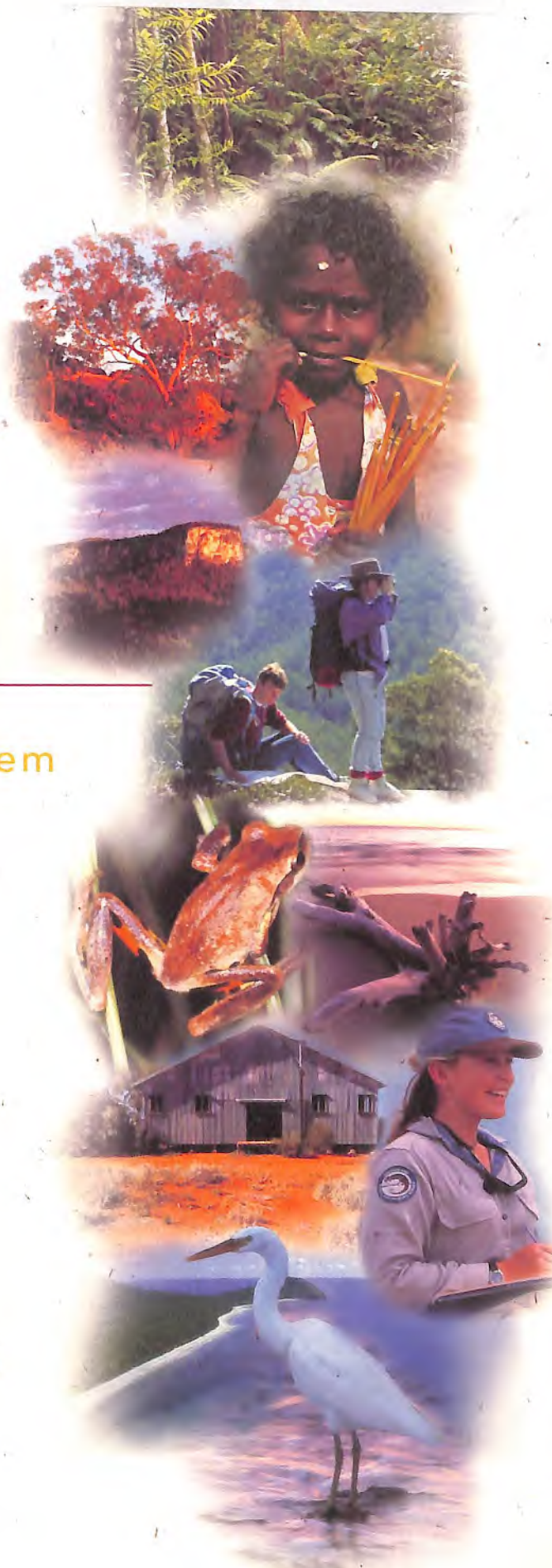


master plan

for Queensland's Parks System



Queensland Government
Environmental Protection Agency
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

MAINTAINING NATURAL INTEGRITY,
CULTURAL VALUES AND NATURAL
LANDSCAPES IS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY
OF NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT

Please note: QPWS advises that this document may contain images of deceased persons that may be upsetting to some Indigenous people. QPWS wishes to apologise for any stress this may cause.

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MINISTER'S FOREWORD

Queensland is a state rich in natural assets that have shaped our way of life and underpin our vibrant tourism industry. We have a parks system that has developed since 1908 which reflects this diversity of life and landscapes. We have five of the 14 World Heritage Areas in Australia. The Queensland community has the potential to demonstrate how such a rich inheritance can be protected, utilised, expanded and managed.

The conservation of our natural and cultural heritage must be based on a world-class system of protected areas including national parks. That's why the Queensland Government has produced this Master Plan to guide the direction for Queensland's parks system over the next twenty years and on into the future.

This Master Plan will guide directions and strategies for managing our parks responsibly, and will:

- review and reinforce the important role of parks into the 21st Century;
- affirm and pledge to continue the good work being done;
- identify where systems and management need to be improved and where resources need to be targeted;
- clearly state the vision, principles and aims for park management over the next twenty years and on into the future; and
- identify actions needed to achieve the vision.

Many Indigenous people have cultural obligations to maintain custodianship of lands and waters including parks. We welcome their involvement in park management through a range of negotiated agreements.

We do not merely inherit our state's beautiful natural environment from our parents: we borrow it from our children and our children's children. We have a duty to hold it in trust, for the benefit of future generations.

Park management must be responsive to change if the natural and cultural values are to be maintained. This means we must conserve biological diversity by protecting our state's ecology and essential life support systems.

Parks are the cornerstone of the long term survival of our diverse biological heritage and underpin the wellbeing of our economy and community as a whole. Parks provide valuable ecological services, recreational opportunities and are a source of inspiration and cultural identity.

This Master Plan is a result of consultation with the Queensland community following the release of the Master Plan Discussion Paper. Community feedback on the Discussion Paper has strengthened and clarified the document's principles, aims and actions. We will continue to work in partnership with the community to meet its environmental objectives to ensure the protection, conservation and proper management of our natural and cultural values.

On behalf of the Queensland Government, I present this Plan to the Queensland community. I trust that it will promote excellence in park management and provide the way forward for protected area management over the next 20 years.

Dean Wells

Dean Wells MP
Minister for Environment



THE FUTURE OF OUR PARKS — OUR VISION

To contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage in Queensland by establishing and managing a comprehensive and fully representative system of protected areas, managed in partnership with Indigenous people, and with the involvement of an informed and participating community.

The vision recognises:

- Parks are cornerstones of an integrated strategy to conserve nature, including biological diversity, and cultural heritage in Queensland, as part of a national and global system.
- Parks should ensure the conservation of natural and cultural values for all time and for all peoples.
- Indigenous peoples maintain strong links with the land on which many parks have been established.
- Continuing engagement between people and parks, including enhanced opportunities for all to visit, participate in, learn, respect, enjoy and preserve parks, is a fundamental purpose of management.

Purpose of the Master Plan

This Master Plan outlines the direction for the management of Queensland's protected areas, referred to collectively as "parks", over the next 20 years.

Over that time, parks dedicated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* will have significantly wider functions than now, but will be built on and continue the strengths of the existing parks system. Conservation of natural and cultural values will remain the primary aim of the management agency, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS).

- > 1. Mt Barney National Park - helping conserve Queensland's biological diversity.
- 2. Tommy George, traditional owner of parts of Lakefield National Park.
- 3. Sustainable nature-based recreation is one way of enjoying parks.

Principles and actions contained in the Master Plan enable the parks system to achieve a wider role in protecting and conserving Queensland's natural and cultural heritage values and in enhancing community appreciation of these values. This Master Plan begins a process of continual evaluation and learning to ensure progressive and measurable enhancement in park management.

This is a strategic document, to be complemented by an Implementation Plan and more specific strategies developed in consultation with the community to provide staff and the community with blueprints for advancing park management.

Master plans to guide directions and strategies for managing marine parks, wildlife, and state forests will be developed progressively following consultation with the community.

How to use this document

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT PARKS SYSTEM

This explains what protected areas are and why they are important. It provides important background to the principles, aims and actions contained in Section 2, The Plan — parks on track for the future. If you are not familiar with the structure of the Queensland parks system, please read this section first.

SECTION 2. THE PLAN — PARKS ON TRACK FOR THE FUTURE

This section is divided into four dimensions of park management under which 12 principles are identified.

The four dimensions and 12 principles are:

Protecting natural and cultural heritage

1. The Queensland parks system will be protected vigorously into the future.
2. The natural integrity of parks will be conserved, with their natural values protected and presented, and parks will be integrated with good land management across the landscape.

Introduction

3. The cultural heritage values of parks will be protected and presented.

Working with community partners

4. Responsibilities, interests and aspirations of Indigenous peoples will be respected in relation to their lands, and their roles in park management will be supported.
5. Parks will be managed in the context of surrounding landscapes with participation and involvement of local community needs and aspirations.

Sustaining recreational and tourism opportunities

6. Opportunities will be provided for people to visit, participate in, learn about, respect, enjoy, preserve and protect parks natural and cultural heritage.
7. The parks system will be managed to provide substantial and sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits to the Queensland community while maintaining the intrinsic values of all parks.
8. The parks system will be managed to provide visitors with safe facilities and with information that will promote visitor awareness of the hazards present in parks and the levels of skill and competence required to cope with the risks they may face.

Enhancing our management capabilities

9. The Queensland parks system will be planned and managed skilfully, effectively, adaptively and efficiently to maintain park values in conjunction with other private and State lands.
10. Good management decisions will be made, based on high standards of information and wisdom and community involvement in decision making.
11. A dedicated, skilled and motivated workforce will manage parks, using clear policies, directions and standards.
12. Continual improvement in park management will be fostered through evaluation, learning, and reliable and logical allocation of resources.

Plan structure

Within the four dimensions of park management, each of the 12 principles provides the foundation for developing strategic actions that will guide the Queensland parks system over the next 20 years.

The text for each topic contains:

- a context section which briefly explains the background and the QPWS approach to the topic;
- a "principle and aims" section which states the principle and defines the broad aims for park management in relation to the topic areas; and
- a "strategic actions" section identifying the actions needed to achieve the desired future outcomes.

One hundred and twenty five actions need to be implemented over the next 20 years to achieve the principles set out in the document. These include existing actions and future actions required to enhance current management of protected areas. Not all actions will be implemented at once and some will contribute relatively more than others towards achieving the preservation of natural and cultural values. To be effective, some actions need to succeed or build on others.

Enhancement of park management will be a progressive, collaborative process with QPWS and its partners learning from experiences here and in other places. Innovative ideas and effective management practices will be adapted and applied to parks across Queensland.

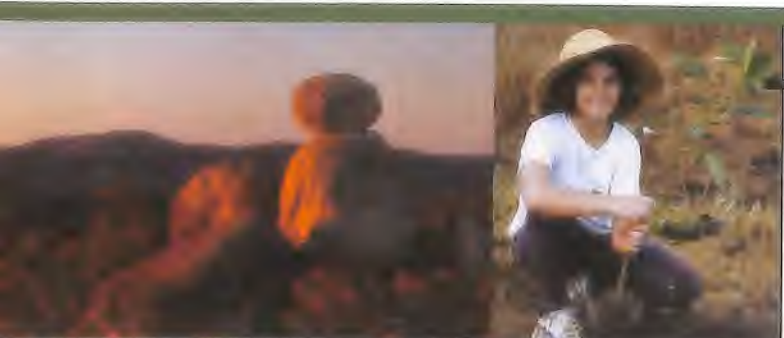
The way forward

This Master Plan will be reviewed every five years, with public participation to evaluate the progress towards the stated principles and aims, and to consider new issues and circumstances. At each five-year review, the Plan will be refined to ensure it remains a dynamic blueprint, responsive to emerging issues while providing a firm and clear overall direction, rolling into the future.

- >
1. The Sphinx, Girraween National Park.
 2. Increasingly, the community will become involved in managing parks and helping protect surrounding areas.

Queensland Parks -an overview

Hinchinbrook Island National Park.





- > 1. Visitor awed by a strangler fig on the Scenic Circuit at Bunya Mountains National Park.
- 2. National parks play vital roles in catchment protection.
- 3. Spotted-tailed quolls *Dasyurus maculatus maculatus* require large hunting territories for their survival.

QUEENSLAND'S PROTECTED AREAS

Protected areas including national parks and a range of other types of reserves play a vital role in the survival of the Earth as a sustainable, functioning ecosystem, and thus in the future of people and other living things. Though parks alone will not ensure conservation of biodiversity, ecological processes or cultural values, in most countries a protected area system is the core of programs to maintain the diversity of ecosystems, species and wild genetic resources.

Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, 12 classes of protected area can be declared to protect Queensland's biological diversity and outstanding natural and cultural features.

Queensland protected areas at 30 June 2001 (ha)

Protected area type	National parks	National parks (scientific)	Conservation parks	Resources reserves	Nature refuges	Coordinated conservation areas	Total
Number	212	7	172	39	74	1	505
Area	6,646,137	52,181	34,804	352,191	35,045	1170	7,121,528



- > Epping Forest National Park (scientific), site of the only known colony of the endangered northern hairy-nosed wombat, *Lasiorhinus krefftii*.

The classes of national parks (scientific), national parks, national parks (Aboriginal land), national parks (Torres Strait Islander land), national parks (recovery), conservation parks and resources reserves can be declared over State-owned land. The classes of nature refuges, coordinated conservation areas, wilderness areas, World Heritage management areas and international agreement areas can be declared over areas of State land and/or other lands with the consent of the owner/s.

At 30 June 2001, the parks system in Queensland comprised 505 protected areas in six of the 12 classes (See table below.)

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES FOR QUEENSLAND'S PROTECTED AREAS

NATIONAL PARKS

Most protected areas in Queensland are national parks.

A national park is to be managed to –

- (a) As the cardinal principle, "provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values; and
- (b) present the area's cultural and natural resources, and their values; and
- (c) ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable."

NATIONAL PARKS (SCIENTIFIC)

National parks (scientific) are established to protect places or species with exceptional scientific value. This type of protected area gives a high level of protection for nature. Scientific study and monitoring are allowed under strict conditions, and parks can be managed as necessary to control threatening processes. Entry to a national park (scientific) is by special permit and there is no provision for recreational use.

NATIONAL PARKS (ABORIGINAL LAND) AND NATIONAL PARKS (TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND)

National parks made available for claim under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* or the *Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991* can also be made national park (Aboriginal land) or national park (Torres Strait Islander land). These areas are managed as national parks but, as far as practical, any Aboriginal tradition or Torres Strait Islander customs which apply to the areas are respected and protected.

CONSERVATION PARKS

Although a greater range of activities can be undertaken on conservation parks than on national parks, the primary purpose is still conservation.

Queensland Parks - an overview

"A conservation park is to be managed to:

- (a) conserve and present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values; and
- (b) provide for the permanent conservation of the area's natural condition to the greatest possible extent; and
- (c) ensure that any commercial use of the area's natural resources, including fishing and grazing, is ecologically sustainable."

