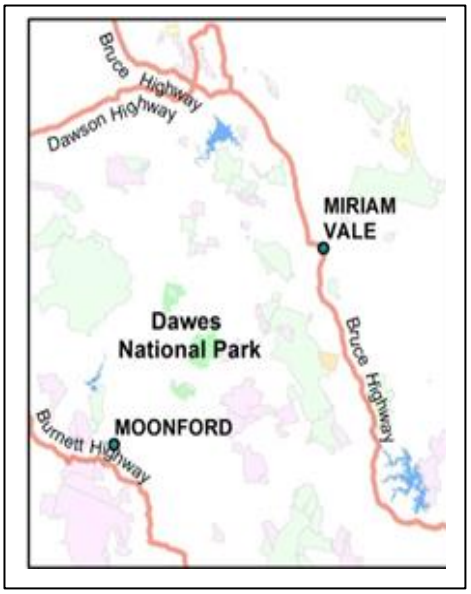
Dawes National Park
Management Statement 2015



Context

Over 25% of Dawes National Park is covered by either endangered or of concern regional ecosystems that are poorly represented in Queensland's protected area estate. These communities are predominantly eucalypt woodland and open forests and some Araucarian vine forest.

In 2014 Dawes National Park significantly increased in size through an amalgamation with the previous Degalgil Forest Reserve and Dawes National Park (Recovery). The park protects islands of endangered and of concern remnant vegetation, and is a significant ecosystem remnant within the region due to the surrounding area's history of being completely cleared. The dry vine scrub communities with their ecotones are habitat for several species of conservation significance, including the vulnerable black-breasted button-quail *Turnix melanogaster*. The eucalyptus woodlands also contain the endangered cycad *Cycas megacarpa*.

The area has a history of gold, silver and copper mining, grazing and logging. The Glassford Creek Smelter sites in the national park (including settlement area, mines and furnace remains) reflect a typical pattern for small copper fields in Queensland. The initial prospecting was followed by more substantial but short-lived company development, tailing off into small-scale mining often recovering values ignored by earlier miners.

The park lies within the lands of the Port Curtis Coral Coast Indigenous Group representing the Bailai, Gooreng Gooreng and Gurang peoples. The Port Curtis Coral Coast Native Title (QUD6026/01 and QC01/09) covers Dawes National Park.

Bioregion	South East Queensland	**Area**	8910ha
Local Government Area	Gladstone Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council	**State electorate**	Callide, Gladstone
Management Obligations	Port Curtis Coral Coast Native title claim QUD 6026/01 and QC01/09, Bonn Convention, Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA)		

This management statement provides high level strategic direction for the protection and management of key park values. Management will be undertaken in accordance with the management principles for the tenure as defined in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and supporting regulations, other appropriate legislation including the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and *Native Title Act 1993*, ILUA, government policies, procedures, and protocols.

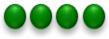
Key park values

While all parks are important, and all values help make parks worthwhile, management needs to focus on protecting and presenting the most important values—the key values. These are the values that will form the basis of ongoing evaluation of management effectiveness. Protecting these key values will help frame the purpose of management for each park. The table below shows how each key value's condition is represented, how the condition is trending and the confidence in the information used to make the ratings. Details of key values are listed in **Table 1** and illustrated in **Map 1**.

Key to condition, trend and confidence icons

Condition	**Good** 	**Good with some concern** 	**Significant concern** 	**Critical** 
Description	*The value is in good condition and is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, provided that current conservation measures are maintained.*	*The value is likely to be essentially maintained over the long-term with minor additional conservation measures to address existing concerns.*	*The value is threatened by a number of current and/or potential threats. Significant additional conservation measures are required to preserve the value over the medium to long-term.*	*The value is severely threatened. Urgent additional large-scale conservation measures are required or the value may be lost.*
Trend rating	Improving 	Stable 	Deteriorating 	No consistent trend 
Confidence	Inferred 	Limited 	Adequate 	

