

# Summary of Feedback on UNE Urban Forest Maintenance

## Communication to Students:

- Total of 21,409 students were emailed (19,733 to students currently enrolled in an undergraduate or coursework degree, 1,676 to HDR and other students not captured during the first round);
- 7,004 students opened the email (32.7%)
- 14,351 discarded the email (67.0%)
- 46 people clicked the link to the website (just over 0.002%)
- 8 students provided feedback ( $3.73 \times 10^{-4}\%$ )

## Communication to Staff

- 1,315 staff were emailed;
- 4 staff members provided feedback (0.003%);
- UNE Official doesn't provide the same analytics as SRM, so it is unknown how many people clicked on the link.

## Summary of feedback

- The overall response rate for staff and students combined was extremely low -  $5.28 \times 10^{-4}\%$ ;
- Although the feedback was supposed to be on the proposed communication processes, some people took it as an opportunity to discuss landscape management in general;
- There appears to be a mix of opinions – some indicating UNE is not doing enough; others expressing frustration about UNE going overboard and disregarding safety.

Feedback has been categorised in three sections – concerns, opportunities and general comments.

### Concerns

- Slow progress in changing on-ground actions;
- No communication sent to students;
- Any risk to personal safety requires appropriate action first;
- Practice of checking hollows during tree removal;
- Ineffective wildlife occupancy checks;
- Lack of transparency in the past;
- No clarification of how students and the broader community will be informed of communication processes;
- Ground beneath habitat trees is regularly denuded of pruned and fallen 'debris';
- Continued encroachment of mowing of the grass and shrub layer;
- Scant evidence of UNE being a "bushland campus";
- Unnecessarily pruning and sculpting of native shrubs;
- Consultation and communication is urgently required

### General Comments

- Can you unsubscribe me from these emails please;
- The health and safety of humans is paramount in any planning. Please consider the humans first and if required remove any dangerous tree that poses a risk to people;

- How do I unsubscribe from these - you guys send WAY too many emails
- It would be a disservice to the University and the Armidale community if the opportunities of developing a genuine 'bush campus' were not fully pursued;
- I think that having these systems and options in place is essential rather than having 'ad-hoc' discussions and consultations each time a risk is identified and action is being considered
- The environment is important but it should be People First when considering anything;
- To create a unique bushland campus habitat is about amenity, staff and student wellbeing, global sustainability, post humanist worldviews and also pragmatically, outdoor teaching spaces;
- A common sense approach is identifying high risk areas on campus and 'no tolerance' risks that exist, areas where risk can be tolerated at a higher level in low traffic areas, and an array of risk controls that can be consulted on prior to removal of trees or major trimming to ensure consultation is fair and open;
- There are a huge number of areas that these plants can be situated other than in an area of risk. The rural properties have thousands of Eucalypts so UNE does have that habitat off from the heavily trafficked areas and is not wilfully engaged in habitat destruction

### Opportunities

- Retention of stems and branches as habitat on the ground allows hollow-dwelling wildlife an opportunity to survive pruning, remains as habitat for other fauna, reduces evaporation of soil water, dust and soil erosion and tree-stress, so enhancing tree lifespan. Similarly the removal of trees destroys habitat and biodiversity, while also increasing costs of mowing;
- Plant the appropriate tree in an area. Do not have a large Eucalypt in an area of pedestrian traffic
- The development of a bush campus presents a genuine opportunity for education and market differentiation;
- Every students' experience could be enhanced by an understanding that they share the campus with velvet worms;
- Community support for walking tracks, wildlife corridors and habitat protection - particularly focused on the koala as the species faces unprecedented habitat pressure;
- UNE, positioned as it is in the high country, is in a good place to help them by taking steps to safeguard pedestrians without straight-out tree removal, which will inevitably remove the koalas;
- Fencing in large old trees, with appropriate warning notices;
- Create such a campus that promotes local flora and fauna, particularly endangered local wildlife like koalas;
- Management of the environmental values of the campus overseen by people with expertise in environmental management,
- Recognition by UNE of the habitat values of remnant bushland and mature trees for wildlife, including threatened species.
- Consultation with students, staff and the community,
- Investigation of options to preserve and protect mature eucalypts on campus to better balance safety and conservation,
- Managing natural areas of the campus as conservation assets rather than parkland, including reduced mowing around the edge of remnants.