

Nicoll Scrub National Park

Management Plan

2011



South East Queensland Bioregion

Prepared by:

Planning Services Unit, Department of Environment and Science (DES)

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The Nicoll Scrub National Park Management Plan 2011 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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Front cover photograph: riparian rainforest, Nicoll Scrub National Park. Photo: DES.

Top right photograph: giant moss *Dawsonia* sp. Nicoll Scrub National Park. Photo: DES.

Centre right photograph: blue quandong fruit *Elaeocarpus grandis*, Nicoll Scrub National Park. Photo: DES.

Bottom right photograph: fallen rainforest leaves, Nicoll Scrub National Park. Photo: DES.

Vision statement

Nicoll Scrub National Park will be managed to protect the only substantial area of rainforest in the middle and lower Currumbin Creek valley. This section of rainforest is the single remaining entire altitudinal sequence of rainforest in the landform typical of the Currumbin and Tallebudgera Creek valleys. Management will also be designed to conserve 13 plants of conservation significance, six of which are poorly represented in Queensland's protected areas.

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1. Management intent

Nicoll Scrub National Park will be managed to:

- protect natural plant and animal communities
- conserve the natural ecosystems of the park, including regional ecosystems and plants and animals of conservation significance
- reduce and eradicate pest plants and animals, where possible, and ensure control methods have no or minimal adverse impacts
- provide opportunities for scientific research and education that seek to gain valuable information on threatened species and communities.

2. Basis for management

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) is responsible for the day-to-day management of Nicoll Scrub National Park. The park is managed in accordance with the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and associated regulations to protect land, wildlife and cultural values.

The park will be managed in accordance with relevant Science (DES) policies and the requirements of other legislation administered by DES and other state and commonwealth agencies will be met where necessary.

Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems are described under the DES biodiversity status and endangered, vulnerable and near threatened species are listed under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006. DES is responsible under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* for controlling declared pest plants and animals on protected areas.

Indigenous people have affiliations with this park and involving Traditional Owner groups is an important part of management.

3. Location and regional context

The larger section of Nicoll Scrub National Park covers 26.8 ha and is situated on the Tomewin–Currumbin Creek Road, adjacent to the National Trust property, ‘Coolamon’. The park is close to the New South Wales border and the surrounding land is freehold with one block on the southern boundary having nature refuge status. It lies on a short spur off the McPherson Range between Mount Coolangang and Mount Boololung.

Nicoll Scrub National Park also includes a 3 ha strip formerly known as Tomewin Environmental Park located just over 5 km south-west of the main section of the park on the Tomewin–Currumbin Creek Road, and is less than 1 km away from Tomewin Conservation Park. This part of the park protects a small section of open eucalypt forest with a rainforest understorey (refer Appendix A, Map 1).

4. Protecting and presenting the park’s values

4.1 Landscape

The park is located on north to north-west facing slopes of the McPherson Range which fall moderate to steeply towards a minor tributary of Currumbin Creek. The altitudinal range is up to 180 m above sea level at the highest point of the park. Soils and geology have an underlying value as they determine the type and distribution of plant and animal communities across the park. The geomorphology of Nicoll Scrub National Park is typical of much of the Currumbin and Tallebudgera valleys—hills of palaeozoic metasediments and phyllites with cappings of tertiary basalt. Soils range from krasnozems with basalt boulders on the upper slopes supporting auracarian vine forests, the mid to lower slopes being yellow podzolic soil supporting complex notophyll vine forest with lower drainage lines derived from quaternary colluvium, which supports palm forests. The dense rainforest vegetation protects the steep, rocky slopes from erosion. Minimal disturbance to this site serves to reduce siltation of a tributary of Currumbin Creek.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Soil erosion on the park is minimised.	A1. No construction of new tracks, roads within the park to prevent the steep fragile slopes being eroded with the exception of future access road or track for QPWS if required.

4.2 Native plants and animals

4.2.1 Native plants

The park has a high diversity of plants, with five distinct types of rainforest and over 200 plant species, including two endangered and six vulnerable species (Appendix C). A comprehensive survey of the park was conducted around 1991 for the Vine Forest Plant Atlas for South East Queensland. Nicoll Scrub National Park protects the only substantial area of rainforest remaining in the middle and lower Currumbin Valley. There is a small cleared area in the south-western corner of the park that is being revegetated by a local community group.

