

# Information sheet

## Visitor Management

### Information for applicants: Standard guided tour permit

*This information sheet is an “Applicants guide” relevant to persons proposing to apply for a standard guided tour permit (a Commercial Activity Permit under the Nature Conservation Act 1992) for Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service managed areas.*

#### Overview

The *Commercial activity permit: Standard guided tour* (standard guided tour permit) is a standardised permit, meaning the guided tour activity and any allowable secondary activities have been pre-assessed as small scale and therefore present a low to very low risk of impacting park values and native title rights and interests. There are limits to the locations in which this permit applies along with, access limits and specific condition requirements.

The standard guided tour permit is primarily for the purpose of conducting a non-competitive, walking guided tour, including a guide(s) with a small group of paying participants. The standard guided tour permit can be issued for a maximum three (3) year term.

#### Key features of the standard guided tour permit

Using Online Services (Department of Environment and Science) at the Business Queensland website (<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/> search: Online Services DES), the standard guided tour permit is a quick and easy way to gain approval for access to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) managed areas to conduct small scale commercial guided tours, determined to be consistent with the location and settings. As the locations and scale of activities have been pre-assessed, a decision on whether to grant a permit can be fast-tracked, saving time, and providing greater transparency about what can happen and where.

#### Locations

The standard guided tour permit allows access to selected QPWS managed areas where small scale, low impact activities are suited. Included areas are where suitable infrastructure is available such as walking tracks, roads, visitor facilities (e.g. lookouts and boardwalks), day-use areas and camping areas, that are suitable in supporting a small, guided tour group, with some selected secondary activities.

Not all locations are permitted under the standard guided tour permit. Where locations are not included, a full assessment of the proposed guided tour or activity is required, and while taking longer, is an important process to ensure park values are maintained, native title rights and interests are protected, demand and use is managed, and necessary safety matters addressed.

To be clear, the standard guided tour permit cannot be used as a roving permission and the authority holder can only access those locations and undertake the secondary activities identified.

Please refer to (<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/> search: Standard guided tour permit) to view the list of approved standard guided tour permit locations.

### Activities and access limits

As mentioned above, the standard guided tour permit is primarily for the purpose of conducting a non-competitive, walking guided tour, including a guide(s) with a small group of paying participants. Competitive walking or running is not approved under the Standard guided tour permit, which requires a different authority assessment process.

The standard guided tour permit can also allow other secondary activities, such as cycling and camping, however secondary activities must be allowable in the relevant area and clearly align as a subsidiary to the primary guided tour product. The standard guided tour permit activities and access limits are contained in Table 1.

**Table 1. Activities and access limits under the standard guided tour permit per QPWS managed area**

APPROVED ACTIVITIES	ACCESS LIMITS for each QPWS managed estate				
	Maximum Group size – including staff	Total persons per day – including staff	Vehicles per day	Bicycles per day	Gross Vehicle Mass per vehicle
<b>Standard guided tour – Primary activity</b>					
Walking	≤25	≤50	—	—	—
<b>Secondary activities clearly aligned and subsidiary to the walking guided tour</b>					
Nature Study / Educational	≤25	≤50	—	—	—
Photography	≤25	≤50			
Spotlighting	≤10	≤20	—	—	—
Cycling	≤15	≤45	—	<15	—
Watercraft - non-motorised	≤15	≤45			
Motorised - 4WD	≤10	≤50	≤5	—	≤4.495 tonne
Motorised – Motor-cycle	≤10	≤20	≤10	—	—
Camping - <i>authority required via Online camping bookings</i>	≤10	≤20	≤2		≤4.495 tonne

### Information on secondary activities

As mentioned above, the standard guided tour permit includes secondary activities, where they are allowable in the relevant QPWS managed area and align as a subsidiary to the primary guided tour product. Information on the secondary activities and how they apply to the standard guided tour permit are outlined in Table 2.

There are several guiding *Operational Policies* applicable to operating a commercial guided tour on QPWS managed areas, these are available on the Department of Environment and Science website in the Policies and procedures section (<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au> – search: policies).

