



A Master Plan for Queensland's parks and forests

to 2025



Prepared by: **Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing.**

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Front cover image: Bushwalking in Carnarvon National Park. Image on this page: Cathedral Beach, Fraser Island.

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Respect for Traditional Owners

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) respects the rights, responsibilities, knowledge and aspirations of Indigenous peoples. Central to all QPWS work is the recognition of the critical roles of Indigenous people as custodians of their land and sea country and as skilled partners in management of wildlife and the protected area system.

Respect is paid to the Elders past and present of Queensland's lands and waters.

National parks are the foundation of our state's rich biodiversity and unique natural environments. Through proper management, strong partnerships and skilled and dedicated people, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) aims to ensure that our parks are protected, enjoyed and valued by all Queenslanders and our visitors now and into the future.

Queensland's parks and forests, with their diverse ecosystems and opportunities for recreational activities and sustainable ecotourism ventures, also play an important role in building strong, healthy and prosperous communities.

Queensland is home to over 1000 national parks, forests and other protected areas, including five World Heritage Areas—more than any other State.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service manages over 12.5 million hectares of land which is an area larger than 50% of the world's countries.

This Master Plan is a living document that will guide the next decade of park and forest management in Queensland. Five Service Areas describe our business. Goals and actions under each Service Area build on past successes, incorporate new initiatives and set new directions.

Our success as an organisation will be built on a foundation of enhancing connections with our customers, establishing parks and forests as the preferred destinations for tourism and recreation and ensuring healthy species and ecosystems.

Our promise

Experience **freedom**

A sense of **adventure**

And a **personal connection** with people and special places in nature ... keep discovering!

What are our parks and forests?

Parks and forests managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service include:

- national parks and regional parks declared under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*;
- marine parks declared under the *Marine Parks Act 2004*;
- fish habitat areas declared under the *Fisheries Act 1994*;
- state forests and timber reserves declared under the *Forestry Act 1959*;
- the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (in partnership with the Commonwealth).

Glass House Mountains.



Our vision

Queensland's outstanding parks and forests are protected, enjoyed and cherished now and into the future, enhancing Queenslanders' wellbeing and prosperity.

The vision recognises:

- Queensland's natural and cultural heritage must be conserved for the benefit of current and future generations.
- Our protected areas on land and sea are part of a national and global protected area system, and are the cornerstone of an integrated strategy across all tenures to conserve and present natural and cultural heritage in Queensland.
- Parks and forests provide the life essentials of clean air and water, act as nursery grounds for important species, and increase the environment's resilience to climate variations and natural disasters.
- Healthy and well-managed protected areas are the foundation of Queensland's ecotourism industry and provide economic benefits for local and regional communities.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain strong links with country, and their custodianship is critical to the conservation of bio-cultural diversity.
- Continued connections between people and nature are essential for the health and wellbeing of communities and the conservation of nature.
- Environmental stewardship of our parks and forests is the responsibility of the whole community—landholders, Traditional Owners, all levels of government, industry and the wider community.
- Natural resource use or necessary development within parks and forests must be undertaken with minimal impact and managed sustainably.
- Our employees are known for their generosity, professionalism and commitment to the values of QPWS.

Our values

- Our highest priority is the **conservation** of Queensland's natural and cultural treasures for all, forever.
- Together with Traditional Owners and other landholders, we are committed to environmental **stewardship** on behalf of all Queenslanders.
- We regard **meaningful engagement** with our community as vital to the future of Queensland's wildlife, land and sea.
- We believe our environment is enriched and strengthened by **diversity** of culture, people, ideas, nature and landscapes.
- Being genuine, practical, grounded and acting with **integrity** is in our nature.
- We value **effectiveness** founded on science, ingenuity and evidence-based decisions.



Boodjamulla National Park. Parks provide important places where people can enjoy recreation and scenic beauty. In remote and regional areas they can be a major contributor to local economies.

Photo: Mark Nemeth, Queensland Government.

Challenges and opportunities to address

Challenges

Balancing improved conservation with the growth of the tourism industry; and providing better access for all Queenslanders and visitors.

Making national park management a priority, concentrating on healthy species and ecosystems, fire and pest management, being good neighbours, and being prepared for any event in a constrained fiscal environment.

Working to maintain effective and collaborative management with Traditional Owners and other agencies.

Sustainably managing resource use industries.

Building better partnerships and relationships with the wider community.

Opportunities

Fostering world-class destinations and experiences.

Encouraging and supporting an ecotourism industry that contributes to the conservation of our natural areas.

Encouraging all Queenslanders and visitors to connect with, appreciate and value our unique environments.

Reviewing and consolidating the protected area system to provide improved access while maintaining the natural and cultural values.

Improving customer service, reducing red tape and achieving operational efficiencies for sustainable tourism, recreation and other protected area uses.

Prioritising, planning, evaluating and enhancing our management and business practices.

Building our knowledge and skills, making the most of our resources, and reinvesting savings into better service delivery with targeted outcomes.

Continuing to build on our working relationships with neighbouring land owners and other partners to enhance on-ground management.

Investigating alternative and innovative revenue streams and new approaches to service delivery through contestability.

Enhancing our relationships with other state and federal agencies and other land managers to ensure efficient and effective management arrangements.

Continuing to deliver improved partnership arrangements for national parks with Traditional Owners.

Developing collaborative partnerships across land and sea and exploring capacity building opportunities.

Working effectively with government, business, industry and community groups to ensure a sustainable, risk-based approach that supports the economy.

Promoting the connection between the health of a community and its individuals with the health of their natural environment.

Continuing to build partnerships with the community and support volunteer experiences to help protect and enhance our national parks and other protected areas.

Main Range National Park.



Our approach

The Master Plan for Queensland's parks and forests outlines the strategic objectives for management to 2025 in the five core QPWS Service Areas.

Managing parks and forests for conservation and for people

Facilitating ecotourism, recreation and heritage experiences within the protected area estate

Providing protected area services with Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities

Managing protected area permissions

Enhancing management capability



The view from Porcupine Gorge platform.

Service areas

QPWS has identified five Service Areas to deliver protected area management and address the challenges and opportunities it faces. The first four Service Areas have direct alignment to the department's service delivery responsibilities, while the fifth Service Area guides organisational governance. QPWS uses these Service Areas to identify core business and to guide future plans and strategies.

The **Queensland Plan** details a 30-year vision for our state. Together with the **Master Plan for Queensland's Parks and Forests**, it provides direction on where we need to focus our efforts and describes a future Queensland for us to strive towards.



The **Queensland Plan**

Alignment with the Queensland Plan

The Master Plan contributes to multiple Queensland Plan foundation areas and QPWS is a key contributor to the three Queensland Plan targets below:

Target 14: Environmental guardian – Queensland is recognised as a world-leader in environmental management and protection



Service Area 1 – Managing parks and forests for conservation and for people

QPWS will manage our parks and forests to sustain our natural and cultural values and build environmental resilience. A comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of QPWS park and forest management will measure our performance.

Target 15: Environmental balance – Queensland has the best balance of environmental protection and economic development in Australia



Service Area 2 – Facilitating ecotourism, recreation and heritage experiences within the protected area estate

QPWS will foster best practice delivery of sustainable ecotourism opportunities that contribute to the conservation of our natural and cultural values and benefit local economies.

Target 20: Queenslanders are highly satisfied with the way governments deliver for their communities



Service Area 4 – Managing protected area permissions

Queensland's parks and forests provide sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits to the Queensland community.

Details of the QPWS targets are included on page 17.

Managing parks and forests for conservation and for people

Our goals

- Manage our parks and forests to sustain natural and cultural values and build environmental resilience to ensure healthy species and ecosystems for future generations.
- Establish strong partnerships to deliver benefits to parks and forests and the community.

Queensland's diverse parks and forests are refuges for a wide variety of life forms, including threatened plants and animals. They also support the health of our communities, current and future, by providing fresh air, clean water, and productive soils and oceans. Fire has long played an integral and essential role in maintaining our parks and forests.

