

# Mount Walsh National Park

**Management Statement**

2013



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

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The Mount Walsh National Park Management Statement 2013 has been extended in 2024 in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the statement's original management intent and direction.

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Park size:	10,272ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	Sunshine and Fraser Coast
Local government estate/area:	North Burnett Regional Council Fraser Coast Regional Council
State electorate:	Callide Maryborough

**Legislative framework**

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

**Plans and agreements**

✓	Bonn Convention
✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	National multi-species recovery plan for cycads
✓	National recovery plan for the black-breasted button quail <i>Turnix melanogaster</i>

**Thematic strategies**

✓	Level 2 Pest Management Strategy
✓	Level 2 Fire Management Strategy

## Vision

Very high biodiversity values, including a large number of threatened plant species are protected in Mount Walsh National Park. Visitors have the opportunity to undertake low impact, nature-based activities in a large remote natural area and appreciate the attractive granite outcrops and cliffs. Cultural heritage values will be identified and protected and species of conservation significance will be conserved including the cycad and rainforest species.

## Conservation purpose

Mount Walsh National Park was first gazetted in 1947 and was originally 5,240 hectares (ha) in area. It was extended to cover 10,727ha in 2006 with the addition of Boompa Forest Reserves 1 and 2 as part of the South East Queensland Forests Agreement process. The park protects a very diverse range of plant species and communities of conservation significance and has high social value to visitors.

## Protecting and presenting the park's values

### Landscapes

Rising to 703 metres (m) above sea level in the Coastal Range, Mount Walsh National Park is a rugged park with spectacular exposed granite outcrops and cliffs. It contains steep forested slopes, rugged ridge lines and mountain areas. The rugged to mountainous terrain, in the sections of the park that were previously forest reserves, ranges from 200m to 500m.

The park contains sediments of mostly late Triassic granites, rhyolite, ignimbrites, pyroclastics, conglomerates, sandstones and siltstones. Several prominent landscape features are found in the Mount Walsh area, including The Bluff at the northern end of the park, a prominent landmark in the Biggenden area, and Coongara Rock, which is an intrusive rhyolite plug.

The large tract of remnant vegetation in the park helps protect part of the Mary and Burnett river catchments.

### Regional ecosystems

The park contains one endangered regional ecosystem and 11 that are of concern covering a diversity of vegetation types including vine forest in sheltered pockets, scrubland and heath on rock pavements and open eucalypt forest and woodland (Table 1). Shrubs are common in the forest and woodland understorey and in the heath.

Rainforest ecosystems include semi-evergreen vine thicket, araucarian microphyll vine forest and a small areas of araucarian notophyll vine forest can be found in sheltered gullies. While the area of rainforest is small, a number of species that usually grow in such communities are present as scattered trees or small clumps and are widely distributed within the park. Logging of hoop pine ceased prior to 1993 and rainforest areas on the park are in good condition.

### Native plants and animals

Mount Walsh National Park supports habitat comprising a diverse range of fauna and flora, of approximately 1100 recorded species. There are three endangered and nine vulnerable plant species (Table 2), and one endangered and seven vulnerable animal species (Table 2). Seven birds and one butterfly recorded for the park are listed under international agreements (Table 3).

Recovery plans exist for species of conservation significance listed for Mount Walsh National Park, including the National Multi-species Recovery Plan for cycads which covers *Macrozamia pauli-guilielmi* and *Cycad megacarpa*. Adult *Macrozamia* plants are fire dependent and are under threat from illegal harvesting and clearing on neighbouring lands.

The vulnerable black-breasted button-quail *Turnix melanogaster* has a recovery plan and is recorded on this park. Known threats include destruction and fragmentation of low closed forest for agriculture, forestry and urban development, frequent fire association, predation by feral cats *Felis catus* and foxes *Vulpes vulpes* and disturbance of habitat by exotic grazers (cattle and deer). The vulnerable long-nosed potoroo *Potorous tridactylus* has also been recorded and is susceptible to destruction and fragmentation of habitat, especially through grazing and clearing of coastal vegetation, predation by foxes and other introduced predators and inappropriate fire regimes.

