

Wondul Range National Park

Management Plan
2011



Brigalow Belt South Bioregion

Prepared by:

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

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The Wondul Range 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: *Macrozamia machinii*. Photo: DES.

Top right photograph: Shedded bark, Wondul Range National Park. Photo: DES.

Centre right photograph: katydid. Photo: DES.

Bottom right photograph: *Cyclorana novaehollandiae*. Photo: DES.

Vision statement

Wondul Range National Park will be managed to conserve open woodland species typical of the Western Downs. Maintaining and protecting the natural values of the park and conserving its plant communities will be the key focus for management.

The park protects several species of conservation significance, including the gum-topped ironbark *Eucalyptus decorticans*, which is at the southern limit of its range. Wondul Range National Park will also be managed to present visitors with nature-based experiences that have minimal impact on the environment and ensure the sustainable use of the park.

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1. Management intent

Wondul Range National Park will be managed as a representative sample of the open woodland species typical of the Western Downs.

The primary purpose of management for this park will be to:

- protect and conserve its natural and cultural values
- identify and conserve species of conservation significance through specific management strategies, where appropriate
- maintain access for self-sufficient visitors in a completely natural setting
- provide neighbours, local government, Traditional Owners and other interested parties opportunities to be involved in managing the park, where appropriate.

2. Basis for management

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

Indigenous people have affiliations with the park and involving Traditional Owner groups is an important part of management. Wondul Range National Park is included in an area subject to native title claim (Bigambul QC01/006). This plan does not affect this claim.

Cultural heritage places in Queensland are legislatively managed under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* and the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*. The Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage and The Burra Charter provide detailed guidelines for managing cultural heritage places.

Endangered, near threatened and vulnerable species are listed under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006. The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) has a responsibility under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* to control declared pest plants and animals in protected areas.

The park supports migratory species listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (that is, those species listed under the Bonn Convention, the China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement).

3. Location and regional context

Wondul Range National Park, 19 km west of Millmerran in the Toowoomba Regional Council area of southern Queensland, conserves 3555 ha of open woodland species typical of the Western Downs. The park is in the Brigalow Belt South bioregion, province 32: the Inglewood Sandstones.

The park's western boundary adjoins Bulli State Forest, with a small section of its south-west boundary abutting Whetstone State Forest. There are several rural freehold blocks adjoining the park's northern boundary and these separate the park from the nearby Wondul Creek State Forest to the north-east. The remainder of the park is surrounded by pastoral leasehold land. Western Creek State Forest is close to the park (refer to Appendix A – Maps). Adjoining land uses include cattle grazing, forestry and a number of smaller rural residential properties.

Wondul Range National Park provides a natural setting with few roads and no facilities. It is most suited to self-sufficient visitors with interests in nature-based activities in natural, undeveloped settings. Most visitors are seeking a venue for a particular nature-based experience, such as bird watching or wildlife observation.

4. Protecting and presenting the park's values

4.1 Landscape

The soil and underlying geology have fundamental value as they determine the type and distribution of plant and animal communities in the park.

The park has predominantly shallow, stony, loamy soil over Middle Jurassic to Lower Cretaceous Kumberilla beds of sandstone, siltstone and mudstone. In some areas sediments are deeply weathered. The majority of Wondul Range National Park (approximately 70 per cent), is on an old dissected Tertiary surface largely stripped of soil, with the remainder comprised of sand plains, late Cainozoic floodout, and residual soils and colluvium on old land surfaces.

The park is part of the Border River catchment. Two small creeks and their unnamed tributaries have their headwaters in the park.

Gunn Creek South Branch flows through the south-eastern corner of the park and Commoran Creek flows west out of the park. These creeks empty into the Weir River then into the Barwon River near Mungindi (far northern New South Wales). Both creeks are ephemeral in Wondul Range National Park and eventually flow into the Murray–Darling system (Hobson 2005).