Conservation parks can be managed or co-managed by trustees, such as local government. Educational activities and nature-based recreation are facilitated. Conservation parks are used to protect and manage scientific sites and special natural features.

NATIONAL PARKS (RECOVERY)

Where an area intended to become national park has been seriously degraded and needs some active manipulation of its natural resources to restore its conservation values, it can be declared a national park (recovery) or in effect a "national park in waiting". On this kind of park, for example, native vegetation might have been cleared in the past and replaced with a plantation of exotic trees. The restoration activity might be removing the unwanted plantation timber, followed by active planting or passive regeneration of the damaged land.

As well as the restoration activities, the management principles require that the park is managed to protect or restore the park's natural condition and protect its cultural values. Any commercial or other use of the park's natural resources to restore its conservation values must be consistent with an approved regeneration plan, and other uses of the park must be nature based.

RESOURCES RESERVES

Resources reserves are declared over land which has high conservation value but cannot be reserved as national or conservation park, for example, areas subject to fossicking, mining or prospecting. Sometimes resources reserves might protect land which will eventually be converted to national park but needs to be rehabilitated first. Trustees can be appointed to manage a resources reserve.

Resources reserves are managed to:

- recognise and, if appropriate, protect the area's cultural and natural resources;
- provide for the controlled use of the area's cultural and natural resources; and
- ensure that the area is maintained predominantly in its natural condition.

NATURE REFUGES

Private landholders can help protect native wildlife and wildlife habitat by their property being declared a nature refuge jointly with the Government.

A nature refuge can be declared over any land, State or freehold, with significant natural resource values to conserve, and to provide for controlled use of those natural resources, taking into account the landholder's interests. This does not change the ownership of the land.

Properties which could become nature refuges might:

- have significant wildlife values;
- provide a wildlife refuge during drought;
- contain special features such as geological formations or fossils; or
- contain rare and/or threatened plants and animals or communities.

A property (or part of a property) becomes a nature refuge with a voluntary conservation agreement to protect the land's conservation value and to guide the way the property is managed. This agreement is between the State of Queensland and the landholder and is binding on future landholders for the period of the agreement. Most agreements are binding in perpetuity.

Activities and management arrangements are detailed in the conservation agreement. The property can still be used for agriculture, grazing, timber production and tourism, provided those activities are ecologically sustainable.

COORDINATED CONSERVATION AREAS

A coordinated conservation area provides for consistent management of adjacent areas of varying tenure to conserve the area's natural and cultural values, and take account of educational, commercial, recreational and other values. Landholder interests must be maintained.

WILDERNESS AREAS

Wilderness areas are managed to protect or restore wilderness values and maintain such areas without significant human interference. Wilderness areas can be declared over various tenures including national park.

WORLD HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Any area on the World Heritage list can be protected under this category.

- "A World Heritage management area is to be managed to –
- (a) meet international obligations in relation to the area; and
 - (b) protect the area's internationally outstanding cultural and natural resources and its biological diversity; and
 - (c) transmit the area's world heritage values to the community."

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT AREAS

Where an international treaty exists to protect nature, international agreement areas can be established to maintain the area's conservation importance and conserve the area's wildlife. Landholder activities might be restricted to protect wildlife, but landholder interests must be taken into account. A management plan must be prepared before the area can be declared.

World Heritage areas in Queensland

World Heritage areas are listed to protect outstanding examples of the world's natural and cultural heritage for future generations, and represent vitally important links between the past and the future.

To be included on the World Heritage list, sites must satisfy the selection criteria outlined in the World Heritage Convention and pass examination by the World Heritage Committee on the basis of technical evaluations provided by independent advisory bodies. Without the support of the Convention and World Heritage listing, the values of some sites could deteriorate.

World Heritage properties in Australia do not become Commonwealth property, and ownership rights are not affected by listing. World Heritage listing cultivates local and national pride in the property, develops feelings of responsibility to protect the area and creates opportunities for tourism.

Of the 14 World Heritage inscribed sites in Australia, five are in Queensland. Management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is shared between the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments. Management of other World Heritage sites is carried out primarily by QPWS in conjunction with government and community partners.

World Heritage areas in Queensland

Property	Area	Date of inscription
Wet Tropics	894,420ha	1988
Great Barrier Reef	34,870,000ha	1981
Central Eastern Rainforests Reserves of Australia (CERRA) (Queensland section)	60,000ha (and 310,000ha in New South Wales)	1994, 1986
Australian Mammal Fossil Sites (Queensland section)	10,000ha at Riversleigh in Queensland (and 300ha at Naracoorte, South Australia)	1994
Fraser Island	184,000ha	1992



1. The dinosaur tracks at Lark Quarry Conservation Park are protected from the elements.

2. Relics from the gold mining era at Palmer River Goldfields Resources Reserve.

3. Daintree National Park is part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area which protects Australia's most extensive remaining area of wet tropical rainforest.

4. Flame tree *Brachychiton acerifolium*
5. *Banksia aemula*

Reservation status of Queensland's regional ecosystems (REs), mid to late 1999

Biogeographic region	Regional area (ha)	Protected area (ha)	% bioregion in protected areas	No. of REs in the bioregion	No. of REs in protected areas	% REs in protected areas
Brigalow Belt	36,417,627	777,812	2	168	137	82
Cape York Peninsula	12,167,082	1,582,791	13	211	178	84
Central Queensland Coast	1,443,544	145,670	10	78	59	76
Channel Country	23,814,421	1,593,098	7	56	44	79
Desert Uplands	7,030,672	184,924	3	77	46	79
Einasleigh Uplands	11,861,306	256,571	2	47	36	77
Gulf Plains	22,000,384	554,734	3	83	25	30
Mitchell Grass Downs	24,183,094	336,030	1	54	23	43
Mulga Lands	18,500,128	453,104	2	67	52	78
New England Tableland	775,153	26,903	4	25	19	76
North West Highlands	7,314,221	383,619	5	41	27	66
South East Queensland	6,212,622	411,888	7	105	79	75
Wet Tropics	1,983,825	373,110	19	148	133	90
Total	173,704,079	7,080,254	4	1,160	858	approx. 70

This table presenting the reservation status of Queensland's regional ecosystems shows some 30 percent are not represented in protected areas. Future acquisitions will seek to protect many unrepresented ecosystems together with those that are poorly conserved or at risk. Consolidation of the parks system across all bioregions will provide additional protection to the species and regional ecosystems.

However, as wildlife knows no boundaries, nature cannot be conserved in a parks system alone. Protecting Queensland's biodiversity can be achieved only by incorporating a range of off-park conservation strategies which complement park management initiatives. Parks will continue to be the cornerstones of a statewide conservation system which also involves careful natural resource management over a range of tenures and landuses.

The Mulga Lands strategy – high representation in a small area

The Mulga Lands strategy shows the efficiency and effectiveness of a systematic approach to conserving biodiversity across a bioregion. Before 1984 the Mulga Lands bioregion, which covers more than 18 million hectares or around 11 percent of Queensland, was represented in only one conservation area covering only 0.1 percent of the bioregion.

In 1984 a study was carried out to determine the conservation needs of the Mulga Lands bioregion and to delineate a network of reserves to meet those needs.

Using the criteria of diversity, representativeness, rarity, naturalness and effectiveness, the whole bioregion was assessed and 13 properties identified, comprising only 3 percent of the bioregion but containing up to 92 percent of the biodiversity.

This allowed for acquisition action to focus on particular properties that would deliver the greatest value for the least cost. Currently 78 percent of the regional ecosystems are represented in the reserve system which covers only 2.4 percent of the bioregion.

Parks conserve cultural, scenic and spiritual values

Parks protect natural, scenic and cultural values which contribute significantly to Queensland's, and Australia's, identity. The scenic landscapes, cultural values and historic sites in parks represent the living history of our relationships with the land. They are unique, irreplaceable parts of our identity, and should be protected and presented for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Perspectives...

Our material needs for food and drink, shelter and security are obvious enough. So now are the accelerating impacts in this technological age: destruction and pollution of the essential natural ecological processes of soils, water, air and vegetation. Losses of wildlife and their intrinsic values are irreversible. We now find ourselves in the throes of a social revolution globally against the pervasive forces of the extractive economy and the "bottom line".

The dramatic changes in our environment have ignited a widening search for our identity and safety as humans. We have a deep-down, psychic need for direct experience and intimacy in natural environments. The human species evolved over thousands of generations in close connection with the earth, whereby we became "programmed" for sensory inputs of diverse qualities. Cultural as well as biological coding, and the evolution of reflexive thought, provide our unique self-awareness. In us, the universe has become aware of itself! Thus we cannot escape our moral responsibility to protect the earth, as ourselves, together.

Within less than 20 generations, the scientific-technological revolution has produced a largely artificial world, especially in cities, where despite amazing innovations, the satisfaction of human psychic needs and peace of mind are being lost. Desperation hangs heavy in the air, invisibly with pollution and violence of all kinds. The power of traditional virtues in cultural coding is threatened by greed, ignorance and lack of respect for nature.

Yet hope persists. As human beings we can draw strength from natural environments whose cultural and now therapeutic values are at last being accepted.

Fortunately, there have been far-seeing and sensitive people who battled for the protection of national parks, nature reserves and similar areas. It is now up to governance at all levels to ensure that ecologically-based management of remaining natural and semi-natural protected areas, along with other healthy productive landscapes, ensures their vital contribution to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

Professor Len Webb AO April 2000

1. Professor Webb is highly respected as an ecologist, well known for his work on rainforests with CSIRO from the 1950s to 1980. He is a prolific author and has held national and international positions and received many awards for his contribution to broader conservation issues.

1. Lookout at Porcupine Gorge National Park.
2. Currawinya woolshed in Currawinya National Park provides visitors with a link to the pastoral history of the area.

Parks provide scenic backdrops to communities and tourist attractions, and valuable green spaces between urban settlements.

For many people who live in landscapes away from nature, parks give a rare chance to experience the beauty and the sometimes harsh reality of the natural world.

By protecting the diversity of landscapes, parks provide the opportunity for people to connect with the land and to experience and understand our natural and cultural heritage. For some people, quiet times in parks can be a spiritual experience.

For Indigenous people, connection with nature and with their country is both a life-giving joy and an obligation to care for their country.

Perspectives...

Although I am a long way from my land, I am still part of that land through the ways, culture, beliefs that my father taught me. I feel close through the ceremonies, singing and dancing and language.

It is so important that land is still looked after. People (and community) go out to hunt and gather food to be close spiritually and for healing. It is not a land without people. People and land are one, because through land is survival. We call it Mother Nature.

Land is important not only for people in the past but also we want the children of tomorrow to share what our elders have taught us. We do not want to see it spoilt and die. We want next generation to carry on culture, ways, environment, of survival, ceremonies, dreaming. It is important we keep this land through dreaming.

Gladys Tybingoomba

1. Currawinya National park was established in 1991 to conserve wetland areas and other mulga ecosystems.

2. Twenty-eight species of the kangaroo family are found in Queensland. The tiny musk rat kangaroo weighs just over half a kilogram, while the red and grey kangaroos can weigh over 80 kilograms. Conserving this diversity of kangaroo species requires a wide range of habitats to be protected. For example: yellow-footed rock wallabies *Petrogale xanthopus celeris* (above left) live only along cliff-lines at the edges of low tablelands in mulga areas, and Lumholtz's tree-kangaroos *Dendrolagus lumholtzi* (above right) live in coastal rainforest of north-eastern Queensland.

Parks give economic and social benefits

Parks generate substantial economic benefits for Queenslanders. Our national parks are one of Queensland's biggest tourist attractions, hosting more than an estimated 12.5 million visits each year. Research by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that most Australians visit a national park or similar reserve at least once a year. Many are likely to make repeat visits. More than half of the four million international visitors to Australia visit national parks or similar natural areas. More visitors to Queensland in 1997 visited a national park than visited a theme park or a casino.

Spending by park visitors contributes more than \$1.2 billion each year to the Queensland economy and supports more than 6000 jobs directly and many more indirectly. For every \$1 of government funding invested in their management, national parks generate more than \$40 worth of economic activity in the Queensland economy. More than 400 commercial tour operators and 40 near-park resorts rely on national parks for much of their business. Many other businesses benefit from the existence, management and use of national parks and services provided by tourism operators accessing these parks.

As well as the direct income from tourism which they can bring, parks provide vital "ecosystem services" to the community. For example, protecting watersheds provides relatively reliable water for agricultural and urban lands downstream and protects adjacent lands from salination, erosion, and common effects of widespread land clearing. The large uncleared tracts of natural vegetation absorb greenhouse gases.

Parks provide opportunities for enjoyment, relaxation, recreation and education

For many people, national parks are popular places to visit on weekends and holidays — to camp, picnic, hike, climb, enjoy a change of scenery, view wildlife or have a good time outside with family or friends. Children and adults can enjoy doing very little or can test their skills and endurance with long hikes and simple living. Some people, especially backpackers and retired people, take long trips and visit many parks in Queensland and other states, learning about our natural and cultural heritage on the way.

The parks system as a whole provides a wide range of opportunities for lots of different activities in environments which vary from tiny coral islands on the Great Barrier Reef to high-forested peaks and remote western plains. While facilities for camping and picnicking are provided on some parks, the emphasis for most of the parks system is on low-key recreation in the natural environment, where people enjoy themselves in simple ways without lots of development or artificial activities.

For Indigenous people, parks are places where they can take their families and meet communities back on country which has been kept relatively natural. Here, they can pass on skills and stories to the next generation.

Key points from the QPWS Community Survey (1999)

Just over half of all Queensland residents aged 15 and over visit our parks at least once a year.

Respondents to the survey saw many benefits of parks, especially:

- protection of native animals and plants;
- opportunities to get away and enjoy the bush;
- recreational use of these areas;
- opportunities to see and appreciate these natural areas; and
- protection of the environment.



The Plan Parks on track for the future

- > 1. Parks including Noosa (far left) and Carnarvon Gorge (centre) are major tourist attractions and provide significant income for local communities.
- 2. National parks provide ideal locations and subjects for nature photography.