### Aboriginal culture

Little information is available about the extent of occupation within and the degree of cultural significance of Mount Walsh National Park to Traditional Owners. However, the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay Burnett areas are of high

significance to Aboriginal people with many sites of Aboriginal cultural importance across the region. Site records in the surrounding region include Aboriginal burials, middens and canoe trees but none have been recorded for the park, possibly due to the absence of formal surveys.

A Native Title claim by the Wakka Wakka People #5 (QUD93/12; QC12/4) has been lodged over a large section of the North and South Burnett and appears to adjoin the park.

Opportunities exist to improve relationships with local Traditional Owner groups and involve them in park management.

## Shared-history culture

European settlers came to the Wide Bay Burnett area in the middle of the 19th century. Sheep and cattle grazing, timber harvesting and citrus farming commenced at this time and was consolidated by the construction of the railway network in the 1880s. No known evidence of these activities remains on the park.

## Tourism and visitor opportunities

Mount Walsh National Park is popular with both day visitors and persons wanting to camp and looking for the extended wilderness experience. Opportunities exist for remote and organised camping, bush walking and rock climbing. The majority of Mount Walsh National Park is suitable only for experienced, well-equipped bushwalkers with sound bush skills.

Facilities at the northern end of Mount Walsh National Park below the Bluff include a day use area with picnic tables, shelter, barbecues and water tank. A council-managed toilet block and parking area is located on the road reserve next to the day-use area.

For less experienced visitors, four accessible walks can be undertaken including:

- an unmaintained walking trail below the Bluff leads from the picnic area through open forest to a rocky creek gully fringed with dry rainforest. It then continues up the steep scree slope on to the tree line for views over the surrounding countryside.
- Coongara Falls, a seasonal waterfall only 80 metres from open car park
- Coongara Rock pools waterfall and swimming hole about 3 kilometres (km) walk from car park
- Waterfall Creek seasonal rock pools and swimming holes 1.2 km from car park.

South-western access into walks around Coongara rock is by four-wheel drive access only.

Within Mount Walsh National Park, remote bush camping can be organised through prior contact with the ranger in charge.

General camping is supported on the road into Coongarra Rock at Lemon tree Flat, on free hold land or within a short drive back into the township of Biggenden. Waterfall and Smith Creeks still have great social and recreational value to locals and visitors from around the region.

Access to Coongara Rock area and the increasingly popular Waterfall Creek rock pools requires managing to minimise visitor impacts. At Waterfall Creek, this management includes the recent construction of a car park inside the boundary of the national park at the end of Utopia Road, and realigning the walking track from the car park to link with the existing Waterfall Creek walking track. Visitor information signage also formed part of this upgrade.

Increased visitor use can be supported by greater four-wheel drive access around the southern section of Mount Walsh National Park between Coongara Rock and Waterfall Creek. This is still to be negotiated with neighbouring land owners. Previous history has often involved conflict between landholders and visitors who leave stock gates open.

Increased visitor use has also meant an increase in litter and degradation of the natural landscape including trampling of undergrowth and damage from open camp fires.

## Education and science

The park has high scientific values due to its high biodiversity including 27 plant and animal species of conservation significance. Local schools use the park for bushwalking and activities related to the Duke of Edinburgh program.

## Partnerships

Regular liaison is maintained with neighbours and organisations with shared interests in park management, such as fire authorities, local government and tourism bodies.

## Other key issues and responses

### Pest management

Lantana *Lantana camara* has established in areas around Coongara Rock where vine forest was burnt and pasture grown after harvesting of hoop pine ceased. Cat's claw creeper *Macfadyena unguis-cati* is becoming prevalent in the closed forest areas and its removal should be a priority. Other known pest plant species include stinkwort *Dittrichia graveolens*, Brazilian nightshade *Solanum seaforthianum*, rubber vine *Cryptostegia grandiflora*, groundsel *Baccharis halimifolia*, prickly pear *Opuntia* spp., green panic *Panicum maximum* var. *trichoglume*, giant rat's tail grass *Sporobolus natalensis* and variegated thistle *Silybum marianum*. Control methods used include chemical spraying, manual removal and biological control.

Foxes, wild dogs, hares *Lepus europaeus*, rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, cane toads *Rhinella marina* and pigs *Sus scrofa* present the major threats from pest animals.