The dams on Wondul Range National Park are the only permanent water points on the park and are a critical resource for fire response by QPWS. Many species of wildlife, including the vulnerable glossy black-cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami*, have also been seen watering on these dams (Hobson 2005). Erosion in the park is very minimal and is limited to roads.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
<p>Maintain catchment and aesthetic values, ensuring any future development is consistent with these natural values.</p> <p>Protect and conserve park soils and landforms.</p>	<p>A1. Continue to represent the interests of the park and liaise with relevant catchment management, Landcare and other organisations, as appropriate.</p> <p>A2. Investigate opportunities to add areas of conservation value to the park. Priority will be given to securing linking areas that allow for species to move in response to climate change.</p> <p>A3. Maintain dams as a resource for fire fighting and as part of the habitat for the park's fauna.</p> <p>A4. Construct roads to minimise erosion. Park staff to monitor road conditions during scheduled visits. Carry out remedial work when required.</p>

4.2 Native animals

4.2.1 Native plants

Wondul Range National Park conserves a high diversity of open forest communities representative of the Western Downs that occur in the Inglewood Sandstone Province. These plant communities are not conserved in any other protected areas. The plains and gentle rises are dominated by narrow-leaved ironbark *Eucalyptus crebra* and smooth-bark apple *Angophora leiocarpa*, often accompanied by the bullock *Allocasuarina luehmannii* and white cypress pine *Callitris glaucophylla*.

The sandstone ridges support species of bloodwood *E. trachyphloia* and ironbark *E. crebra* and *E. decorticans*, with species of acacia, thready-barked she-oak *Allocasuarina inophloia* and black cypress pine *Callitris endlicheri*.

Very steep areas of the park may contain mallee eucalypt species, such as *E. exserta*, *E. bakeri* and *E. apothalassica* with further survey work required to confirm this.

Two vulnerable plants have been recorded in the park, the cycad *Macrozamia machinii* and Dunmore mint bush *Prostanthera sp* (Hobson 2005). Wondul Range National Park also forms the southern extremity of the geographical distribution of the gum topped ironbark *Eucalyptus decorticans*.

Although no comprehensive survey of the park's vegetation has been undertaken, some areas have been surveyed as part of fire monitoring and a thorough survey was conducted on adjoining land in May 2007. The park has a largely undisturbed diversity of open-woodland plant communities, which could be expected to contain a number of species of conservation significance. Five regional ecosystems have been identified. None of these are of concern.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
<p>A better understanding of the vegetation communities at Wondul Range National Park is developed.</p> <p>Available knowledge of plant ecology is enhanced and used as the basis for future management decisions.</p> <p>The diversity of plant communities and species in the park is maintained.</p> <p>Plant communities that provide habitat for animal species of high conservation significance are protected.</p>	<p>A5. Identify through comprehensive surveys the range and composition of plant communities in the park including communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of conservation significance • that provide habitats for animals of conservation significance. <p>A6. Regulate the frequency and intensity of fire to maintain the plant species composition, and the structure and ecological dynamics of all vegetation communities in accordance with Section 5.1 of this plan.</p> <p>A7. Establish key monitoring objectives for species of conservation significance on the park, and support monitoring programs that achieve these objectives.</p> <p>A8. Implement any recovery, conservation or action plans for plant species of high conservation significance.</p>

4.2.2 Native animals

One hundred and eighty-seven vertebrate species have been recorded at Wondul Range National Park and its environs.

The Brigalow scaly-foot *Paradelma orientalis* and eastern long-eared bat *Nyctophilus timoriensis*, listed as vulnerable under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, have been sighted in the park, as have the glossy black-cockatoo and little pied bat *Chalinolobus picatus*, listed as vulnerable and near threatened respectively under the *Nature Conservation Act*.

A 2004 fauna survey of Wondul Range National Park found three 'species of concern': the spotted black snake *Pseudechis guttatus*, the grey-crowned babbler *Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis* and the cycad blue butterfly *Theclinesthes onycha onycha* (Hobson 2005).

The fauna survey failed to find the brush-tailed rock-wallaby *Petrogale penicillata* in the park, although it inhabits nearby areas. Further monitoring is required to determine if this vulnerable species also occurs in the park. The adorned (collared) delma *Delma torquata*, a vulnerable lizard under the *Nature Conservation Act*, has been recorded in nearby Western Creek State Forest. It is likely that this species, with its ability to camouflage or conceal itself, also occurs on Wondul Range National Park (Hobson 2005).

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
<p>An increased knowledge of the animals that occur at Wondul Range is achieved.</p> <p>Species diversity in the park is maintained.</p>	<p>A9. Establish key monitoring objectives for species of conservation significance on the park, and support monitoring programs that achieve these objectives.</p> <p>A10. Monitor the distribution, abundance and habitat condition of animal species of conservation significance.</p> <p>A11. Implement management actions for priority species (Back on Track).</p> <p>A12. Implement any recovery, conservation or action plans for animal species of conservation significance.</p>

4.3 Indigenous culture

Wondul Range National Park has cultural and landscape values important to Indigenous people.

