

Lake Eacham Day Use Area Upgrade: Consultation summary

Purpose

This summary provides the results of consultation in early 2025 by the Queensland Government on the proposed upgrade of the Lake Eacham Day Use Area.

Background

Lake Eacham is a biodiverse and culturally significant ecosystem, located in Crater Lakes National Park within the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. It provides opportunities for recreational activities such as picnicking, swimming, non-motorised watercraft use, rainforest walks, and wildlife spotting.

The Queensland Government is committed to upgrading the Lake Eacham Day Use Area to enhance visitor experiences, while preserving the area's natural and cultural values. The proposed upgrades aim to:

- provide universal access for increased recreational opportunities
- improve site functionality, reduce visitor impacts, and maintain safety
- repurpose existing facilities sustainably using local materials
- educate visitors about the area's unique cultural and natural heritage.

Consultation process

Feedback was sought for eight weeks through an online survey, which concluded on 4 April 2025. The public were also able to provide feedback directly to the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

The website provided information about the proposed upgrades including the background, reason for the upgrade, and an overview of proposed works. It also provided a short video depicting the proposed works and what the upgraded Lake Eacham Day Use Area may look like.

Feedback received

A total of 305 questionnaires were completed and the department received seven direct responses. Overall, 42% of responses were 'satisfied', 18% were 'neutral' and 40% were 'dissatisfied' with the upgrade concept.

Key themes

A review of all comments and letters highlighted five key themes: Access¹, Cultural heritage², Environmental protection, Management issues and Urbanisation.

Support for the Lake Eacham Day Use Area redevelopment varied across these themes, and those who were dissatisfied provided rich feedback for improvement of the design. Community consultation has enabled the Government to improve final detailed design elements; building on the original intent of the redevelopment to improve accessibility, safety and presentation of this important community and tourism asset.

¹ Includes access to carpark, walking tracks, amenities, lake, and accessibility for people with disability.

² Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

Government response

Community feedback has been valuable, and the detailed design will now be amended in consideration of the following:

Access

Parking: Review parking provisions to ensure the design meets expected demand while balancing environmental and spatial constraints.

Watercraft and scuba diving: Consider non-motorised watercraft access points in the final design. Review scuba diving access provisions to ensure safety and compatibility with other recreational activities.

Inclusive design: Review toilet and change facilities to meet community needs, while ensuring compliance with accessibility regulations and standards.

Communication: Explore development of clear signage and communication materials to inform visitors about motorised watercraft restrictions and designated scuba diving areas.

Cultural heritage

Cultural engagement: Engagement with First Nations people will continue to guide the project to protect the area's cultural resources and values,³ and to meet the cultural heritage duty of care.⁴

Cultural storytelling: Explore opportunities for First Nations interpretive signage to share cultural stories and foster respect for Country.

Environmental protection

Minimising vegetation removal: Consider minimising the removal of trees, wherever possible, and mitigate any necessary removals by replanting suitable areas with native species.

Environmental management plan: Develop an environmental management plan to mitigate risks to the environment including local wildlife, and to ensure visitor safety from wildlife interactions.

Water quality protection: Incorporate stormwater and runoff management strategies into the design to protect the lake's water quality.

Sustainability: Environmentally sustainable practices will be prioritised, including the use of natural materials in design and construction.

Management issues

Sanitation upgrades: Upgrade toilets and sanitation facilities to meet visitor demand.

Rubbish management: Review designs to enhance rubbish management and reduce environmental impacts.

Visitor capacity management: Balance visitor use and environmental protection, including consideration of zoning to separate quiet and active areas.

Urbanisation

Minimising urbanisation: Review shoreline redevelopment designs to ensure furniture, structures and materials are more appropriate to natural setting.

Design: Natural materials and colours will be incorporated to blend with the surrounding environment.

³ *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Qld) s 17(1)(a).

⁴ *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld) s 23.