There is a Level 2 pest management strategy in place which prescribes the management program and control methods to be used for pests.

### Fire management

Fire is an important tool in controlling pest plants and maintaining regional ecosystem structure and integrity. Vine forest communities are fire sensitive and not normally flammable, and must not be burnt deliberately. Broad-scale management involving small fires on land surrounding vine forest communities and shrub land on rocky peaks throughout the year reduces the risk of wildfire damage. Soil moisture retention in surrounding vegetation limits fire behaviour and intensity.

Eucalypt open forests and woodlands are protected using a regime of low or moderate intensity fires at varying intervals to produce fine scale mosaics of burnt and unburnt areas of grassy and shrubby understoreys and control pest plant infestations. Fire intervals and intensity are adjusted according to the observed health of the ecosystems and the fire ecology of plants of conservation significance to protect plant reproduction processes and respond to changing climate conditions. For example, adult *Macrozamia* plants have an underground stem and are able to re-sprout after loss of the above-ground foliage from fire. Seedlings and unburied seeds are usually killed by fire; and synchronous cone formation often follows fire (EPA, 2007). The threat of fire entering the park from adjoining freehold land is always of concern. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) works jointly with neighbouring land owners discussing and carrying out prescribed burning to reduce wildfire impact on both QPWS estate and the lively hood of the pastoralists and graziers on neighbouring freehold.

A Level 2 fire management strategy is used to guide fire management actions.

### Other management issues

Occupational leases are held on two areas, Lot 411/OL283 an in-holding on unallocated state land of 1,093ha and Lot3/AP2753 an area of 443ha on MtWNP inside the southern boundary. These are used for grazing although the number of cattle using the park is low. The absence of permanent water in these areas discourages the cattle from remaining on the park for any significant length of time. These areas are not fenced but the impacts on the rest of the park are minimal. The majority of the park boundary is fenced but complete fencing is not practical due to rugged terrain in some parts. There are several inactive apiary sites on the park.

### References

EPA 2007, National Multi-species Recovery Plan for the cycads, *Cycas megacarpa*, *Cycas ophiolitica*, *Macrozamia cranei*, *Macrozamia lomandroides*, *Macrozamia pauli-guilielmi* and *Macrozamia platyrhachis*. Queensland Herbarium: Brisbane.

## Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p><b>Native plants and animals</b> Communities and species of conservation significance are protected and appropriately managed.</p>	<p>Implement recovery plans or conservation plans for species of conservation significance. Establish key monitoring objectives for species of conservation significance on the park, and support monitoring programs that achieve these objectives.</p>
<p><b>Aboriginal culture</b> Aboriginal cultural values of Mount Walsh National Park should be identified and protected.</p>	<p>Encourage Traditional Owners to identify and document values, sites, artefacts and places of cultural heritage significance so that management strategies and decisions relating to fire regimes, access and track maintenance minimise potential threats to these values.</p>
<p><b>Tourism and visitor opportunities</b> Visitor use should complement the park's natural setting and its natural and cultural values,</p>	<p>Implement the following visitor management actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the current level and type of rock climbing use occurring on the park, including style of climbing, use of temporary or permanent anchor points/routes, associated impacts and issues.</li> <li>• Work with rock climbing clubs and associations to determine style of climbing to occur; identify preferred climbing areas; determine management of anchor points/routes; and determine appropriate and safe use of the area in accordance with departmental policy, supporting desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Monitor rock climbing activities to ensure minimal damage to rock surfaces and surrounding areas and work with climbers to manage impacts.</li> </ul> <p>Maintain the track to the Palm Valley area for management and bushwalking purposes only.</p> <p>Investigate actions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve four wheel drive access between Lords Road, Coongara Rock and Waterfall Creek</li> <li>• manage vehicle access and walking tracks in the Coongara Rock and Waterfall Creek area via low maintenance four-wheel drive tracks</li> <li>• liaise with neighbouring land owners</li> <li>• promote the use of nearby off-park camping with bush walking groups.</li> <li>• provide guided walks with commercial providers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Land management</b> Habitat is consolidated and extended as opportunities arise.</p>	<p>Encourage the use of conservation agreements on neighbouring land through groups such as Land for Wildlife and external regional groups including Burnet Mary Regional Group (BMRG). Seek opportunities to increase the park area to ensure the boundary follows terrain that will enable the completion of perimeter fencing.</p>
<p><b>Fire management</b> Threat of fire entering the park is reduced and fire is used to maintain ecosystem diversity and species of conservation significance.</p>	<p>Investigate and progress the construction of fire breaks around the park perimeter in cooperation with neighbours.</p>

