- Instagram: 4.3 million
- Facebook: 2.3 million

# 10. Implementation

## 10.1 Planning Approvals

The site for the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct is zoned 'Major Tourism Zone (Wildlife Park Precinct), Open Space Zone and Neighbourhood Centre Zone.

Discussions with the Gold Coast City Council to date have indicated that the development is consistent with the Gold Coast City Plan Version 10 and an appropriate use for the land. A Development Application was lodged in July 2023. Council has requested some additional information (information request) and this information has been provided. A Development Approval is expected in March 2024.

## 10.2 Funding Strategy

The realisation of the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary Research and Training Precinct is contingent upon Government funding. As highlighted in the financial analysis (refer Section 5), once built, the project can operate in a financially sustainable manner, without the need for any further Government funding. However, as a non-profit organisation, the National Trust of Australia (Queensland) has very limited capacity to fund capital intensive projects. Proceeds from the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary (and fundraising) are used to maintain the attraction and support the existing activities of the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital (all services are provided to the community free of charge) as well as maintain other National Trust of Australia (Queensland) assets around the State.

NTAQ has invested $570,000 into the project for detailed design and approvals in order to ensure the project is 'shovel-ready' and can proceed once Government funding has been secured.

The funding strategy for the project is to access grant funding from all three levels of Government:

- **Commonwealth Government**: the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has applied for funding from the Growing Regions Program Round 1 and progressed to the second stage of the application process.
- **Queensland Government**: the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has progressed to the second stage of the Growing Future Tourism (GFT) program and has prepared a business case to support $4 million in funding from this fund.
- **Gold Coast City Council**: the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has engaged with the City of the Gold Coast and they are interested in contributing funds to the project, however, wish to wait until Commonwealth and State Government funding is known and confirmed. The City of the Gold Coast will be asked to fund $2.4 million of the project.

**Table 10.1. Currumbin Wildlife Hospital Research and Training Precinct Funding Strategy**

| Element | Amount ($) |
|---|---|
| **Project Costs** | |
| **Total Cost** | **$12,705,000** |
| **Funding Sources** | |
| City of the Gold Coast | $2,352,500 |
| Queensland Government | $4,000,000 |
| Commonwealth Government | $6,352,500 |
| **Total Funding** | **$12,705,000** |

Source: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

## 10.3 Project Governance

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary maintains strong project governance across its operations and the implementation of new products or experiences.

The project steering group has already been formed and been providing guidance to the project during its planning and development phase to progress the project to its current point. Members of this project steering group currently include:

- Jayme Cuttriss, CEO, National Trust of Australia (Queensland)
- Michael Kelly, General Manager - Strategic Projects, National Trust of Australia (Queensland)
- Dr. Michael Payne, Senior Veterinarian, Currumbin Wildlife Hospital

These senior executives have worked with project consultants to develop the existing concept, business model and project information. A dedicated project manager will be appointed for the construction of Research and Training Precinct and the project steering group will be expanded to include other senior executives that will contribute to the project.

**Project Governance Framework**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Meetings** | Monthly meetings will be held | |
| **Responsibilities / Roles** | National Trust of Australia | • Developer and owner of the project<br>• Liaison with government departments and stakeholders |
| | Project Steering Group | • Provides advice and guidance regarding the project's development and implementation |
| | Project Manager | • Responsible for day-to-day activities of the project including:<br>o Tender for design and detailed planning<br>o Letting of tender contracts for construction<br>o Engaging with contractors<br>o Managing project finances<br>o Reporting to Project Control Group |
| **Management Model** | Land Owner | City of Gold Coast |
| | Lessee | National Trust of Australia (Queensland) |
| | Operator | Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary |
| | Monitoring | Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary |
| | Maintenance | Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary |
| **Interested Stakeholders** | • National Trust of Australia (Queensland) Limited<br>• City of Gold Coast<br>• Queensland State Government<br>• Commonwealth Government<br>• Destination Gold Coast<br>• Tourism and Events Queensland<br>• Regional Development Australia | |

## 10.4 Procurement

Procurement will be done in accordance with the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary policy.

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary will conduct a tender process and ensure a clear and transparent process. Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary will seek to support local businesses and Indigenous owned businesses wherever possible (where value for money and suitable services/products can be achieved).

All construction work delivered through the project would be delivered by builders accredited under the Australian Government Construction WHS Accreditation Scheme. This accreditation will be included in the tender documentation as a mandatory requirement.

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary through the tender documents will ask for estimates of local spend (with local businesses and spend with local Indigenous businesses).

The tender process will be widely advertised to ensure all businesses have equal and fair access to the opportunity.

Selection criteria will be established for evaluating the tenders and a panel will be established (including the NTAQ CFO, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary GM and the PM) to evaluate the submissions.

The successful tenderer will enter contract negotiations for the work and before proceeding will enter into a contractual arrangement for the delivery of the project.

## 10.5 Asset Maintenance

The National Trust of Australia (Queensland) currently maintains an asset pool of over $80 million. Many of these assets are heritage or specialty properties that require more attention than conventional buildings. In the 2021-22 financial year, the National Trust of Australia (Queensland) spent over $1 million on repairs and maintenance across its asset pool in order to maintain all buildings in good working order and in many cases to protect heritage buildings.

