

Townsville Town Common Conservation Park

Incorporates: Cape Pallarenda 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.

© State of Queensland, 2026

April 2026

This management statement does not intent to affect, diminish or extinguish native title or associated rights.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs and printed material that some people may find distressing.

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (CC BY) licence.



Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms.

You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.

For more information on this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en>

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared with all due diligence and care, based on the best available information at the time of publication. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties.

If you need to access this document in a language other than English, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to telephone Library Services on +61 7 3170 5470.

This publication can be made available in an alternative format (e.g. large print or audiotape) on request for people with vision impairment; phone +61 7 3170 5470 or email <library@detsi.qld.gov.au>.

Contents

- 1. Introduction3
- 2. Park overview4
- 3. Key values5
 - 3.1 Bird viewing opportunities..... 7
 - 3.2 Scenic viewing opportunitites 9
 - 3.3 Walking and mountain bike tracks..... 10
 - 3.4 Wetlands and grasslands 12
 - 3.5 Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station and World War II fortifications 14
- 4. Management direction16
 - 4.1 Management directions 17
- 5. Glossary18
- Appendix 119

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.

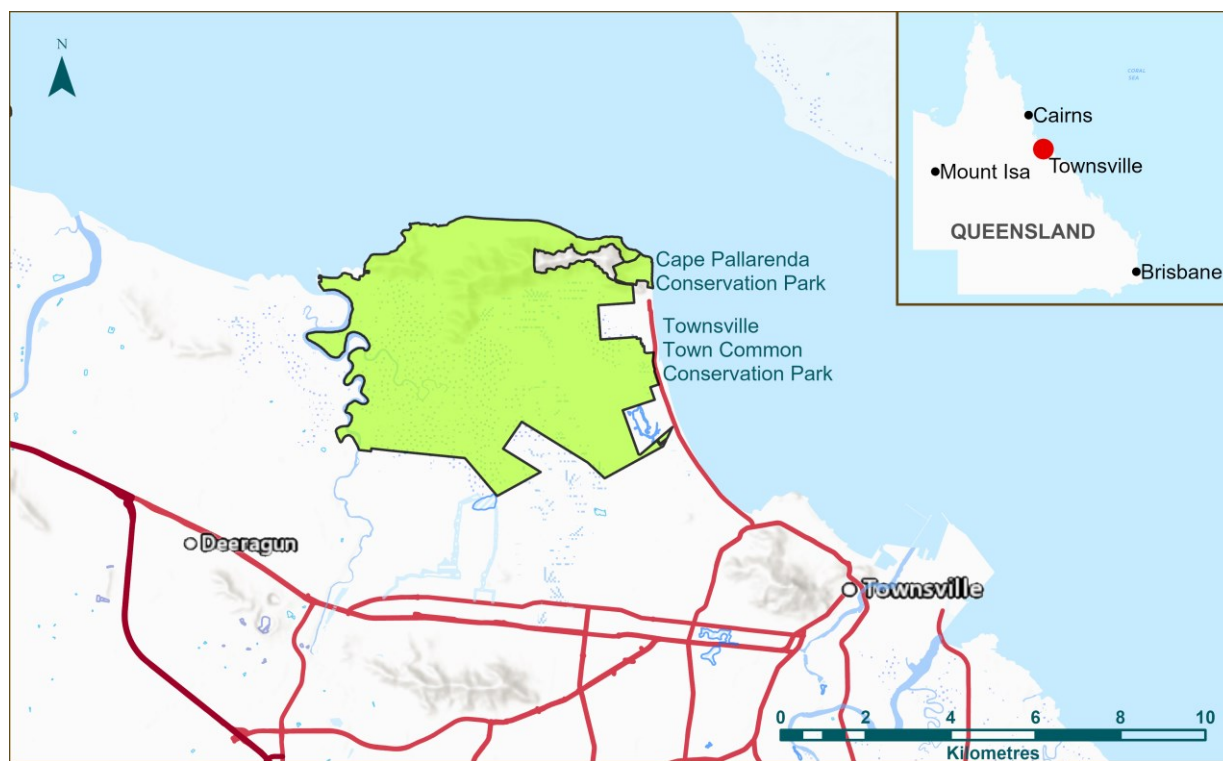


Figure 1. Locality of Townsville Town Common Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Townsville Town Common Conservation Park