## Tables – Conservation values management

**Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems**

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
12.3.3	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> woodland to open forest on alluvial plains.	Endangered
12.3.11	<i>Eucalyptus siderophloia</i> , <i>E. tereticornis</i> , <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> open forest on alluvial plains usually near coast.	Of concern
12.9-10.3	<i>Eucalyptus moluccana</i> on sedimentary rocks.	Of concern
12.11.8	<i>Eucalyptus melanophloia</i> , <i>E. crebra</i> woodland on metamorphics +/- interbedded volcanics.	Of concern
12.11.14	<i>Eucalyptus crebra</i> , <i>E. tereticornis</i> woodland on metamorphics +/- interbedded volcanics.	Of concern
12.11.17	<i>Eucalyptus acmenoides</i> or <i>E. portuensis</i> open forest on metamorphics +/- interbedded volcanics.	Of concern
12.12.1	Simple notophyll vine forest usually with abundant <i>Archontophoenix cunninghamiana</i> (gully vine forest) on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks.	Of concern
12.12.8	<i>Eucalyptus melanophloia</i> woodland on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks.	Of concern
12.12.9	Shrubby woodland with <i>Eucalyptus dura</i> usually on rocky peaks on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks.	Of concern
12.12.10	Shrub land of rocky peaks on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks.	Of concern
12.12.18	Semi-evergreen vine thicket on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks.	Of concern
12.12.22	<i>Eucalyptus decolor</i> , <i>E. portuensis</i> or <i>E. acmenoides</i> open forest on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks.	Of concern



**Table 2: Species of conservation significance**

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
<b>Plants</b>				
<i>Acacia grandifolia</i>	-	Common	Vulnerable	-
<i>Acacia pubicosta</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Acomis acoma</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Agiortia cicatricata</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Alectryon semicinereus</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Argophyllum nullumense</i>	silver leaf	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Backhousia oligantha</i>	-	Endangered	-	Low
<i>Bertya pedicellata</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Bosistoa transversa</i>	three-leaved Bosistoa	Common	Vulnerable	-
<i>Cassinia collina</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Cooperookia scabridiuscula</i>	Cooperookia	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Corynocarpus rupestris</i> subsp. <i>arborescens</i>	southern corynocarpus	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Cycas megacarpa</i>	-	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Daviesia discolor</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Eucalyptus decolor</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Kunzea flavescens</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Lobelia membranacea</i>	-	Near threatened	-	-
<i>Macrozamia cardiacensis</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Medium
<i>Macrozamia parcifolia</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Macrozamia pauli-guilielmi</i>	-	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Melaleuca formosa</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Micromyrtus vernicosa</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Muellerina myrtifolia</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Olearia gravis</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Samadera bidwillii</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	-
<i>Senna acclinis</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Zieria adenodonta</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<b>Animals</b>				
<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	grey goshawk	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Adelotus brevis</i>	tusked frog	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Dasyurus maculatus maculatus</i>	spotted-tailed quoll (southern subspecies)	Vulnerable	Endangered	High
<i>Erythrotriorchis radiatus</i>	red goshawk	Endangered	Vulnerable	High
<i>Ninox rufa queenslandica</i>	rufous owl (southern subspecies)	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	powerful owl	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	koala (southeast	Vulnerable	-	-

Scientific name	Common name	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> status	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> status	Back on Track status
(southeast Queensland bioregion)	Queensland bioregion)			
<i>Potorous tridactylus tridactylus</i>	long-nosed potoroo	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Turnix melanogaster</i>	black-breasted button-quail	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical

**Table 3: Species listed in international agreements**

Scientific name	Common name	BONN	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	-	✓	-
<i>Danaus plexippus plexippus</i>	monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	✓	-
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	satin flycatcher	✓	-	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-
<i>Symposiachrus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-

BONN (CMS) – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement