

Pipeclay National Park

Management Plan

2000

Prepared by: **Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of Environment and Science**

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The Pipeclay National Park Management Plan 2000 has been extended in 2023, in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the plan's original management intent and direction.

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Summary

This management plan provides the framework and guidelines on how Pipeclay National Park will be managed. It sets out the considerations, outcomes and strategies that proposed to form the basis on which day-to-day management decisions are made.

This plan was prepared in May 1998, in accordance with s 125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Act). In 2023 the plan was extended, in keeping with s 120G of the Act. For further information on this plan or the planning process, please contact the Department of Environment and Science at ParkManagementPlans@des.qld.gov.au.

This management plan was prepared by Department of Environment and Science staff. Thanks are due to those groups and individuals who made submissions in response to the draft plan.

1. Management directions and purpose

1.1 Management directions

Pipeclay National Park will be managed to conserve its natural and cultural values, in particular the bora ring located within the park. The park will be managed in cooperation with Aboriginal people who have links with the area. Recreational use will not be encouraged. Access to the park will be restricted and by permit only. Any additions to the park will have the same access restrictions.

1.2 Purpose

The major purposes of management will be to ensure that:

- cultural sites within the park are managed and maintained in co-operation with Aboriginal people who have links with the area
- the public are informed of the cultural values of the park and are aware of management and access restrictions
- the park suffers minimal impact from weed invasion and feral animals; and
- appropriate fire management protects cultural sites and maintains the diversity of plant communities.

2. Basis for management

Pipeclay National Park is gazetted under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 as a national park and will be managed in accordance with s 17 of the Act which sets out the following principles for management:

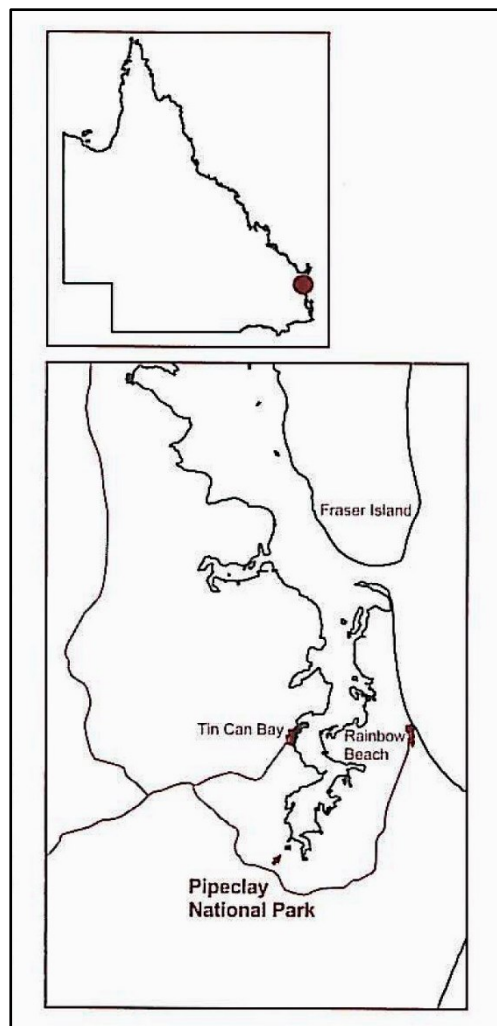
- to provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values
- to present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values; and
- to ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.

2.1 Bioregional context

Pipeclay National Park lies roughly 8 kilometres (km) west of Rainbow Beach and 5 km south of the township of Tin Can Bay, and covers an area of approximately 2.5 hectares. The park lies in the parish of Toolara and the local authority area of Cooloolo. The park is in the South East Queensland biogeographic region. The park was gazetted in 1974 to protect an intact Aboriginal bora ring. According to locals the park is named after the clay available in a nearby creek, which was first used by Aborigines, and later by Europeans for clay pipes.

The park is located in the Great Sandy Region, which includes Fraser Island, the Cooloolo sandmass, Noosa Northshore, and the waters of Hervey Bay and the Great Sandy Strait covering an area of about 840,000 hectares.

The Great Sandy Region has been subject to extensive planning as a result of the Commission of Inquiry into the Conservation, Management and Use of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region appointed in 1990 which resulted in the production of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan in 1994.