1. Eucalypt open forest and woodlands

Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
				Condition	Trend
Critically endangered, endangered, and of concern eucalypt forest and woodland community regional ecosystems. Provides habitat for vulnerable and endangered plants and animals.	2015: 	Desired: 		◯	◯

Much of the communities along the Central Queensland Coast have been cleared for pasture. Around 14% of Dawes National Park contains either endangered or of concern eucalypt open forests and woodlands. These open forests and woodlands provide habitat for significant threatened species including the endangered cycad *Cycas megacarpa* and the following seven vulnerable species:

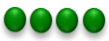
- black breasted button quail
- glossy black cockatoo
- koala
- grey headed flying fox
- plumed frogmouth
- powerful owl
- spotted tailed quoll.

The condition of these ecosystems is of significant concern based on a long history of impacts from fire, pests logging and clearing.

Threats: The main threatening process is ecosystem modification caused by infrequent planned fires and occasional wildfires resulting in poor overall forest structure and health. The secondary threatening process is the replacement of native plants by pest plants and the disturbance caused by feral animals. Fragmentation of the habitat is also considered a threat.

Strategic management directions: The aim is to improve the condition by implementing planned burns as per guidelines with a focus on maintenance, protection, exclusion, and reducing the impacts of weeds and feral animals as part of an overall pest management strategy.

2. Araucarian vine forests (rainforest)

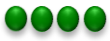
Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
				Condition	Trend
Critically endangered, endangered, and of concern rainforest community regional ecosystems. Provides habitat for vulnerable and endangered plants and animals.	2015: 	Desired: 		◯	◯

Along the Central Queensland coast these ecosystems have been extensively cleared and remnants are threatened by wildfires and weed invasion. Endangered or of concern vine forests cover around 12% of the park and provide habitat for the endangered plants *Atalaya collina* and *Cossinia australiana* and three vulnerable species; tusked frog *Adelotus brevis*, *Fontainea venosa* and *Sophora fraseri*. In addition, the mesic uplands of Mount Robert support a population of the Kroombit spiny crayfish *Euastacus monteithorum*, which is otherwise restricted to the eastern uplands of Kroombit Tops.

Threats: The main threatening process is the modification of the ecosystems by invasive and problematic pest plant species such Cats Claw creeper, Lantana and Madeira vine. The secondary threatening process is damage of the ecosystem caused by fire due to surrounding land use. Fragmentation of the habitat is also considered a threat.

Strategic management directions: The aim is to improve the condition by preventing weeds from becoming dominant, reducing impacts of Madeira vine and lantana, mosaic burning surrounding vegetation communities to minimise wildfire severity, and excluding fire encroachment into rainforest communities.

3. Glassford Creek Smelter Sites (historic mining and mineral processing)

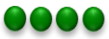
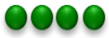
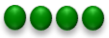
Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
				Condition	Trend
Historic Copper mine town (Glassford mining area) with settlement area, mines and furnace/smelter remains.	2015: 	Desired: 		◯	◯

The smelter sites are a key value of the park due to their historic cultural significance, which is recognised through a listing on the Queensland Heritage Register. Part of Dawes National Park was once a small gold mining town. Remnants of the township still remain including the settlement area, mines and furnace. The Queensland heritage listed smelter sites are well preserved for their age and type, and provide uncommon and endangered evidence of this scale of a copper mining enterprise. The smelter sites are valued as a historical asset, not only for the connection that they provide with the past but also for their educational and interpretational values.

Threats: The main threatening process is theft and damage caused by human intrusion and disturbance. The secondary threatening process is the damage of culturally significant sites by the encroachment of introduced weeds. Fire is also considered a threat to these sites.

Strategic management directions: The aim is to reserve the Glassford Creek Smelter sites in its existing state and minimise deterioration by reducing the impacts of weeds, and protection from fire by the management of fuel through the implementation of planned burns. Visitor safety will be managed by restricting access and providing interpretations.