The Traditional Owner group associated with this area is the Bigambul people.

Although no cultural heritage surveys have been conducted on the park, it is known there are several sites of cultural significance. These sites should remain confidential in the interest of their continued protection.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
<p>Indigenous people with traditional affiliations in the area are involved in management of the park.</p> <p>Indigenous cultural resources and sites of significance are identified and protected, with help from Traditional Owners.</p>	<p>A13. Where practicable, consult and engage with the Bigambul people in the management of the park, including interpreting cultural values if appropriate.</p> <p>A14. Encourage the Bigambul people to help identify, document and protect Indigenous cultural heritage places in the park and provide advice on other cultural interests and concerns.</p> <p>A15. Where archaeological sites are identified, ensure that they are conserved and managed consistently with the requirements of the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> and QPWS Conservation Management Profiles.</p>

4.4 Shared-history culture

Even though the Western Downs area was settled around 1841, Wondul Range National Park has no known particular post-settlement heritage values. The park was gazetted in 1992 and was previously Badderam Holding (Run 2901). No park surveys have been conducted to locate specific sites of cultural significance.

4.5 Tourism and visitor opportunities

Due to its small size and restricted access, Wondul Range National Park is well suited to self-sufficient visitors who wish to experience a fairly remote park environment.

Wondul Range National Park has no visitor facilities, on-park interpretation, or directional signs on tracks or roads. There are directional signs from the Gore Highway and the entrance is signposted. The majority of visitors to Wondul Range National Park are dedicated naturalists and birdwatchers. There are no commercial operators using the area. There has been no evidence of unauthorised behaviour by park visitors.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Maintain the sustainable level of visitation suitable to the small park size and minimal facilities provided.	A16. Continue to manage Wondul Range National Park for low-impact, ecologically sustainable nature-based recreation. No major infrastructure will be provided and visitors will be encouraged to be self-sufficient.

4.6 Education and science

Wondul Range National Park is largely undisturbed. A fauna survey was conducted by QPWS in March 2004 but considerable potential still exists for further scientific investigation of the fauna, flora and landscape of the park. QPWS has also conducted fire monitoring to assess fire sensitivity on the vulnerable *Macrozamia machinii*.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
A better understanding of the animals and vegetation communities at Wondul Range National Park is gained.	<p>A17. Encourage research and investment in priority data deficient species.</p> <p>A18. Continue monitoring and research of plant communities' responses to different burning regimes.</p> <p>A19. Encourage tertiary institutions to research animal species of conservation significance.</p>

4.7 Partnerships

Wondul Range National Park is close to private and public land, where a range of other land uses occur, including cattle grazing and forestry. A considerable number of smaller rural residential properties exist to the north of the park. Cooperative management with neighbours covers weed, feral animal, fire management and other initiatives that require actions that extend beyond the park boundaries.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Neighbours, local government, Indigenous groups and other interested parties are made aware of park management issues and have the opportunity to be involved in managing the park, where appropriate.	A20. Liaise with neighbours, local government, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, regional natural resource management groups and Traditional Owners to develop and implement cooperative stock, feral animal, weed and fire programs, where appropriate.

5. Other key issues and responses

5.1 Fire management

Managing fire is a high priority for Wondul Range National Park because wildfires threaten life, property, commercial assets and the biodiversity values of the park. In accordance with the QPWS Fire Management System, a Level 2 Fire Strategy and wildfire response procedures were developed in 2003.

Some level of fire is also a necessary feature of the park's eucalypt forest ecosystem processes, necessary to maintain the health of these communities. QPWS has conducted fire monitoring to assess fire sensitivity on the vulnerable *Macrozamia machinii*.

Fire is managed in cooperation with the adjoining State forests to produce a mosaic of fire frequency, intensity and season consistent with the ecological requirements of the vegetation communities and protection of adjacent properties.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Life, property and national park neighbours are protected from the impacts of fire. Fire is managed to promote the biological diversity and integrity of native flora and fauna, particularly for species of conservation significance. Ecological processes reliant on appropriate fire regimes are maintained.	A21. Continue to implement and review the fire management strategy for the park. A22. Develop appropriate fire management regimes based on life and property protection and assessments of plant communities. A23. Maintain dams that provide water supplies that have value for fire-fighting purposes.

