

Frequency asked questions

Why is Council demolishing the World Heritage Rainforest Centre, also known as the Murwillumbah Visitor Information Centre, located in Budd Park?



The decision to demolish the World Heritage Rainforest Centre (WHRC), also known as the Murwillumbah Visitor Information Centre (VIC), has arisen from the need to address the risk of future flooding. Severe flooding in 2017 and again in 2022 caused extensive damage to the building, making it unusable without extensive repair works. Due to its flood-prone location the building is now uninsurable.

Significant financial resources were allocated to repair and refurbish the building following the 2017 floods which saw the World Heritage Rainforest Centre reinstated. Insurance covered a significant part of the costs, and a portion was funded by Council. Insurance works encompassed an internal strip-out, replacement of furnishings and linings, structural repairs, plumbing, electrical and telecommunication system overhauls, bathroom fit-outs, and path improvements. The building flooded again in 2022.

Council has determined that the risks and costs associated with maintaining the building outweigh the benefits, especially considering the significant works required to repair the damage caused by flooding events. Flooding damaged the walls and linings, as well as the central box gutter, causing the supporting roof beams to shift. It also caused irreversible damage to fixtures, fittings, air conditioning units, electrical and plumbing systems. Engineers have found ground movement, changes in concrete path levels, drainage issues, and pooling underneath the building, which could affect the structural foundations. There is also termite and wet rot damage.

The presence of mould, mildew, and contaminants, pose long-term health risks to potential occupants. Therefore, prioritising safety, health, economic viability, and community well-being, Council has decided to demolish the building. This decision not only ensures safety and mitigates future risks but also presents an opportunity to transform the area into a revitalised parkland, enhancing the town's aesthetic appeal and serving as a welcoming public open space for residents and visitors alike.

Where has the Murwillumbah’s Visitor Information Centre (VIC) relocated to?

The VIC was relocated to the Murwillumbah Railway Station temporarily in 2017, and permanently in 2022, which also serves as the trailhead of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. This move positions the VIC closer to in-market travellers, offering improved vehicle parking, bus connectivity, and easier access to Tweed Valley Way. Moreover, being situated alongside the Rail Trail, an established tourism attraction, enhances the VIC's visibility and accessibility, ensuring that visitors have convenient access to tourism information and services as they explore the region.

When will the building be demolished?

The demolition is scheduled to occur between September to November 2024, pending approvals. Once demolished, the parkland will be remediated to become an open space for the community to enjoy. To ensure transparency and inform the public, a sign will be erected in the park two weeks prior to the commencement of works, notifying the community of the planned demolition and transformation of the area into a revitalized public open space.

Why is Council removing the internal road that links the two car parking areas?

The decision to remove the internal road, that links the two car parking areas, is for several reasons, primarily related to enhancing safety, efficiency, and overall functionality of the public open space.

Instead, vehicles will be able to enter and exit onto Alma Street from the western car park and vehicles will be able to enter or exit onto Tweed Valley Way from the eastern car park. This will improve traffic flow and circulation within the two car parking areas.

By removing the internal road and converting the area to parkland, the area becomes more pedestrian-friendly, reducing the risk of accidents and improving the overall experience for visitors. It allows for better utilisation of the available space, potentially creating more room for landscaping, seating areas, and accessible amenities that enhance the parkland. The overall design will be more harmonious and conducive to recreational activities, picnics, and gatherings.

Overall, the decision to remove the internal road is driven by a combination of safety considerations, traffic management goals, and the desire to create a more attractive and functional parkland for the community to enjoy.



How is the project funded?

The project is jointly funded by the Australian and NSW Governments.

For more information, please contact Council’s Parks and Active Communities unit on 02 6670 2400.