Table 1. Dawes National Park — Strategic management direction for key values

Condition	Trend	Key threatening process	Strategic management directions: Values	Priority (1-5)
1. Eucalypt open forest and woodlands				
2015:  Desired: 		Fire Introduced weeds Introduced animals	Implement planned burning with the aim of producing fine scale mosaics of unburnt areas to maintain structural and biological diversity. Reduce impacts of weeds as part of an overall pest management strategy to rehabilitate grazed, logged, and weed infested areas on the foothills and creek flats. Reduce impacts of feral animals in the eucalypt forest and woodland communities.	1
2. Araucarian vine forests (rainforest)				
2015:  Desired: 		Fire Introduced weeds	Protect through mosaic burning in surrounding vegetation communities to minimise wildfire severity. Exclude fire from entering rainforest communities. Reduce impacts of madeira vine and lantana in rainforest communities.	3
3. Glassford Creek Smelter Sites (historic mining and mineral processing)				
2015:  Desired: 		Introduced weeds Human disturbance Fire	Reduce impacts of weeds on sites of historic cultural significance. Manage visitor safety by restricting access and providing interpretations. Protect historic cultural heritage sites by management of fuel through the implementation of planned burns.	2

Levels of Service

Levels of Service (LoS) standards have been developed to identify the current and desired future standards for a range of critical management elements and associated performance measures. Dawes National Park has been assessed as requiring a moderate level of service for most aspects of management based on the identified:

- values
- threats and pressures
- community interface challenges
- special management intervention.

The desired LoS standards for nine management elements have been identified to guide the level of management effort required for Dawes National Park within a state-wide context. These nine elements reflect the most common management activities undertaken by QPWS across all protected lands and waters and include Indigenous cultural heritage management and engagement, fire and pest management, visitor management and natural values management.

For further detail on the levels of service standards for Dawes National Park, refer to **Table 2**.

Table 2. Dawes National Park – Strategic management direction for Levels of Service

Management element	Levels of Service			Strategic management directions	Priority
	Current	Desired	Description		
1. Fire	Base	Medium	Fire is currently managed at a very broad scale consistent with generic guidelines to protect life and property on and adjacent to the park and mitigate threats to key fire affected park values. Planned burns focus on life, property, and special conservation purposes. Fire needs to be managed at a slightly finer scale.	Implement planned burns as per the fire strategy with stakeholder consultation. Maintain current protection zones to protect infrastructure and property. Maintain current conservation zones to ensure ecosystem health and function values.	1
2. Pest	Base	Medium	Pests are currently managed at a very broad scale consistent with generic guidelines to exclude new introductions and mitigate impacts of existing critical and very high priority species on key pest affected park values and neighbouring land uses. Pest management focuses on exclusion, containment, and key value protection. Pests need to be managed at a slightly finer scale.	Prioritise weed programs at key value sites. Focus on emerging threat species and the impact of existing species on conservation significant ecosystems/species. Develop an inventory of existing pests and the extent of incursion.	1
3. Natural values	Base	Medium	Natural values are currently managed at a very broad scale consistent with mostly generic guidelines to mitigate critical and very high level threats and maintain key park values. Known threats are managed to prevent, stabilise, or slow the rate of unacceptable decline in the condition of natural values. Documented critical and very high priorities are implemented. Natural values need to be managed at a slightly finer scale with focus on preventing decline and stabilising the condition of natural values.	Investigate the condition of key values and investigate the extent of impacts. Create and implement park guidelines to mitigate threats to key natural values. Rehabilitate and restore degraded areas including removal of any previous grazing infrastructure, weed suppression and fire management.	1
4. Indigenous cultural values and engagement	Base	Medium	Indigenous cultural heritage values are managed at a very broad scale consistent with generic guidelines to mitigate critical and very high level threats and maintain key indigenous cultural heritage values. Known threats are managed to prevent, stabilise, or slow the rate of unacceptable decline in the condition of Indigenous cultural heritage values. Documented critical priorities are implemented. Notification of potential impacts follow routine, advisory, negotiated and consent doctrine. Indigenous cultural values need to be managed at a slightly finer scale with focus on both critical and very high priorities being implemented.	Consult Traditional Owners and indigenous stakeholders to support park management programs. Consult with the relevant TO's and representative Indigenous organisations to identify the park's cultural values and the TO's interests in the park. Identify, record and protect sites of significance and physical artefacts provided an agreement has been reached with the relevant TO's.	3
5. Historic heritage	Base	High	Historic heritage values are managed at a very broad scale consistent with generic guidelines to mitigate critical and very high level threats and maintain key historic cultural heritage values. Known threats are managed to prevent, stabilise, or slow the rate of unacceptable decline in the condition of historic cultural heritage values (including graceful decline). Documented critical priorities are implemented. Historic heritage cultural values need to be managed at a slightly finer scale with focus on both critical and very high priorities being implemented.	Increase priority and resourcing to implement protection measures for the smelter/mining sites in consultation with Cultural heritage branch and the local community. Develop a cultural heritage plan in consultation with the local Boyne Valley community for the sites.	2

