

Lake Murphy Conservation Park

Management Statement

2026



Queensland
Government

This management statement has not been co-designed with First Nations partners. This document has been prepared by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation to provide management guidance and adaptive management until such a time as the department can engage with First Nations partners in the co-design of a management instrument.

Management statements are prepared under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. These documents may also include management direction for other State tenure for which QPWS has management responsibility.

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1. Introduction

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), within the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI), applies a contemporary management process that is based on international best practice and targets management towards the most important features of each park: their 'key values'.

The Values-Based Management Framework (VBMF) is an adaptive management cycle that incorporates planning, prioritising, doing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting into all areas of our business. This enables the agency to be more flexible and proactive and to improve management effectiveness over time. A glossary of VBMF terms and concepts used within this document is provided at the end of this document (Section 5 – Glossary).

As a land manager, QPWS has a custodial obligation to ensure our estate is managed to provide appropriate and safe access, protect life and property, be a good neighbour and work cooperatively with partners across the landscape. The agency does this as part of setting the 'levels of service' for each park. Levels of service is a management standard that considers an area's values, threatening processes, custodial obligations, risks and overall management complexity.

This management statement has been prepared by QPWS to provide management guidance and adaptive management until such a time as the department can engage with First Nations partners in co-design of a management instrument.

2. Park overview

The following figure and table (Figure 1, Table 1) provide an overview of information related to the parks included in this management statement, including their locality, legislative framework and applicable plans/agreements.

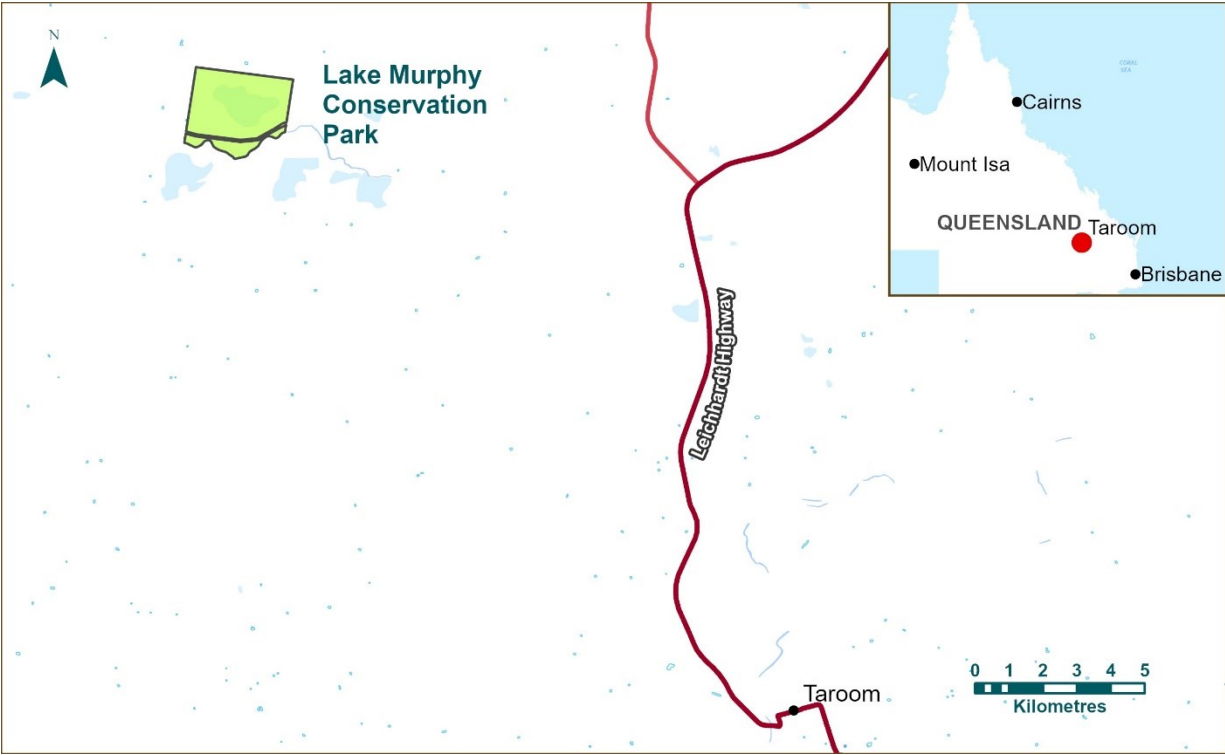


Figure 1. Locality of Lake Murphy Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Lake Murphy Conservation Park