Conserving natural and
cultural heritage



TOWARDS A BETTER PARKS SYSTEM

Though conservation cannot be achieved by parks alone, they are regarded worldwide as cornerstones of conservation, to be complemented and linked by conservation efforts and sustainable land use on private, government and community lands.

The National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biodiversity, recognises as the central strategy for conservation the role of a "comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) reserve system" where:

- *Comprehensive* means that the reserve system samples the full range of regional ecosystems across the landscape;
- *Adequate* means that the reserves are of a sufficient size and appropriate shape to enable natural integrity, including the species diversity, of the park to be maintained; and
- *Representative* means that the samples of regional ecosystems include the maximum possible diversity of their plant and animal communities.

Continuing growth and improvement of the parks system is important for the protection of biological diversity, especially for regional ecosystems which are not represented in parks at present. Eighty percent is the estimated maximum possible representation of regional ecosystems in protected areas in Queensland without major compulsory land acquisitions. Conservation of the remainder of Queensland's regional ecosystems may best be achieved through conservation agreements and covenants over private and leasehold lands.

Blue grass and brigalow

Albinia Downs, situated immediately west of Rolleston, is part of the Brigalow Belt Bioregion, a large and complex area covering 36.4 million hectares. Major threats to this bioregion include broadscale clearing for pastoral development and intensive agriculture. Nature conservation in the bioregion is a priority because of the rapid and extensive loss of habitat which has been accompanied by declines in species populations.

The Brigalow Belt contains a range of ecosystems, with brigalow forests, eucalypt woodlands and blue grass downs. Albinia Downs contains a large area of blue grass downs, an ecosystem endangered due to the intensive cropping and weed invasion of remaining natural downs areas.

The strategic purchase of the Albinia Downs property for National Park was vital to conserve biodiversity at landscape, ecosystem and species level.

Further, parks may also be declared for conservation of natural and cultural heritage values, as well as providing for sympathetic nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities. Parks will play a role in wider landscape conservation including the protection of ecosystem services such as watershed protection, which also have an indirect economic value. Declaration of new parks should maximise positive benefits to society.

PRINCIPLE 1

The Queensland parks system will be protected vigorously into the future. The parks system will be comprehensive, adequate and representative of Queensland's biological and landscape diversity, will include outstanding examples of natural and cultural heritage values, and will maintain the values of World Heritage areas as key elements of the parks system.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To develop a parks system which is comprehensive, adequate and representative of Queensland's biodiversity at all levels from landscape to genetic, which demonstrates the values of natural and cultural heritage, and which has a widely-recognised function in the life of the community.
2. To use the range of the protected area classes from the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* transparently to provide for a variety of natural and cultural conservation needs. The system will consist of State-owned, private and community lands under a variety of management regimes, encompassing community-based conservation.

- > 1. The mahogany glider *Petaurus gracilis* is an endangered species occurring in fragmented areas of lowland forests in the Wet Tropics bioregion.

3. To use the parks system as the cornerstone of an integrated conservation regime and as a benchmark for ecologically-sustainable management of the landscape.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

1.1 Continue to establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system, primarily through the expansion of protected areas to conserve biological diversity. Raise the level of protection of regional ecosystems from 70 percent to a minimum of 80 percent.

1.2 Fully protect Queensland's biodiversity across all bioregions through a system of parks and reserves complemented by nature refuges and a range of covenants and voluntary conservation agreements.

INTEGRATION OF PARKS SYSTEM WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INTERESTS

1.3 Clearly identify, communicate and encourage appreciation of the benefits parks deliver to the community. Studies of the economic values of parks are an important component of this identification.

1.4 Park strategies will include programs to ensure conservation has a function in the life of local communities.

APPROPRIATE USE OF A RANGE OF PROTECTED AREA CLASSES

1.5 Review the range of protected area classes and other mechanisms available to conserve nature, modify them where necessary, and apply them to better protect Queensland's biodiversity and cultural values.

Conserving natural and cultural heritage

1.6 Review the current protected area system to ensure the most appropriate protected area class is used for each park, taking into consideration its ecological, cultural and social values. Develop proposals to alter the status of some parks or parts of parks if this would improve their conservation status or management effectiveness or would allow community access more appropriate to the park's values.

1.7 Develop the parks system with a well-balanced range of protected areas to achieve a wide range of objectives including biodiversity conservation, protection of special and scenic values, cultural heritage protection and presentation, and recreation and tourism opportunities.

CONSERVATION THROUGH AGREEMENTS

1.8 Develop, trial and apply approaches for the more strategic use of nature refuges and coordinated conservation areas. These approaches will encourage conservation agreements where they can contribute significantly to conservation through:

- integrating on- and off-park conservation to target specific conservation objectives;
- protecting natural systems which are inadequately or not represented in the parks system, particularly those designated as "of concern" or "endangered" regional ecosystems;
- extending the value and effectiveness of existing parks; or
- protecting areas, otherwise well represented, for educational or community purpose benefits.

- > 1. Sandhills in Simpson Desert National Park, representing the Channel Country bioregion.
2. Whitehaven Beach, Whitsunday Islands National Park, which protects ecosystems of the Central Queensland Coast bioregion.

CONSERVING NATURAL INTEGRITY

The cardinal principle of national park management is to "provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values" (*Nature Conservation Act 1992*). This sits within the framework of the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Maintaining natural integrity, cultural values and natural landscapes is the highest priority of national park management.

Conservation of the natural values of our parks is partly achieved by protecting them from development and clearing, and by regulating the impacts of visitors. However, active management is also needed to maintain the plants, animals and landscapes which form the park ecosystems. Over recent decades, there have been a number of changes in how we approach the management of parks.

We recognise there are many choices to be made about what is a park's "natural state" and what values need to be protected. Active decision making and management is often required to maintain these values. For example, periodic fire is needed if we wish to maintain the tall, wet eucalypt forests found in some coastal Queensland parks. If fire is excluded, rainforest will expand and total regional biodiversity might decrease. Maintaining biodiversity depends on understanding ecological processes and dynamics, such as fire, so that a mosaic of habitats is maintained over space and time.

We know that knowledge now is far from comprehensive and may never be complete. Where the knowledge to make decisions is lacking, caution

- > 1. Mossman Gorge, Daintree National Park. Maintaining water quality in parks is a critical aspect of natural integrity.
- 2. Mt Moffatt section, Carnarvon National Park. Monitoring regrowth after fire.
- 3. Greater bilby *Macrotis lagotis*

Saving the bilby

Maintaining natural integrity includes conserving species diversity by managing the natural processes and threats from both inside and outside park boundaries. An example of this is a management initiative to save the bilby.

Throughout Queensland the bilby population has declined for various reasons, including declining habitat due to grazing by domestic and feral livestock, changed fire patterns, competition for food from rabbits, and other factors, such as introduced predators (feral cats and foxes). Management initiatives needed to protect the bilby include controlling predators and rabbits and using fire to maintain its habitat.

must be applied and the potential for resolving uncertainty through further research assessed. Community involvement in these decisions is important.

We understand that parks can be managed successfully, and contribute effectively to ecologically sustainable management, only if they are considered as part of the wider landscape and if a long timeframe is considered. Many processes, such as fire, pest invasion and animal migration, do not recognise park boundaries. Animals move from one habitat to another for food or shelter, and flows of materials, energy and information link reserves with surrounding lands. Climatic and evolutionary processes will continue to occur and require dynamic management.

Parks must be managed as "open systems" rather than isolated "islands", by recognising and minimising the negative flows between the park and the surrounding landscape (such as the entry of pollutants into watercourses or pest plants into the park) while encouraging positive flows (such as the movement of pollinators and migratory species in and out of the park).

Biological diversity needs to be considered at a number of levels from genetic and species up to ecosystem and landscape. Though the basis of conservation is the protection of habitats, conserving biological diversity also requires attention to individual species, especially those which are restricted to a small area or are rare or threatened with extinction.

These species may require special management and sometimes deliberate changes to the environment.

Within parks across a bioregion, avoidable loss of natural biodiversity is unacceptable. As biodiversity can be measured at any level from landscape and ecosystem to species and gene, it is essential that conservation measures on parks be as comprehensive as possible.

Recognising these considerations, a primary goal of park management is the maintenance of natural integrity. To maintain natural integrity, including species diversity, natural processes and threats from inside and outside the park, borders must be recognised, understood and managed. Natural integrity will be the aim across all national parks. However, in the "multi-use" classes of parks such as nature refuges declared over private properties, the defined values of the park will be protected. Natural integrity may not be protected to the same extent across the entire property, especially where it is also used for production purposes.

Complementary work by local communities, local governments, other Government agencies and neighbours is essential to effectively manage the parks system, not only in managing the inter-related landscape, but as partners with park managers in developing and sharing experience and knowledge. Park neighbours are existing land managers who assist in preserving natural integrity by undertaking feral animal and weed control as part of their daily management. QPWS undertakes its own pest and fire management planning for parks and recognises the importance of implementing these to preserve a park's values. The natural integrity of parks can also be improved by restoration of degraded areas or by voluntary habitat protection on adjacent lands.

Ecosystem management is an integral part of all other activities associated with park use and management, and is critical for all parks, not only those which have high visitor use and a high public profile.

Generally, the priority for ecosystem management is the maintenance of integrity rather than restoration of degraded habitats. However, rehabilitation works should be undertaken:

- where the impacts from a degraded environment are affecting adjacent or downstream areas (for example, through erosion and siltation);

Conserving natural and cultural heritage

- where habitat is critically required for plants or animals; or
- where recreational impacts will aggravate the situation if rehabilitation is not undertaken.

PRINCIPLE 2

The natural integrity of parks will be conserved, with their values protected and presented, and parks will be integrated with good land management across the landscape. Maintaining natural integrity, cultural values and natural landscapes across time is the highest priority of national park management.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To follow the cardinal principle of national park management through an ecosystem management approach, which uses scientific information, traditional knowledge, staff and community wisdom, and adaptive learning.
2. As far as practicable and unless specifically decided otherwise in relation to particular areas, conservation will aim for the maintenance of the dynamic landscape and vegetation system of an area in its "natural state", which might be as it was when acquired or as it was before the influence of European settlement (recognising the changes through time and space in natural systems). This will involve:
 - the maintenance of natural ecological processes such as nutrient and water cycling, with active management of processes such as fire where desirable, and eradication of pest plants and animals;
 - the full range of natural biological diversity maintained in the parks system; and
 - no net loss of biological diversity across the parks system in each biogeographic region.
3. To set and maintain a high standard in relation to the environmental impacts of all park operations, including the development and maintenance of recreational and management facilities and infrastructure.

4. To increase the capacity of parks system management by recognising and incorporating Indigenous and community experience, expertise and responsibilities in ecosystem management, and to cooperate with neighbours and other land managers in managing parks as part of the broader landscape.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

PROTECTING NATURAL INTEGRITY

2.1 Prepare a strategy for maintaining natural integrity on parks. This strategy will include criteria for the preparation of natural integrity statements for individual parks, which will recognise natural values and threatening processes such as pest plants and animals. It will identify strategies to minimise the effect of threatening processes and to maximise the conservation role of the park in the surrounding landscape.

2.2 Introduce and trial this strategy throughout the state, and complete natural integrity statements for selected key parks in the short term. In the longer term, every park will have natural integrity statements and implemented action plans for the maintenance of natural integrity.

2.3 Achieve a substantially higher standard of ecosystem management on parks. Evaluate this standard through a regular monitoring program outlined in the natural integrity statements.

2.4 Develop and implement a comprehensive set of policies and practices relating to ecosystem management.

2.5 All plantings and re-introductions on parks will be based on the best available information, generally with local native species with local genetic stock.

NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION

2.6 Implement a program to obtain over time basic natural resource information for all parks.

The information will include baseline data such as vegetation maps; comprehensive plant and animal inventories; thorough documentation of rare and threatened species and communities with their habitat requirements and life histories; documentation of existing and anticipated threats to the area; and documentation of potential extensions of habitat and natural values on surrounding lands.

2.7 Over time, methodically obtain other critical information such as species interactions, population dynamics, ecosystem function, and responses to disturbance and management regimes, especially for parks of particular ecological value or with a high degree of threat.

2.8 When new parks are gazetted, within two years develop and implement basic programs of ecosystem management (for example, vegetation mapping, fire, pest plant and feral animal management programs and associated monitoring programs) for these areas.

2.9 Promote to the public information gathered for ecosystem management on the parks system.

INCREASED CAPACITY IN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

2.10 Support a strong, informed and active network of natural resource managers, other government agencies and professionals, and community members working across the state. Enhance significantly the capability of park managers through research, training and up-to-date equipment. (Actions are detailed in other sections.) Ensure information and wisdom is shared and transferred effectively when members of the workforce change. Maximise the effectiveness of partnerships with other interest groups in natural resource management.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF QPWS OPERATIONS

2.11 Develop and implement a system of environmental impact and audit standards for all park operations, including development and maintenance of recreational and management facilities and infrastructure.

SAFEGUARDING CULTURAL VALUES

Parks are established to protect and present not only natural values but also cultural resources which the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* defines as "places or objects that have anthropological, archaeological, historical, scientific, spiritual or sociological significance or value, including such significance or value under Aboriginal tradition or Island custom".

The cultural values discussed in this section reflect the variety of human experiences of many cultures including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Cultural heritage conservation on parks was previously regarded by many people as the protection of historic places and objects of obvious heritage significance, such as Indigenous art sites, historic buildings and other early heritage sites. The protection of this "material" culture is important, and requires considerable expertise and resources.

However, cultural heritage conservation is now viewed as a more dynamic and inclusive process, based on keeping alive the values that people place on the landscape and on their experience of it, as well as protecting specific places, structures, and objects. The cultural importance of parks is not always obvious; it may be associated with the history of a place or people's feelings about it.

Culture is changing and dynamic; it relates to the present as well as the past, and to stories, beliefs, songs, language and lifestyles as well as ancient relics. Thus cultural heritage conservation must involve the community, especially those for whom each park holds special significance. Actions might include encouraging or supporting cultural links, recognising community knowledge, and the recording or renewal of living cultural expressions.

