

Keppel Sands Conservation Park

Resource Information

2026



Queensland
Government

This document is a compendium of park information and a supporting document for the associated management instrument (management plan or management statement. Management instruments are prepared under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and include management direction for tenure 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.

This document is a compendium of park information and a supporting document for key values and level of service assessment reports or management plans and management statements. It contains background information about a park's purpose, values, resources and legal and administrative framework.

2. Park overview

Keppel Sands Conservation Park is located 1.5 kilometres from the coastal community of Keppel Sands, near the mouth of Coorooman Creek. It is 29 kilometres northeast of the regional city of Rockhampton and 2.5 kilometres southeast of the Koorana Crocodile Farm.

The park consists of two sections: one on the western side of Keppel Sands Road and the other on the eastern side. The surrounding landscape includes numerous freehold properties, which have been modified for agriculture (mainly grazing) and residential use.

The eastern section of the park is separated from Keppel Sands Road by Mabel Edmund Park, with Pumpkin Creek running through it. Road reserves exist along the northern and southern boundaries, but the tracks are restricted to authorised vehicles. Mabel Edmund Park contains sporting fields and associated infrastructure, including a road, carpark, and buildings.

The western section of the park lies adjacent to Coorooman Creek and Keppel Sands Road. Road reserves surround much of this section, with two reserves crossing the property from Keppel Sands Road. However, these tracks are also limited to authorised vehicles. Two freehold properties border the western section.

Nearby protected areas include Flat Top Range Resources Reserve, located nine kilometres southwest of the park; Mount Archer National Park and State Forest, 16 kilometres to the east; and Capricorn Coast National Park, six kilometres to the northeast.

Figure 1 and Table 1 provide further details about the park, including its location, legislative framework, and relevant plans or agreements.