Park size	Lake Murphy Conservation Park	550.6 ha
Bioregion	Brigalow Belt South	
QPWS region	South West	
Local government area	Banana Shire Council	
State electorate	Callide	
Relevant legislation	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cwlth) (EPBC)	
	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (NCA)	
	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>	
	<i>Native Title Act 1993</i> (Cwlth)	
Plans and agreements	<i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i>	
	<i>Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia</i>	
	<i>Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals</i>	
	<i>China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement</i>	
	<i>Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement</i>	
	<i>Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement</i>	
	Threatened Species Action Plan 2002–2032	
	Draft National Recovery Plan for Greater Gliders	
	National Recovery Plan for the Koala <i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i> (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)	

3. Key values

All parks, forests and reserves contain a range of natural, cultural, social and economic values that contribute to the state's comprehensive and representative protected area and forest estate. The VBMF provides a framework for identifying and protecting the most important of these—referred to as *key values*—which in turn guides the allocation of management resources.

The location of each key value is shown in Figure 2. An assessment of each key value—including its current and desired condition, trend, and the confidence level of the assessment—is presented in the following tables and can be interpreted using Table 2. The assessment also outlines the main threats to each key value and provides broad strategic management direction to address these threats and achieve desired outcomes over time.

Table 2. Description of condition and trend icons used in the key values assessment

Condition of key value	Good  The value is in good condition and is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, provided that current measures are maintained	Good with some concern  The value is likely to be maintained over the long term with minor additional conservation measures to address existing concerns	Significant concern  The value is threatened by a number of current or potential threats. Significant additional conservation measures are required to preserve the value over the medium to long term	Critical  The value is severely threatened. Urgent additional large-scale conservation measures are required or the value may be lost
Trend of key value condition	Improving 	Stable 	Deteriorating 	No consistent trend 
Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Limited 	Adequate 	



Figure 2. Lake Murphy Conservation Park key values

3.1 Wetland habitat

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Habitat for significant species	The park is part of the Palm Tree and Robinson Creek Wetland, which is listed in 'A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia'. The wetland habitat within the park extends across half the park, and includes a perched lake, fringing woodland and sedgeland, and a small area of freshwater swamp. The freshwater wetland regional ecosystem that is present (11.3.27) has of concern biodiversity status, and of the 21 protected areas in Queensland where it is present, this park has the second highest representation. The three vegetation communities found here (11.3.27 a, c, d) are not found in many other protected areas in Queensland. This park has the highest representation for vegetation community 11.3.27a and d and is the only park protecting 11.3.27c. The park's wetland provides important habitat for resident and migratory birds, with 159 different bird species recorded from the park, including waterbirds like ducks, pelicans and black swans, and 13 migratory species listed on international conventions. The wetland includes two broad vegetation groups (34a and 34d), both of which require protection from fire. BVG 34a covers half the park and includes the lake and fringing woodland and sedgeland. BVG34d covers a very small area of freshwater swamp. BVG 34a Lacustrine wetlands. Lakes, ephemeral to permanent. Includes fringing woodlands and sedgelands. Covers 276.20 ha (50.35%) of the park. Within the park includes one RE 11.3.27. There are two vegetation communities within this RE/BVG in the park that have low representation in the protected area estate. Vegetation community 11.3.27a is 4.42% of that remaining in Queensland and 40.61% of that in the protected area estate (ranked 1 of 5). Vegetation community 11.3.27d is 37.28% of that remaining in Queensland and 50.30% of that within the protected area estate (ranked 1 of 2). BVG 34d Palustrine wetlands. Freshwater swamps/springs/billabongs on floodplains ranging from permanent and semi-permanent to ephemeral. Covers 3.37 ha (0.61%) of the park. Within the park includes one RE 11.3.27. This is the only protected area in the estate that protects vegetation community 11.3.27c, this park protects 0.14% of that remaining in Qld. RE 11.3.27 is 0.65% of that remaining in Queensland and 13.38% of that in the protected area estate (ranked 2 of 21 parks). The three vegetation communities mentioned above (a, c, d) are not found in many other protected areas. There are 159 birds recorded from the park, including 6 birds of conservation significance — vulnerable Latham's snipe <i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>, sharp-tailed sandpiper <i>Calidris acuminata</i> and powerful owl <i>Ninox strenua</i>; and special least concern white-winged black tern <i>Chilodrias leucopterus</i>, Caspian tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> and glossy ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>. Except for powerful owl, the remaining 5 are migratory birds listed on international agreements — there are a further 8 migratory birds recorded from the park (total 13). Lake Murphy provides a seasonal refuge for a range of waterbirds, including ducks, pelicans and black swans.						