Public documents and all presentation and interpretation activities need to respect that some cultural heritage

Cape Moreton Lightstation

This historic lighthouse was gazetted as a conservation park adjoining Moreton Island National Park in May 2000, adding greatly to the historic and cultural values of the park. This lighthouse, which commenced operation in 1857, was the only lighthouse along the Queensland coast at the time of separation from New South Wales in 1859 and was also the only lighthouse in Queensland built of stone.

information is sensitive and private and will not be available to the public. Cultural heritage management strategies and plans must ensure that sensitive and restricted information in relation to Indigenous culture is managed to the protocols and processes established by traditional owners.

Best practice standards exist or are in development for many aspects of cultural heritage management, including agreements with traditional owners on protocols for field work, data recording, information management and presentation, and protocols such as the Burra Charter. QPWS should follow these standards.

PRINCIPLE 3

The cultural heritage values of parks will be identified, protected and presented within a statewide framework of cultural heritage conservation.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To care for and present parks and their cultural values in a manner that recognises and respects the links, both past and present, between the land and its people and to celebrate living culture as well as the past.
2. To protect, and present where appropriate, places and objects of cultural significance according to current best practice standards.
3. To protect specific cultural heritage places and objects on parks by undertaking cultural heritage and social impact assessments before any development works are initiated.
4. To formally recognise the right of Indigenous peoples to conserve and manage their heritage, to protect their privacy, and to present or permit the presentation of cultural heritage.
5. To consider cultural heritage values and the responsibility to conserve and present cultural heritage in the formulation of park management plans, in park management decisions, such as granting of permits, and in on-park activities such as fire management. Priority will be given to conservation of places, sites and objects of cultural significance which are under threat from human or natural processes.

- > 1. Carnarvon National Park. Eastern snake-necked turtle *Chelodina longicollis*.
2. Rufous bettong *Aepyprymnus rufescens*

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

PROTECTING CULTURAL INTEGRITY

3.1 Prepare a strategy for conserving cultural heritage on Queensland parks. This strategy will develop an approach to cultural heritage identification, assessment and management. The strategy will include criteria for the preparation of cultural integrity statements for individual parks, which will recognise cultural values and threatening processes such as inappropriate visitor management at gender specific places. It will provide detailed guidelines on protocols and procedures and it will identify strategies to minimise the effect of threatening processes and to maximise the culture-sustaining role of the park in the surrounding landscape.

3.2 Introduce and trial this strategy throughout the state, and complete cultural integrity statements for selected key parks in the short term. In the longer term, every park will have cultural integrity statements and implemented action plans for the maintenance of cultural integrity. The strategy will identify the roles Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities can play in management processes.

3.3 Achieve a substantially higher standard of cultural heritage management on parks. Evaluate this standard through a regular monitoring and auditing program outlined in the cultural integrity statements.

3.4 Develop and implement a comprehensive set of policies and practices relating to cultural heritage management.

INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

3.5 Consult and negotiate with traditional owners in relation to any proposed park management action which may affect their cultural heritage.

3.6 Develop and implement agreements which formally recognise the right of Indigenous peoples to conserve and manage their heritage, to protect their privacy, and to present or permit the presentation of cultural heritage. Implement statewide park management policies recognising Indigenous rights, including intellectual property rights, and responsibilities for cultural heritage management and presentation.

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

3.7 As part of the management planning process, identify cultural values and consider cultural management for protected areas in conjunction with community interests. Identify both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural places (subject to privacy

concerns), assess their significance and outline their management requirements. Establish procedures for managing information, involving traditional owners and other interest groups in the process.

3.8 Record oral histories of parks, especially in relation to prior use and management of parks, respecting intellectual property rights where appropriate.

HERITAGE PLACE AND OBJECT CONSERVATION

3.9 Raise the level of protection of types of cultural heritage places so that Indigenous places, storylines and landscapes that exist in parks are managed in accordance with the requirements of Indigenous people, and comprehensive, adequate and representative examples of places and landscapes of historic cultural heritage significance are identified and conserved in protected areas.

3.10 Develop and implement a standard procedure for cultural heritage and social impact assessments, which will be carried out before any development works are initiated. Assessment will involve consultation with traditional owners and/or stakeholders.

INCREASED CAPACITY IN CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

3.11 Train all relevant staff in cross-cultural awareness and in awareness of cultural values, and develop a workforce better able to adequately address cultural heritage issues in conjunction with traditional owners and communities.

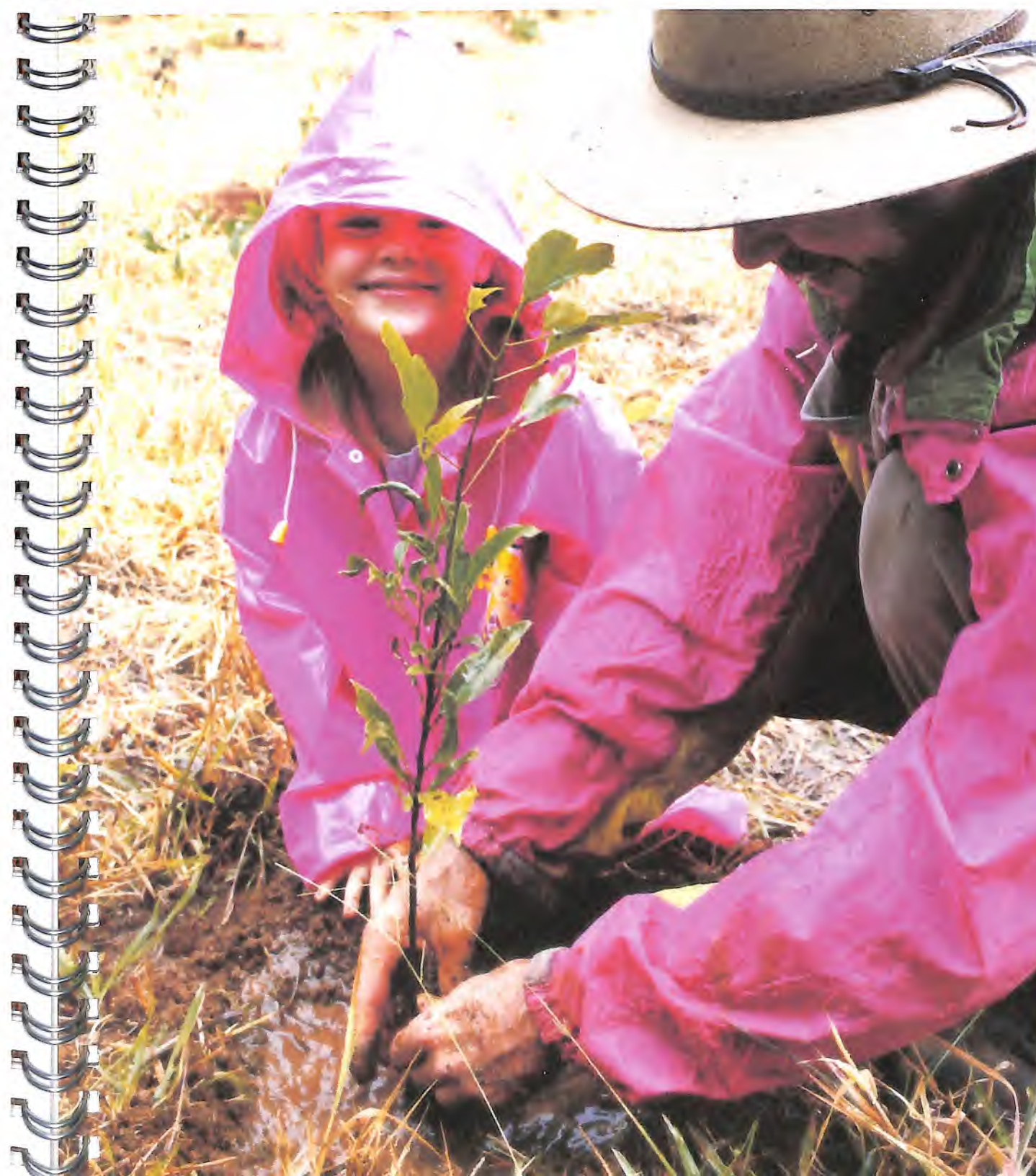
CULTURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION

3.12 Implement a program to obtain over time basic cultural heritage resource information for all parks. This information will incorporate baseline inventory data of archaeological, built and other cultural places; traditional Indigenous ecological and natural resource information; oral histories; historic photographic collections; and place specific and contextual research sufficient to assess historic places for nomination to the Queensland Heritage Register. This information will be stored to agreed archival standards while recognising intellectual property issues.

3.13 Develop expertise in heritage conservation in order to facilitate the management of built heritage.

3.14 Establish long-term monitoring programs to assess the effects of human and natural processes on the full range of cultural resources. Monitoring programs will be developed and implemented within two years of the gazettal of new parks.

Working with community partners





WORKING TOGETHER – INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS, RIGHTS AND INTERESTS

The Government recognises that native title interests may exist over many of Queensland's parks. Clearly park management must recognise the rights and interests of the traditional owners. A significant change in the next two decades will be the increasing role of Indigenous people in park management. This is a very positive opportunity for management of the natural and cultural values of parks, and QPWS will be negotiating a range of agreements with traditional owners. Participatory models for management of parks are being developed.

Many parks have traditional owners with an interest in area management. Many Indigenous people have cultural obligations to maintain continuing custodianship of national park lands and waters.

Management of the parks system will be enhanced by respecting and supporting the laws, customs, knowledge responsibilities, and interests of Indigenous people. Participation of Indigenous people is likely to be of benefit to the parks system as traditional owners increase their capacity to resume or continue their interest in management of lands and waters and to undertake their cultural activities. Maintenance of the natural and cultural values of parks will remain the primary management principle. Management arrangements may address issues such as natural resource management, possible living areas, cultural heritage management, sustainable hunting and other appropriate activities.

Indigenous peoples are the custodians of their cultural heritage. Traditional owners should lead in defining the level of Indigenous cultural importance of areas and the extent to which any related areas, subjects, material items or stories should be accessible to the public. Interpretation of Indigenous culture requires the authority and advice of the traditional owners.

- > In some areas, Indigenous people have cultural obligations to maintain custodianship of national park lands and waters. Traditional crafts and using fire to manage the land can be part of cultural relationships with country.
- 2. Expanding Indigenous employment and training opportunities.

QPWS recognises that developing partnerships with traditional owners will be sensitive and that sufficient time should be allocated for this process. Protocols and agreements will be developed to promote Indigenous involvement in the management of parks irrespective of the determination of native title.

PRINCIPLE 4

Responsibilities, interests and aspirations of Indigenous peoples will be respected in relation to their lands, and their roles in park management will be supported. The parks system will be managed by partnership between Indigenous peoples and QPWS in a manner appropriate to Indigenous cultural heritage and the protection of natural and cultural values.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To ensure Queensland's parks system provides for the continued expression of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders relationships with the land and waters and to respect cultural values, including traditional laws, customs and practices.
2. To recognise and respect Indigenous rights and interests in land and waters which coexist with the protection of natural values, and to recognise the role of Indigenous people as skilled partners in the parks system.
3. To express this recognition by managing the parks system through co-operation and partnerships between Indigenous peoples and QPWS in a manner appropriate to Indigenous cultural heritage and the protection of natural and cultural values.
4. To actively seek opportunities for better cooperation and reconciliation, and to maximise social and economic benefits through actively developing opportunities for Indigenous employment and training both on parks, including land management, administration and interpretation, and across all QPWS activities.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

BASIS OF PARTNERSHIPS

4.1 Negotiate agreements to form active partnerships between traditional owners, Indigenous land and sea-resource management agencies and QPWS to provide for the management, protection and presentation of the parks system. Management arrangements will foster direct participation in the management of individual parks or groups of parks by traditional owners who have an interest in those parks.

4.2 Implement strategies for involving Indigenous people in all aspects of parks management. The strategies will establish functional systems to involve Indigenous peoples in parks decision making. Links to the natural integrity, cultural heritage, visitor and community engagement strategies will be made. Opportunities for reconciliation and increased community awareness and education will be promoted.

4.3 Inform the wider community of native title rights and the positive contribution that goodwill, partnerships and agreements with Indigenous peoples will provide to parks system management.

4.4 Establish with Indigenous groups the strategic policies, principles and procedures to apply between the QPWS and Indigenous interests concerning parks management.

4.5 Consult with Indigenous peoples at district or park level to: advise on park management issues; coordinate approaches to park-specific issues; facilitate consultation on specific issues; and advise and assist where necessary in resolving regional and local issues.

AGREEMENTS

4.6 Seek consultation and negotiation with traditional owners in relation to any proposed park management action which may affect their interests. These matters may be specified in Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs).

Working with community partners

4.7 Effect local and regional agreements such as partnership agreements and ILUAs with appropriate communities in relation to cultural heritage management on parks.

EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

4.8 Use a range of programs to provide employment for Indigenous people in all aspects of conservation management. Ensure that appropriate training is provided and that employment opportunities are expanded over time to include long-term employment.

4.9 Support Indigenous people wishing to establish businesses linked with park management and visitation, within relevant policies and guidelines.



- > 1. Increasingly, Indigenous people will be involved in all aspects of park management across Queensland.

BENEFITS OF PARKS TO COMMUNITIES

5.4 Evaluate the contribution parks make to local economies. Undertake such studies according to a regular planned program.

COOPERATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

5.5 Investigate and implement measures to develop greater cooperation with and to improve relationships with local government. This may include promoting activities adjacent to parks that are compatible with their management and maximise opportunities for benefits from parks such as tourism.

5.6 The EPA will provide advice to local government during the planning scheme preparation phase and will provide advice to local government on all aspects of their planning schemes to ensure that the Agency's State interests in terms of nature conservation are not adversely affected.

ROLE OF NEIGHBOURS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IN PARK MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

5.7 Enable park and extension staff to provide advice and assistance to communities who manage lands adjacent to parks, resulting in further establishment and retention of corridors, remnant patches and

habitat extensions, and consolidate links between fragmented natural and cultural landscapes.

5.8 Acknowledge and encourage local government and local community involvement in park management and conservation as a highly effective method of enhancing conservation. Models for involvement will include volunteer activities, cooperative management of adjacent lands, catchment protection and revegetation schemes.

