

Establishing a proposed Sunshine Coast

# Dark Sky Reserve

Protecting and celebrating our dark sky



# A sky filled with stars

It's part of what makes our Sunshine Coast so special

Light pollution in our region is expected to increase as our population grows. To help protect our precious dark skies, Sunshine Coast Council is seeking to work with the community to establish a Dark Sky Reserve.

Keeping our night sky dark and filled with stars is important for:

- Our health and wellbeing.
- Wildlife that move and feed at night.
- Helping to reduce our carbon emissions.
- Supporting local businesses.

## Why establish a Dark Sky Reserve?

A Dark Sky Reserve in our Sunshine Coast hinterland, designated through the International Dark Sky Places Program, would help protect our starry dark skies for the future.

It would support responsible lighting practices and bring our communities together in celebration of our night sky.

A Dark Sky Reserve would place our region among Australian leaders in the dark sky movement and attract national and international astrotourism visitors, supporting our hinterland businesses.

There are only four Dark Sky Places in Australia as of May 2024, and only one of those is a Dark Sky Reserve, which is characterised by community involvement and partnerships.

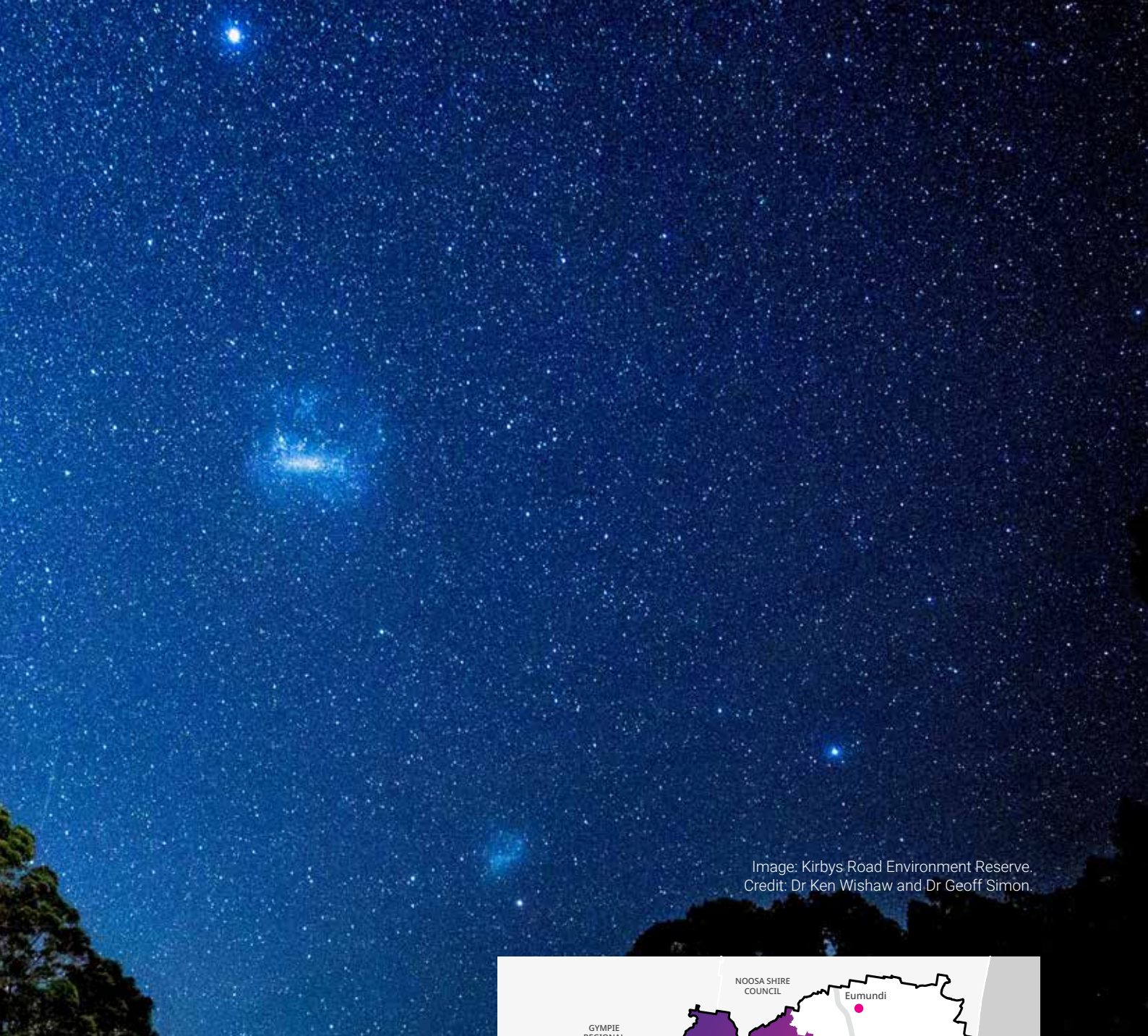


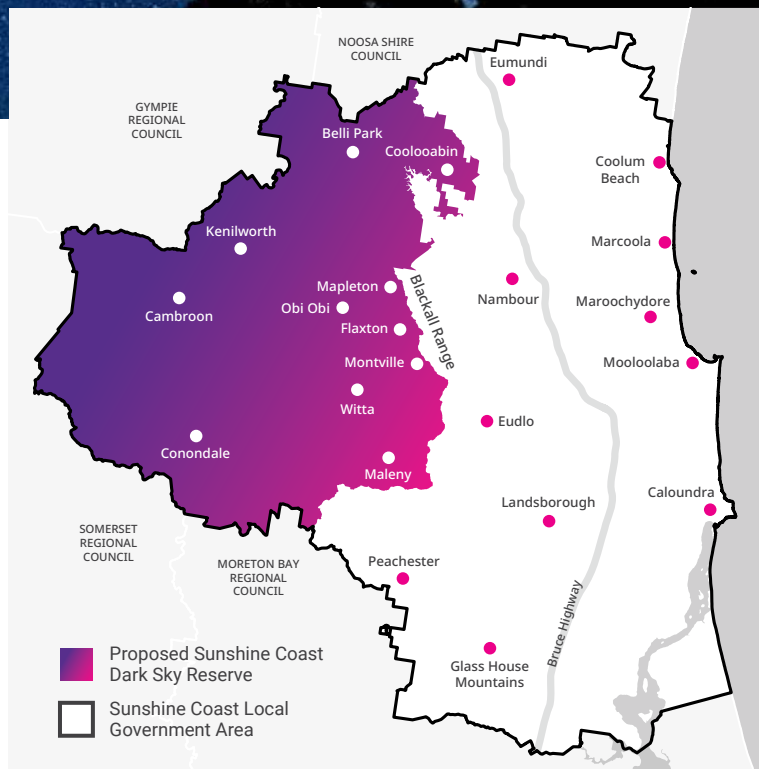
Image: Kirbys Road Environment Reserve.  
Credit: Dr Ken Wishaw and Dr Geoff Simon.

## Where would the reserve cover?

The proposed reserve would encompass the Mary River catchment and adjoining State protected areas within the Sunshine Coast local government area. This is a mix of private and public land.

It includes townships such as Maleny, Mapleton, Montville, Witta, Flaxton and Conondale.

Excellent night sky quality has been measured throughout the proposed reserve area.



# Our sky is special

The Blackall Range protects the proposed Reserve area from most of the light pollution from the coast and Brisbane. On a clear winter night you can see around 4,000 stars compared to less than 100 in central Brisbane. On some winter nights the Milky Way core can be bright enough to cast a shadow.

## What would change in the reserve area?

Establishing a Dark Sky Reserve would involve:

- Improving public lighting such as streetlights
- Developing dark sky friendly lighting standards
- Demonstrating our communities care about our dark skies and want to preserve them for the future.

There will be no mandate to change private lighting at your existing home or business within the Reserve or to switch off lights. Instead, we encourage everyone to take what steps they can to reduce light pollution while also saving on power bills and helping protect our hinterland's character and landscape.

