



Media Release

18 June, 2019

Hello possums!

The City of Cockburn is preparing to build the first possum bridge in the Perth metropolitan area, with a local contractor installing two support poles on either side of Beeliar Drive, Yangebup in coming weeks.

A cable-tensioned rope bridge will then be strung across the dual carriageway about 200m east of Dunraven Drive between Yangebup Lake and Kogolup Lake in Beeliar Regional Park.

Environment Manager Chris Beaton said although previously thought to be plentiful locally, Brushtail Possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) surveys have indicated very few exist in Yangebup Lake but appear to exist in high numbers at nearby Kogolup Lake.

“A bridge will help possums move through our increasingly fragmented landscape. As tree-dwellers during the day, they forage on the ground at night where they are prey for cats, dogs and foxes.

“As they cross roads between water and food source environments, cars are a constant threat. Studies have found numerous possums living on the Kogalup Lake side of Beeliar Drive, but very few on the other side at Yangebup Lake. We hope the bridge will encourage them to expand their habitat.

“Brushtails are curious opportunists and they won’t know the bridge is there, but there is plenty of evidence over east and down south at Busselton where a bridge operates on Caves Road, that they are used by possums to travel between habitats.

“The Osprey nesting pole installed at Coogee Beach some time ago wasn’t used for a couple of years but has since been used over a number years by the birds to raise chicks.”

Mr Beaton said the City was prepared to embrace projects that were a bit risky to help maintain biodiversity and sustainability for today’s native species populations, and for future generations to enjoy.



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The location of the 6.3m tall bridge at a crest in the road between the lakes was chosen due to the presence of some mature trees and dead trees whose hollows may be used by local possums.

Some possums were fitted with microchips during recent research and at a later stage the City's Environment team hopes to fit the bridge with a microchip reader to record how many and which possums are using it.

In support of the proposal, Western Wildlife lead consultant Jenny Wilcox said possum bridges had been used successfully in other parts of Australia, including bridges for the threatened Western Ringtail Possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus occidentalis*) around Busselton.

Success-based business Future Power, whose core business is the erection of power poles and lines, will install the bridge's support poles then erect and certify the rope bridge once it has been installed.

Future Power Managing Director Peter Leenhouders said he was 100% supportive of actions to preserve the environment and improve on past decisions.

"This is a fantastic project and fits in with our green ethos," Mr Leenhouders said.

"We are dedicated to doing all we can to manage native species and improve their outlook for future generations."

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