Operational policy

Visitor Management

Competitive events on QPWS managed areas

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of Environment and Science. Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Purpose

To provide guidance in relation to accessing marine and terrestrial Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) managed areas for competitive outdoor recreation events/activities and determining if, when, and how, competitive events are to be conducted.

Background

QPWS has a history of permitting a range of competitive events however there have been inconsistencies in application of local standards with divergent opinion on the environmental and social impacts of such events. This has resulted in variable access to parks and forests for similar events across the state. The types of events permitted have included adventure racing, dog sledding, trail running, horse riding, orienteering, rogaining, trail biking, mountain biking, fishing, triathlons and boat racing.

These events have been permitted across all tenures of QPWS managed areas without a strategic recreational planning 'whole of landscape' approach to determine appropriate areas for these activities and considerations of regional level supply between competing interests. Additional pressure is placed on QPWS to ease restrictions on access for these events as trail-based activities are an important form of outdoor recreation in Queensland (especially to the highly urbanised south east); there is an increased demand from changing recreational use patterns such as adventure racing; and there is a trend toward declining community health in Australia.

Most other Australian and overseas park agencies authorise and conduct competitive activities in protected areas through active engagement and promotion. Four Australian parks services run promotions called 'Healthy parks, healthy people' (New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia), with Victoria and New South Wales calling some protected areas 'green gyms'.

The majority of current QPWS events are relatively small and/or organised at a club level, with some large scale key events. Experience from other states indicates that it is not unreasonable to expect future pressure to conduct these types of activities in QPWS managed areas which could potentially trigger public interest considerations due to the nature, size and/or profile of the events.

The majority of QPWS authorisation for these events has been by group activity permits (now replaced with organised event permits) although participants often pay substantial entry fees, raising questions about the potential commercial nature of some events. The changing landscape and demand for competitive events in protected areas provide opportunities for developing managed, strategic regional commercial agreements and possibly Expressions of Interest (EOI's) and tender processes for these events, as peak clubs/bodies and commercial organisations often manage and represent particular sports or activities.

Policy statements

- QPWS will manage access to QPWS managed areas for the conduct of competitive events.

- QPWS regions will develop strategic plans to determine an annual quota of competitive events to be held within a particular park, marine park or within a region(s) as required.

- Strategic plans will detail what type of events can be held, the number of recommended participants per event and the areas/locations of these events.

- QPWS will seek to locate different competitive events at sites with appropriate settings, however, QPWS does recognise that in some circumstances although certain events may not be consistent with a site's setting, or averaged sustainable visitor use limit, the short-term temporary nature of such activities does not compromise the overall setting.

- All competitive events on QPWS managed areas will be authorised by an organised event permit, Commercial Activity Permit, Special Activity Permit or Commercial Agreement as deemed appropriate.

- Where a competitive event is being conducted by organisations for profit or engaged in expansion or infrastructure development through entry fees and/or sponsorship, the event will be considered commercial and require a commercial activity permit or agreement.

- If there is a high level of demand for particular events within a QPWS region the activity may be prescribed and an expression of interest to develop commercial agreements with event management organisations, clubs and associations may be developed for these activities.

- All applications for competitive events on QPWS managed areas must also address the considerations outlined in Appendix 2 Event Management Assessment Checklist to ensure adequate event management standards are met by the applicant(s).

- QPWS regions will evaluate the management and permit conditions of any authorised competitive event as required using the report outlined in Appendix 3.

- Where commercial agreements have been developed for particular events and monitoring is considered necessary or desirable, QPWS will recover the costs of monitoring these events.

- QPWS acknowledges that often the risk associated with competitive outdoor recreational activities can be mitigated through identifying constraints and applying appropriate planning and permitting arrangements such as:

    - engaging with the activity organiser;

    - appropriate risk management plans;

    - appropriate conditioning; and

    - considering limited temporal exclusive use for particular activities.

Reference materials

Operational Policy – Organised events (non-commercial) on QPWS managed areas

Operational Policy – Commercial tourism and recreation activities in QPWS managed areas

Operational Policy – Landscape Classification system for visitor management

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 operational policy, officers must comply with that obligation (refer to Comply with Human Rights Act).

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

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12/03/2011

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Appendix 1 – Definitions

Nature-based - in relation to the use of protected areas, includes scientific, educational, spiritual, intellectual, cultural and recreational use. Nature-based activities in QPWS managed areas should meet the following criteria: appreciation of nature is a key motivational factor; substantial modification of the environment is not required; and the natural environment is critical to the experience of the participants.

Protected area – includes national parks, conservation parks and resources reserves (see QPWS managed areas below).