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Desired outcome							
The wetland is healthy with clean water, diverse native species, natural hydrology, stable vegetation and minimal human impacts, supporting thriving biodiversity, water quality, and cultural and community needs.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
Introduced animals	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Pigs <i>Sus scrofa</i> can cause significant damage to wetlands, with impacts including habitat degradation from feeding, tramping and wallowing, reduced water quality, spreading weeds, disturbing waterbirds and predation of native wetland species, including frogs, yabbies and bird eggs. Pigs are found in the park and in the broader surrounding landscape. Impacts have been observed along the edges of the park's wetland. Aerial shooting has been happening in collaboration with the Fitzroy Basin Association and surrounding neighbours for the past three years.	Primary	High
Introduced weeds	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Grazing is prevalent in the surrounding landscape and improved pastures are used in neighbouring properties. The park is inundated during flood events, and flood waters often transport pest plants to new areas. Invasive grasses can change habitats and create an increased fire risk.	Secondary	Medium
Bushfire	Natural system modifications	Introduced grasses, particularly high biomass grasses, increase bushfire risk. The park can produce good fuel loads, which can increase the risk of bushfire from lightning strike. While there are fire breaks in the park and on surrounding properties, there is a risk of bushfires starting on neighbouring properties and spreading into the park, particularly along the northern side where it is challenging to undertake planned burns.	Other	Medium
Other	Climate change and severe weather	While Central Queensland can experience climate extremes such as floods, droughts, heatwaves and bushfires, climate change is likely to exacerbate the frequency and severity of these events. Some of the climate change impacts on inland wetlands include changes to water inflows associated with increasing temperatures, increasing rainfall variability, and extremes in climate and weather events.	Other	High

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Reduce the impact of pigs <i>Sus scrofa</i> on wetland habitat and wetland-dependent native animals such as waterbirds, in partnership with neighbours and the Fitzroy Basin Association.	3
Reduce the impact of invasive grasses on wetland habitat.	4
Protect wetland communities through appropriate fire management of adjacent fire-adapted communities.	4
Monitor condition and climatic associated changes to wetland habitat to assess impacts and determine future management.	5

*Key value priority: 1 – Critical, 2 – Very high, 3 – High, 4 – Moderate, 5 – Desirable (see Appendix 1)

4. Management direction

QPWS manages protected areas and forests to protect their values and deliver our custodial obligations as a land manager. A levels of service (LoS) assessment allows QPWS to consider the management of each park in a state-wide context and determine desired levels of management effort for each park in a consistent and equitable way. An LoS assessment lets QPWS staff and the public know what level of management activity to expect on each park, forest or reserve. There are six LoS ratings ranging from 'below acceptable' to 'exceptional', and an 'acceptable' rating is the minimum standard required to deliver good management and meet our legislative and custodial obligations.

