

Nest boxes being built locally for Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade November 2016

A project which aims to provide nest boxes for use by a range of native animal species has started as part of the Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade.

Nearly 700 nest boxes will be installed in trees along the 155 kilometre highway route to provide alternative nesting and roosting places for wildlife as part of the highway upgrade. The Grafton Men's Shed, OCI Caringa and Beamer Tree Services have been asked to supply and install the nest boxes.

The initiative involves installing more than 20 different styles of nest boxes of varying sizes and shapes for threatened species such as the Brush-tailed Phascogale, squirrel glider, little bent-wing bat, glossy black cockatoo, powerful owl and a variety of other hollow dependent wildlife including possums, pygmy possums, micro bats, gliders, parrots, cockatoos, kingfishers and large forest owls.

Grafton Men's Shed and OCI Caringa built a range of nest boxes from locally sourced hardwood for the project.

The Grafton Men's Shed will use the funds generated from supplying nest boxes for the project to expand and improve their facilities.

The project will also test newly developed technology in the form of nest boxes built from 100 per cent recycled plastic materials, called cyplas nest boxes from Hollow Log Homes, which are designed to extend the lifetime of the nest boxes to 30 years or more.

A team of ecologists will evaluate the performance of the cyplas boxes against the traditionally built timber nest boxes over an eight year period.

It is hoped this project will lead to improvements in the design, installation and monitoring of nest boxes which can be applied in the future to improve the alternative habitat options for hollow-dependent wildlife.

Recently, two wooden microbat boxes have been successfully relocated from the existing bridge over Halfway Creek to the new twin bridges as part of the Halfway Creek to Glenugie project. The boxes were carefully moved over four nights and monitoring has confirmed the threatened Large-footed Myotis (microbat) has been successfully breeding in the boxes.

The nest boxes are a reminder of the Woolgoolga to Ballina project team's dedication to working with the community and stakeholders to minimising the impact of the upgrade on sensitive environmental communities, and protect wildlife along the route, while building a safer Pacific Highway.



Large-footed Myotis (microbat) nesting near Halfway Creek



Large-footed Myotis (microbat)