Since the State declared its first national park in 1908, Queensland's terrestrial and marine protected area system has been extended to represent our diverse ecosystems, land and seascapes. It is timely to review what we have and prioritise our resources to consolidate and achieve a well-designed protected area system. Our parks and forests need to be resilient to threats, include outstanding examples of natural and cultural heritage such as World Heritage sites, and benefit the community. A particular focus will be on ensuring the parks and forests are achieving their most suitable purpose and are afforded the appropriate level of protection and funding.

Greater accountability to the community and government and increasing competition for resources means that QPWS must be resourceful, innovative and forward thinking in its management of parks and forests. Understanding our land and sea management priorities is vital so we can use our resources effectively across the state. In addition to conserving our natural and cultural values, we seek to deliver social, health and economic benefits to the community through our own efforts and a variety of cooperative management arrangements. A responsive and adaptive approach is needed toward

parks and forest management so that we can build on past successes, adapt to new circumstances and provide the best possible service to our customers.

What we will do

A well-designed protected area system

- Prioritise our investment in the protected area system to ensure the most important values are protected for future generations.
- Use an agreed methodology based on science, to assign all parks and forests the most appropriate classes of protection.
- Balance the protection of the park values with the broader aspirations of the community.
- Consolidate the protected area system in accordance with the guiding principles for ecosystem representation and appropriately resource new acquisitions to protect natural and cultural values.

Planning for management where it is needed most

- Develop a system that sets performance standards for park and forest management.
- Establish an investment strategy with clear funding priorities to deliver improved park management and resilience to threats.
- Deliver park management planning that identifies, evaluates and responds to park and forest values and threats, indicators of change and emerging issues according to a management effectiveness evaluation framework.

Park profile: Raine Island National Park

Raine Island National Park protects species and habitats of exceptional value.

It supports the world's largest known rookery for the vulnerable green turtle, the most significant seabird rookeries in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, and significant cultural heritage values.

Raine Island National Park is managed in partnership with the Traditional Owners and programs are currently focussed on the management and conservation of turtles and maintaining the viability of the island to improve nesting and hatching success.



Brown booby with chick on Raine Island National Park. Photo: Qld Govt.

Healthy species and ecosystems

- Use an adaptive management approach supported by a scientific basis to improve our understanding of ecosystem health and deliver enhanced park and forest management over time.
- Prioritise efforts towards maintaining the condition of those areas that support significant species or ecosystems.
- Support the recovery and restoration of species, habitats and natural and cultural assets through targeted programs and partnerships with other organisations and agencies.
- Maintain the values of World Heritage properties and Ramsar sites as outstanding examples of natural and cultural heritage.
- Record and document what we learn and support others to help us.

Fire management for protection of life, property and natural and cultural values

- Continuously improve the management of fire in parks and forests through a fire management program based on best practice operations, innovative science and enhanced technical support.
- Develop a strategic approach to the protection of life and property, with particular emphasis on protecting neighbouring landholders and communities.
- Complete planned burn programs to reduce fuel loads, protect infrastructure and conserve natural systems and processes in accordance with bioregional planned burn guidelines.
- Adequately maintain the QPWS network of roads and firebreaks.

- Ensure our workforce is well trained and equipped to respond to wildfire outbreaks.
- Foster a cooperative approach to fire management with other land management agencies, neighbours and the community.

Control of invasive species

- Work closely with our neighbours and conservation partners to deliver effective and collaborative pest management.
- Prioritise pest management to reduce populations of pest animals in areas where they are affecting key values, including significant species, ecological functions or cultural values.
- Foster a partnership approach with other agencies, community organisations, including volunteers, to control or eradicate invasive plants and pathogens, with a focus on preventing the establishment of new pests and pathogens, preventing further spread, and controlling their impact.
- Test new and emerging technologies in pest management and adopt new approaches where appropriate.

Well maintained and managed assets and infrastructure

- Prioritise delivery of an infrastructure program to improve access for visitors and make parks safer while protecting natural and cultural values.
- Apply contemporary standards and innovation when planning new infrastructure to ensure it is the best value for money over the life of the asset.
- Regularly review the QPWS fleet and equipment to ensure efficiency gains through cost reduction and output improvement.