**Table 2. Information on secondary activities subsidiary to the guided tour product**

<b>Secondary activities subsidiary to the walking guided tour</b>	
Nature Study / Educational	The standard guided tour permit allows for the guided tour offering to include educational / nature study activities such as geological, flora and fauna observational surveys. These activities are strictly non-invasive,

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	<p>visual only with no collection or take of materials from the QPWS managed areas. The activities must stay within existing walking tracks; no off-track access is permissible under the standard guided tour permit.</p> <p>A different commercial activity permit assessment process applies for off-track activities and any activity that involves use, take, interference with natural and cultural resources.</p>
Photography	<p>The relevant legislation provides the basis for managing commercial filming and photography activities in QPWS managed areas. The standard guided tour permit does not authorise commercial filming and photography, however, it does allow the authority holder to let staff and participants, in groups of up to twenty-five people, take photographs or film for their own experience and personal use, as a secondary activity to the guided tour.</p> <p>Filming by use of Drone/UAV is not included in the standard guided tour permit. A different commercial activity assessment process applies for use of Drone/UAV activities.</p> <p>For more information refer to <i>Operational Policy: Commercial filming and photography in QPWS managed areas</i>, on the Department of Environment and Science website in the Policies and procedures section (<a href="https://parks.des.qld.gov.au">https://parks.des.qld.gov.au</a> – search: policies).</p>
Spotlighting	<p>The standard guided tour permit allows for spotlighting activities. Any spotlighting activities must stay within existing walking tracks; no off-track access is permissible under the standard guided tour permit. Spotlighting under the standard guided tour permit can occur only using a light source no more powerful than a domestic torch to ensure wildlife are not adversely impacted or disturbed.</p> <p>A different commercial activity permit assessment process applies for off-track activities or for activities involving more powerful light sources.</p>
Cycling	<p>The standard guided tour permit allows for cycling, with the <u>exclusion</u> of mountain biking (i.e. riding on rough terrain for sport, usually with specially designed mountain bikes), where it supports the primary purpose of conducting a walking guided tour. The touring style of cycling is considered low risk where access limits are adhered to, where it is secondary to the primary walking guided tour, and where there is no form of competition, adventure sport (e.g. downhill and freestyle) or organised event associated with the activity.</p> <p>The standard guided tour permit does not authorise the use of motorised bicycles (e.g. e-bikes), which require a different commercial activity permit assessment process.</p>
Watercraft - non-motorised	<p>Non-motorised water sports involving equipment such as a kayak, canoe, stand-up paddleboard, wind surfer, inflatable device and other person sit/stand-on-top craft is supported under the standard guided tour permit,</p>

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	<p>where it is secondary to the primary purpose of conducting a walking guided tour.</p> <p>Any hiring of non-motorised watercraft by the authority holder or third party must be arranged at a location outside the QPWS managed area, unless an appropriate permit has been issued for this activity within the relevant area.</p>
<p>Motorised - 4WD</p> <p>Motorised – Motor-cycle</p>	<p>A motor vehicle is a road vehicle driven by a motor and generally includes cars (inclusive of four-wheel-drive vehicles) and motorcycles. The use of cars and motorcycles is supported under the Standard guided tour permit, where it supports the primary purpose of transport to facilitate the conducting a walking guided tour. As the primary purpose is authorisation of a walking guided tour, tag-along tours or vehicle convoys are not permitted.</p>
<p>Camping</p>	<p>The standard guided tour permit allows for camping where it supports the primary purpose of conducting a guided tour. For example, some commercial tour operators may like to offer participants the opportunity to stay overnight and continue the guided tour experience the next day.</p> <p>The standard guided tour permit supports camping at the locations authorised on the permit, where it is consistent with the access limits contained in Table 1.</p> <p>Where camping overnight is sought, the authority holder is required to apply for a separate camping permit online (<a href="https://parks.des.qld.gov.au">https://parks.des.qld.gov.au</a> – search: camping bookings). This may result in groups sizes or availability being further limited, depending on specific camp site capacities available online.</p> <p>Bush camping is not acceptable under the standard guided tour permit.</p> <p>For more information refer to <i>Operational Policy: Camping on QPWS managed areas</i>, on the Department of Environment and Science website in the Policies and procedures section (<a href="https://parks.des.qld.gov.au">https://parks.des.qld.gov.au</a> – search: policies).</p>

### Structures and exclusive access

As per the relevant legislation, a person must not erect or store a structure or equipment in QPWS managed area, other than for camping under a camping permit.