5.9 Engage neighbours, local communities and other stakeholders in the preparation of park management plans and action plans to ensure their interests are considered.

5.10 Exchange advice or technical assistance with park neighbours and local communities to assist with habitat management and revegetation wherever possible.

5.11 Promote community stewardship of natural resources through programs to build community support and capacity for natural and cultural resource care.

5.12 Develop trusteeship agreements on appropriate conservation parks and resources reserves.

Sustaining recreational and tourism opportunities

Donaghy's Corridor

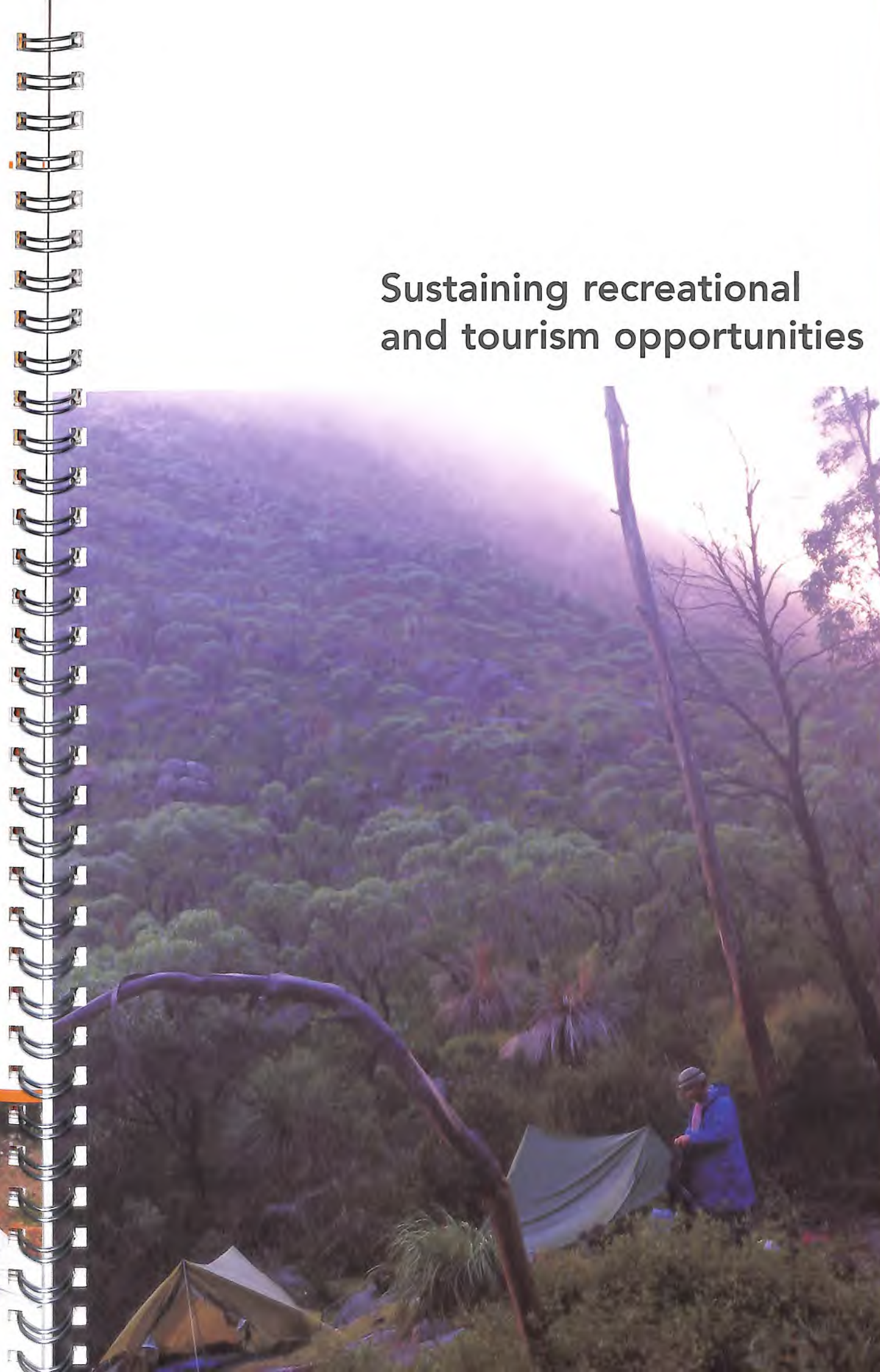
Conservation projects being undertaken by members of TREAT (Trees for the Evelyn and Atherton Tableland), the Donaghy family, the Wet Tropics Management Authority and the QPWS demonstrate the benefits of cooperation between QPWS and local communities.

Donaghy's Corridor is on private land where the owners have signed a Voluntary Conservation Agreement. Five hundred community members of TREAT have helped to revegetate the once degraded stream bank corridor using native trees from a nursery owned by QPWS and jointly operated with TREAT.

This corridor links the isolated Lake Barrine section of the Crater Lakes National Park with the much larger Wooroonooran National Park. The project aims to provide habitat and possible linkages for rain forest animals, including tree kangaroos, cassowaries and ringtail possums.

An extensive monitoring and evaluation program is under way and results to date have shown a great variety of fauna now colonising and moving throughout the corridor.

While QPWS staff assisted and helped direct the project, the drive for the project came from community members, and their rewards were a sense of pride and ownership.





ENHANCING VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES

People are most likely to care for and protect the things and places that are important to them and that they experience directly. Though conservation always has primacy, "presentation" of parks to people is also specified in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* as a major purpose of park management.

QPWS has an obligation to the community to allow for enjoyment of parks as well as to protect them, so sustainable nature-based recreation and tourism is encouraged as a legitimate use of parks. The level of access and facilities in parks varies, but only in rare cases essential for conservation, research or safety reasons, are parks or parts of them closed to visitors.

Parks are the foundation for Queensland's nature-based tourism industry and provide opportunities to highlight Queensland's cultural heritage in a growing cultural tourism market. With parks currently supporting more than 12.5 million visits a year, QPWS is one of the largest tourism providers in the state. Parks generate jobs and economic benefits for the local community and Queensland's economy. They are part of a wider network of recreation and tourism opportunities.

As natural places become rarer and more precious, the challenge for park management is to balance conservation with the increasing demands for different styles of visitation. Some visitors seek an easy, safe, comfortable and brief experience of nature, perhaps in a large group with a guide, while other people prefer wild places away from any sign of development. Each park has its own attributes and provides different opportunities and settings for visitors. The emphasis in parks is on nature-based recreation where visitors can

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1. Glass House Mountains National Park offers bushwalking opportunities close to urban centres.
 2. Parks provide opportunities for enjoying nature-based activities such as photography.
 3. Simpson Desert National Park. Queensland's parks provide recreation opportunities in a diversity of landscapes.

relate directly to natural and cultural values. Not all outdoor recreation activities are available on every park. Some activities are not appropriate or legally permitted on national parks but may be undertaken on some conservation parks or resources reserves.

Another challenge is that while conservation is the primary purpose of parks, most resources, including both staff time and materials, are currently directed towards the provision of visitor opportunities and management of visitor impacts.

Visitor opportunities must accord with native title provisions and be planned in conjunction with traditional custodians and local communities as well as visitor interest groups.

Queensland's parks system should be managed to support a range of styles of nature-based visitation, and management planning should ensure that a variety of different settings cater for different types of visitors. These settings are proposed to be characterised through the use of a management zoning system that will be developed at park level. Additionally, four categories of parks will be used for planning and resource allocation purposes at statewide and regional levels.

The four categories are:

- *high profile* (parks strongly promoted domestically, interstate and overseas, with defined, highly developed sites receiving high levels of use especially by large groups);
- *popular* (parks with defined, developed sites receiving moderate to high levels of use and with a range of facilities and opportunities);
- *explorer* (low-key developments, low to moderate levels of use); and
- *self-reliant* (few or no developments, low and irregular levels of use).

Subject to the principles in this Master Plan, each park will be allocated to one of these four categories based on the highest level of development available at certain sites within each park. Parks may be reallocated between categories following review and consultation. However, this does not imply that the whole of "high profile" or "popular" parks will be developed for visitors. In most cases only a very small part of these parks will be managed for moderate to high visitation, and the undeveloped nature of the rest of the park will be maintained. Management planning and the use of a zoning system will define areas for present and future recreation facilities.

Visitor use should be managed at a regional scale to ensure a diversity of settings and opportunities appropriate to these styles of use, park values and the interests of local, national and international visitors. Landscapes with only minor or no infrastructure are becoming increasingly scarce and it is important that these parks are maintained for both their conservation and aesthetic value.

Opportunities for day use and overnight use are required by independent visitors and people on commercial visits, but all these opportunities might not be provided by QPWS or at every park.

Park interpretation assists visitors, local communities and other interested people to better understand, explore, experience and care for the natural and cultural values of parks. Park managers and commercial operators can communicate specific messages about safe and low-impact behaviour on parks. By providing broad environmental protection messages, interpretation can also encourage people to conserve nature and protect cultural heritage in their everyday lives.

PRINCIPLE 6

A range of opportunities will be provided for visitors to enjoy parks, and interpretive programs will enhance visitor awareness, appreciation and protection of natural and cultural heritage.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. Within the constraints of sustainability and resources, to maximise community use and enjoyment of parks in ways that enhance community support for conservation and maintain

the integrity of parks; and to continue to provide opportunities for people to connect with nature on parks across a wide range of landscapes, from rainforest to desert.

2. To build better communication and encourage people to value and protect parks through park interpretation and community involvement.
3. To promote community respect for the culture of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders and for cultural heritage places on parks. The right of Indigenous people to control information and interpretation relating to their heritage is recognised.
4. To make available a variety of settings and nature-based visitor opportunities on parks ranging from developed services and facilities to undeveloped wilderness areas for remote and challenging activities; to ensure that across any region, opportunities for "unstructured" minimal impact enjoyment of undeveloped settings on parks are maintained; and prevent all sites progressively reaching higher levels of development, use and visitation.
5. To assume a leadership role in nature-based and cultural visitor management on parks, in partnership with tourism, recreation and community interests; and to work with other suppliers to integrate park visitor opportunities into regional and local tourism and recreation planning, aiming for a healthy diversity of nature-based opportunities across the state.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES AND MANAGEMENT

6.1 Develop and implement a clear direction for the provision of new and enhanced visitor opportunities. There will be a strong emphasis on maintaining, protecting or enhancing the variety of opportunities available to park visitors in each district. Where practical and within the limits of sustainability and acceptable change, selected sites managed for high profile and popular use may be managed to accommodate substantially more visitors than currently experienced.

6.2 Review visitor settings and opportunities in each district. Develop an inventory of visitor opportunities to guide visitor use, management and management planning. From this review, prepare strategies at district and park level with public consultation to identify existing and projected needs, gaps in existing opportunities, potential conflicts of interests, future development options, and desired directions.

6.3 Prepare a Visitor Strategy involving government, industry and local communities. This strategy will be based on the district reviews outlined above, and provide an overview of the role of the whole parks system in providing opportunities for a range of appropriate activities and visitor groups. This will consider the opportunities on other public and private lands. Priorities for enhancement of facilities or provision of more visitor facilities on parks will be identified where appropriate

6.4 Progressively incorporate recommendations from the Visitor Strategy into new and revised park management plans.

6.5 Over the next 20 years, invest in the development or enhancement of recreational facilities according to the Visitor Strategy:

1. Where in keeping with park values and desired settings, upgrade or create appropriate sites in "high profile" and "popular" parks which currently account for more than 90 percent of visitor use, or develop sites on other parks in the district as alternative destinations.
2. Develop or enhance visitor opportunities on "popular" and "explorer" parks where this will make a substantial contribution to the local social and economic stability of an area, and where the diversity of opportunities for visitors and local people will be substantially increased.

SUSTAINABLE USE AND LIMITS OF ACCEPTABLE CHANGE

6.6 Identify potential opportunities for visitors and potential issues with visitor impacts through

management plans. Take management actions to encourage, cater for and where necessary limit the numbers of visitors and types of activities according to the park values and site vulnerability.

6.7 Where impacts are approaching the limits of acceptable change defined for a particular park or site, take action to alleviate these impacts. Such actions may require a reduction in the levels of use or restriction of the types of activity in the area, modification of infrastructure, or the provision of alternative sites.

6.8 As part of the process of evaluating management and safeguarding natural and cultural integrity on parks, regularly monitor the impacts of recreational use and evaluate the effectiveness of visitor management. Keep records of visitor numbers, characteristics and satisfaction according to a planned strategy.

COMMUNICATE INTERPRETIVE MESSAGES AND THEMES

6.9 Deliver park interpretive services and programs, and establish a program of interpretive research and evaluation. Train and support park rangers to deliver high-quality interpretation and complement their efforts with interpretive specialists, interpretive rangers, seasonal rangers and volunteers who deliver interpretation during busy periods. Work with those conducting interpretive activities to ensure their activities complement and coordinate with park programs, and that park management maximises the potential of tour operators to be a major vehicle for the delivery of park orientation and interpretive themes.

6.10 Increase on-park programs and other media fostering awareness and understanding for children and adults, including:

- an enhanced children's program which will provide activities for children visiting selected parks and will be accessible to all children through the QPWS website;
- enhanced environmental education programs and interpretive activities; and

- detailed interpretive publications for key parks with a charge to cover production costs where appropriate.

6.11 Promote broad messages about conservation of biodiversity and ecological processes. Identify important themes relating to the ecology, cultural heritage and management issues of particular parks. In addition special attention will be given to:

- cultural interpretation: QPWS will consult with Indigenous communities and other cultural heritage experts when developing any interpretation about cultural heritage places and issues. Indigenous rangers will be employed to help plan, prepare and deliver appropriate cultural interpretation.
- interpretation as a management tool: Consistent and relevant information will be provided to promote visitor safety, including visitors using remote or trackless areas. Visitors will be clearly informed about park rules and the reasons behind them. A strong, coordinated program promoting "minimum impact" philosophy and practices will also be developed and promoted.
- community "stewardship": Park visitors will be encouraged to develop a personal identification with the park through opportunities to be involved in reporting, monitoring and management.
- parks as models for sustainability: Parks will demonstrate environmentally responsible land management and practices such as energy efficiency. Parks will demonstrate culturally responsible land management and practices such as the continuation of fire management regimes where appropriate. Park interpretation programs will encourage the community to follow suit.