Lowland rainforests of the Gold Coast hinterland are a biodiversity hotspot with several endemic species identified in the South East Queensland Biodiversity Planning Assessment. The park supports the only known remaining entire altitudinal sequence of rainforest on this landform, which includes dry rainforest, dry warm subtropical rainforest, transitional rainforest, warm subtropical rainforest and palm forest. The park contains one of concern regional ecosystem 12.8.8 *Eucalyptus saligna* or *Eucalyptus grandis* tall open forest on Cainozoic igneous rocks (Appendix A Map 3).

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Rare and threatened species on the park are conserved.	A2. Continue working co-operatively with local community groups to rehabilitate the cleared area of national park with endemic pioneer plants consistent with the original regional ecosystems (12.11.2 and 12.11.1).
The natural biological diversity of the plant communities occurring on the park is protected.	A3. Continue to encourage and support local individuals and groups involved in volunteering in park management activities such as regeneration, pest management, research and monitoring.

4.2.2 Native animals

The altitudinal sequence of rainforest types on the park provides a diverse range of habitats that support a variety of native animals. A fauna survey for Nicoll Scrub National Park was conducted in November 2000 with a total of 78 vertebrate species recorded. This included seven species of mammal, 56 species of birds, six species of reptiles and eight species of amphibians with the significant species found listed in Appendix C, Table 1.

The vulnerable Richmond birdwing butterfly *Ornithoptera richmondia*, and a transient colony of grey-headed flying foxes *Pteropus poliocephalus* and black flying foxes *Pteropus alecto*, are recorded on the park. When the flying fox colony is present, QPWS conduct monitoring on a monthly basis to determine the species, numbers present and their use of the area.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
The native animal population on the park is protected and numbers maintained or increased.	A4. Maintain the ongoing flying fox monitoring program when the colony is present. A5. Establish key monitoring objectives for species of conservation significance on the park, and support monitoring programs that achieve these objectives.

4.3 Indigenous culture

The Currumbin Valley is part of the cultural landscape of the Yugambah people. Little is known at present about Indigenous cultural heritage values of the park.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
The cultural heritage significance of the park is protected.	A6. Continue to encourage Traditional Owner involvement in the area's planning and management, including support of any cultural heritage assessment work in the area.

4.4 Shared-history culture

The area was known locally as Nicoll Scrub after the Nicoll family, early pioneers of the Currumbin Valley, and one of the first European families in the district. Wallace Nicoll recognised the natural value of this section of his property and it remained uncleared. The Queensland Government acquired the land from the Nicoll family and it was gazetted as a national park in 1986.

Remnants of the area's history include mature bunya pines and a hibiscus species native to Lord Howe Island, planted by Alex Griffith along the fence boundary on Brocks Road.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
The cultural heritage significance of the park is protected.	A7. Continue to document places of historic significance in the park as they are identified.

4.5 Tourism and visitor opportunities

Recreation has not been encouraged due to the small size of the park and its steep, erodible slopes. Informal walking opportunities are utilised by experienced bushwalkers to access Mount Tomewin and Hanging Rock.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Visitation to the Nicoll Scrub National Park is not actively promoted.	A8. Development of infrastructure will not occur on the park. A9. Park boundary signs are kept minimal to reflect a Class 4 landscape setting.

4.6 Education and science

Nicoll Scrub National Park provides scientific research and educational opportunities. The park contains examples of four regional ecosystems (12.8.4, 12.8.8, 12.11.1, and 12.11.2) on two geological substrates (Appendix D). The park has 16 species of conservation significance, and the only known remaining entire altitudinal sequence of rainforest on this landform. The fauna population remains poorly studied, with the last fauna survey conducted in 2000. Any scientific research or educational activities should be encouraged to complement the key monitoring requirements identified for the park and be aimed towards filling identified knowledge gaps.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Scientific research increases natural resource knowledge on the park to support management of the park's scientific and conservation values.	A10. Encourage scientific research by universities which are aligned to the key monitoring objectives in A5. A11. Limit the size of research groups to a maximum of 12 people to minimise trampling of vegetation and erosion of the steep slopes. A12. Monitor impacts of pest species on native flora and fauna.

