

South East Queensland Biogeographic Region

Venman Bushland National Park

Management



1. Management directions and purposes

1.1 Management directions

Venman Bushland National Park is designated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* as a national park and will be managed in accordance with s17.1 of the Act which sets out the following principles for management:

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

The requirements of other legislation administered by the Department and other State and Commonwealth agencies will be met where necessary.

Venman Bushland National Park will be managed to maintain the integrity of a relatively large area of open forest within the Brisbane area. Management will include developing strategies for fire, weeds, and feral and domestic animals.

The park is included in the Koala Bushland Co-ordinated Conservation Area (KBCCA), established in 1996, and forms part of the area covered by the Koala Coast Public Contact Work Plan. The KBCCA includes Daisy Hill State Forest (Department of Natural Resources), Neville Lawrie Reserve (Logan City Council), the Don and Christine Burnett Conservation Area and Ford Road Conservation Area (both Redland Shire Council), and road reserves other than Ford Road. According to s23 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, a co-ordinated conservation area is to be managed to:

- conserve the area's natural and cultural values by co-ordinated management involving the area's various landholders;
- take account of the area's values, including its recreational, educational and commercial values; and
- provide for the interests of the various landholders to be maintained.

1.2 Management purposes

- The main purposes of management will be to ensure that:
 - the integrity of the natural bushland area among surrounding urban development is protected;
 - the existing diversity of plants and animals, especially rare and threatened wildlife, is conserved;
 - recreational opportunities are provided which are compatible with conserving the park's natural values; and
 - educational and scientific opportunities are provided within the context of nature conservation.

2 Management basis

2.1 Bioregional context

Covering 415ha, Venman Bushland National Park is reached via a well-signed road off West Mount Cotton Road, Mount Cotton in Redland Shire. The park was named after Jack Venman. In 1971, he sold 103ha of the bushland to the then Albert Shire Council for \$1 to preserve its conservation values. The area was gazetted in 1975 as an environmental park under State legislation. Various additions were made before the area was converted to a national park in 1994.

The area surrounding Venman Bushland National Park is undergoing rapid urban development. The park's importance as a representative sample of the area's natural vegetation and as a valuable habitat for native animals is increasing. Only a small amount of the park's tall open forest type is reserved in the South East Queensland biogeographic region, and many freehold areas of similar vegetation type have been extensively cleared for agriculture or residential purposes.

2.2 Venman Bushland National Park values

Plants and animals

Venman Bushland National Park's main vegetation type consists of open eucalypt forest.

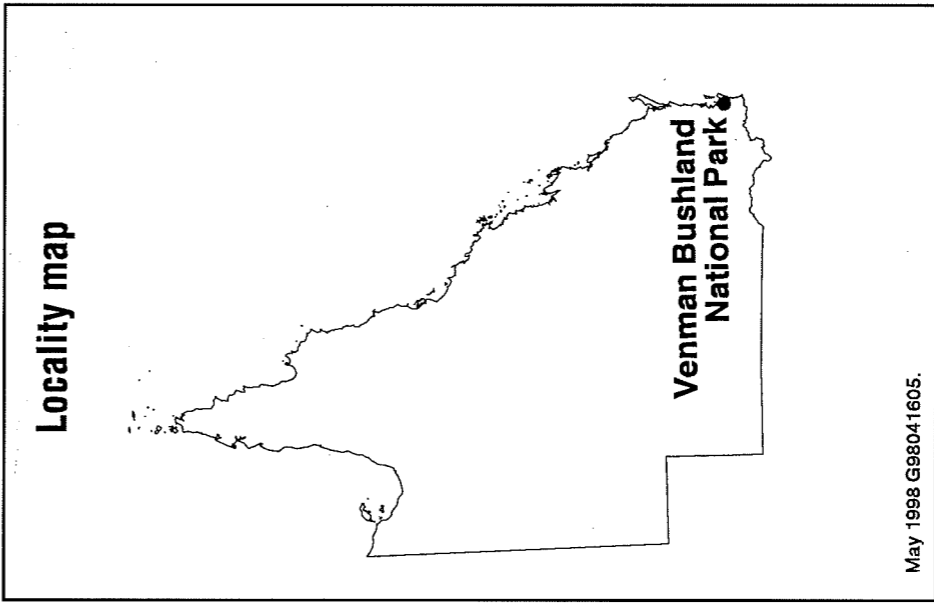
On the gravelly ridges, spotted gum *Corymbia citriodora* and grey ironbark *Eucalyptus siderophloia* dominate open forest, with the lower slopes supporting pink bloodwood *C. intermedia*, grey gum *E. prophylla* and brush box *Lophostemon confertus*. Open forest of smooth-barked apple *Angophora leiocarpa*, smudgee *A. woodiana*, forest red gum *E. tereticornis*, scribbly gum *E. racemosa* and pink bloodwood *C. intermedia* are found along drainage lines. The upper reaches of Tingalpa Creek, which bisects the park, support a swamp paperbark *Melaleuca quinquenervia* community.