Park size	Townsville Town Common Conservation Park	3,301.2 ha
	Cape Pallarenda Conservation Park	44.2 ha
Bioregion	Brigalow Belt North	
QPWS region	Central	
Local government area	Townsville City Council	
State electorate	Townsville	
World Heritage region	Great Barrier Reef	
Relevant legislation	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth – EPBC Act)	
	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (NCA)	

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 	

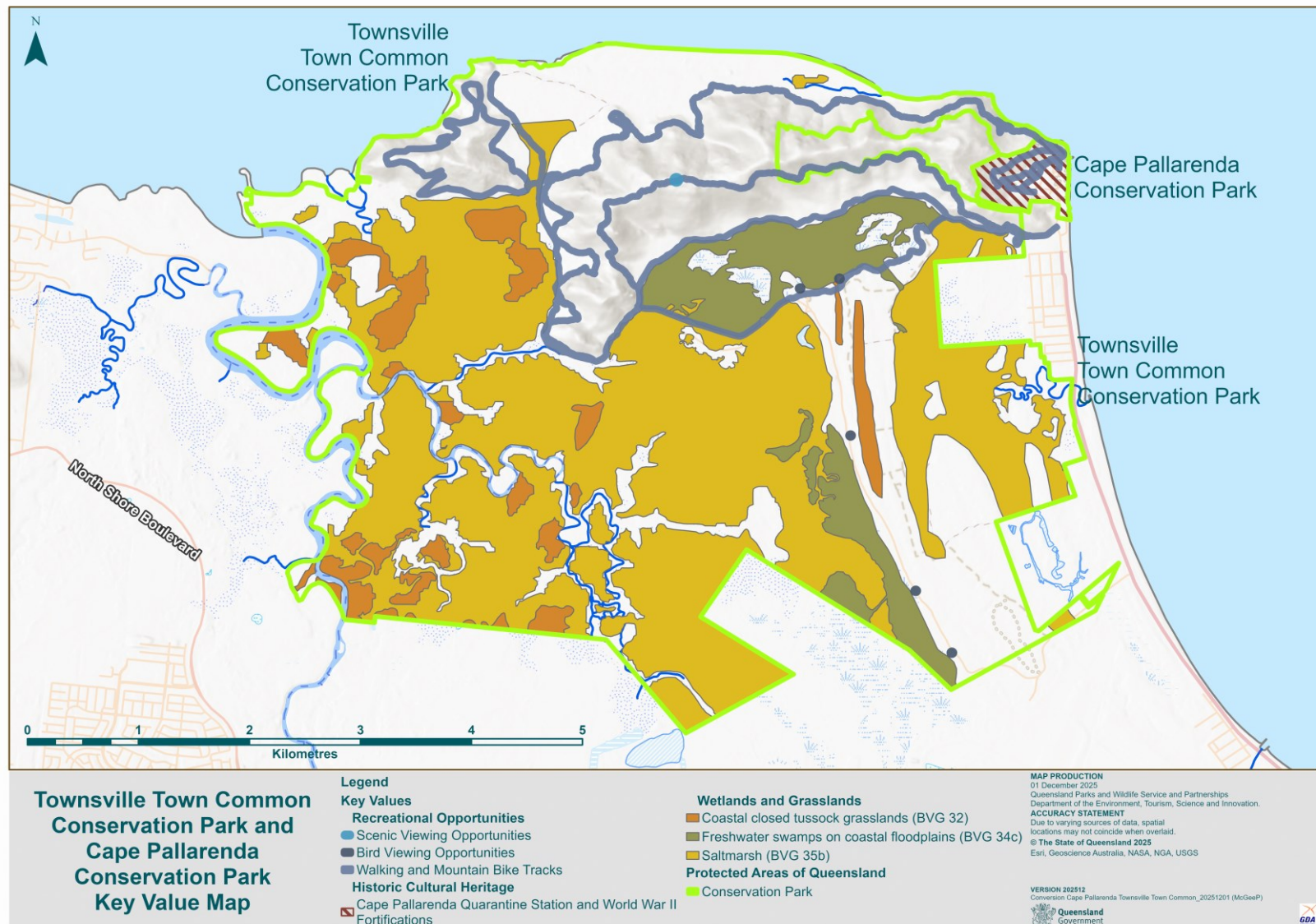


Figure 2. Townsville Town Common Conservation Park key values

3.1 Bird viewing opportunities

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Recreational opportunities	Five bird hides and viewing areas are located through the Townsville Town Common Conservation Park (Town Common) – Freshwater bird hide, Jacana bird hide, Melaleuca viewing area, Payet's tower and Pandanus viewing area. Bird hides provide an opportunity for bird watchers to view birds within the freshwater wetlands and lagoons where large aggregations of birds can occur. The bird hides are easily accessible from the Freshwater Lagoon Road. Freshwater and Lagoon Trails also provide access around Freshwater Lagoon for bird watchers.						
Desired outcome Bird viewing opportunities are safe, engaging, and sustainable, offering meaningful and accessible nature-based recreation opportunities while respecting cultural values, protecting the environment, and supporting local communities.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
1. Introduced plants	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	The hymenachne <i>Hymenachne amplexicaulis</i> and para grass <i>Urochloa mutica</i> grow across the wetlands and reduce the bird habitat and diversity.	Primary	High
2. Introduced animals	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Feral pigs <i>Sus scrofa</i> and their diggings are obvious in some of the viewing areas and are a seasonal problem. The impacts associated with pig presence affects the public perception of park management.	Secondary	Medium
3. Loss of experience	Impacts on visitor experience and commercial opportunities	Increased maintenance is required as a result of the rapid growth of grasses and other pest plants. Grasses and weeds restrict the bird viewing opportunities at the bird hides.	Other	Medium

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Reduce the impacts of high-biomass grass on the scenic amenity.	2
Enhance the visitor experience and presentation through improvement of visitor infrastructure.	3
Reduce the impacts of feral pigs on the scenic amenity.	4

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

3.2 Scenic viewing opportunities

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Recreational opportunities	Visitors can hike the Many Peaks Walking Track and enjoy expansive 360° views of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, the coastal plain and ranges, and Townsville City. Mt Marlow and Tegoora Rock provide key viewing points along the track. Visitors also gain quality viewing opportunities while riding or walking the extended trail network on Many Peaks Range and Smedley Hill. Bohle View and Seaview Corner provide important points along the trails for viewing. Shelly Beach provides a unique opportunity close to Townsville where the viewscape is without development and infrastructure.						