4.7 Partnerships

Good neighbour relations are important in aiding management strategies including partnerships with all surrounding land managers and local government. Currumbin Bird Sanctuary (managers of the neighbouring property 'Coolamon') and Bush Heritage Australia (neighbouring property Currumbin Valley Reserve/Griffiths Nature Reserve) work co-operatively with DES in compatible land management.

This arrangement includes cross boundary pest management, providing access to sections of the park and communicating issues as they arise. There is a current association with local community groups involving revegetation and weed control activities on the park. There is a substantial fence restricting native animal movement between Nicoll Scrub National Park and Coolamon and Currumbin Valley Reserve/Griffiths Nature Reserve. This fence is no longer required for management purposes, and negotiations should occur to progress the removal of the fence.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Neighbours and relevant groups and authorities have the opportunity to play an important role in plan implementation and park protection.	<p>A13. Encourage and support local individuals and groups involved in volunteering in park management activities such as regeneration, pest management, research and monitoring</p> <p>A14. Continue working co-operatively with local community groups to continue the rehabilitation project on the cleared area of national park with endemic pioneer plants consistent with the original regional ecosystems (12.11.2 and 12.11.1)</p> <p>A15. Continue to work with Bush Heritage Australia and Currumbin Bird Sanctuary in co-operative management across tenures.</p> <p>A16. Negotiate the removal of fences that restrict fauna movement between Nicoll Scrub National Park and Coolamon and Currumbin Valley Reserve/Griffiths Nature Reserve.</p>

5. Other key issues and responses

5.1 Climate change

Although climate change is hard to manage for and largely outside the scope of this plan, reducing stresses on the park's natural systems can make them more resilient to rapid environmental changes. Predictions for south-east Queensland are higher temperatures, reduced rainfall, and increased evaporation as a result of climate change (DES 2009). This may negatively impact on the rainforest system, see changes in fire regimes and increase weed problems. Due to the small size of the park (26 Ha), there is a need to identify suitable habitat in the surrounding landscape and work in partnership with local and adjacent property owners in promoting extension and linkages of important habitats for climate change affected species.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Impacts of invasive species as a result of climate change are minimised.	A17. Manage invasive species in accordance with section 5.2.
Suitable habitats are linked to help native species move across the landscape and adapt to climate change impacts.	A18. Provide support for identifying suitable habitat in the surrounding landscape and work in partnership with local and adjacent property owners in promoting extension and linkages of important habitats for climate change affected species.

5.2 Pest management

Under the QPWS Pest Management System, a Level Two Pest Management Strategy has been developed which incorporates Nicoll Scrub National Park. Pest plants are not a major problem in Nicoll Scrub National Park; however umbrella tree *Schefflera actinophylla*, Brazilian nightshade *Solanum seaforthianum* and Easter cassia *Senna pendula* var. *glabrate* occur in low numbers in the rainforest sections, and camphor laurel *Cinnamomum camphora*, poinsettia *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, yellow bells *Tecoma stans* and slash pine *Pinus elliottii* occur on a small cleared area in the park. Lantana *Lantana camara* and groundsel *Baccharis halimifolia* have been controlled periodically. There is an infestation of lantana in the Tomewin section of the national park that is of some concern as it is a declared pest species. The Level Two Pest Management Strategy recommends that the mature bunya pines and hibiscus planted by Alex Griffith remain for historical reasons and they are unlikely to become invasive. Introduced animals recorded in the park include the cane toad, dogs, cats and foxes and exact numbers are unknown.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
<p>Introduced plants and animals are controlled and where possible eradicated from the park.</p>	<p>A19. The Nicoll Scrub National Park Level Two Pest Strategy is reviewed and updated every five years to ensure that regional ecosystem health is protected through the following provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • containing existing infestations and preventing further spread with eventual eradication • remove lantana in Tomewin section of the park and revegetate using local species • routine inspections of the park to identify any new pest plant outbreaks • monitor the effect of any pest plant control methods used on the park and adjust where necessary • is congruent with Gold Coast City Council's Pest Management Plan. <p>A20. Continue to support and involve local community groups, neighbours, Gold Coast City Council and individuals in pest plant control programs especially on the edges of the park.</p>

5.3 Fire management

Protecting the rainforest communities and species of conservation significance within the park from wildfire or inappropriate fire regimes is a high priority. There are no records of wildfires or planned burns ever impacting upon Nicoll Scrub National Park. The park contains five rainforest types that are fire intolerant and require long-term protection from fire.