These vegetation types, once regarded as common, have become restricted in both a local and regional context because of drastic modifications to areas around Brisbane. Similar vegetation on surrounding land is quickly disappearing because of rapid development in this part of south-east Queensland. Venman Bushland National Park's importance in conserving this forest type will continue to increase.

Acacia perangusta, classified as vulnerable in the *Nature Conservation Regulation 1994*, is on the park.

The park has a large variety of native animals, including koalas *Phascolarctus chirensis*, greater gliders *Petaurus volans*, common brushtail possums *Trichosurus vulpecula* and common ringtail possums *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*. There have been incidental sightings of platypus *Ornithorhynchus anatinus* in the creeks and red-necked wallabies *Macropus*

May 1998 G98041605.



Summary

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

This plan was prepared in May 1998 and, in accordance with s125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, will be reviewed not later than 10 years after its approval. For further information on this plan or the planning process, please contact the Department of Environment's Southeastern Regional Centre in Brisbane on (07) 3224 5641 during business hours.

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

rufigriseus are commonly seen in and around picnic areas. Animal surveys have found 11 species of native frogs and 87 species of birds, including the rare grey goshawk *Accipiter novaeollandiae*, vulnerable glossy black-cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami* and vulnerable powerful owl *Ninox strenua*. Powerful owl chicks have been seen, confirming that a breeding pair is on the park.

Scenic

Venman Bushland National Park protects a large and scenic area of natural bushland within Brisbane. Relatively few such protected areas lie in the immediate Brisbane area. The park provides a tranquil setting for visitors to escape from surrounding urban development. The forested ridge protects the scenic integrity of the country south of Mount Cotton and provides a picturesque backdrop for visitors.

Scientific and educational

The park has good examples of various open forest types and shows an interrelationship between topography, hydrology and vegetation. Close to urban areas and with convenient road access, the park gives school and tertiary-level student groups an opportunity to conduct low-impact educational trips.

Venman Bushland National Park forms part of the research area for the Department of Environment (DOE) Koala Research Team. There is ongoing research being undertaken by DOE staff on other plants and animals. Local community groups, naturalist groups and conservation groups are provided with the opportunity to conduct minimal-impact outdoor nature studies in this bushland.

Recreation and tourism

The park offers a range of recreational opportunities in an accessible location close to the city. The main activities include watching birds and other wildlife, walking and picnicking. A network of tracks are on the park. Picnic facilities, including barbecues, picnic tables, a carpark and a new amenities block with composting toilets, are at the main park entrance.

3 Management strategies

Current situation

Native plants

A comprehensive plant species list for the park was revised in 1995. A vegetation survey followed and a vegetation map of the area was produced.
Vegetation monitoring has been operating since 1994 as part of a fire and fuel load monitoring project.

Monitoring sites have been established within different vegetation types and vegetation baseline data, including species composition, is recorded regularly. Changes in vegetation communities, particularly in response to fire, can be monitored over time. After a fire, sites are visited and plant regeneration and individual species recovery are monitored.

Native animals

DoE staff and volunteer groups have conducted some animal surveys on the park. Among the 87 bird species recorded were the powerful owl, glossy black-cockatoo and grey goshawk. A frog survey discovered 11 species. Resource Rangers have periodically conducted general animal surveys to update existing information.
The Koala Coast Research Team has conducted three koala surveys, two in 1996 and one in 1997. Koala numbers were estimated at between 43 and 96 for the national park, indicating that it provides valuable habitat for koalas. The greater glider has also been seen in the picnic area.

Introduced plants and animals

The weed problem is not severe. groundsel bush and mistflower, both declared plants, have invaded some park areas. Other weeds posing a threat to the park's natural species diversity include lantana, corky passion vine, smooth senna and summer grass. Ochna is also present. Feral animals on the park include cane toads, cats and dogs. Stray dogs are currently posing the most significant threat to native animals. As housing developments increase along the park boundary, domestic cats and dogs will pose a greater threat. Horses being ridden on the park are contributing to track erosion.

Fire management

A fuel load monitoring project has been operating since 1993, with fuel load assessed by both weight and photo monitoring evaluations. A draft fire management plan was prepared in 1993.

Joint fire management is now the responsibility of agencies involved in the KBCCA. DoE has the lead role in fire monitoring for the KBCCA. Regular meetings between agencies are held and a planned burning program has been developed for the entire KBCCA.

In February 1995, a wildfire burnt out 190ha of the 415ha park.

Cultural heritage

The cultural heritage significance of the area is yet to be determined.

Recreation and tourism

The park has picnic and barbecue facilities and a variety of walking tracks. A new amenities block including composting toilets has recently been added and a plan exists to redevelop the carpark area and picnic facilities, both of which are in urgent need of attention. Degraded facilities such as picnic tables and barbecues may pose a risk to visitors. Emergencies arising from visitors becoming lost or injured regularly occur within the KBCCA.

Horseriders, mountain bike riders and occasionally trailbike riders use areas designated as road reserve (gazetted road). These uses often conflict with bushwalking and other more passive pursuits.

Public contact and education

A visitor information sheet was produced in 1997 for the national park and one is being prepared for the entire KBCCA. The current visitor information facility and entrance area needs to be redeveloped as the information is outdated and the shelter is temporary.