PARKS AND CENTRES OF INTERPRETIVE EXCELLENCE WILL BE DEVELOPED

6.12 Identify parks and centres of interpretive excellence at key locations across the state. These parks and centres will feature specialist interpretive rangers and high quality interpretive facilities.

- >
1. Interpretive signs are a useful on-site technique to communicate information directly to park visitors.
 2. Parks are valuable outdoor classrooms for school groups.



- >
1. The turtle conservation program, with volunteer assistance, gives thousands of people each year the chance to view and learn about nesting turtles.
 2. Park interpretation and community involvement, through two-way communication, encourages people to value and protect parks.



- > 1. Commercial operations can support conservation outcomes as well as economic and employment benefits.
2. Lawn Hill National Park. Managed carefully, commercial services such as canoe hire can enhance visitors' enjoyment without negative impacts on the park.

SUSTAINING COMMERCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

In addition to conserving nature, Queensland's parks system supports a diversity of commercial and community services such as guided activities and tours. Parks also provide an important focus for resorts and other businesses in nearby areas. Queensland has the opportunity to be a world leader in the provision of rewarding and sustainable visitor opportunities in parks. This will advance conservation, economic and employment benefits for Queensland, particularly in many regional and rural areas, while maintaining natural and cultural values. Promoting these park benefits is important to keeping parks relevant to the community.

Parks are a significant focus of tourism marketing and deliver significant economic benefits to Queensland communities. Cultural tourism is a growing market with the potential for significant developments in the next few decades.

Many commercial tour operators, near-park resorts and other commercial operators rely on parks for much of their business and benefit from the existence, management and use of the parks system. These operations also provide a valuable community service in presenting parks to visitors and can offer a high standard of service and interpretation. QPWS must work in partnership with individual operators and the tourism industry to ensure high standards and to maximise the benefits to parks and visitors.

Opportunities exist for QPWS to increase its revenue through offering a range of services and facilities for which a fee could be paid. Such commercial services must be carefully considered. Any commercial

activities initiated by QPWS should deliver a benefit for park conservation, presentation to visitors or community benefits and should aim for enhancement, rather than duplication, of services or facilities otherwise available.

There are also demands for parks to be used for public utilities, such as power supply lines, telephone and radio repeater stations. These demands have the potential to fragment parks and downgrade their values. There is concern over possible conflicts between commercial interests and the public interest which underlies conservation and environmental principles and practice. Utilities, roads and other community facilities will be permitted on parks only under demonstrably exceptional circumstances where a clear and long-term benefit to the community is established, damage to park values will be minimal and where it is shown that no alternatives exist.

PRINCIPLE 7

The parks system will be managed to provide substantial and sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits to the Queensland community while maintaining the intrinsic values of all parks.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To manage parks so that the primary function of conservation is never made subordinate to any commercial use of parks.
2. To ensure that, while parks have a fundamental conservation purpose, they make a major contribution to the economic, social and aesthetic well-being of Queensland. The need for investment for each of these purposes should be increasingly recognised by government, community and industry.

3. To encourage and facilitate the development of sympathetic, well-planned "gateway communities" near park entrances to protected areas where private enterprise or local government may provide facilities and services for visitors. These communities will take pride in their association with parks and derive significant benefits from their proximity to parks.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

CREATING A CLEARER POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING COMMERCIAL SERVICES AND RAISING REVENUE

7.1 Develop a Commercial Tourism Management Strategy, policies and codes of practices for commercial operations on parks. This strategy will recommend systems to allocate rights for business and other organisations to make use of a public resource and ways in which those deriving a direct financial benefit from the existence, management or use of the parks system should make a financial return for these rights.

7.2 The Commercial Tourism Management strategy will allow for aspects of a park's built heritage to be managed by private or community business interests within the context of cultural heritage best practice management (including adaptive re-use) and under the supervision of QPWS.

7.3 Consider and recommend practical and ethical methods of revenue generation consistent with the requirements of Government policy. These will include:

- developing systems for collecting donations, bequests and sponsorships from corporate and private sources, for example, establishing a charitable "National Parks Trust";
- developing enhanced interpretive opportunities for which some charge may be made;
- reviewing commercial operator opportunities and other private sector involvement in park management; and
- progressively introducing charges for value added QPWS products.

7.4 Develop plans for all parks to identify revenue opportunities consistent with Government policy and the values of each park.

COMMUNITY UTILITIES

7.5 Develop and implement QPWS policies to establish the exceptional circumstances under which utilities (for example, telecommunication facilities) can be permitted on parks, and the procedures which must be followed to demonstrate these exceptional circumstances including undertaking an environmental, economic and social impact assessment.

7.6 Develop a strategy and codes of practice in conjunction with managers of existing utilities and community infrastructure on parks (for example, power lines, roads, water extraction, telecommunications facilities) to ensure the operation, management and use of this existing infrastructure delivers net environmental, economic and social benefits to the Queensland community.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMERCIAL OPERATORS AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

7.7 Work in partnership with the tourism industry to encourage a high standard of presentation of parks to visitors, investigate provision of visitor facilities and minimise the potential impacts of tourism on parks.

7.8 Work with commercial operators to ensure the highest level of compliance and increased monitoring of impacts of commercial operations. Ensure that necessary action is taken if problems are identified.

7.9 Support Indigenous partners in park management who wish to develop commercial operations that are in keeping with park values, management agreements and relevant plans and policies.



USING PARKS SAFELY

Parks are natural places. As with all natural places, using parks may involve dealing with a range of natural hazards. While hazards require care and caution they offer an element of excitement and challenge to many park users. In managing parks, an underlying principle is to seek to have park visitors aware of risks that they may encounter, and how they should behave in order to protect themselves from injury or other harm. Park managers seek to apply risk management principles and practices to protect visitor safety and encourage appreciation of the values of parks as natural recreational settings. Risk in a risk management context means any unintentional event or situation that leads to a loss. This loss may lead to physical, mental, social or financial harm.

While park managers aim to manage risk responsibly, visitor safety requires that park users think and behave in a way that anticipates and protects them from the hazards they may encounter. Specifically visitors can use the park safely by:

- exhibiting a degree of responsibility for their own safety commensurate with the activities they undertake;
- being properly equipped and having the levels of knowledge, skills and physical fitness required for chosen activities;
- seeking information from park staff about preparedness and the nature of risks inherent in planned activities; and
- considering and acting upon the information and advice provided and observing regulations.

- > 1. Burrum Coast National Park boardwalk.
2. Walking tracks allow people to experience parks with relative safety.

There are increasing numbers of visitors to parks and the challenge for QPWS is to balance the requirements of these visitors while at the same time facilitating experiences that are safe and fulfilling. This will be done through the provision of appropriate opportunities, facilities and information services. The key is for visitors to match their skill and competence levels with the level of risk involved in particular activities.

PRINCIPLE 8

The parks system will be managed to provide visitors with facilities that are safe and are located, designed, constructed and maintained to meet appropriate safety standards, and with information that will promote visitor awareness of the hazards present in parks and the levels of skill and competence required to cope with the risks they may face.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To provide visitor facilities that are located, designed, constructed and maintained to meet appropriate safety standards using sound building practices.
2. To make visitors aware of the hazards present in parks and of the level of skill and competence they require.
3. To maintain a high standard of visitor services and facilities appropriate to the chosen setting, within the commitment of QPWS to conservation of natural and cultural heritage as required by the cardinal principle of management; and to achieve a high standard in environmentally sustainable design, development, maintenance and operation.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 The principles and practices of risk management will be applied to the development and presentation of visitor-use opportunities across the parks system. Where considered necessary, risk management plans will be prepared for individual parks or specific sites.

8.2 The principles and practices of risk management will be applied to the planning, development and maintenance of visitor infrastructure on parks. Where appropriate QPWS will identify potential risks, outline issues associated with each risk and detail mitigation methods for example:

Issue	Risk Profile	Mitigation
Cliff edges	Potential risks during wet, windy conditions.	Signage and some infrastructure may be installed to change visitor behaviour.
Fire	High risk where there is an interface between park and residential development, October to January in particular.	Education, prescribed burning, maintaining fire breaks, intensive fire controls during worst periods, restricting/closing access according to fire ratings, working with other fire fighting agencies.
Sand driving	Inexperienced drivers, non-compliance with road rules.	Public awareness, promotion of appropriate behaviour through education and law enforcement.
Swimming	Risk from drowning, disabling accidents.	Signage.
Walking Tracks	Risk of rockfall (at random times), tracks become eroded.	Signage. Closure if necessary.
Water falls	Risk from slipping, falls, concussion, major injury, death.	Designated viewing areas and some restricted access areas in selected sites.
Wildlife/animals	Risk from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disease transmission to humans; • aggressive animals; and • dangerous or venomous animals e.g. cassowary, reptiles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education awareness and interpretation, signage and pre-visit information. • Monitor specific situations of concern and remove particular animals if necessary. • Enforcement of legislation to protect public safety. • Actively promote minimal habituation or dependence of animals on human influences.

VISITOR FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

8.3 Manage the parks system to cater for more visitors within acceptable levels of change to parks settings. This will involve designing, developing and maintaining visitor sites to cope with the desired type and level of use and educating visitors on appropriate low-impact practices.

8.4 Develop, implement and maintain a system of environmental and social impact and audit standards for all QPWS operations, including development and maintenance of recreational and management facilities and infrastructure. (See principle 2.)

8.5 Approve major developments such as new roads, large camping areas and significant buildings on parks only as indicated in an approved management plan or through an equivalent process with appropriate consultation. Publicly reviewed impact statements for major developments will guide their construction and maintenance.

8.6 Develop a strategy to ensure the design of new park infrastructure and facilities is:

- in harmony with the protection of park values;
- appropriate to the park setting (nature, scale, appearance);
- adequate for the desired levels and patterns of visitor use;
- a reinforcement of the identity of QPWS;
- appropriate to the needs of people with a disability and responsive to the principles and practices that respect diversity;
- cost effective; and
- based on sustainable design principles and is energy-efficient, durable and functional.

8.7 Ensure all park infrastructure and facilities conform with the principles identified in this strategy.

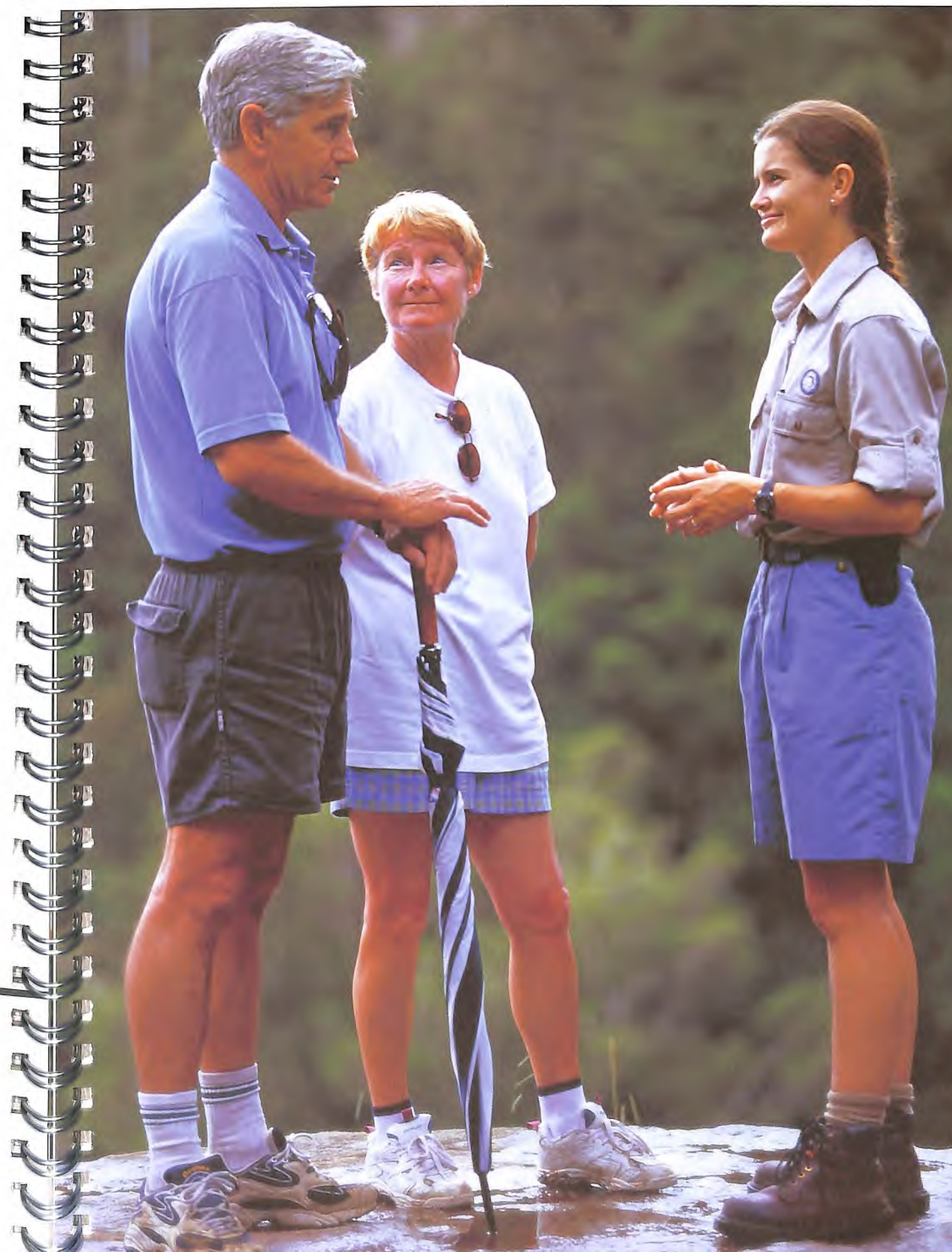
VISITOR INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

8.8 Provide reliable and up-to-date orientation information on parks designated for visitor use through appropriate media to assist people to choose the most appropriate destination for the types of opportunity they are seeking. Advise visitors of the likely conditions and the skills and equipment needed for particular areas. This information will enable visitors to make informed choices about the level of risk they are prepared to accept. In some areas, the level of risk will require management action or may preclude visitation.