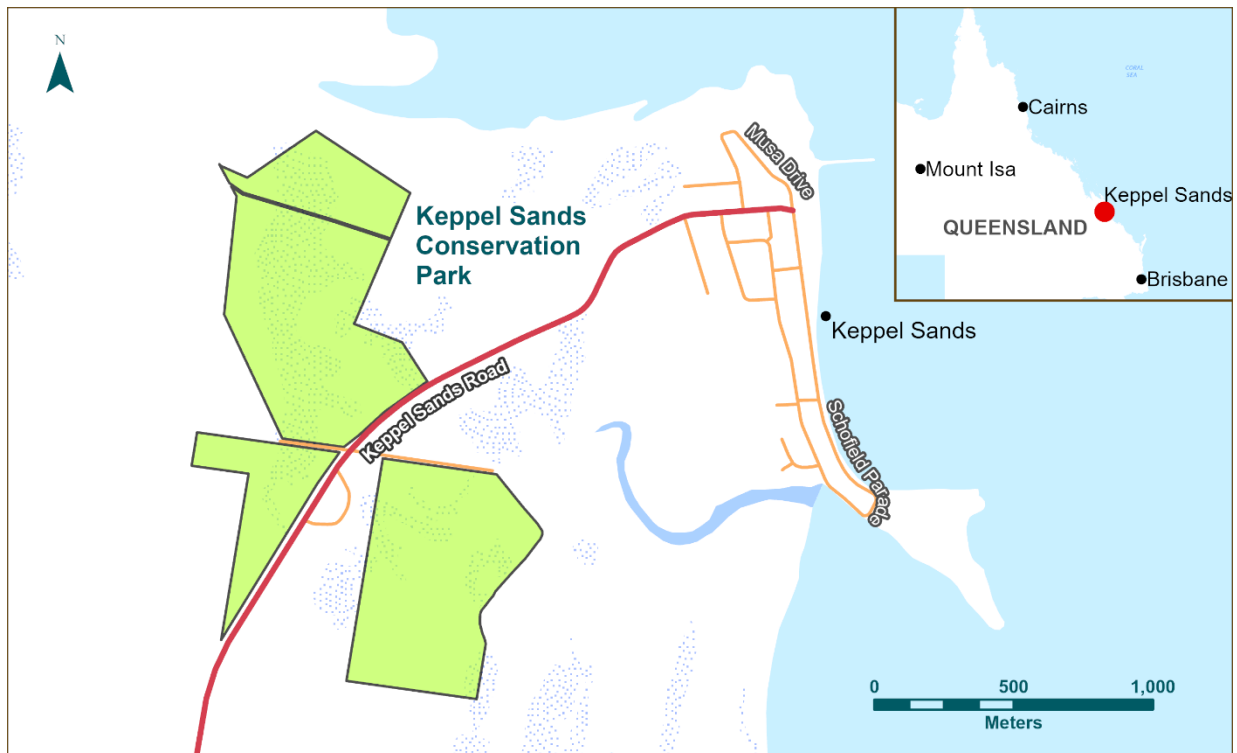


Figure 1. Locality of Keppel Sands Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Keppel Sands Conservation Park

Park size	Keppel Sands Conservation Park	98.4 ha
Bioregion	Brigalow Belt North	
QPWS region	Central	
Local government area	Livingstone Shire	
State electorate	Keppel	
Relevant legislation	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>	
	<i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i>	
	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cwlth)	
	<i>Native Title Act 1993</i> (Cwlth)	
	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>	
Plans and agreements	A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia	

3. Resource Information

3.1 Darumbal people

Two native title claims on behalf of the Darumbal people were registered on 23 February 1999 and 5 July 2000. These claims were combined on 26 July 2012 but later split into Darumbal Part A and B on 27 March 2013.

A determination was made on Part A on 21 June 2016 (Tribunal Number QCD2016/006, Federal Court Number QUD6131/1998) and includes part of the park and other areas. Native title over part of the park is held by the Darumbal People, as outlined in the determination. The Darumbal People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC is the registered native title body corporate (RNTBC) responsible for managing these rights.

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA, QI2016/036) was registered on 2 April 2016. This agreement applies to the part of the park where native title has been determined, as well as other protected areas. Known as the Darumbal People Protected Areas ILUA, it covers about 438 square kilometres in the Rockhampton region.

The park adjoins Mabel Edmund Park, named in honour of Mrs Mabel Edmund, a Darumbal woman. Mrs Edmund was the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to local government in Australia in 1970. She was also an artist and an author, recognised for her contributions to the Aboriginal community. She was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 1986 and received the Centenary Medal in 2001 for her distinguished service through writing. (Queensland Parliament 2009, Australian Government, Indigenous Australia)

3.2 World Heritage

The park is near to the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) which stretches along the Keppel Bay coastline and extends into Coorooman and Cawarral creeks. The GBRWHA was added to the World Heritage List (ID 154) during the 5th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Sydney from 26-30 October 1981.

Covering an area of 348,000 square kilometres, the GBRWHA is the world's largest coral reef ecosystem. It spans from the tip of Cape York in northern Queensland to just north of Bundaberg, extending from the low water mark to beyond the continental shelf. The area includes over 900 islands and cays and is recognised for its outstanding universal value. Its incredible diversity of species and interconnected habitats makes it one of the most complex and rich natural ecosystems on Earth. (UNESCO, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority)

3.3 Key value information

Based on an evaluation, the park's values do not reach the thresholds required to be considered a key value. The park, however, continues to contribute to the State's comprehensive and representative reserve system providing protection for biodiversity, ecosystem services and connectivity within the landscape.

3.4 Other values

3.4.1 Intertidal wetlands

Intertidal wetlands cover approximately 74.1% of the park and form part of the Yeppoon–Keppel Sands Tidal Wetland, which is recognised in *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia*. Most of the park's wetlands consist of samphire forbland, with a smaller area of mangrove forest. These wetlands play a vital role in connecting the park to the nearby Cawarral Creek Fish Habitat Area, the Great Barrier Reef

World Heritage Area, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Commonwealth), and the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (State).

3.5 Ecosystems and biodiversity

The park is located within the Marlborough Plains subregion of the Brigalow Belt North bioregion, as defined by the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA).

A portion of the park's western section lies within a Regional Biodiversity Corridor, which has been established to support and enhance ecological connectivity across Queensland.

Additionally, the park forms part of a moderately large tract of remnant vegetation along the coastline in Keppel Bay.