This section provides a strategic management direction for each management theme, identifying its current LoS and desired LoS which can be interpreted using Figure 3.

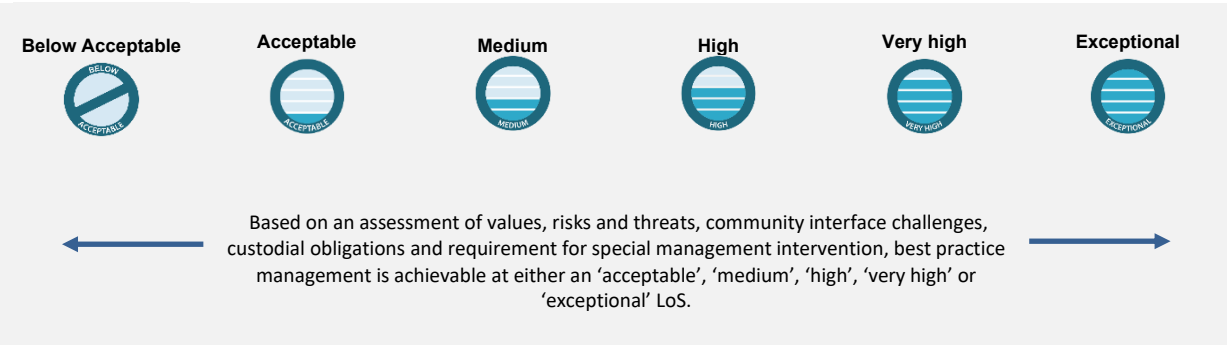


Figure 3. Description of LoS icons

4.1 Management directions

Management theme	Current	Desired	Strategic management direction	Priority (1–5) *
Fire management			Maintain current approach to fire management based on broad regional ecosystems mapping, guided by the planned burn guidelines.	4
			Maintain current level of consultation with neighbours, fire agencies and relevant stakeholders.	4
			Maintain current priority of fire management to protect life and property and improve the condition of identified key values.	4
			Improve fire management in the park through preparation of an area fire strategy.	3
Pest management			Maintain contemporary knowledge of pest species that might threaten key values.	4
			Maintain the current level of consultation for the development of the annual pest program.	4
			Maintain the current priority for pest management to protect life and property and improve the condition of key values.	4
			Improve pest management in the park through preparation of an area pest strategy.	3
Natural values management			Maintain contemporary knowledge of natural values and their management requirements, particularly for the improvement of key value health.	4
			Improve knowledge of the condition of the vegetation communities by ground truthing the brigalow forest and implementing the health check program.	4
			Maintain current level of consultation and engagement with regional and centric units to support natural values management.	4
			Maintain the current management effort to improve the condition of key values.	4
Post-contact cultural heritage management			Maintain a contemporary knowledge of the park's post-contact cultural heritage and management requirements.	4
			Maintain the current level of consultation with heritage groups and stakeholders, and QPWS Principal Heritage Officer to guide post-contact cultural heritage management.	4
			Maintain the current approach for telling the story of the park's post-contact cultural heritage and Leichhardt's expedition.	4
Visitor management			Maintain current level of knowledge of visitor use.	4
			Maintain visitor experiences through interpretation of park values on site and via the agency website.	4
			Maintain current approach to visitor management.	4
			Maintain current approach to facilities management.	4
			Maintain the current level of visitor safety at key visitor sites.	4

Management theme	Current	Desired	Strategic management direction	Priority (1–5) *
Community, partnerships and other interests			Maintain contemporary knowledge of all stakeholders and management requirements.	4
			Improve the relationship with the Iman People by re-establishing an effective relationship and communicating with them regarding on-ground park management.	4
			Establish an effective relationship and communication with bird groups visiting the park.	4
			Maintain current approach to management of partnerships, community and other interests.	4
			Maintain current approach to the management of the Iman People's identified cultural heritage areas.	4
Field management capability			Maintain a contemporary knowledge base to deliver required management.	4
			Maintain current levels of consultation with regional support units regarding field management capacity.	4
			Maintain current site inspection regime.	4
Operational planning and management support			Maintain knowledge of available operational planning and management support within the region to guide and support park management operations.	4
			Maintain levels of operational planning for key management priorities, including fire, pest and visitor management, and threatened species.	4

*Level of Service priority: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (see Appendix 1)

5. Glossary

The following glossary contains VBMF terms and concepts used within this document.