Enhancing management capabilities



- > 1. Amenities at Noosa National Park.
- 2. Visitor access in Great Sandy National Park.





- > 1. Whitsunday Islands National Park. The skills and knowledge of the workforce are critical in delivery of sound management decisions. Managing island parks poses extra challenges and staff need skills for marine as well as terrestrial work.
2. Good planning ensures visitor facilities fit in well with the environment.

IMPROVING PLANNING, POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

The previous three sections have dealt with particular aspects of protecting and presenting parks. The remainder of the Plan discusses how QPWS and its partners in management can become progressively more:

- **skilful** – by raising the professionalism of the workforce, by better involving the skills, knowledge and wisdom of the community and industry and by using progressively better information bases;
- **effective** – by supporting the workforce with trust, encouragement and adequate resources, and by developing and implementing good partnerships, policies and planning systems;
- **adaptive** – by becoming an innovative organisation which learns through experience and is willing to try new ideas to be at the forefront of park management;
- **efficient** – by careful use of resources, delegation of responsibility to local levels wherever possible, communicating well and sharing information both within the agency and with other organisations; and
- **value-driven** – by ensuring that the principles of park management remain as core factors in all decisions and activities.

The extent and complexity of the parks system require decisions at many levels. Planning and policy developments are effective mechanisms to gather information, to identify and integrate management decisions, and to transparently document a firm course of action. They also ensure similar issues are managed consistently across the parks system. Planning systems for park operations must be closely linked with the

business planning cycle and ensure that resources expended can be linked with clear outcomes. Resources from QPWS core funding will be allocated primarily to implementing QPWS basic business.

Planning and policy provide opportunities for community and industry involvement in decision-making, including through the development of appropriate cooperative arrangements and partnerships. Indigenous peoples will be playing an increasing role in planning and decision making. A high level of cooperation with other government agencies, including local government, is essential in many aspects of park management and may be defined in relevant plans. When parks form part of a declared World Heritage area, management will continue to be in cooperation with the Commonwealth and international conservation bodies.

Where planning and decision making require choices between conflicting imperatives:

- first priority should be given to matters that have the highest potential to promote, affect or impair the natural or cultural heritage values of the Queensland parks system.

Other issues requiring consideration include:

- general community needs and aspirations; and
- matters that assist in resolving issues across the parks system generally, or across a range of parks in a region, or integrate direction and management of protected natural areas in or between regions.

PRINCIPLE 9

The Queensland parks system will be planned and managed skilfully, effectively, adaptively and efficiently to maintain park values in conjunction with other private and State lands.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To manage the parks system through a comprehensive, integrated and transparent planning and policy framework with agreed standards and information systems. To ensure people working at the park level are trained and empowered to make decisions on day-to-day matters within this framework.
2. Through partnerships, involve Indigenous peoples in park management, with the level of this involvement specified in management arrangements. Other community members and organisations will also be involved in decision making.
3. To be a cost-effective organisation, operating with the community to deliver effective decisions at all levels of park management.
4. To seek, share and implement best practice standards within and outside the organisation and to seek partnerships to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

PLANNING AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

9.1 Develop an Implementation Plan for the Master Plan that will include all strategies contained in this document; allocate priorities and resources to strategic actions; establish performance indicators where appropriate; and monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Master Plan.

9.2 Develop and implement an integrated planning and policy framework for park management based on the Master Plan resulting in:

- high quality park management and achievement of conservation objectives;
- the needs and aspirations of landholders being met to the maximum possible extent; and
- maximum community involvement and satisfaction in park management.

Enhancing management capabilities

9.3 Undertake planning priorities to:

- coordinate the direction and management of parks within regions and across the state and provide integrated guidance for individual park management plans, consistent with policies and strategies developed in accordance with the Master Plan; and
- prepare park management plans essential to implement the Master Plan.

BETTER SYSTEMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANS AND POLICIES

9.4 Develop an operational framework to implement effective use of resources in management and to clearly link planning with resource allocation. (See Principle 12)

9.5 Form and support expertise-based teams across the organisation to review and report on specific management functions.

INTEGRATION OF PLANNING, POLICY, RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROCESSES

9.6 Link planning, research and monitoring. Park plans, strategies and policies will explicitly identify decisions based on the need to conserve natural integrity, including situations where further research is required before certain actions are taken. Natural resource monitoring programs will be based on natural integrity statements. Similar cultural resource monitoring programs will be based on cultural integrity statements. Review generic management strategies and monitoring standards derived from natural and cultural integrity statements for applicability to individual draft management plans, as a basis for day-to-day park management programs.

INTEGRATION OF PARK PLANNING WITH SURROUNDING AREAS AND ACTIVITIES

9.7 Encourage complementary planning, land management and use of surrounding areas and activities. Provide clear statements outlining the values and directions of importance for management of a park or group of parks as a basis for negotiating complementary arrangements such as nature refuges on surrounding lands.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER AGENCIES

9.8 Develop and trial policies and strategies in relation to community and industry partnerships on a range of parks. To protect all interests, these partnerships and cooperative ventures will, wherever appropriate, be formalised with written agreements clearly defining the rights and responsibilities of all parties.

9.9 Organise personnel exchanges and cooperation with other park management agencies within Australia and overseas through both formal and informal mechanisms. Develop arrangements to deliver mutual assistance with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region

EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

9.10 Undertake regular and consistent statewide reviews of park management to identify park management needs across the state. Conduct regular rapid assessments of management performance, and conduct more detailed evaluations where necessary.

USING A LEARNING APPROACH

9.11 Provide policy, planning and technical support to encourage and review innovative ideas for park management.

9.12 Identify aspects of park management, including systems, policies and procedures, which need improvement or modification. Implement systems to recognise and reward examples of excellent management, and to adapt and propagate good ideas at appropriate locations throughout the state.

ENHANCING COMPLIANCE

9.13 Work with other government agencies at local, state and Commonwealth levels in achieving a coordinated approach to compliance issues.

9.14 Train enforcement officers to the appropriate professional standards so that compliance issues are managed with maximum efficiency and minimum risk to staff and the public.



ADVANCING INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

High-quality, fact-based and well interpreted information and community wisdom are key supports for effective long-term ecosystem management.

There are numerous gaps, inconsistencies and inadequacies in natural and cultural resource information generally and for the parks system particularly. "Adequate" information on which to make decisions is never likely to be fully available for all cases. Accepting that information is unlikely to be completely comprehensive, QPWS should increase its knowledge and wisdom, giving priority to that which will help it manage better.

Management decisions should be based on legislation, good science, and sound principles of land management and must be ethical. All management decisions should reflect the best available information. Where adequate information is not available, planning and policy should place a priority on the protection of ecological and cultural integrity, including conservation of biodiversity. The requirements for further research to reduce uncertainty in decision making need to be identified.

There is growing awareness that traditional and community-based knowledge and systems can provide a strong basis for conserving natural systems and cultural values. This experience should be respected and play an increasing role in park management.

Regular pro-active reporting on program progress and outcomes is desirable, while reactive reporting on tight deadlines should occur only in response to emergent events such as wildfires or serious accidents.

- > 1. Measuring the fuel load of a monitoring plot at Princess Hills National Park.
- 2. Monitoring the health of pandanus plants at Noosa National Park is an example of the role science plays in management.

Rather than collecting information for its own sake we should aim to develop shared visions, culture and wisdom. Collection and compilation of information should be efficient, with minimum duplication. Priority requirements for compiling park information, including baseline data essential for management purposes, have been identified in other topic areas (for example, there are considerable information needs for protecting natural integrity and for identifying and assessing cultural heritage values). Information gathering should be undertaken on a strategic basis and be conducted wherever possible with the assistance of partners such as other government agencies, industry, academic institutions, cooperative research centres and local communities.

PRINCIPLE 10

Good management decisions will be made, based on high standards of information and wisdom and community and stakeholder involvement in decision making.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To collect information, build knowledge and develop wisdom by combining the best available knowledge systems, including traditional and community stakeholders' knowledge.
2. To maintain and provide access to that information, and to ensure that the resulting knowledge is used when making management decisions.
3. To communicate the information to relevant people, with information relating to park management as openly accessible as is consistent with security, privacy and confidentiality imperatives and Government policies.



'It is essential to have our eyes firmly fixed on future generations to focus first and foremost on the goal of preserving functioning ecosystems, with public use and enjoyment accommodated in ways that are compatible with that primary goal'

Bing Lucas, 1999

4. To respect the rights and value the wisdom of Indigenous peoples.
5. To encourage the workforce, community and stakeholders at all levels to participate in decision making.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

10.1 Develop agreements with Indigenous peoples which recognise the role of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom in park management, and establish protocols for the use and ownership of such information.

INFORMATION GATHERING

10.2 Identify specific priority information needs and the most effective ways of obtaining such information.

10.3 Identify and support partnerships with organisations and individuals to encourage applicable research and monitoring.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

10.4 Develop electronic information storage, management and presentation systems to facilitate accessibility and manage large volumes across time and topics. Develop systems to safeguard ownership and use rights of information and to respect community ownership where appropriate.

10.5 Ensure best use of available information through:

- providing data which is owned by QPWS to external agencies (this may be done on a cost recovery basis);
- developing strategic alliances with other holders of relevant information and encourage data sharing arrangements that add value;
- developing data collection protocols and standards to ensure information collected throughout the organisation and partner organisations is compatible; and
- coordinating and integrating information systems.

10.6 Develop, in consultation with Queensland State Archives, appropriate archival systems for the management of non-electronic data, in particular photos, slides, oral history tapes and other resources relating to park history and management.

10.7 Develop an integrated park management database to better manage available information, which:

- electronically issues leases, licences, permits and other legal approvals for activities occurring on parks;
- stores information relevant for management; and
- analyses available information and produces useful reports.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND REPORTING

10.8 Establish a statewide information reporting system to facilitate the strategic provision of quality, factual information to support management decisions. This system will be closely linked to the planning system outlined in the previous topic.

USING INFORMATION IN DECISION-MAKING

10.9 Systematically use relevant information, plans and policies to support decisions.

10.10 Enable management decisions and plans for the parks system to be substantially founded on sets of reliable, relevant and long-term information derived from a variety of sources, focussed research and effective operational management.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

10.11 Facilitate regular consultation with a range of stakeholders at strategic level, in relation to specific parks, and in relation to particular topics.



ENHANCING WORKFORCE CAPABILITIES

Park management relies ultimately on the skills and commitment of the people involved and on the support they are given to perform their tasks. The key role that park rangers have played and will continue to play in the conservation and presentation of parks is recognised and appreciated.

In line with international trends, the parks system workforce in the future will be more open to participation from stakeholders and will give greater recognition to their skills, knowledge and enthusiasm. The workforce may consist of staff, volunteers, partners in management and people undertaking complementary works. A balance between effectiveness and efficiency should be sought to deliver quality outcomes.

Some parks are located in the most remote areas of Queensland. Defining the best locations for work bases and accommodation is often a challenge. After considering the needs and welfare of the workforce, staff accommodation should be provided in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible to enable effective field operations, community relations, visitor services and emergency responses. Where accommodation is located on-park, it should be in keeping with the park environs and should take advantage of best practice in design and operations, such as the use of renewable energy.

- >
1. Simpson Desert National Park. Rangers who work in remote locations must be well prepared for the conditions. Managers and staff need to be aware of a range of workplace health and safety concerns.
 2. Fleays Conservation Park. Skills in animal handling are important in presentation and wildlife management roles of park rangers.

PRINCIPLE 11

A dedicated, skilled and motivated workforce will manage parks, using clear policies, directions and standards.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To value staff as a professional, committed and dedicated resource, with clear reciprocal responsibilities between staff members and managers.
2. To develop a workforce with the necessary skills, resources and capability to protect, monitor, restore and present Queensland parks. The hallmark of park management will be a sense of dignity, honour and achievement, high professional standards and excellence in science, skills, traditional knowledge and resources underpinning protection and presentation.
3. To use a variety of employment opportunities and contractual agreements to develop this workforce. Ensure the workforce is well resourced, highly trained and of sufficient size to meet the management obligations of the parks system. QPWS staff will lead and support community and industry involvement in protecting and appreciating parks and other natural areas.
4. To adopt the culture of a learning organisation, fostering innovation, dedication, integrity, and thoughtfulness in its staff. Opportunities will be offered to staff and other participants in management to develop and use their skills and experience in an organised and effective manner.
5. To locate park management staff as best possible to encourage close links between parks and community.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

A MORE EFFECTIVE AND BROADLY-BASED WORKFORCE

11.1 Investigate potential mutual benefits of delegating or contracting selected park management functions to contractors, local communities or park neighbours, and develop, trial and evaluate mechanisms to efficiently allow this where appropriate. Ensure quality control of any contracting arrangements is undertaken to reflect the importance of maintaining management standards.

11.2 Implement the most efficient and effective management arrangements for all parks.

TRAINING AND CAREER PATHS

11.3 Develop a system of competencies to match all position needs and responsibilities. Mentor programs will be developed to enhance staffing abilities and provide opportunities for the workforce to develop skills in conjunction with focused training programs.

11.4 Actively engage staff in training and develop an annual training program.

11.5 Facilitate training opportunities for skills in a range of priority functions. Incentive systems will be developed to encourage acquisition and improvement of skills. Options to be reviewed and implemented if warranted will include:

- a formal QPWS training program coordinated with external service providers;
- cadetship schemes; and
- exchange and work experience programs.

11.6 Ensure comprehensive training opportunities, career and achievement structures, and incentives are available to develop and support a workforce with excellent skills in park management.

11.7 Further develop and support a workforce which involves and relates to the local community. Train staff as necessary in facilitation, community capacity building, communication and conflict resolution.