A Level Two Fire Strategy was developed for Nicoll Scrub National Park and Tomewin Conservation Park in accordance with the QPWS Fire Management System in 2003. This strategy contains measures to protect fire-sensitive communities and involves co-operative efforts with park neighbours and other land management agencies.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
<p>Rare or threatened plants, community types and biological diversity are conserved through appropriate fire management.</p>	<p>A21. The Nicoll Scrub National Park Level Two Fire Strategy is reviewed and updated every five years to ensure that the fire intolerant regional ecosystems are protected through the following provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excluding fire from Nicoll Scrub National Park • assist neighbours with fire management activities including establishment and maintenance of off-park fire breaks and providing advice • continue to liaise with neighbouring landholders, local rural fire brigade and Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority on fire management issues.

5.4 Park status

The Tomewin section of Nicoll Scrub National Park is separated approximately 5.5 km from the main portion of the national park and less than a kilometre away from Tomewin Conservation Park. The main section of the park was named after the Nicoll family from whom the land was acquired in 1986, and the Tomewin section was donated by the Hilder family as a flora and fauna reserve. It is recommended that Tomewin Conservation Park be consolidated into the existing Nicoll Scrub National Park as the Tomewin Section.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
<p>Consolidation of Nicoll Scrub National Park and Tomewin Conservation Park.</p>	<p>A22. Transfer Tomewin Conservation Park to Nicoll Scrub National Park.</p>

6. References

Sattler, P. and Williams, R. (eds) 1999, *The conservation status of Queensland's bioregional ecosystems*. Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Government, Brisbane.

State of Queensland (1992), *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel, Brisbane.

State of Queensland, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2001), *Master Plan for Queensland's Parks System*, State of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) (2000), *Fauna Survey – Nicoll Scrub National Park Currumbin Valley*, State of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) (2003), *Statement of Fire Management Intent for Nicoll Scrub National Park and Tomewin Conservation park*, State of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland – unpublished.

State of Queensland, Department of Environment and Science (DES) (2009), *ClimateQ: Toward a greener Queensland, Queensland's climate change strategy*, Brisbane, Queensland.

7. Hyperlinks

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and Regulations 2000 <www.environment.gov.au>

Department of Environment and Resource Management website <www.des.qld.gov.au>

Nature Conservation Act 1992 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Regulation 1994 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006 <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>