The Great Sandy National Park-Cooloola section and the Fraser Island World Heritage Area lie to the east and north of the park and provide extensive coastal recreational opportunities for significant numbers of local, regional and international tourists. The park is adjacent to residential development to the west and proposed residential development to the south.

The park is managed in co-operation with the Great Sandy Region Heritage Advisory Committee. This committee has been formed to represent the interests of Aborigines affiliated with the Great Sandy area in regards to the management of cultural heritage issues. It contains representatives from the traditional owners of the area. The aim of the committee is to ensure:

'Traditional owners and relevant Aboriginal groups have input into and give advice to QPWS on issues in relation to cultural heritage in the Great Sandy Region. In this instance cultural heritage relates to all spheres of Aboriginal heritage including oral traditions, archaeological sites, spiritual sites, traditional use of areas and items, relationship to land. The committee will give advice on management of cultural heritage, and this would include aspects of land management where it is felt that cultural heritage values may be compromised.

The committee is also set up to advise QPWS on aspects of historical cultural heritage which would include the built environment where there are Aboriginal interests or areas where historical affiliations are still maintained.'

2.2 Values of Pipeclay National Park

2.2.1 Geology and landform

The park is part of a low lying coastal plain which drains into the upper reaches of the Tin Can Bay Inlet. This inlet empties into the Great Sandy Strait at Wide Bay Harbour, which is next to Inskip Point and the southern end of Fraser Island. Tin Can Bay Inlet is a drowned valley that was flooded by the rising sea. To the west of the park lies the Como Scarp which is an erosional feature formed at the divide between the high gradient, aggressive coastal streams and the less energetic, lower gradient streams which drain inland into Tinana Creek.

2.2.2 Plants and animals

The park contains open heath and woodland with *Leptospermum flavescens*, *Leptospermum semibaccatum* and *Banksia oblongifolia*. The park provides a small area of habitat for native animals with surrounding native habitat rapidly being cleared for residential development.

2.2.3 Cultural heritage

The bora ring in Pipeclay National Park is known as the 'little bora ring' and was a major initiation site for Aborigines from Fraser Island and the adjacent mainland. There is another bora ring in the area, however the little bora ring represented the highest level that an initiate could achieve in his quest for manhood. According to pre-contact Aboriginal customary law only those who were initiated at the ring were eligible to visit the site. The last initiation ceremonies to take place at the little bora ring were in 1865 (Mrs. Olga Miller, Butchulla elder). The bora ring was reported to government sources in 1962. The ring is described as being 21-23 m in diameter and the mound was 15-18 cm in height. Midden sites and scarred trees occur to the north of the bora ring outside the existing park.

2.2.4 Scientific and educational

Scientific interest in the park is related to the little bora ring, its protection as a significant example of this type of cultural site still in a reasonable condition, and its significance to Aboriginal people who have links with the area.

2.2.5 Recreation and tourism

The park has virtually no recreational use.

3. Management strategies

3.1 Native plants

Current situation

There is no plant or animal list for the park.

Desired outcomes

- The composition and extent of native vegetation types are maintained, subject to natural change.
- A current list of plants and animals and their conservation values is maintained.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Collect natural resource information for the park.
- Consult with Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the area to assist in natural resource surveys.

3.2 Introduced plants and animals

Current situation

The major weed on the park is groundsel. There is a fence around the park to prevent vehicle access.

Desired outcomes

- Introduced plants are controlled and, where practical, eradicated.
- The impact of introduced animals on the park is reduced.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Investigate and implement the most effective measures for the control of weeds. Declared noxious species will be eradicated if possible.
- Monitor feral animal numbers as part of general duties and through liaison with neighbours. Action will be taken if feral animal numbers are determined to be significant.
- Consult with Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the area to assist in weed and feral animal management.
- Upgrade the existing fence to include wire mesh in order to prevent introduced animals from adjacent residential development accessing the park.

3.3 Fire management

Current situation

Heath is highly combustible during dry periods. Frequent burning of heath will result in a change of the composition of vegetation communities and a reduction in species diversity. The park has a set of wildfire response procedures. There is a firebreak around the perimeter of the park to protect a boundary fence and the park from wildfires. The park is adjacent to residential development and may be at risk from wildfires as a result of backyard fire escapes.