Public contact Rangers from Daisy Hill and independent school groups are increasingly using the park as a venue for natural history education.

Venman Bushland Park Road reserves

Several road reserves are within the national park. Some sections are unformed and follow undisturbed natural vegetation of high conservation value. Existing tracks traversing the park do not necessarily follow these road reserves.

Problems linked with public access to these road reserves include the dumping and burning of stolen cars, mountain bike and trailbike riding, and four-wheel-drive use.

Horses may legally use the gazetted roads passing through the park. However, the road reserve is not always clearly marked.

Plan implementation and monitoring

The management plan will be implemented by DoE Central Moreton District staff based at Daisy Hill Koala Centre with help from the Conservation Resource Unit at Moggill. As the park will be managed as part of the KBCCA, the Redland Shire Council, Logan City Council and Department of Natural Resources will be involved in management decisions for the entire area.

Desired outcomes

Plants, especially any rare or threatened species, are protected.
Natural vegetation community types are protected.

Animals, especially any rare or threatened species, are protected.

Declared noxious weeds are controlled on the park.
Other weeds are controlled and, where possible, eliminated from the park.
The impact of feral and domestic animals is minimised.

Fire is used to maintain maximum species diversity on the park. Fire does not put any visitors, staff or neighbours at risk.

Places and items of cultural heritage significance are protected.

Visitors can enjoy safe, nature-based recreation without disturbing other visitors or compromising conservation values of the park.

Visitors are well-informed about the importance of both the park and the KBCCA, of which Venman Bushland is a part.

Environmental impacts on the park caused by uncontrolled access and non-conforming activities are minimised.

The management plan is implemented effectively.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

Collate existing biological information and monitoring data.
Continue a plant monitoring project for the park which involves vegetation monitoring at 14 permanent sites and maintaining a herbarium collection for the area.
Ensure fire management aims to maintain natural species diversity and community processes.

Continue animal survey and monitoring work.
Assess the needs of rare and threatened species and incorporate the findings into responsible and informed habitat management.
Actively encourage volunteer naturalist groups and university groups to participate in animal survey and monitoring work. A fish survey of Tingalpa Creek would be a high priority as rare and/or threatened species may occur in these waters. Threatened species have been recorded in Buhot Creek, a tributary of Tingalpa Creek.
Investigate the possibility of the Institute of Applied Research at Griffith University conducting research on the park for baseline ecological data, especially for animals.

Develop a weed action plan which aims to control declared noxious weeds on the park and minimises adverse effects of other weeds on natural vegetation and processes. It will be developed in conjunction with local government weed control plans.
Develop an education program about the need to control domestic animals and their possible effect on native wildlife.
Increase park patrols and have other KBCCA agency staff trained as DoE conservation officers to enforce the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.
Support the Department of Natural Resources' and local government dog and cat trapping program.

Update and amend the 1993 draft fire management plan to include:

- incorporating natural resource monitoring and fire history mapping to assist in determining better fire management regimes;
- continuing to develop a joint fire management strategy with the other KBCCA agencies;
- developing wildfire response plans and prescribed burning programs in consultation with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority and local rural fire brigade;
- developing a strategy to evacuate visitors from the park when prescribed burning is being undertaken or in periods of extreme fire danger;
- liaising with neighbours, especially Kimberley Park neighbours who have houses directly bordering the park, about fire management;
- continuing fire monitoring and fuel load monitoring; and
- maintaining formal barbecues to deter visitors from lighting unconfined fires that may escape.

Conduct a cultural heritage assessment of the area including Jack Venman's house.

Rationalise the track network and mark tracks with appropriate directional signs to reduce the chance of people becoming lost. Unused tracks should be closed. Directional signs are necessary but should not be obtrusive.

Harden and landscape the carpark and picnic area to enhance the park's scenic amenity. In accordance with the site plan being developed for the area, deteriorating picnic facilities such as tables and barbecues should be upgraded or replaced to prevent visitor injury. Assess the safety of Jack Venman's house and, if possible, it should be maintained and used for management or interpretive purposes.

Allow only pedestrian access to prevent conflict of interest between park users.

Train on-ground staff from other agencies involved in KBCCA management as conservation officers, to enforce regulations under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Develop an information shelter in the carpark area.

Finish producing the visitor information sheet for the KBCCA which includes information on the national park.

Place interpretive signs at the park entrance so visitors can increase their understanding of the importance of conserving these areas and the advantage of enjoying a minimal-impact experience. As most visitors enter through the main access gate, interpretive displays should be located within the main carpark and picnic area and include the story of Jack Venman and his donation of the land for conservation.

Increase liaison with neighbours to protect park values.

Conduct an assessment of the impacts of road reserves on the park's natural and recreational values.

Negotiate with Redland Shire Council, Logan City Council and Department of Natural Resources regarding rationalisation of the gazetted road network within the national park and the management of other road reserves within the KBCCA.

Develop a staff schedule for plan implementation which identifies priorities for park management.

Hold regular meetings with the KBCCA to ensure co-ordinated management between the relevant agencies.