Regional ecosystems <www.des.qld.gov.au>

8. Appendixes

Appendix A – Maps

Appendix B – Definitions

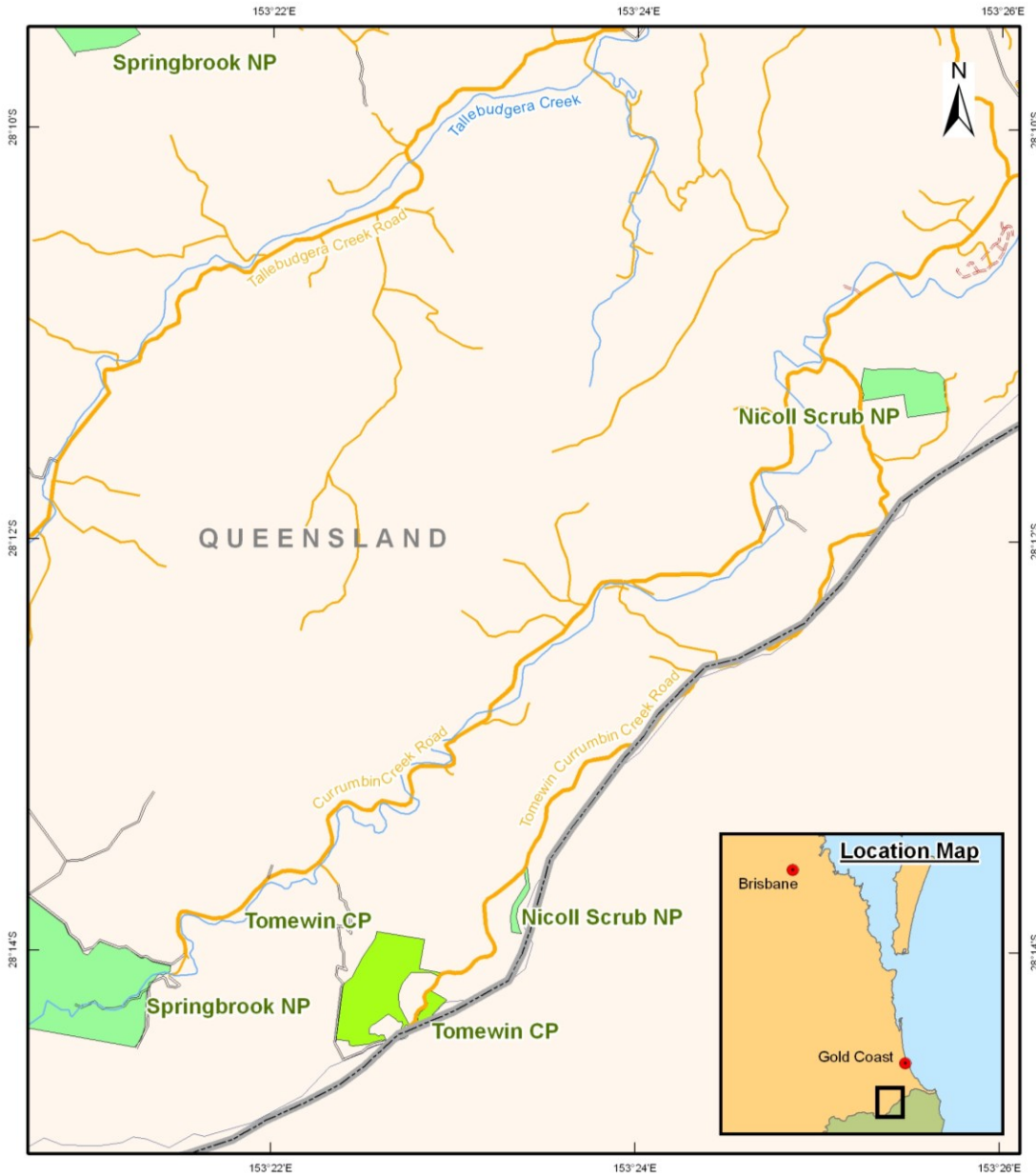
Appendix C – Animal and plant species of conservation significance

Appendix D – Regional ecosystems

Appendix E – Pest plant and animal species

Appendix A – Maps

Map 1 – Location



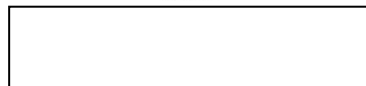
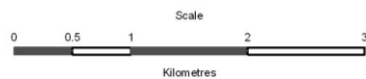
Map Projection:
 Universal Transverse Mercator (MGA) zone 56
 Horizontal Datum:
 Geocentric Datum of Australia 1994 (GDA94)

Map Production:
 Spatial Services,
 Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service,
 Department of Environment and Resource Management,
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Nicoll Scrub National Park Location Map