6. Other community and commercial engagement	Base	Base	Community and commercial engagement currently occurs at a very broad scale consistent with generic guidelines to ensure critical and very high level risks are managed. Effective engagement with commercial and community interests to ensure critical priority initiatives are delivered. Operational management activity is aligned with documented priorities. Documented critical priorities are implemented.	Continue informal local consultation with community stakeholders as required to progress specific park management issues. Maintain current LoS.	4
7. Visitors	Base	Base	Visitor management currently occurs at a very broad scale consistent with generic guidelines to maintain the safety and sustainability of very limited existing visitor opportunities. Park values protected from major new unacceptable visitor impacts. Reasonable visitor safety achieved through shared responsibility framework. Diversity of opportunity is maintained. Management focus in landscape class, values protection, setting protection, and visitor safety.	Maintain essential management and safety signage only. Maintain current LoS.	4
8. Field management capability	Base	Medium	Management capability typically located very remotely with a very small, mostly generalist and/or limited on-ground management presence to respond to critical priority issues. The intensity and timing of management effort currently ensures critical priority initiatives are delivered. Operational management activity is aligned with documented priorities. Documented critical priorities in annual operational business plans are implemented. Field management capability must be managed at a slightly finer scale with focus on including very high priority issues and initiatives.	Increase routine management inspections to every two months. Implementing critical and very high priority initiatives identified in annual operational business plans.	2
9. Operational planning and management	Base	Medium	Operational planning and management currently occurs at a very broad scale consistent with generic guidelines with very limited expert support for planning, implementing, and evaluating park management activities. Management focused on critical priorities only. Planning processes ensure the most significant park values are identified with actions identified and taken to maintain them in at least a stable condition. Base level planning processes are undertaken in accordance with the LoS standard. Operational planning and management must be managed at a slightly finer scale with focus on including very high priorities and improving the key values of the park.	Increased focus on operational support relating to protecting the smelter site and increasing knowledge of key values. Seek some Regional input for critical and high priority values protection. Undertake moderate planning process in accordance with the LoS standard including the development of appropriate thematic strategies.	1

Thematic strategies

Each protected area will require one or more thematic management strategies depending on the key values identified and the complexity of management requirements. The Levels of Service standards provide guidance for each individual element to indicate the requirement for a thematic strategy and its appropriate level of detail.

Thematic strategies provide a linkage between the strategic management direction identified in this document and the delivery of operational management actions. Thematic strategies present detailed actions to address the strategic management directions identified to manage key values and achieve target Levels of Service.

Thematic strategies required for Dawes National Park:

- Fire strategy
- Pest strategy
- Historic cultural heritage strategy

Evaluation and reporting

Management effectiveness will be evaluated for Dawes National Park as part of a monitoring framework. This will guide an adaptive management approach to set clear benchmarks for management, ensure the condition of key values is within acceptable thresholds, deliver transparent and accountable reporting and inform future management. Management effectiveness will be measured against:

- condition and trend for key values
- achievement of Levels of Service standards
- implementation of management actions
- outcomes of strategic management directions.

Map 1: Dawes National Park - key values