5.2 Pest management

To date, few pest plant species have been identified on Wondul Range National Park. This is thought to be due to low visitor levels, lack of surface water flows into the park from adjacent areas, and compatible adjoining land uses. Pest animals thought to occur in low numbers in the park include foxes, cats and pigs.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
Protection of the natural and cultural values of Wondul Range National Park, including threatened species and ecosystems, by eradicating pests or significantly reducing their impacts.	A24. Ensure a Level 2 Pest Management Strategy that applies to the park is developed under the QPWS Pest Management System, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitoring and controlling pest plant species that have the potential to spread rapidly and have an impact on natural values giving priority to areas with species and communities of conservation significance.

5.3 Resource use

Some land parcels adjacent to Wondul Range National Park are grazed by stock. While the east boundary of the park is well fenced, the north, west and south boundaries are poorly fenced. Numbers of wild cattle in the park from surrounding pastoral properties are low.

Desired outcomes 2021	Actions and guidelines
The park is maintained free from straying stock.	A25. Liaise with neighbours to ensure fencing is maintained, with an emphasis on those sections where stock grazing occurs on adjacent blocks. A26. Work cooperatively with park neighbours to exclude stock from the park.

6. References

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- Threatened Species Scientific Committee 2008, *Commonwealth Conservation Advice on *Paradelma orientalis* (*Brigalow scaly-foot*)*. Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- Duncan, A. Baker, GB. and Montgomery, N. (Eds.). 1999 *The action plan for Australian bats*. Environment Australia, Canberra.
- Hobson, S. 2005. *Wondul Range National Park fauna survey report March 2004*. Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Government.
- Sattler, P. and Williams, R. 1999, *The conservation status of Queensland's bioregional ecosystems*. Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland Government.
- EPA 2001, *Master plan for Queensland's parks system*, Environmental Protection Agency, Brisbane.
- Richardson, R. 2006, *Draft Queensland Brigalow Belt reptile recovery plan 2008–2012*. Report to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra. WWF–Australia, Brisbane.

7. Hyperlinks

- Bonn Convention <www.cms.int>
- China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA) <www.austlii.edu.au>
- Disaster Management Act 2003* <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and Regulations 2000 <www.environment.gov.au>
- Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) <www.austlii.edu.au>
- National Native Title Tribunal <www.nntt.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>
- QPWS Pest Management Plan: Areas managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service 2003–2008 – <www.derm.qld.gov.au>
- Queensland Heritage Act 1992* <www.legislation.qld.gov.au>
- Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (ROKAMBA) <www.austlii.edu.au>

