



Noosa Biosphere® Reserve Foundation Ltd

MEDIA RELEASE

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Fighting dieback on Noosa's iconic Pandanus palm

The Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation is helping the fight to protect Noosa's iconic Pandanus palm under threat by widespread cases of dieback.

Deputy Chair of the Foundation, Clare Cartwright says this project is important to protecting a great natural asset to Noosa.

"The Pandanus palm is used as part of the story that sells Noosa to the world.

"We see it in tourism images and across Instagram from visitors sharing their memories of Noosa with friends.

"Not only does this project protect and restore biodiversity but also protects the natural amenity of Noosa's beaches, for tourists, locals and our wildlife to enjoy."

Joel Fostin, an horticulturalist and coastal ecosystem specialist, under the auspices of Peregrian Beach Community Association, was one of six groups to receive funding in the recent Noosa Biosphere Reserve Big Ideas grants round and aims to tackle this threat.

Mr Fostin says the Pandanus Preservation Project will significantly protect and improve the health and survival rates of Pandanus palms in Noosa.

"Pandanus trees provide habitat niches and biodiversity hotspots for native mammals, reptiles, birds, and insects.

"Dieback results in loss of canopy, loss of habitat, increased erosion and loss of shade leaving opportunities for the establishment of weeds. It's also an eyesore and detracts from the visual amenity of our local beaches and headlands.

"This project aims to halt the cases of dieback being found on Pandanus palms across the Noosa coastline and Noosa National Park."

The effectiveness of the work headed by Joel Fostin is well documented and has been implemented across South East Queensland.

"The Noosa Biosphere Reserve grant funding has triggered additional investment in this cutting-edge research, which will have positive repercussions locally and across eastern Australia's threatened Pandanus populations," says Mr Fostin.

"We're working on joining forces with a range of community groups and state government departments to leverage an additional \$54,000 of cash and in-kind support.

"The dieback is being caused by leafhopper *Jamella australiae*. It's been severely misunderstood and has devastating affects to the Pandanus tree," says Mr Fostin.

"Education and training for coastal managers, along with strategic biannual monitoring is crucial to effective dieback prevention."

The project will involve translocation of the Pandanus leafhoppers' natural predator, parasitoid wasps, plus leaf stripping and limited/targeted chemical control.



Collaboration with community groups and strategic partners are fundamental to long-term outcomes of the project.

Breakthrough research will be contributed to government online resources, and a dieback education page.

Ms Cartwright says the Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation is pleased to support a project at the forefront of ecological best practice.

“The Foundation is contributing \$20,000 in cash and expects the project to return a 3 to 1 payback in co-investment.

“We look forward to Joel and his team mitigating this threat to our coastal biodiversity.”

About Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation

The Noosa Shire as a region is distinct from other, more developed urban areas on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland and elsewhere in Australia, and has achieved global recognition for the high values of its natural environment. In 2007, this exceptionalism was internationally recognised with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) consenting to the designation of our Shire as the Noosa Biosphere Reserve under its Man and the Biosphere program (MaB). The Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation is entrusted by UNESCO and Noosa Council to protect our global status as a biosphere reserve.
www.noosabiosphere.org.au.