Desired outcome Visitor viewing opportunities are safe, engaging, and sustainable, offering meaningful and accessible nature-based recreation opportunities while respecting cultural values, protecting the environment, supporting local communities and enhancing visitor opportunities while maintaining a high standard of scenic amenity and presentation at key areas.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
1. Loss of experience	Impacts on visitor experience and commercial opportunities	Increase maintenance is required as a result of the rapid growth of grasses and other pest plants during the wet season.	Primary	Medium

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Reduce the impacts of introduced grasses and woody weeds on the scenic amenity.	2
Enhance the visitor opportunities and presentation through improvement of visitor infrastructure.	3

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

3.3 Walking and mountain bike tracks

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Recreational opportunities	The Cape Pallarenda Trail Network provides a variety of shared use trails and single use trails within the Town Common and Cape Pallarenda Conservation Park. The network includes 17 km of shared use trails, 17 km of mountain bike trails and 10.75 km of walking trails. These trails are very popular and are regularly used for recreation and commercial events. There is potential to provide for further development of the Cape Pallarenda trails while ensuring the scenic amenity and visitor experience are preserved.						
Desired outcome The recreational experience on the walking and mountain bike tracks is safe, engaging, and sustainable, offering meaningful and accessible nature-based recreation opportunities while respecting cultural values, protecting the environment, and supporting local communities.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
1. Inappropriate facilities	Impacts on visitor experience and commercial opportunities	A long-term vision for the trail network should be addressed in the visitor thematic. Further development of the trail network needs to consider management capability and impacts on scenic amenity.	Primary	High
2. Storms	Climate change and severe weather	High rainfall events will cause erosion along some areas of the tracks. Tracks need to be designed and maintained for weather mitigation and wet weather closures enforced.	Secondary	Medium
3. Introduced plants	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Woody weeds including lantana <i>Lantana camara</i> and chine apple <i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> grow along the tracks and impact on the recreational experience and visitor safety.	Other	Low