PROJECT TEAM APPROACH

11.8 Form and support project teams across the state and across levels of management, made up of specialists from each area of management, to plan, develop and monitor initiatives and to disperse this information statewide. The focus will be on expertise

rather than position or geographic location. Project teams will be used for key areas identified in the Master Plan including natural integrity management and cultural heritage management. These teams will produce more detailed strategies in relation to these topic areas. These expertise-based teams will need to be sensitive to the importance of and source local knowledge.

STAFF ACCOMMODATION, RESPONSIBILITIES AND WELFARE

11.9 Establish clear and practical policies and procedures in relation to issues concerning staff welfare and responsibilities, including on-call and emergency responses. Staff and union representatives will be fully consulted in the formulation of these policies.

11.10 Meet agreed standards for staff accommodation in all locations where accommodation is provided.

11.11 Develop and implement strategies to attract and keep high-quality people in the workforce. These strategies may include options for limited term placements in remote areas.

DELEGATIONS, NETWORKING AND PROFESSIONALISM

11.12 Arrange delegation of decision making to the most appropriate operational level, within the improved planning and policy framework. Promote coordination and information exchange to ensure consistent high standards of management and operations across the state.

11.13 Support meetings, conferences, exchanges, field work and workshops which increase personal contact between staff at all levels, mentoring and information exchange.

Managing Lochern

Being Ranger in charge of a western park with few visitors, most of my work is concerned with managing the land for conservation. Lochern has been a park since 1994, and we are witnessing the changes taking place on the land after years without stock grazing. We have been trying out different land management tools such as fire.

We are recording the wildlife and enjoy the anticipation of seeing rare and threatened species, such as kullars, flock bronzewings and Major Mitchell cockatoos, appear and increase on the park.

Managing the land here has to be in partnership with people living on the surrounding properties. We're learning about the history of the land from them and we're keen to involve the kids from around the district in wildlife surveys so they can see animals they do not see normally.

We're hoping that cooperative management with our neighbours will become even closer in the future.

Helen Wylks - Ranger-in-charge, Lochern National Park



RESOURCING THE PARKS SYSTEM

The Queensland parks system has expanded rapidly over the last 20 years and is likely to expand further in the next 20 years. New acquisitions, greater community expectations and increasing threats to natural systems all compete for allocation of Government resources. The first priority for Government funding for parks is the effective maintenance of natural and cultural values of the parks system.

Effective land management to protect natural and cultural heritage and to provide services and facilities for visitors is labour intensive. It also requires considerable infrastructure and equipment in locations across Queensland. Therefore the parks system needs substantial and sustained investment if it is to deliver the ecological, economic and social benefits we expect.

Activities in the parks system can be considered at three levels:

- Basic business comprises those aspects of park management that maintain ecological and cultural integrity and natural landscapes, for example, fire and pest management. Basic business also includes provision of essential presentation opportunities.
- Enhanced business comprises those aspects of parks system management that enhance the minimum essential standards of basic business, for example, campgrounds and interpretation.
- Supplementary business comprises those aspects of parks system management which, while not essential to basic business, would significantly

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- > 1. Salt lake, Simpson Desert National Park. The wide spread of parks across Queensland brings benefits to remote communities, but requires considerable investment.
 2. Riversleigh, which forms part of the Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (Naracoorte/Riversleigh) World Heritage Area, was acquired by QPWS and is now protected as part of Lawn Hill National Park.

complement and promote the objectives of basic business, for example, interpretation centres, off-park conservation including the attraction of project funding to local area activities.

PRINCIPLE 12

Continual improvement in park management will be fostered through evaluation, learning, and reliable and logical allocation of resources.

To uphold this principle, we aim:

1. To be accountable to the Government and the community, with a management approach based on continuous improvement, tested against performance indicators and reported regularly to Government and the community.
2. To ensure core funding for Queensland's parks provides for protection of park resources and at a minimum basic resources for presentation, interpretation, research, inventory, monitoring and adaptive management. Core funding must be adequate to maintain and, where necessary, restore values and integrity and allow for the development of management arrangements with traditional owners.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

12.1 Clearly identify in consultation with the community and local government activities comprising basic, enhanced and supplementary business.

12.2 Develop and implement a resource allocation model for financial resources relating to parks. This system will be logical and transparent and will be based on the four dimensions of park management outlined in this Plan. Aspects addressed will include:

- asset valuation and best practice asset management under an accrual accounting framework;
- setting priorities for capital works, asset maintenance and other management activities based on the four dimensions for park management and on priorities identified in the Master Plan and in park management plans; and
- clear links to the business planning system and to performance indicator monitoring and evaluation.

12.3 Develop a resourcing strategy in consultation with traditional owners and stakeholders, that identifies:

- basic business adequately resourced from core funding;
- priorities for enhanced business and additional potential sources of resourcing; and
- priorities for supplementary business and additional potential sources of resourcing.

12.4 Develop clear, publicly promoted materials documenting resourcing use, priorities and rationale.

Glossary



- > 1. Community involvement in parks benefits the community and the park. This revegetation program at Kondalilla National Park assisted Green Corps participants from the Barung Landcare Group to gain skills in natural area management.

Glossary

Biodiversity: Biodiversity and biological diversity are used in the sense of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, which states that biological diversity is the natural diversity of native wildlife, together with the environmental conditions necessary for their survival and includes –

- (a) regional diversity, that is, the diversity of the landscape components of the region, and the functional relationships that affect environmental conditions within ecosystems;
- (b) ecosystem diversity, that is, the diversity of the different types of communities formed by living organisms and the relations between them;
- (c) species diversity, that is the diversity of species; and
- (d) genetic diversity, that is, the diversity of genes within each species.

Bioregion: Bioregions or bioregional planning in Queensland has been developed and refined during the last 25 years. The approach is based upon using mapped land resource information (land systems and vegetation mapping and more recently regional ecosystems that reflect the interaction of vegetation/plants with geology, landforms, soils, climate) as a surrogate for biodiversity.

Burra Charter: A charter developed by the Australian International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Sites (ICOMOS) in 1979 at Burra, South Australia, which defines the basic principles and procedures to be followed in the conservation of heritage places. It is widely accepted as the standard for historic heritage conservation in Australia.

Cardinal principle: Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* the cardinal principle of national park management is to “provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area’s natural condition and the protection of the area’s cultural resources and values”.

CAR reserve system: The CAR reserve system was recommended by the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia’s Biodiversity and is the basis of Queensland’s parks system:

- *Comprehensive* means that the reserve system samples the full range of regional ecosystems across the landscape;
- *Adequate* means that the reserves are of a sufficient size and appropriate shape that the natural integrity, including the species diversity, of the protected area can be maintained; and
- *Representative* means that the samples of regional ecosystems include the maximum possible diversity of their plant and animal communities.

Commercial use: Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, a commercial activity is any activity conducted for gain, and may include selling an article, material or thing; supplying a facility or service; commercial photography; conducting a tour, safari, scenic flight, cruise or excursion; or advertising or promoting a protected area as part of an enterprise.

Community: The citizens of Queensland, including traditional owners, partners, key stakeholders and the broader community.

Conservation: The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* defines conservation as “the protection and maintenance of nature while allowing for its ecologically sustainable use”.

Core funding: Funding provided to QPWS from Government. It does not include funding generated by QPWS from fees and charges.

Cultural heritage: In parks refers to the values which people place on the park landscape and their experience of it; it includes their knowledge and traditions, stories, language, songs, dances and relationships, as well as specific places, structures, and objects.

Cultural resources: The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* defines cultural resources as “places or objects that have anthropological, archaeological, historical, scientific, spiritual or sociological significance or value, including such significance or value under Aboriginal tradition or Island custom”.

Ecologically sustainable use: Of protected areas is defined in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* as their use within their capacity to sustain natural processes while:

- maintaining the life support systems of nature; and
- ensuring that the benefit of the use to present generations does not diminish the potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.

Ecosystem: A dynamic complex of plant, animal, fungal, and micro-organism communities and the associated non-living environment interacting as an ecological unit (Commonwealth of Australia 1996).

Endangered regional ecosystem: Under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* means a regional ecosystem that is prescribed under a regulation and has either

- less than 10 percent of its pre-clearing extent remaining; or
- 10 percent to 30 percent of its pre-clearing extent remaining and the remnant vegetation remaining is less than 10 000ha.

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency.

Feral species: A domesticated species that has become wild (Commonwealth of Australia 1996).

Gene: The functional unit of heredity; that part of the DNA molecule that encodes a single enzyme or structural protein unit. (Commonwealth of Australia 1996).

Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA): Agreements entered into by QPWS with Indigenous groups pursuant to Sections 24BB to 24BE of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cwlth).

Interpretation: The process of stimulating and encouraging appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage and of communicating conservation ideals and practices (Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service 1983).

IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (now known as the World Conservation Union).

Land clearing: Under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* consists of the destruction of the above ground biomass of native vegetation and its substantial replacement by non-local species or by human artefacts. Land clearing includes clearance of native vegetation for crops, improved pasture, plantations, gardens, houses, mines, buildings and roads. It also includes infilling of wetlands or dumping material on dry land native vegetation, and the drowning of vegetation through the construction of impoundments.

Local communities: Include individuals, community groups, local businesses and local government.

Limits of acceptable change: This term is used to describe the condition of a site at which point intervention is required to prevent further unacceptable degradation or change.

Natural integrity: The condition of an ecosystem where biological diversity and ecosystem processes are optimal and are likely to persist. “In plain words, ecosystems have integrity when they have their native components (plants, animals and other organisms) and processes (such as growth and reproduction) intact”. (Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada’s National Parks 2000).

Native title: Section 223 of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cwlth) defines native title as the following: The expression **native title** or **native title rights and interests** means the communal, group or individual rights and interests of Aboriginal peoples or Torres Strait Islanders in relation to land or waters, where:

- the rights and interests are possessed under the traditional laws acknowledged, and the traditional customs observed, by the Aboriginal peoples, or Torres Strait Islanders; and
- the Aboriginal peoples or Torres Strait Islanders, by those laws and customs, have a connection with the land or waters, and
- the rights and interests are recognised by the common law of Australia ...

Nature-based: In relation to the use of protected areas, includes scientific, educational, spiritual, intellectual, cultural and recreational (*Nature Conservation Act 1992*). In planning for protected area recreation, nature-based activities should meet the following criteria:

- appreciation of nature is a key motivational factor;
- substantial modification of the environment is not required; and
- the natural environment is critical to the experience of the participants.

Nature-based tourism: Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas (as defined by Ecotourism Association of Australia).

Of concern regional ecosystem: Under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* means a regional ecosystem that is prescribed under a regulation and has either

- 10 percent to 30 percent of its pre-clearing extent remaining; or
- more than 30 percent of its pre-clearing extent remaining and the remnant vegetation remaining is less than 10 000ha.

Parks and parks system: The Master Plan covers Queensland’s protected areas declared under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and refers to these as “parks”. Marine parks are not included in this Plan, though island national parks within the marine parks are included. Parks include lands owned and managed by the Queensland Government for the purposes of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and lands which may be owned or managed by individuals or community interests for the purposes of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. These lands together comprise Queensland’s parks system.

Partnerships: A partnership can be defined as “a special type of relationship formed among a number of individuals or groups to work collaboratively at all stages towards the achievement of a common goal; there is reciprocal respect, a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities and flexibility to respond and adapt to changing circumstances” (Scherl 1996). Partnership may refer to cooperation in park management by Indigenous groups and QPWS, sometimes under a formal agreement. The term is also used to describe close relationships between the QPWS and the community including neighbours, all levels of government, business, industry and community groups.

Pest (plant or animal): A species occurring in an area outside its historically known natural range as a result of intentional or accidental dispersal (including exotic organisms, genetically modified organisms and translocated species) (adapted from National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia’s Biological Diversity definition for alien species or introduced species).

Presentation: Presentation implies opportunities to visit and appreciate, but also opportunities to become better informed about the values of parks and encouragement to support the continued protection of these values. Presentation of natural and cultural values is listed as a management principle of national parks (*Nature Conservation Act 1992*).

Glossary

Protected area: Defined by the IUCN Commission on protected areas as: “An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means” (*Guidelines for protected area management categories*. Gland, Switzerland, IUCN 1994).

QPWS: Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Regional ecosystem: Means a vegetation community in a bioregion that is consistently associated with a particular combination of geology, landform and soil. The regional ecosystem is a surrogate measure for biological diversity that is used as the basis for the protected areas system in Queensland.

Setting: A term used to describe the character of a place which takes into account its physical, social and managerial features. Settings on parks range from high-volume areas with signs, toilets and car parks to wild, remote locations.

Species: A group of organisms capable of interbreeding freely with each other but not with members of other species (Commonwealth of Australia 1996).

Sustainable: Able to be carried out over time without damaging the long-term health and integrity of natural and cultural environments.

Stakeholders: Includes other government agencies at local, State and Commonwealth levels, landholders, community and industry, and the general public.

Threatened: Under the *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 1994*, status is either presumed extinct, endangered or vulnerable.

Traditional owner: Means an Indigenous person who, under Aboriginal tradition or Torres Strait Islander custom, has responsibility and ownership of particular country regardless of whether their native title has been extinguished.

Wildlife: Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, wildlife means any taxon or species of animal, plant, protista, procaryote or virus.

World Heritage areas: Those properties inscribed on the World Heritage list by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

World Heritage Convention: This international agreement, signed to date by more than 150 countries, was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972. Its primary mission is to define and conserve the world’s heritage, by drawing up a list of sites whose outstanding values should be preserved for all humanity and to ensure their protection through a closer co-operation among nations. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve the sites situated on its territory, some of which may be recognised as World Heritage.

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Herbie

Herbie - a symbol for conservation

The Herbert River ringtail possum has been the symbol of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (and its predecessor Q.NPWS) since 1976.

This distinctive possum is restricted to Queensland, living only in the tropical upland forests between the Herbert River Gorge and Cooktown. It is rarely seen as its habitat is quite restricted, it is active at night and it moves around in the highest branches of the forest.

It is dependent for its survival on careful conservation of the environment, and is a symbol of our need and responsibility to care for our natural heritage.