Prioritising park management according to service standards

Levels of service standards are a fundamental tool in prioritising park and forest management across the state. They set out acceptable minimum levels of service delivery and provide a baseline to guide priorities across QPWS business.



Cassowary chick. Photo: Adam Creed, Queensland Government.

Parks and people that are prepared for any event

- Where possible provide early warning of risks so that visitors and customers are informed and well-prepared.
- Ensure plans and procedures and skilled and well-equipped employees and volunteers are in place to respond to disasters and incidents, including cyclones, bushfires, floods and marine incidents.
- Ensure that actions undertaken by QPWS during incidents minimise environmental harm to our natural and cultural values, and that the values are restored where possible.
- Focus on protecting and assisting in the recovery of communities as the highest priority during major disasters and incidents.

Partnerships in conservation

- Support the declaration and management of Indigenous protected areas.
- Collaborate with managers of private protected areas to complement Queensland's protected area system.
- Continue to seek private sector and philanthropic investment in specific parks and forest initiatives including ecotourism, land purchase and management, revegetation, habitat and cultural heritage restoration, and research.
- Build on partnerships with academic and research institutions to increase our knowledge and capacity to manage parks for the conservation of natural and cultural values.
- Enlist the support of neighbours to support park and forest management.

Green turtle.

Marine areas

Three state marine parks, incorporating over 72,000 square kilometres, and 70 fish habitat areas covering over 10,000 square kilometres make up the marine protected area network in Queensland. These multiple-use areas are established to protect and conserve natural values and enhance fisheries production. A wide variety of activities such as fishing, tourism and research are managed in marine parks, and fish habitat areas focus on protecting key fish habitats from the impacts of coastal development. QPWS also plays a critical role in supporting the day-to-day management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.



Facilitating ecotourism, recreation and heritage experiences within the protected area estate

Our goals

- Queensland is Australia's number one ecotourism destination and a recognised world leader in ecotourism, delivering best practice nature-based experiences that contribute to the conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.
- Our local communities and visitors are active outdoors, value our diverse recreational opportunities and natural and cultural heritage, and have a life-long appreciation of our parks and forests.

Queensland's parks and forests are internationally renowned for their beauty, diversity and unique natural values, providing a competitive advantage to the tourism industry. By working with our partners to promote and sustainably manage nature-based tourism, Queensland has the opportunity to be the destination of choice for authentic and meaningful tourism experiences in nature.

Parks and forests in Queensland are also popular among people seeking outdoor recreational experiences. They are places where people can experience a sense of freedom, adventure, and a personal connection with people and special places in nature. This connection can contribute to our health and wellbeing, enrich our lives and encourage advocacy for our parks and forests. QPWS is committed to enhancing the health and wellbeing of communities by supporting a wide range of recreational activities, visitor infrastructure and providing innovative interpretive services.

A big part of our connection to parks and forests is cultural heritage. For Traditional Owners, cultural values are tightly entwined with a connection to land and sea country. A shared and multi-cultural history and a commitment to conservation are a major part of Queensland's non-Indigenous heritage. QPWS will share, cherish and protect Queensland's natural and cultural values and foster an ideology of parks connected to people through fun, discovery, adventure, education and cultural appreciation.

The majority of Queenslanders now live in cities and our children are spending more of their leisure time indoors. New terms like 'Nature Deficit Disorder' and the 'Extinction of Experience' are emerging as ways to describe how more people, particularly children and teenagers, are losing touch with their surrounding natural environment. An active connection with nature offers a way to address a range of health issues, and Queensland's parks and forests provide unlimited opportunities to get outdoors and connect with nature.

Mountain biking on South Molle Island.



What we will do

Nurturing world-class destinations and experiences

- Prioritise tourism and visitor investment according to ecotourism potential, patterns of use, market needs and visitor impacts, with a focus on our most iconic places, the ‘jewels in the crown’ delivering world-class tourism experiences.
- Implement policies to improve access and provide new opportunities in national parks for ecotourism operators and visitors.
- Increase the profile of Queensland’s parks and forests experiences and visitation through strategic marketing with our partners.
- Provide for and actively identify opportunities for private investment in ecologically sustainable, innovative tourism activities on parks and forests that will enhance Queensland’s reputation as a world leading ecotourism destination.
- Encourage best practice standards from tourism operators and work with them to ensure the highest level of compliance with compulsory eco-certification requirements.
- Develop an industry capacity-building program to increase the quality of interpretation of natural values and cultural heritage.