8. Appendixes

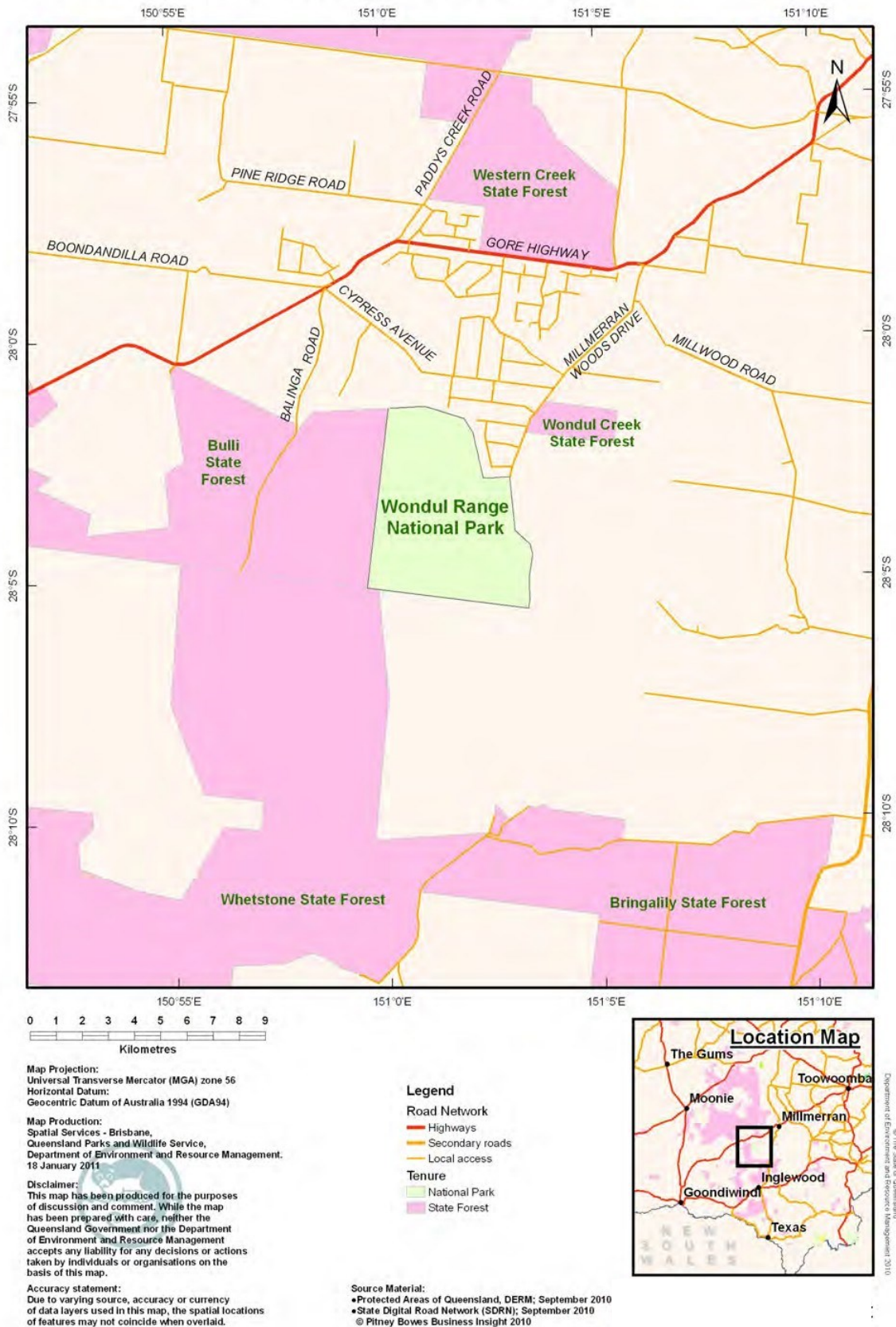
Appendix A – Maps

Appendix B – Definitions

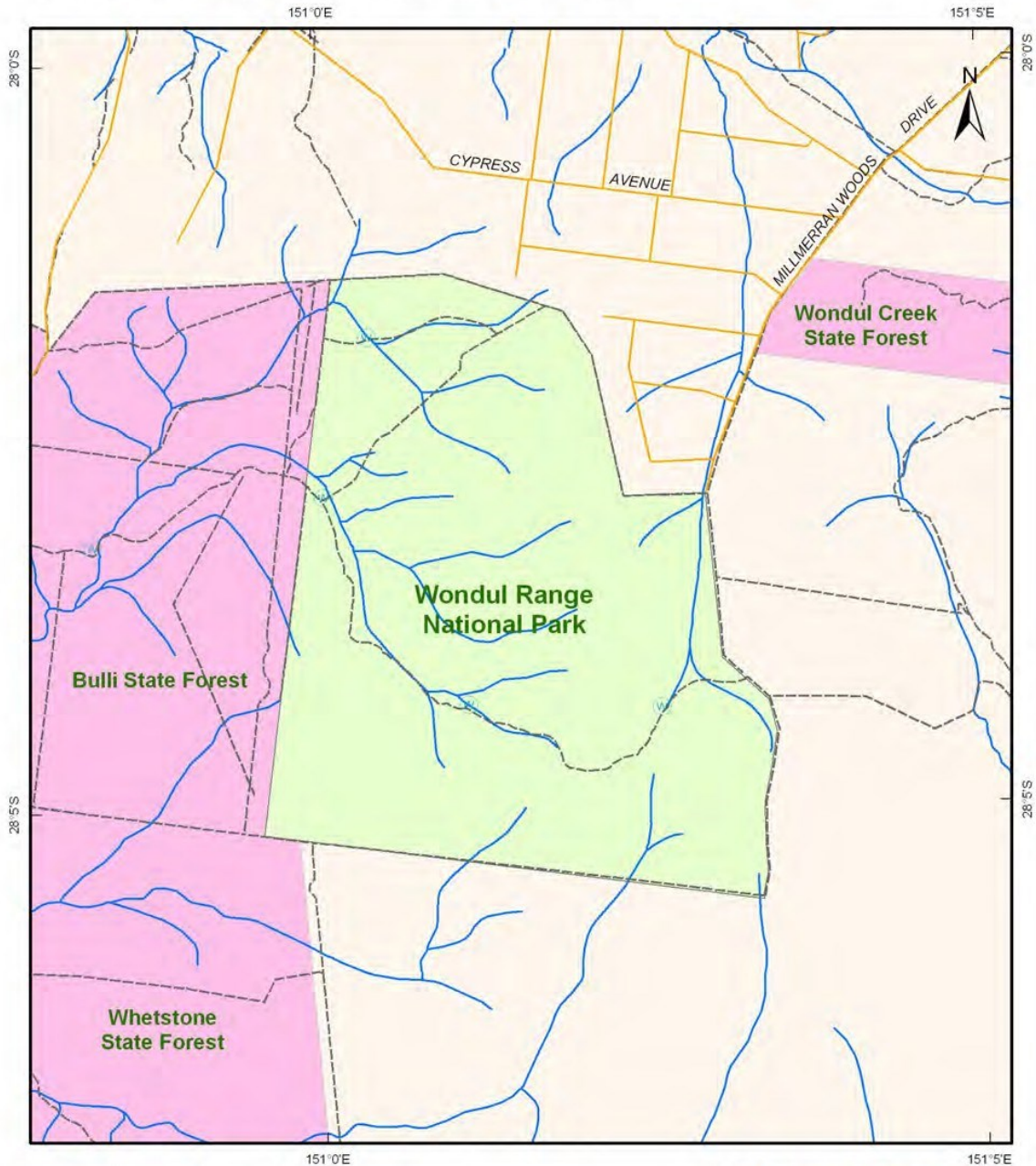
Appendix C – Species of conservation significance

