



20 March 2024

## A hop in the right direction: Launch of research partnership to celebrate World Frog Day

[Link to images and audio grabs](#)

The launch of a new Sunshine Coast research project is coinciding with World Frog Day on 20 March this year, with the University of the Sunshine Coast and Stockland Aura partnering to better understand how to protect and restore habitat for the vulnerable Wallum Sedge Frogs, found predominantly in South-East Queensland and North-East New South Wales.

The two-year project includes a team of researchers from University of the Sunshine Coast, including Dr Gabriel Conroy, Dr Beth Brunton, Dr Gareth Chalmers and Dr Ross Dwyer.

Across Stockland Aura, around 700 hectares of former cleared and degraded ex-pine plantation land is being rehabilitated for conservation purposes, with more than 150 hectares of this land dedicated to Acid Frog species, including more than 150 specially designed frog ponds already constructed. Many of these are now home to these important species, including the Wallum Sedge Frog.

Stockland Senior Development Manager, Mark Stephens said the research project will build on previous conservation efforts where the specially constructed wetlands and foraging areas have successfully supported the breeding of species like the Wallum Sedge Frog.

“We have already seen great results from the work completed and this research will build on our understanding of the habitat characteristics of the threatened frog species and the factors influencing its survival. Of particular importance is the identification of potential climate refugia areas, where these frogs may find sanctuary in the face of changing environmental conditions,” Mr Stephens said.

“Frogs are often considered indicators of ecosystem health and understanding their needs can give us vital clues about the broader environmental issues affecting our landscapes. Through this research, we are helping to protect frogs while also contributing to a greater understanding of environmental impacts and how we can help to mitigate those effects.”

Dr Conroy from the University of the Sunshine Coast said this project will conduct a thorough ecological study with climate models.

“This study will enable us to examine the potential impacts of rising temperatures, sea level rise and saltwater inundation determining the future of the Wallum Sedge Frog and how best protect their safe havens in the future,” Dr Conroy said.

“We will also focus on some key unknowns for the species, including a detailed look at water-cycles (hydrology), groundwater systems, landform processes (geomorphology) and how they interlink to form the very specific habitat niche required by this species.”

Renowned frog habitat restoration expert Dr Mark Bayley, who has worked closely with the Stockland team since 2012, said that this level of research will provide a valuable insight into the conservation efforts conducted so far and greatly assist in the long-term conservation of the Wallum Sedge Frog.

“The Wallum Sedge Frog is a rare frog with very unique habitat requirements – preferring to inhabit wetlands that are often dry during the winter months and fill with water only for select periods of time during the summer and autumn months of the year. It has been heartening to see our habitat restoration efforts working within the Aura community, with many of our artificial wetlands providing habitat for the Wallum Sedge Frog,” Dr Bayley said.

“The collaboration with the University of the Sunshine Coast will provide invaluable data that will help to protect and restore habitat for these endangered frogs, as well as other native species affected by climate change.”

More information on Stockland Aura’s commitment to sustainability can be found here:

<https://www.stockland.com.au/residential/gld/aura/news-and-events/news/aura-a-green-city-2023>

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## About the University of the Sunshine Coast

The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) is a leading institution for research and education in Australia. With a strong focus on environmental science and conservation, USC is dedicated to conducting groundbreaking research aimed at understanding and mitigating the impacts of climate change on biodiversity.

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## Stockland (ASX:SGP)

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