Creating places for people

- Strategically plan and manage parks and forests to provide a range of settings for outdoor recreational experiences – from challenging adventure in wild and remote locations, to regional parks with contemporary infrastructure and services.
- Develop iconic tourism and recreation hubs, including world-class gateway visitor centres, to enhance tourism

and recreation experiences and encourage commercial partnerships and investment.

- Prioritise investment in visitor sites to provide facilities that people want and need, listening to the ideas of the tourism industry and recreational users, that are consistent with a landscape classification system.
- Engage with volunteer and recreational interest groups, neighbours and the private sector to assist with the maintenance of visitor facilities, recreational assets and monitoring of impacts.
- Draw on our partnerships to identify recreational opportunities, inform best practice delivery of recreation activities and meet community aspirations.

Getting active outdoors

- Use events and other innovative and world-class experiences to attract new audiences, particularly young people, to explore and discover parks and forests.
- Identify trends in park visitation and tourism and recreation needs, and develop strategies that will maintain our contemporary relevance and increase recognition of the social, health and lifestyle benefits of parks and forests.
- Promote healthy lifestyles and environmental stewardship, especially to young people, by encouraging outdoor recreation activities in parks and forests.
- Foster a collaborative approach with the outdoor recreation sector and other land managers to provide world-class outdoor recreation opportunities.

Encourage people to connect with and appreciate parks and forests

- Develop a customer-oriented, interactive national parks web presence and social media strategy that innovatively presents Queensland’s unique national park and wildlife experiences.

Strengthening our connections to visitors

Our rangers and partners extend a warm and friendly welcome to visitors as they explore and discover our parks and forests. We invite people to listen and share our stories about parks and forests as this may add value to their experiences. We stand for knowledge, expertise, best practice management and are ambassadors for our parks.



Carnarvon Gorge Wilderness Lodge; neighbouring Carnarvon Gorge National Park.

- Rangers and trained volunteers will actively seek out park visitors and share their stories as ambassadors for our parks.
- Use powerful messaging, and a positive ranger presence to promote and encourage visitors to be future stewards of our parks and forests.
- Foster a culture of stewardship among tourism operators and volunteers to deliver quality interpretation, maintain and monitor natural and cultural values, and encourage community involvement and a sense of ownership.
- Deliver targeted programs to attract children and school groups to parks and forests and work in consultation with schools and education bodies to incorporate nature-based experiential learning in the curriculum.

Quality heritage experiences

- Recognise the right of Traditional Owners to conserve and manage their heritage and acknowledge their values and connections to country.
- Work closely with Traditional Owners and the tourism industry to provide quality ecotourism and interpretation experiences that foster environmental and cultural understanding and conservation.
- Manage cultural heritage places and landscapes as dynamic locations with opportunities for cultural tourism, recreation, education, commercial activities and community involvement.
- Identify cultural heritage sites with the potential for adaptive re-use and partnerships and support the development of these sites where possible to conserve cultural heritage and provide heritage tourism experiences and economic opportunities to communities.



St Helena Island National Park, established in October 1979, was Queensland's first cultural heritage national park. QPWS works toward preserving the ruins and artefacts on the island from further degradation and accurately presenting the park and its history to visitors. The Wrecks, Moreton Island National Park.



Providing protected area services with Traditional Owners and Indigenous communities

Our goals

- There is a strong culture of respect for the Traditional Owners and an understanding of cultural values within QPWS.
- We recognise native title rights and interests and engage in partnerships with Traditional Owners in managing parks and forests.
- Traditional Owners develop their capacity to benefit from the management of their land and sea country.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, managing the health of land and sea is integral to cultural wellbeing and people's livelihoods. Given that Queensland's parks and forests are a significant part of land and sea country, park and forest management is fundamental to caring for country.