The National Trust of Australia (Queensland) currently has a building maintenance team at the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary that maintains current facilities, including the existing Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. It adheres to the following asset maintenance regime, which would be extended to include the new facilities.

**Asset Maintenance Regime**

***Responsive Maintenance***

**Emergency Maintenance**

Maintenance emergencies will occur that need to be attended to immediately and could include plumbing issues, electrical outages, furniture breakage or damage to building elements.

***Planned Maintenance***

**Routine Maintenance**

**Daily**: staff are responsible for the day-to-day cleaning and rubbish removal

Routine (as needed):

- Replacement of light bulbs
- Movement of heavy furniture or equipment.
- Minor wall, ceiling and door repairs
- Regular inspections and cleaning of gutters and down pipes
- Checks of security fences and minor repairs as needed
- Minor landscape maintenance

**Preventative Maintenance**

**Monthly/Annually**

- Annual pest control
- Monthly tests of alarm systems and smoke detectors
- Monthly filter checks and cleaning for air-conditioning units
- Annual servicing of air-conditioning units
- Annual inspection of ceilings, floors, paving, plumbing, internal painting, door hinges and locks
- Annual servicing of electrical equipment

**Every Two Years**

- Replacement of glass where necessary
- Power coated finishes applied where necessary
- Furniture replacement where necessary

**Every Five Years**

- Internal painting

**Every Ten Years**

- External painting
- Replacement of floor coverings
- Replacement of guttering
- Replacement of electrical wiring

**Every Twenty Five Years**

- Roof refurbishment/replacement

The new facilities would be included in the current asset pool and would be subject to the above maintenance regime by existing maintenance staff.

## 10.6 Successful Track Record

The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary team has a successful track record in managing sizeable and specialised capital projects, such as this one.

Past projects have been successfully managed, delivered on time with the financial parameters identified and expected. All funds received were used for the intended project and the completed project delivered a long-term return to the local community, with more engaged volunteers at the branch and conservation of a local heritage icon.

As a not-for-profit organisation, the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has delivered a number of renovation & construction projects across the last 5 years. These successful projects are a testament to the ability of Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary governance, management and staff to successfully manage external funding that several funders have repeatedly supported consecutive and/or multiple applications.

The Frog Lab, while small, was recently delivered on time and on budget.

The Outback Springs ($7.1 million) is the latest addition to the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and has progressed in line with expectations.

A sample of past projects that the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary team has delivered is highlighted on the next pages.

**Recent Projects**

**<u>Outback Springs</u>**

**Project Manager**: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

**Timing**: Completed December 2023

**Cost of project**: $7.1 Million

Outback Springs provides guests with an experience emerging them into a historical outback station, complete with a homestead and a number of interactive experiences including a petting zoo, gemstone panning, Billy Tea demonstrations, Australian native reptiles and a bush tucker garden.

**Wild Island**

**Project Manager**: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

**Timing**: 2019

**Cost of project**: $850,000

The Wild Island Adventure Splash Zone offers kids up to the age of 12 a range of timed water jets, streams and waterfalls to run through.

Set amongst a stunning landscape of sub-tropical flora and fauna and surrounded by sculptures of Australian wildlife and natural features, Wild Island Playground offers plenty for kids to climb and explore – including adventure play, spiders web, flying fox, and more!

**Wild Skies**

**Project Manager**: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

**Timing**: 2018

**Cost of project**: $1.2 Million

Wild Skies free-flight bird show is a 20-minute show, which is performed in a purpose-built stadium, that has been created to introduce audiences to the majestic world of flight through innovative and engaging routines featuring native and exotic bird species.

The 45-strong cast – made up of 18 different species of birds – take flight in the stadium. The mighty wedge-tailed eagles, which boast a whopping 2.5-m wingspan, the colourful parrots, the intriguing macaws and the fun-loving pelicans. Audiences not only get to see the birds up close, but a number of them also fly freely throughout the show arena.

**Lost Valley rainforest precinct**

**Project Manager**: Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary

**Timing**: 2015 – 2017

**Cost of project**: $2.4 million

This exhibit is the single largest investment by NTAQ to date, the stunning rainforest precinct spans over 5 acres and creates a living, breathing rainforest that is home to breathtaking botanicals, exotic animals and free-flying birds. This landscape leads the Sanctuary's guests on a voyage where they encounter exotic species like friendly Ring-tailed Lemurs, Cotton-top Tamarins, Red Pandas, Capybaras, Goodfellow's Tree Kangaroo, Green-winged Macaw, free-flying birds, exotic reptiles and more.

Flocks of exotic birds take to the air as visitors explore Australasian rainforest within one of the largest free-flight walk-in aviaries in the southern hemisphere – one of the most spectacular characteristics of Lost Valley.

**Multifunctional All-Weather Entertainment Building at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary**

**Description:** redevelop an existing structure into a multi-purpose all weather theatre to accommodate regular Live shows and animal experiences in wet weather. The DA approved floor plan optimised auditorium space and retractable seating, giving greater flexibility to the space that could be used for after-hours events.

**Capex:** $639,620 which included a $225,500.00 grant from Qld Dept of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business & Commonwealth Games responsible for administering the QLD TDDI funding.

**Duration:** 2016 - 2017

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