QPWS - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS)

QPWS managed areas - include the following areas managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service:

- State forests and timber reserves managed under the *Forestry Act 1959*;

- protected areas (State land) managed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*;

- recreation areas (RAM areas) managed under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*; and

- marine parks managed under the *Marine Parks Act 2004.*

QPWS regions means the QPWS managed areas within six QPWS regional administered boundaries.

Setting - refers to the landscape class of a given site or area; *Operational policy– Landscape Classification system for visitor management.*

Sustainable visitor use is an identified maximum (annual and/or persons-at one-time) level of visitor use which if maintained is likely to result in minimal or no long-term environmental, social, amenity or cultural impacts within a defined site area.

Appendix 2 – Event Management Assessment Checklist

Event Management Assessment Checklist		
Event Name		
Event Type		
Event Location		
Event Date		
Event Start Time		
Event Finish Time		
Event Setup Time		
Event Pack down Time		
Assessment Area	**Check (tick)**	**Notes**
Event Plan		
Has a plan been provided to QPWS including the following considerations?		
1. Participant entry fee details		
2. Communication plan		
3. Promotions/Media plan		
4. Site Plan including signage, stations, safety, personnel etc.		
5. Set-up & pack down procedures/times		
6. Traffic Management Plan/procedures		
7. Event personnel		
8. Emergency/Safety Plan		
9. Participant briefing – including Code of Conduct		
10. Catering/accommodation requirements		
11. Waste management		
12. Environmental management		
13. In-kind contributions		
14. Infrastructure & equipment requirements		
15. Any cordoning off of areas/ creation of exclusion zones		
16. Insurance details		
Liaison with QPWS Staff		
Do any specific liaison requirements between QPWS and the applicant need to be discussed?		
Does a pre-event site meeting need to be arranged to discuss any part of the event proposal?		
Does an event logistics/running sheet need to be provided to QPWS prior to the event?		
Are there any QPWS pre or post event reporting requirements (e.g. injuries, number of participants)?		
Promotions/Media Plan		

Does the promotions plan have a clear statement of goals & behaviour?		
Are there any pre-event promotions activities &/or public notice requirements?		
Are there any promotions activities during the event?		
Are there any promotions activities after the event?		
Signage		
Is the applicant's signage appropriate for the event/setting (i.e. colour, design, and size)?		
Does the signage display the correct messages (i.e. direction, behaviour, safety etc.)?		
How will the signage be installed?		
Traffic Management		
Is the traffic management plan appropriate for the event?		
Does the plan provide an estimate of expected vehicle no's?		
Will traffic management impact on other park users (e.g. space available, safety)?		
Event Timing		
Is the event timing likely to impact on other people?		
17.1. Set-up time/ arrival		
18.2. Event Start time		
19.3. Event Finish time		
20.4. Pack down times		
Are there any alternatives times or dates for the event?		
Event Infrastructure and Equipment		
Is any infrastructure required for the event?		
Is any equipment required for the event?		
Does the event require any 'cordoning off' of areas or the creation of exclusion zones preventing any use by other park visitors?		
Event Personnel		
What event personnel are required? (see below)		
21.1. Event Co-ordinator		
22.2. Traffic Marshalls		
23.3. Participant/briefing marshals		
24.4. Event marshals/signage		
25.5. Sweepers		
26.6. Event marshals		
27.7. Medical personnel		
28.8. Support/Catering personnel		

29.9. Others?		

Emergency/ Safety Plan		
Is the event emergency/safety plan/procedures appropriate for the hazards & risks of the event?		
Does the applicant have emergency response and communication procedures in the event of an emergency?		
Is the communication equipment adequate for emergency response?		
Do emergency services have to be notified before and after the event (ambulance/police)?		
Are First Aid kits available at appropriate locations during the event?		
Are adequately trained medical personnel available at appropriate locations during the event?		
Are adequate food/drink stations provided for the participants as required (e.g. Running Australia standard is every 5km)?		
Has emergency vehicle access been considered?		
If relevant, have considerations for people with disabilities been required?		
Is there Check in-check out procedures for participants?		
Will all injuries be recorded and reported to QPWS after the event?		
Participant briefing & Code of Conduct		
Has a Code of Conduct for participants been developed for the event that includes safety and behavioural guidelines?		
Catering & Facility Requirements		
Will catering be provided for the event?		
Are QPWS accommodation facilities required for the event?		
Are any other QPWS facilities required for the event?		
Waste Management		
Are there established litter removal procedures?		
Are the facilities adequate for the event e.g. toilets?		
Are there any recycling provisions?		
Sponsorship & Prizes		
Is there any sponsorship of the event? (details)		