QPWS will provide for the continued expression of Traditional Owners' relationships with land and sea country and will respect cultural values, including traditional lore, and customs within the limits of Commonwealth and State law. QPWS will recognise and respect native title rights and interests in land and sea country which coexist with the protection of natural values in protected areas.

We acknowledge Traditional Owners as custodians of their land and sea country and the significant knowledge and skills they offer towards the protection and presentation of Queensland's parks and forests. Building closer partnerships with Traditional Owners will deliver improved park management outcomes through understanding, respect and application of traditional ecological knowledge passed down through centuries of experience.

Our parks and forests are increasingly significant in providing opportunities to Traditional Owners for training and employment and building capacity as land managers. QPWS also recognises the aspirations of Traditional Owners to derive cultural and economic benefits from the management of their land and sea country.

Strong partnerships

Traditional Owners and the State's protected area managers have established strong partnerships ensuring that both the natural and cultural values of protected areas are conserved for the benefit of all. These partnerships are reflected in joint management programs, collaborative management agreements, cultural awareness training and a significant number of Traditional Owner initiatives.



Talking with visitors about the rich cultural heritage of Carnarvon National Park.

Photo: Robert Ashdown, Queensland Government.

A QPWS officer and Traditional Owner jointly managing weeds on Lilyvale Nature Refuge. This work will also help protect Lama Lama National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land).

Photo: Buzz Symonds, Queensland Government.

What we will do

Recognise and respect native title rights and interests

- Continue to recognise native title rights and interests that coexist with parks and forests.
- Deliver on commitments with Traditional Owners in accordance with established agreements.
- Develop new agreements that recognise native title rights and interests in the management of parks and forests.
- Involve Traditional Owners and apply traditional ecological knowledge in the planning, management, conservation and presentation of parks and forests.

Collaborative partnerships for better management of land and sea

- Develop new partnerships to guide future management of parks and forests.
- Support QPWS staff to develop and sustain positive relationships with Traditional Owners, ensuring that all communication is appropriate, informed and respectful.
- Enhance the cultural capability of QPWS, with cultural capability training for staff and volunteers.
- Continue to work with Traditional Owners in the interpretation of Aboriginal culture and in educating visitors to respect cultural values in the parks and forests.
- Appropriately acknowledge Traditional Owners, traditional ecological knowledge and intellectual property rights in the presentation of parks and forests.

Capacity building for Traditional Owners

- Assist Traditional Owners to access a range of programs and funding to provide employment opportunities in aspects of park and forest management.
- Support appropriate training and sustainable employment and service contracting opportunities for parks and forests wherever possible.

- Support Traditional Owners wishing to establish businesses and initiatives linked with park and forest management.
- Support the whole-of-landscape approach that Traditional Owners have in delivering land and sea country management through collaboration and coordination with initiatives led by other agencies.



Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land).

Photo: Adam Creed, Queensland Government.

Managing protected area permissions

Our goal

- Queensland's parks and forests provide sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits to the Queensland community.

Many parks and forests support ecologically sustainable activities and community infrastructure that are important for Queensland's economic and social wellbeing. A risk-based management approach will be applied to requests to access parks and forests for recreation, commercial activities, research and other uses. Any activity involving natural resource use or development within parks and forests must be undertaken with minimal impact and managed sustainably.

We manage a wide range of permissions on parks and forests, including camping permits, and many of these activities help us in the delivery of our goals. We are committed to managing permissions in a way that reduces red tape, improves administrative management and compliance and delivers best practice sustainable and risk-based management.

State forests are valued as a source of timber, quarry, grazing and other forest products. A balanced, multiple-use management philosophy is needed that incorporates recreation, ecotourism and conservation.

Right: Whitehaven Tour, Whitsundays.
Below: 4WD on Seventy-five Mile Beach, Fraser Island.



What we will do

Improving access for public enjoyment

- Provide effective booking systems that are fast, reliable, informative, flexible and customer focussed.
- Reduce the number and complexity of permit types administered by QPWS and remove inconsistencies in how permits are administered.
- Provide clear, contemporary advice and simplify permit application processes for customers wishing to undertake activities in protected areas.
- Develop baseline standards and achieve improvements in the integrity, quality, timeliness and consistency of permit assessments.