Term	Description
Adaptive management	The process of adjusting and improving how we manage parks, forests and reserves after assessing the outcomes of previous strategies and on-ground actions.
Condition and trend	The condition of a key value is assessed as either good, good with some concern, significant concern or critical. Trend describes what is happening to the condition: is it improving, stable, or deteriorating? A key value's current condition is determined during the planning process. A desired condition is a realistic goal for the future condition of the key value. The ongoing condition and trend of key values is assessed with regular health checks, or monitoring and scientific assessment.
Custodial obligations	The legal and policy requirements QPWS has as a land manager to ensure that parks, forests and reserves are managed properly and lawfully. This includes protecting life and property, maintaining biosecurity, building positive relationships with adjacent communities and landholders, and safeguarding the values of the land.
Desired outcome	A statement in the key value and management direction statements about moving from the current status (condition or LoS) to a desired status. The goal for management.
Health check	Basic form of monitoring that uses indicators and visual assessments to regularly evaluate the condition of key values. Regular health checks ensure QPWS can respond quickly to adverse change and redirect management priorities.
Key value	A natural, cultural, social or economic value that is most important, significant, unique or irreplaceable and helps define the essence of the area. If lost, it would diminish what makes the area distinct from others.
Level of service (LoS)	Management standards for maintaining an area based on its values, threats and the complexity of management. There are six LoS ratings ranging from 'below acceptable' to 'exceptional', noting that an 'acceptable' rating is the minimum standard required to deliver good management and meet our custodial obligations under law as a land manager. A 'current' LoS rating is the level at the time of planning, the 'desired' LoS is where we want to be.
Management direction	An assessment of the current and desired LoS for each management theme, with prioritised strategic management directions.
Management instrument	A management plan or management statement.
Management theme	Common management themes across parks, forests and reserves, including fire management; pest management; natural values management; post-contact cultural heritage management; visitor management; community, partnerships and other interests; field management capability; operational planning and management support.
Strategic management direction	A broad strategy aimed at mitigating or removing a threat to a key value and maintaining or improving the condition of a park's value; or addressing the gap between the current LoS and desired LoS for a management theme.
Threat or threatening process and threat rating	Based on IUCN's classifications, QPWS has identified threatening processes that have the potential to affect Queensland's values (e.g. natural systems modifications, invasive species). Current and potential threats to key values are identified and given a threat rating based on a combination of the extent of the impact, the severity of the impact and the urgency of action.

Appendix 1

Term	Description
Priority rating (key value SMDs)	A rating given to a strategic management direction according to the need for action to prevent further decline, stabilise current condition, or restore and enhance values, with consideration given to legislative obligations, cost, and social, economic and political factors.
	Critical (1) – Loss or very significant decline in the condition of the key value is highly likely if action is not taken OR significant improvement in the condition of the key value is highly likely if action is taken.
	Very high (2) – Significant decline in the condition of the key value is likely if action is not taken OR significant improvement in the condition of the key value is likely if action is taken.
	High (3) – Decline in the condition of the key value is likely if action is not taken OR improvement in the condition of the key value is likely if action is taken.
	Moderate (4) – Some decline in the condition of the key value is possible if action is not taken OR some improvement in the condition of the key value is possible if action is taken.
	Desirable (5) – While decline in the condition of the key value is not likely in the short term, the action, if taken, would help build long-term resilience of the key value.
Priority rating (LoS SMDs)	A rating given to an LoS or custodial obligation strategic management direction. A scale from 1 (extremely urgent) to 5 (not urgent or optional) is assigned, with consideration given to legislative obligations, cost, and social, economic and political factors.