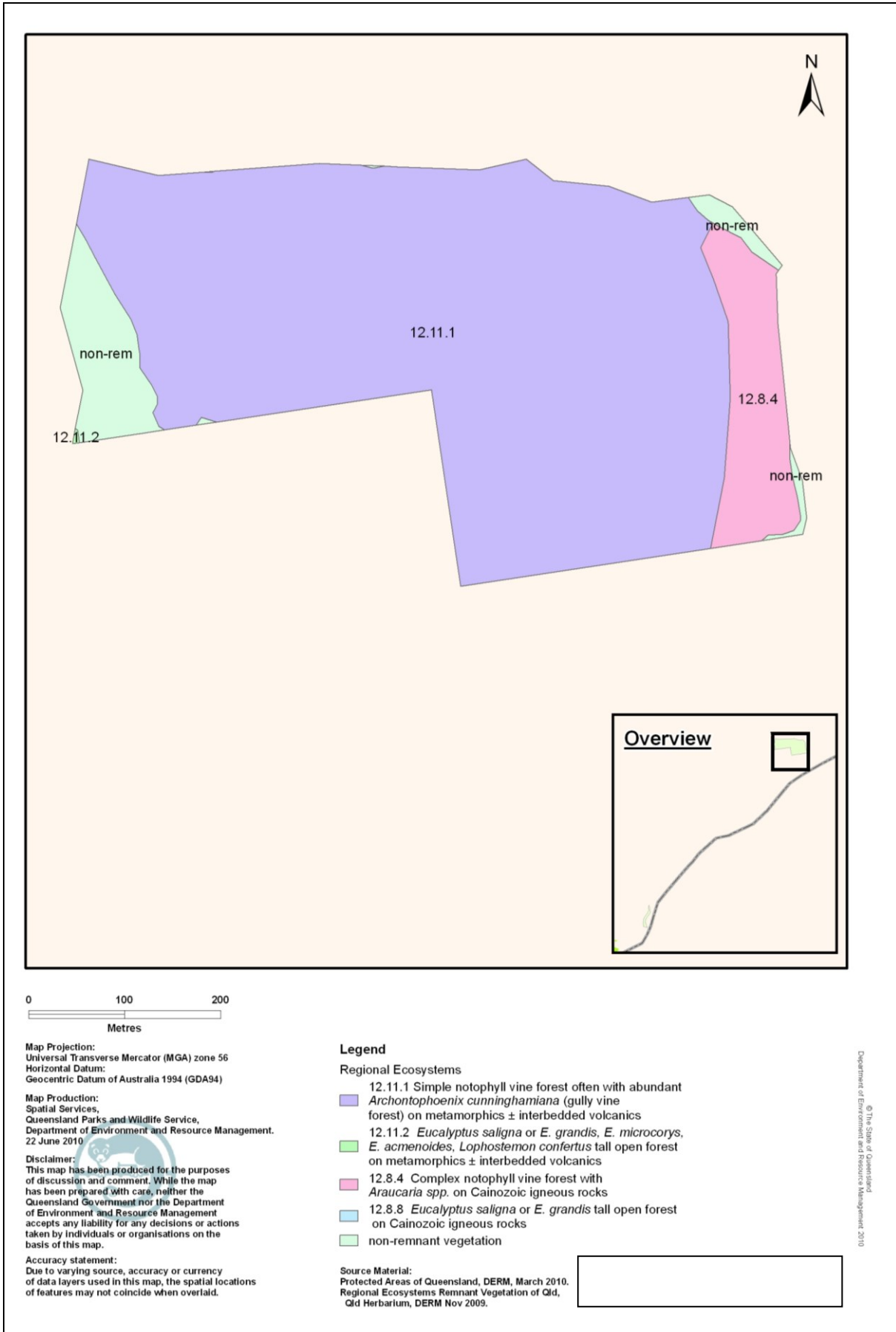
Source Material:
 Protected Areas of Queensland, DERM; 2010
 State Digital Road Network (SDRN); 2010
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Legend