Sustainable resource use

- Apply a risk-based management approach in determining appropriate resource use, dependent on potential conservation, economic and social benefits, and consistency with protected area management principles.
- Develop a consistent framework to monitor and audit the impacts of all resource use to ensure sustainable outcomes.
- Ensure that utilities and infrastructure on or adjacent to parks and forests are managed to minimise impacts on natural and cultural values and provide economic or social benefit to the Queensland community.
- Secure alternative benefits for conservation, consistent with protected area management principles, where impacts to natural and cultural values are unavoidable and enduring.

- Ensure that where the use of parks and forest resources results in economic gain, a conservation, economic or social benefit is returned to the state.

Delivering benefits through compliance

- Develop a targeted compliance program across land and sea areas that achieves high levels of user compliance with permission conditions and regulatory requirements.
- Work with commercial and recreational fishers and other government agencies to develop strategies for sustainable management of significant species and ecosystems in marine parks and other waters.
- Establish industry incentives with our partners to balance resource use with protection and enhancement of natural and cultural values.
- Work with communities to develop codes of conduct that promote best practice standards and a risk management approach to permit administration.

Fishing, Russell River, Tropical North Queensland.



Enhancing management capability

Our goals

- QPWS attracts and retains a skilled, well equipped and motivated workforce that achieves an adaptive approach to parks and forest management.
- Our people have a reputation for performance and innovation in service delivery to our customers.

Our workforce will play a vital role in the future of Queensland's natural and cultural heritage. Our rangers in particular, are critical to the everyday operations of QPWS. Their knowledge, skills and dedication, coupled with the support of a team of specialists, ensure that conservation work on land and sea is carried out to the highest possible standard. Through the skills, enthusiasm and commitment of all of our people, QPWS is a productive, inspiring and positive place to work.

With some parks located in the most remote parts of Queensland, it can be a significant challenge to attract and retain staff, to meet their social and welfare needs, provide career development opportunities and to sustain and transfer corporate and traditional knowledge. QPWS must meet contemporary standards as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Policy alone cannot achieve or maintain an enthusiastic, welcoming and safe environment. Dedication, integrity and pride of all staff members from the most senior to the newest rangers is required. We are accountable to the community, which means that QPWS must be resourceful, innovative and forward thinking. A flexible, responsive and resilient workforce is needed so that resources can be applied where and when they are most needed and that the most appropriate service delivery solution is employed for every aspect of QPWS business.

Park maintenance. Photo: Queensland Govt.



Contestability and parks and forest management

QPWS will develop new approaches to service delivery that meet the contemporary needs of Queenslanders and visitors, with a clear goal of being more flexible, responsive and resource-efficient. This includes exploring new opportunities to engage with partners to give our visitors and clients access to timely, high-quality services while delivering improved park management outcomes, and demonstrating value for investment.

Contestability is a process of testing the market to ensure the public is provided with the best possible solution at the best possible price and QPWS will review a range of its services within this context.

Biomass sampling at Taunton. Photo: Rhonda Melzer, Queensland Govt.



What we will do

A capable and sustainable workforce

- Prepare and routinely review our workforce plan to guide the development of QPWS to meet our core values.
- Promote contemporary attitudes, behaviours and innovative ideas that make QPWS workplaces friendly and welcoming to staff and visitors.
- Provide leadership training and professional development, supportive employment programs for young people, flexible work options and other incentives to attract and retain a diverse workforce.
- Develop a professional development framework that engages and equips our people to deliver better outcomes for our parks and forests, for our visitors and partners, and all Queenslanders.
- Ensure QPWS is a safe workplace and demonstrates excellence in managing organisational health and safety and staff welfare.

Excellence in service delivery and governance

- Embrace systems, technologies and tools to improve the effectiveness of park and forest management and reduce red tape.
- Ensure our employees are skilled in project management to deliver services on time and to budget.
- Investigate models for contestability in service delivery across park and forest management.
- Undertake quality control of contracting arrangements to ensure they maintain management standards and are delivered efficiently and effectively.
- Ensure seamless integration between strategic, business and operational planning.