Are prizes available?		
Environmental Impacts		
Will this event interfere with natural/cultural features or values during the running of this event?		
Are there any mitigation actions required by the permittee due to impacts of the event?		
Social Impacts		
Are there any potential crowding Impacts and or//considerations		
How many spectators are expected at the event?		
Will there be any impacts on the amenity of other park users?		
Will there be any impacts from an increase in the noise levels due to the event?(use of amplifiers, cheering)		

Appendix 3 Event Management Evaluation Report

Event Management Assessment Checklist	
Event Name	
Event Type	
Event Location	
Event Date	
Event Start Time	
Event Finish Time	
Event Setup Time	
Event Pack down Time	

Assessment Area	Check (tick)	Notes
Event Plan		
Was a plan provided to QPWS before the event?		
Liaison with QPWS Staff		
Was participant briefing and event plan provided before the event?		
Was a Safety/Emergency Response Plan provided before the Event?		
Was a Traffic Management Plan provided before the Event?		
Was a Communication Plan discussed with QPWS staff (pre-event and during event)		
Was the RIC contacted at least 24hrs before the event to check weather and any adverse conditions affecting the event?		
Were any event fees disclosed to QPWS staff?		
Was an event logistics/running sheet provided to QPWS prior to the event?		
Was the site/signage plan checked with QPW before the event?		
Have all QPWS pre or post event reporting requirements been met (e.g. injuries, number of participants)?		
Promotions/Media Plan		
Were there any pre-event promotions activities &/or public notice requirements		
Were there any promotions activities during the event?		
Were there any promotions activities after the event?		
Signage		
Was the signage appropriate for the event/setting (i.e. colour, design, and size)?		
Did the signage display the correct messages (i.e. direction, behaviour, safety etc)?		
Was the signage installed correctly?		

Was the signage installed and removed in a timely manner?		
Was the route marked? (e.g. paint/flour, buoys)		
Traffic Management		
Was traffic management appropriate for the event?		
Were there any impacts on other park users (e.g. space available, safety)?		
Event Timing		
Set-up time/dates - prior to the event day		
Set-up time/ arrival on event day 1		
Event Start time		
Event Finish time		
Pack down times		
Set-up time/ arrival on event day 2		
Event Start time		
Event Finish time		
Pack down times		
Event Infrastructure & Equipment		
Describe/list any infrastructure required for the event		
Describe/list any equipment required for the event		
Did the event include any 'cordoning off' of areas or the creation of exclusion zones preventing any use by other park visitors?		
Event Personnel		
What personnel were used at the event?		
Event Co-ordinator		
Traffic Marshalls		
Participant/briefing marshals		
Event marshals/signage		
Sweepers		
Event marshals		
Medical personnel		
Support/Catering personnel		
Others		
Emergency/ Safety Plan		
Were the event emergency/safety plan/procedures appropriate for the hazards & risks of the event?		
Does the permittee have emergency response and communication procedures in the event of an emergency		

Do the personnel have adequate communication equipment for emergency response?		
Were the emergency services notified before and after the event (ambulance/police)?		
Were First Aid kits available at appropriate locations during the event?		
Were adequately trained medical personnel at appropriate locations during the event?		
Were adequate food/drink stations provided for the participants as required (Running Australia standard is every 5km)?		
Was emergency vehicle access considered?		
Were there considerations for people with disabilities as required?		
Was there a Code of Conduct developed for the event that included safety and behavioural guidelines?		
Have Check in-check out procedures for participants?		
Were any Injuries recorded and reported to QPWS after the event?		
Participant briefing – including Code of Conduct		
Was a briefing provided to participants before the event? Did the briefing provide route/logistics details and information?		
When were any briefings held?		
Were any insurance waivers indemnity provided?		
Did the briefing include protected area regulations?		
Did the briefing include safety & emergency response procedures?		
Did the briefing include a Code of Conduct for participant behaviour during the event?		
Was a map provided with the route and any stations, marshalls, signage and safety areas marked on it?		
Catering & Facility Requirements		
What catering was provided for the event?		
Were any accommodation facilities required for the event?		
Were any QPWS facilities required for the event?		
Waste Management		

Were there established litter removal procedures which were carried out?		
Was all litter and waste removed after the event?		
Were the facilities adequate for the event e.g. toilets?		
Was there any recycling provisions?		
Sponsoring & Prizes		
Was there any sponsorship of the event?		
What prizes were made available, if any??		
Environmental Impacts		
Was there any interference with natural features during the running of this event?		
Are there any mitigation actions required by the permittee due to impacts of the event?		
Social Impacts		
Crowding Impacts and or//considerations		
How many spectators were at the event?		
Were there any observed impacts on the amenity of other park users?		
Were there any impacts from an increase in the noise levels due to the event or any use of amplifiers		