Under the standard guided tour permit, the authority holder is not authorised to do the following without further written authority from the Chief Executive:

- install any permanent infrastructure or equipment
- leave or store anything on-site for any period of time
- cordon off or claim to have exclusive right of use
- erect barriers which prevent access to an area by other users
- erect permanent route markers, signs, controls, checkpoints or similar

- restrict access to barbecues, tables or other facilities in the area.

The authority holder can however bring in small scale temporary structures, that are easily packed down and removed at the conclusion of every tour. This could include for example, provision of temporary shade structures such as small-scale tents or marquees for shelter from sun, rain or wind. Other equipment can be used, such as trestle tables and chairs, where picnic facilities are not already provided, or the area is known to be in high demand.

## **Sales and advertising**

The standard guided tour permit does not authorise commercial vending activities such as the sale of food, beverages and other items in QPWS managed areas. A separate authority is required to do this. This is generally done via a Commercial Activity Agreement whereby different criteria is considered and different fees are likely to apply. Where a commercial activity is being conducted unauthorised, the person or authority holder responsible can incur a maximum penalty of 165 penalty units. For more detailed information on commercial vending refer to Operational Policy: Commercial vending on QPWS managed areas, on the Department of Environment and Science website in the Policies and procedures section (<https://parks.des.qld.gov.au> – search: policies).

## **Respecting First Nations People and culture**

The Department of Environment and Science recognises that building strong and meaningful partnerships with First Nations peoples is essential to protecting cultural and natural values, conserving biodiversity, enhancing the resilience of QPWS managed areas and conducting activities in a culturally appropriate way.

Traditional Owners or Custodians are the First Nations peoples with cultural connections and obligations to a particular area of Country. The Department encourages all existing and potential authority holders to be aware of who the Traditional Owners of a relevant area are, and where appropriate and welcomed, work with them to help ensure the best outcomes for protecting cultural heritage values in the development and delivery of a guided tour product.

Should it be determined at some future date by any court or tribunal that native title exists over the relevant area, this may affect the status of a Standard guided tour permit.

## **Applicant suitability**

Please be advised that the Permit Holder must hold public liability insurance. The standard level of cover required for all authorised activities is \$20 million.

Any applicant for this permit must make a lawful declaration relating to their suitability to hold this permission. The following elements are included in the declaration:

- The applicant is able to comply with the conditions on the standard guided tour permit, including the insurance and indemnity conditions.
- The applicant or any associated person has not been convicted of an offence within three years prior to the date of this application against legislation that protects wildlife, recreation, and protected areas.
- The applicant or any associated person has not had a departmental permit or relevant authority suspended, cancelled, or revoked in the past three years.
- The applicant does not currently have any charge, collected amount or penalty amount that is overdue; or any late payment penalty amount that is payable or any bond amount that is outstanding under a current departmental permission (whether the permission is valid or not).
- There are no other matters which may be relevant to this application.

- If this application is being made on behalf of a body corporate — the body corporate is not under external administration.

*Note: for body corporates — an applicant includes the body corporate, its executive officers, its parent body, and the parent body's executive officers.*

## How to apply

The Standard guided tour permit is available to select and apply for through the Department of Environment and Science's Online Services (<https://www.business.qld.gov.au> search: Online Services DES).

You need to pay the relevant regulated application fee and lodge your application through Online Services.

### **Human Rights Act 2019 compatibility**

The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the *Human Rights Act 2019*, the department has an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and, when making a decision, to give proper consideration to human rights. When acting or making a decision under this Standard guided tour – information sheet, officers must comply with that obligation (refer to Comply with Human Rights Act through the Queensland Government website).

### **Disclaimer**

While this document has been prepared with care, it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of Environment and Science should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action

## Approved By

Ben Klaassen

Signature

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27/03/2023

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