- Simplify processes to reduce administrative burden for both staff and customers.

Organisational leadership and innovation

- Foster a shared understanding of QPWS' role in meeting our customers' needs.
- Support leadership development programs and training, for emerging leaders in particular, to increase accountability across the organisation.
- Engage mentors to nurture organisational growth and corporate knowledge and achieve high performance standards.
- Ensure learning and innovation is acknowledged in QPWS business planning, resource allocation, regulations, policies and procedures.
- Reward, recognise and celebrate our successes.

Adaptive and effective management

- Implement a management system for QPWS that connects and integrates management planning, business planning, resource allocation, on-ground implementation, evaluation and adaptation.
- Foster an adaptive management approach, with regular reviews of management effectiveness and the impacts of parks and forest values and threats, including indicators of change and emerging issues.
- Build and share a knowledge bank and identify priority information and monitoring needs from evaluations of management effectiveness.
- Establish partnerships to share knowledge, identify priority knowledge gaps and ensure new and emerging research practices are applied.



Rangers monitoring water birds on Lake Broadwater Conservation Park Photo: Robert Ashdown, Queensland Government.

Our targets

QPWS service areas	Targets
Managing parks and forests for conservation and for people	1. By December 2014, terrestrial protected areas created since 2002 are reviewed in accordance with scientific methodology to ensure an appropriate class of protection.
	2. By 2020, all parks and forests have appropriate folios, planning documents and management plans or management statements completed according to their levels of service.
	3. By 2018, a comprehensive evaluation is completed that evaluates the effectiveness of QPWS in park and forest management.
	4. By 2025, 100% of parks and forests are managed according to the service standards outlined in a state-wide prioritisation system.
	5. By 2025, a consistent approach is applied to document the condition of parks and forest values; and strategies are in place to ensure values are maintained to acceptable standards.
Facilitating ecotourism, recreation and heritage experiences within the protected area estate	6. By 2020, Queensland's parks and forests are recognised as world-class in their management and the visitor services and experiences they offer.
	7. By 2020, Queensland is an industry leader in best practice delivery of sustainable ecotourism opportunities that contribute to the conservation of our natural and cultural values.
	8. By 2020, all Queenslanders recognise our parks and forests as places to connect with people and nature and value parks and forests as integral to our health and wellbeing.
Providing protected area services with Traditional Owners	9. By 2025, the number of effective partnerships between QPWS and Traditional Owners is increased to enable Traditional Owners to meet their cultural obligations while contributing to effective parks and forest management.
	10. By 2025, an increased proportion of Traditional Owners are developing capacity to deliver protected area management services for their land and sea country.
Managing protected area permissions	11. By 2018, red tape is reduced by 20% across QPWS permissions.
	12. By 2015, a risk-based permissions management framework is developed, effectively coordinating the sustainable use of natural resources on parks and forests.
	13. By 2020, a risk-based permissions management model is implemented and 100% of parks and forests permissions are managed in accordance with this model.
Enhancing management capability	14. By 2015, a contemporary training, development and renewal framework is developed to ensure our ranger workforce is equipped to deliver on the strategic priorities of QPWS.
	15. By 2020, strategies are implemented to ensure that QPWS is an employer of choice for conservation professionals.



The **Queensland Plan**

Our targets shown here for Service Areas 1, 2 and 4 directly contribute to several foundation areas in **The Queensland Plan** – and specifically targets 14, 15 and 20.

For further information, refer to page 4.



View from Carlo Sandblow, Great Sandy National Park.

Herbie – a symbol for conservation

Herbie, a symbol of QPWS since 1976, is widely recognised in the Queensland community and internationally and is now intrinsically linked to Queensland's world-class experiences.

Herbie is a Herbert River ringtail possum *Pseudochirus herbertensis* which is unique to Queensland. These possums live in the tropical upland forests between the Herbert River Gorge and Cooktown in far north Queensland. Their habitat is restricted and they are rarely seen as they move around the highest branches of the forest at night.

The Herbert River ringtail possum depends on careful management of the environment for its survival, and is a symbol of our responsibility to protect our natural heritage.