3.5.1 Regional ecosystems

The park contains three regional ecosystems, all of which currently have a biodiversity status of no concern at present. Each of these ecosystems represents less than 1.5% of its type remaining in Queensland or within the protected area estate.

Samphire forland on marine clay plains (11.1.2): This ecosystem covers 70.93 hectares (71.83% of the park). It provides estuarine wetland habitat and, in some areas, supports habitat for the Capricorn yellow chat *Epthianura crocea macgregori*, although no sightings of this species have been recorded in the park. According to the Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD), this ecosystem should not be targeted for burning, except for controlling rubbervine.

Corymbia–Melaleuca woodland complex of beach ridges and swales (11.2.5): This ecosystem covers 23.76 hectares (24.06% of the park). A small portion of this, 0.11 hectares, is classified as vegetation community 11.2.5b, which represents just 0.28% of this vegetation type remaining in Queensland. The park is the only protected area in the state where this vegetation community is found. The REDD fire management guideline advises against deliberate burning of this ecosystem.

Mangrove low open forest and/or woodland on marine clay plains (11.1.4): This ecosystem covers 2.14 hectares (2.17% of the park) and provides estuarine wetland habitat. The REDD fire management guideline recommends that this ecosystem should not be burned.

Additionally, the park contains a small area of non-remnant vegetation, covering 1.36 hectares (1.38% of the park).

3.5.2 Wetlands

Intertidal (saltmarsh, saltflats, mangroves) (natural) wetland covers 73 hectares of the park (74.1 per cent) which is in the Waterpark Creek subcatchment of the Waterpark catchment.

The park's intertidal wetlands are part of the broader Yeppoon–Keppel Sands Tidal Wetland, which is listed in *A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia* (QLD022), covers 10,110 hectares and includes nine different wetland types.

The western section of the park along Coorooman Creek adjoins the Cawarral Creek Fish Habitat Area (FHA-050).

The park is just two kilometres from the nearby Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (State) and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Commonwealth) which runs along the nearby Keppel Bay coastline.

3.6 Species

The Department's WildNet Database contains a single species record for the park — magpie goose.

3.7 Recreational opportunities

The park has no vehicle access or visitor facilities. Camping and fires are not permitted. Most people access the park by vessel to fish in the creeks.

3.8 Post-contact cultural heritage

No post-contact cultural heritage sites are known within the park.

3.9 Fire

The three regional ecosystems in the park do not require fire to maintain their health. Although planned burns are not conducted within the park, bushfires have occurred. The most recent bushfire took place in 2017 when a planned burn on a neighbouring property spread into the western section of the park.

3.10 Pests

Six pest species have been recorded from the park, including five plant species and one animal species (Appendix B). Among the pest plants, two are classified as Weeds of National Significance (WONS): lantana and rubber vine. WONS are identified based on their high invasiveness, potential for spread, and significant economic, environmental, and social impacts.

The park is covered under a current pest management strategy that also applies to nearby protected areas. This strategy provides guidance on managing pest species effectively.

3.11 Powerline

There is a high voltage powerline that runs through the western section of the park.

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5. Appendices

Appendix A. Policy and management commitments

Gazettal details

The park was originally gazetted as Keppel Sands Environmental Park on 29 March 1975 under the *Land Act 1962* and was managed under a Trustee Agreement by Livingstone Shire Council.

It was gazetted as Keppel Sands Conservation Park under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) on 16 December 1994 and again on 1 July 2016.

There was a short period during 2014 to 2016 when certain classes of protected area under the NCA were removed, including conservation parks. During this time the park was a regional park under the NCA, until legislative amendments in 2016 removed the 'regional park' class of protected area and it was reinstated as a conservation park.

Appendix B. Pests

Scientific name	Common name	Biosecurity Act 2014 status	Notes
Plants			
<i>Cryptostegia grandiflora</i>	rubber vine	Category 3	Weed of National Significance
<i>Lantana camara</i>	lantana	Category 3	Weed of National Significance
<i>Euphorbia cyathophora</i>	dwarf poinsettia		
<i>Megathyrsus maximus</i>	Guinea grass		
<i>Melinis repens</i>	red natal grass		
Animals			
<i>Canis familiaris</i>	wild dog	Category 3, 4, 6	