## Where are we up to?

### PHASE 1:

Investigations (Complete)



### PHASE 2:

Community engagement and technical documentation (Current)



### PHASE 3:

Progress formal application (Subject to community consultation outcomes and Council support)

# Join our region's dark sky journey

Close to 15,000 residents live within the proposed Dark Sky Reserve area, and your support is important. It's early in our journey, and you can join us in creating a plan for this reserve.

Council is conducting staged community engagement across 2024 and invites you to provide your feedback and ideas on the proposed reserve.

## Find out more

- Scan the **QR code** or visit [sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](https://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)
- Visit [haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](https://haveyoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au) to check for updates on consultation
- Contact the project team at [els@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:els@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)



Credit: Dr Ken Wishaw.

## Easy ways to reduce light pollution at your place

You can help protect our dark skies by ensuring outdoor lighting is:



### **Useful** – Use light only if it is needed.

All lights should have a clear purpose. Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and their habitats.



### **Targeted** – Direct lighting so it falls only where it is needed.

Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.



### **Low Level** – Light should be no brighter than necessary.

Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions, as some surfaces may reflect more light into the nearby sky than intended.



### **Controlled** – Use light only when it is needed.

Use controls such as timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.



### **Warm Coloured** – Use warmer coloured lights where possible.

Limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed.

**Every small action helps. It's also great for your power bill and the environment!**

*Adapted from Dark Sky International.*

Cover image: Pattermore House, Maleny. Credit: Dr Ken Wishaw, Brisbane Astronomical Society.

*Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Kabi Kabi and Jinibara peoples as the traditional custodians of the Sunshine Coast, and wishes to pay respect to their elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges the cultural significance of the night sky to our region's traditional custodians.*

*This project is contributing to our*



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