Appendix A – Maps

Map 1 – Location



Map 2 – Access



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

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Legend

- Waterpoints
- Road Network**
 - Highways
 - Secondary roads
 - Local access
 - Unformed Road
- Drainage network**
 - Creeks
- Tenure**
 - National Park
 - State Forest

Source Material:
 • Protected Areas of Queensland, DERM; September 2010
 • Drainage, DNRW; April 2008
 • State Digital Road Network (SDRN); September 2010
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Appendix B – Definitions

Back on Track

The Back on Track framework prioritises Queensland native species of flora and fauna to guide conservation, management and recovery, focusing on high and critical priority species for future investment.

Near threatened wildlife

The Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006 sets out parameters to manage species of plants and animals declared by schedule as near threatened. Near threatened wildlife are listed under schedule 5 of the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006.

Of concern (regional ecosystems)

A regional ecosystem is assigned a DES biodiversity status of concern if 10–30 per cent of its pre-clearing extent remains unaffected by moderate degradation and/or biodiversity loss. Moderate degradation and/or biodiversity loss is defined as floristic and/or faunal diversity that is greatly reduced but unlikely to recover within the next 20 years even with the removal of threatening processes; or soil surface is moderately degraded.

Species of conservation significance

Species of conservation significance refers to those species that are threatened (that is, endangered, vulnerable or near threatened species), and may also refer to other species that are subject to threats at a regional or local level, including Back on Track priority species.

Vulnerable

The Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006 sets out parameters to manage species of plants and animals declared by schedule as vulnerable. Vulnerable wildlife are listed under schedule 3 of the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006.

Appendix C – Species of conservation significance

Table 1: Species of conservation significance for Wondul Range National Park.

Family	Scientific Name	Common Name	NCA	EPBC	Back on Track
Cacatuidae	<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i>	glossy black-cockatoo	V		
Vespertilionidae	<i>Chalinolobus picatus</i>	little pied bat [#]	NT		Medium
Vespertilionidae	<i>Nyctophilus timoriensis</i>	eastern long-eared bat [#]	V	V	Medium
Pygopodidae	<i>Paradelma orientalis</i>	Brigalow scaly-foot	V	V	Medium
Pygopodidae	<i>Delma torquata</i>	collared delma ^{##}	V	V	High
Zamiaceae	<i>Macrozamia machinii</i>		V	V	Critical
Lamiaceae	<i>Prostanthera</i> sp. (Dunmore D.M.Gordon 8A)	Dunmore mint bush ^{##}	V	V	Low

Nature Conservation Act 1992 status (NCA): vulnerable (V), near threatened (NT).

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC): vulnerable (V).

Source: DERM WildNet, 19 January 2009.

[#] The Action Plan for Australian Bats 1999.

^{##} Wondul Range National Park. Fauna survey report March 2004 (Hobson).