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Enhance the visitor experience through management of tracks and trails.	2
Maintain the current provision of grades on the recreational tracks and trails.	3
Maintain the track system through hard and soft engineering techniques to manage for storm impacts.	3
Reduce the impacts of lantana and chine apple on the tracks and trails and visitor experience.	4

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

3.4 Wetlands and grasslands

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Ecosystems and biodiversity	The Town Common protects important wetland habitat that was once part of an extensive Bohle River basin. The large wetland complex includes mangrove, clay pans, saltmarsh and coastal grass-sedge wetlands. The freshwater coastal grass-sedge wetlands provide the only habitat for the vulnerable grass <i>Paspalidium udum</i> and it is the only known occurrence of the grass in Queensland. The park's wetlands are included within the Bohle River Fish Habitat Area. The hydrology of the Town Common has changed significantly over time with development of the floodplain. In most years, the freshwater wetlands are still recharged to reset the ephemeral wetting and drying process. Freshwater Lagoon is a bunded marine plain that now provides an important mosaic of freshwater wetlands and grasslands influenced by a higher salt content in the soil. Regional Ecosystems: 11.1.2 Samphire forbland on marine clay plains 11.1.1 <i>Sporobolus virginicus</i> grassland on marine clay plains 11.3.27x1a Freshwater wetlands (of concern) 11.3.31 <i>Ophiuros exaltatus</i>, <i>Dichanthium</i> spp. grassland on alluvial plains (of concern)						
Desired outcome Wetlands and grasslands are healthy with clean water, diverse native species, natural hydrology, stable vegetation and minimal human impacts, supporting thriving biodiversity, water quality, cultural and community needs.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
1. Introduced plants	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Para grass, hymenachne, parkinsonia <i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i> , leucaena and Aleman grass <i>Echinochloa polystachya</i> spread across the wetlands, reduce the water quality and water bird habitat and change hydrological flows. Para grass threatens the <i>Paspalidium udum</i> population through direct competition.	Primary	High
2. Introduced animals	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Pigs affect the visual amenity, predate on the eggs of nesting birds, reduce water quality and damage the wetlands through diggings. The pigs forage around the fringes of the wetlands as they dry down through the year.	Secondary	Medium
3. Commercial development	Residential and commercial development	The Town Common is situated downstream of industrial and residential land in Townsville. Runoff from a sewerage treatment plant flows into the park's wetlands. Other industrial contaminants from the airport also impact on the wetlands. The change in hydrology and in flow of contaminants degrade the wetland systems, potentially reduce wetland habitat productivity and impact on the annual wetting and drying of the wetlands.	Other	Low

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Reduce the impacts of para grass, hymenachne, parkinsonia, leucaena and Aleman grass to promote open water and extent of the <i>Paspalidium udum</i> .	1
Reduce the impacts of pigs on the wetlands and grasslands.	4
Monitor the impacts of the overland flow on the wetlands and grasslands through monitoring and assessment.	5

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

3.5 Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station and World War II fortifications