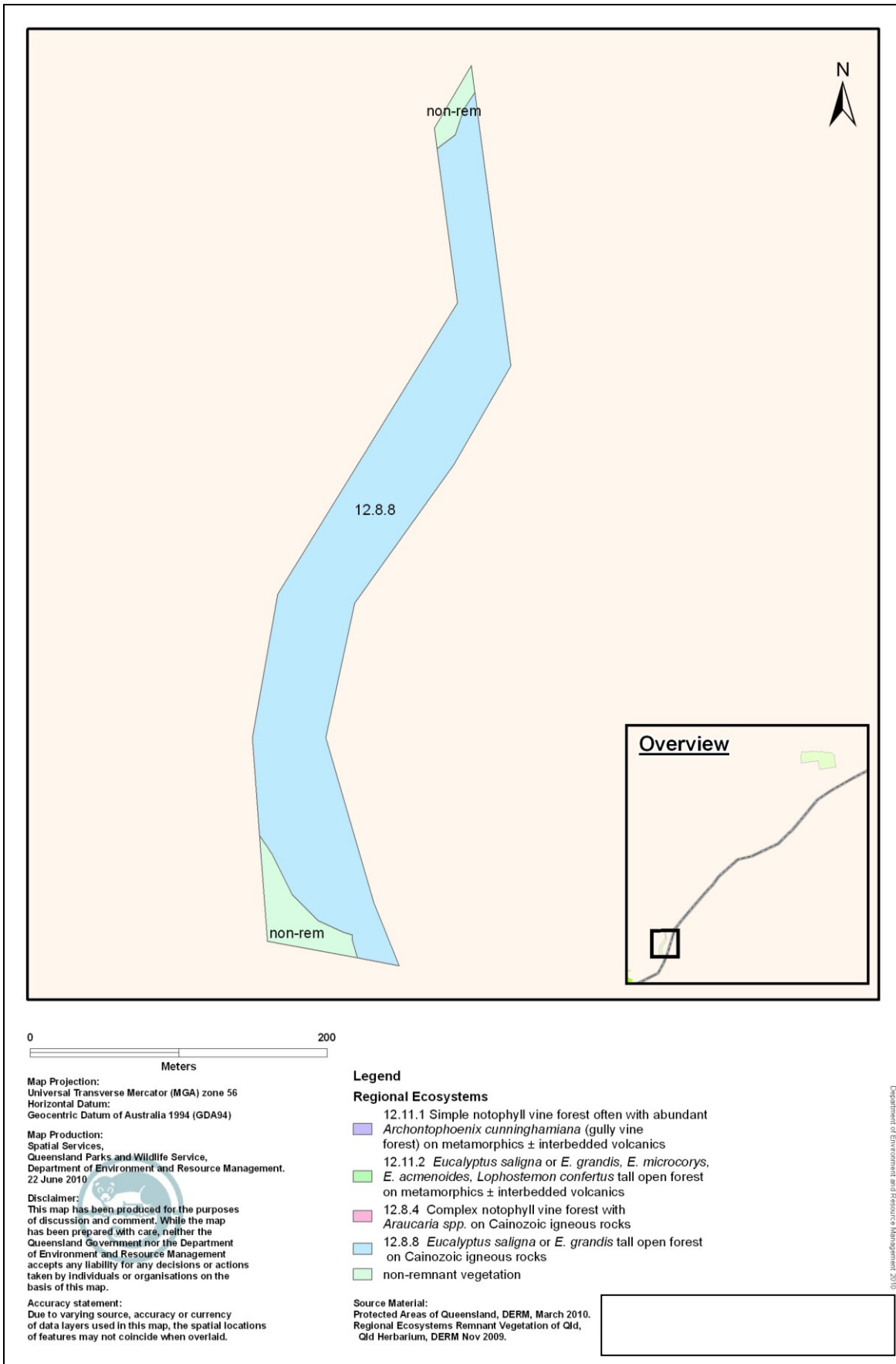
- Protected Area**
 - National Park (scientific)
 - National Park
 - Conservation Park
- Territory boundary**
 - State boundary
- State Digital Road Network**
 - Unconstructed / dedicated
 - Secondary roads
 - Streets
 - Private or restricted roads
- Drainage network**
 - River

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Map 2 – Vegetation northern section



Map 3 – Vegetation southern section



Appendix B – Definitions

Endangered

At the state level, endangered species are those species listed as endangered under schedule 2 of Queensland's Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006. At the national level, endangered species are those species listed as endangered under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Management principles for national parks

These are specified in Section 17 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*:

1. A national park is to be managed to—
 - (a) 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
 - (b) present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values
 - (c) ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.
2. The management principle mentioned in subsection 1(a) is the cardinal principle for the management of national parks.

Regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystems were defined by Sattler and Williams (1999) as vegetation communities in a bioregion that are consistently associated with a particular combination of geology, landform and soil. Readers should refer to this publication for background information about regional ecosystems and the bioregional planning framework used in Queensland.

Compilation of the information about regional ecosystems presented in Sattler and Williams (1999) was derived from a broad range of existing information sources including land system, vegetation and geology mapping and reports. However, the framework is dynamic and is regularly reviewed as new information becomes available. During the past few years the Queensland Herbarium has developed a program for explicitly mapping regional ecosystems across Queensland. This has resulted, and will continue to result, in updates to the descriptions and status of regional ecosystems. Therefore, updated regional ecosystem descriptions in the format of Sattler and Williams (1999) are maintained in the Regional Ecosystem Description Database.