Desired outcomes

- Fire management is based on regionally adopted fire management practices.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Maintain and implement a fire management plan composed of a fire management strategy, a fire management program and a wildfire response procedure.
- Maintain the firebreak around the park and assist and participate with neighbours in co-operative protection burns. The firebreak will be extended to include any additions to the park.
- The Ranger-in-Charge will liaise with park neighbours and the local rural fire brigade concerning QPWS fire management practices. Consult with Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the area to assist in fire management.

3.4 Landscape, soil and catchment protection

Current situation

Drainage from adjacent existing and proposed residential development may have an impact on the park.

Desired outcomes

- Drainage from adjacent developments has minimal impact on the natural and cultural values of the park.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Liaise with the developers of adjacent residential subdivisions, and Cooloolool Shire Council, regarding the management of drainage works to reduce their impact on the park.

3.5 Cultural heritage

Current situation

The park was gazetted to protect the 'little bora ring' which has significance to Aborigines affiliated with the area. The bora ring is managed according to an interim agreement between the Great Sandy Region Heritage Advisory Committee and QPWS.

The bora ring is maintained by keeping the vegetation down and by brushcutting and removing larger trees. In the past there was a problem with vehicles traversing the park adjacent to the bora ring. This was remedied by erecting a fence around the perimeter of the park to restrict vehicle access.

Members of the Great Sandy Region Heritage Advisory Committee have expressed concern over unregulated public access to the park and also access by Aborigines based on restrictions according to past traditions and customary law.

There are other cultural sites in the vicinity of Pipeclay National Park. These include scar trees, midden sites and another bora ring.

Desired outcomes

- Cultural sites are protected using accepted cultural heritage management practices, and in accordance with the wishes of the appropriate Aboriginal people.
- Aboriginal people with traditional affiliations with the area are involved in management of the park.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Pipeclay National Park will be declared a restricted access area under the *Nature Conservation Regulation 1994*.
- A set of guidelines will be developed in liaison with Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the park to determine who may access the park and under what conditions. In the interim, until guidelines have been developed, the approval of all members of the Great Sandy Region Heritage Advisory Committee must be obtained prior to QPWS granting a permit to enter the restricted access area.
- QPWS will continue to maintain the bora ring and develop a maintenance schedule in accordance with the wishes of Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the park.
- The fence around the park will be maintained by QPWS.
- Investigate extending the fence to include any additions to the park in co-operation with the Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the park.
- Investigate cultural sites in the national park in consultation with the adjacent developer, the Cooloolool Shire Council and Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the park.
- QPWS and EPA, in co-operation with Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the park, to conduct a cultural heritage assessment of Pipeclay National Park and surrounding lands. This assessment will provide recommendations on the future management of cultural sites in the area, and how to minimise the impact of adjacent developments on the environmental and cultural values of the park and adjacent lands.

3.6 Recreational and tourism

Current situation

The park has virtually no recreational use.

Desired outcomes

- Restricted access to the park prevents recreational use.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- QPWS staff will conduct regular patrols of the park to ensure compliance with restricted access provisions.
- Park boundary signs indicate that the park is a restricted access area.

3.7 Education and interpretation

Current situation

There are no interpretive facilities on the park. Pipeclay National Park is marked on a map displayed on the Cooloola Visitor Information Sheet.

Desired outcomes

- Visitors are aware of the access restrictions related to the park.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- All future maps available to tourists and visitors that show the location of the park should indicate that the park is a restricted access area.
- Education and interpretation of the cultural significance of the park is developed in co-operation with Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the park.

3.8 Plan implementation and monitoring

Current situation

The park is managed by a QPWS management unit in Rainbow Beach that is responsible for managing Great Sandy National Park - Cooloola Section and all protected areas in the Cooloola Shire and part of the Noosa Shire north of the Noosa River.

Desired outcomes

- The management plan is an effective set of operational guidelines.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- The management plan will be implemented in liaison with Aboriginal people who have traditional affiliations with the area.
- The Ranger-in-Charge will submit a brief annual report on the success of the plan implementation.
- Review the management plan within 10 years from approval according to s 125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.