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Historic	Two post-contact cultural heritage components are protected under the Queensland Heritage Register: Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station (former) (QHR ID 602133) – the former Quarantine Station site, and the complex of WWII structures that predominantly sit within Cape Pallarenda Conservation Park (and a small concentration that are situated within Townsville Town Common Conservation Park). The Quarantine Station was constructed c 1913–1916 and is one of the few remaining early 20th century quarantine stations in Australia, and the only intact one in north Queensland. There are 16 timber buildings within the Quarantine Station site – some of which were relocated and repurposed from an earlier Quarantine Station on Magnetic Island, and others that were newly constructed on the Pallarenda site. Very few changes have been made to the former Quarantine Station since its decommissioning in the early 1970s, and the continued ability to read the cultural landscape contributes to its heritage significance. The Quarantine Station site has high potential for adaptive re-use and could accommodate multiple uses. The heritage register boundary includes the remains of the Pallarenda Battery, a World War II camp and gun emplacement. The remaining structures contribute to understanding how the Townsville Port was protected during the war, and the bigger role that north Queensland played in Australia's war efforts.						
Desired outcome Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station is managed to protect its historical and cultural significance, ensuring authenticity, safety, sustainability, community engagement for future generations and adaptive re-use of buildings where possible. Pallarenda Battery fortifications will continue to provide visitors with insights into historical significance for future generations through the ongoing care and protection of the complex.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
1. Security	Other	Vandalism and theft, particularly since 2020, are an increasing occurrence at the Quarantine Station buildings and infrastructure. Poor presentation and remoteness have contributed to the site's attractiveness to vandals.	Primary	High
2. Weathering	Natural deterioration	Natural weathering and insufficient maintenance contribute to the deterioration of the fabric of the historic site.	Secondary	High
3. Storms	Climate change and severe weather	Cyclone events can impact on the buildings within the historic site.	Other	Medium
4. Wildfires	Natural system modifications	Wildfire is a risk to the site. Maintenance (fire breaks) is regularly conducted around the site to minimise the fire threat. Leaf litter build up on roofs and gutters and vegetation growth in the vicinity of buildings increase the risk of fire, as does the presence of introduced weeds species such as Guinea grass and Mossman River grass.	Other	Medium
5. Poor presentation	Recreation and commercial opportunities impacts	General site presentation (groundskeeping, signage, path condition, general appearance – smashed windows, broken bannisters) is currently poor, making the site appear 'unloved' and therefore attractive to vandals. This reduces the visitor experience and appeal of the whole conservation park. Interpretation at the site is outdated and unengaging, and the stories conveyed only provide a single perspective. Introduced weed species are prolific across the Quarantine Station site. They contribute to poor presentation and present a biosecurity risk.	Other	Medium

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Reactivate Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station buildings.	1
Reduce the impacts of weeds on the Quarantine Station landscape.	1
Conserve the Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station Buildings.	2
Increase resilience to environmental risks such as cyclones and wildfire.	3
Tell the story of the Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station and World War II historic sites.	3
Enhance the visitor experience of Cape Pallarenda's World War II history.	4

*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.

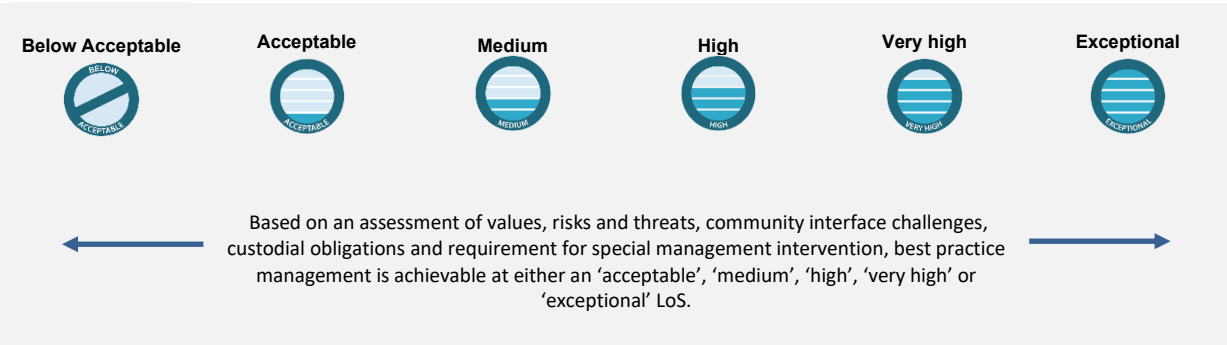


Figure 3. Description of LoS icons

4.1 Management directions

Management theme	Current	Desired	Strategic management direction	Priority (1–5) *
Fire management			Maintain current approach to fire management to protect life and property and all key values.	3
Pest management			Improve current approach to pest management by ensuring key values are protected from pest threatening processes as a priority.	3
			Maintain current approach to pest management.	3
Natural values management			Maintain cooperative arrangements for natural values management.	3
			Maintain current approach to natural values management.	3
Historic cultural heritage management			Improve management of historic cultural heritage through development and implementation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for Cape Pallarenda Conservation Park.	2
Visitor management			Increase the knowledge of all visitor opportunities through the development of a visitor strategy.	2
Community, partnerships and other interests			Strengthen connection to Country by partnering with, and facilitating access for, First Nations groups.	2
			Maintain partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia for adaptive re-use of the Quarantine Station.	3
Field management capability			Maintain the current level of field management capability.	3
Operational planning and management support			Maintain current operational planning and management support.	3

*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.