Vulnerable

At the state level, vulnerable species are those species listed as vulnerable under schedule three of Queensland's Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006. At the national level, vulnerable species are those species listed as vulnerable under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Appendix C – Animal and plant species of conservation significance

Table 1: Vulnerable, endangered or rare native animals for Nicoll Scrub National Park.

Family	Scientific name	Common name	Status under the Nature Conservation Act 1992	Status under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
Papilionidae	<i>Ornithoptera richmondia</i>	Richmond birdwing	Vulnerable	–
*Scincidae	<i>Ophioscincus truncatus</i>	–	–	–
*Scincidae	<i>Saproscincus rosei</i>	–	Near threatened	–
Pteropodidae	<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>	grey-headed flying fox	–	Vulnerable

Table 2: Vulnerable, endangered or rare native plants for Nicoll Scrub National Park.

Family	Scientific name	Common name	Status under the Nature Conservation Act 1992	Status under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
*Aristolochiaceae	<i>Pararistolochia praevenosa</i>	–	Near threatened	–
Caesalpiniaceae	<i>Cassia marksiana</i>	brush cassia	Vulnerable	–
*Lauraceae	<i>Endiandra globosa</i>	ball-fruited walnut	Near threatened	–
*Mimosaceae	<i>Archidendron muellerianum</i>	veiny lace flower	Near threatened	–
Myrtaceae	<i>Gossia fragrantissima</i>	sweet myrtle	Endangered	Endangered
*Myrtaceae	<i>Rhodamnia maideniana</i>	smooth scrub turpentine	–	–
Myrtaceae	<i>Syzygium moorei</i>	durobby	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Proteaceae	<i>Floydia praealta</i>	ball nut	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Proteaceae	<i>Macadamia integrifolia</i>	macadamia nut	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Proteaceae	<i>Macadamia tetraphylla</i>	Queensland nut	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
Rubiaceae	<i>Randia moorei</i>	spiny gardenia	Endangered	Endangered
Rutaceae	<i>Bosistoa transversa</i>	three-leaved bosistoa	–	Vulnerable
*Sapindaceae	<i>Cupaniopsis newmanii</i>	long-leaved tuckeroo	Near threatened	–
*Sapindaceae	<i>Lepiderema pulchella</i>	fine-leaved tuckeroo	Vulnerable	–
**Laxmanniaceae	<i>Cordylina congesta</i>	Boonah palm lily	–	–

* was listed as rare under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* up until 2010.

** was listed as rare under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* up until 2000.

Appendix D – Regional ecosystems

Table 3: Endangered regional ecosystem for Nicoll Scrub National Park.

Regional ecosystem number	Regional ecosystem name	DES biodiversity status	Reason for status and the threats to ongoing sustainability
12.8.8	<i>Eucalyptus saligna</i> or <i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> tall open forest on Cainozoic igneous rocks.	Endangered	In September 2003, remnant extent was < 10,000 ha and >30 per cent of the pre-clearing area remained. Habitat for rare and threatened flora species.

Appendix E – Pest plant and animal species

Table 4: Known introduced plant and animals of Nicoll Scrub National Park.

Scientific name	Common name	Status under the <i>Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002</i>
<i>Bufo marinus</i>	cane toad	Non-declared
<i>Canis familiaris</i>	dog	Class 2
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	fox	Class 2
<i>Felis catus</i>	cat	Class 2
<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>	camphor laurel	Class 3
<i>Passiflora subpeltata</i>	white passion flower	Non-declared
<i>Pinus elliotii</i>	slash pine	–
<i>Schefflera actinophylla</i>	umbrella tree	–
<i>Solanum seaforthianum</i>	Brazilian nightshade	–
<i>Solanum mauritianum</i>	wild tobacco	–
<i>Senna pendula</i> var. <i>glabrata</i>	Easter cassia	–
<i>Euphorbia pulcherrima</i>	poinsettia	–
<i>Tecoma stans</i>	yellow bells	Class 3
<i>Lantana camara</i>	lantana	Class 3
<i>Baccharis halimifolia</i>	groundsel	Class 2

