

South Stradbroke Island 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.

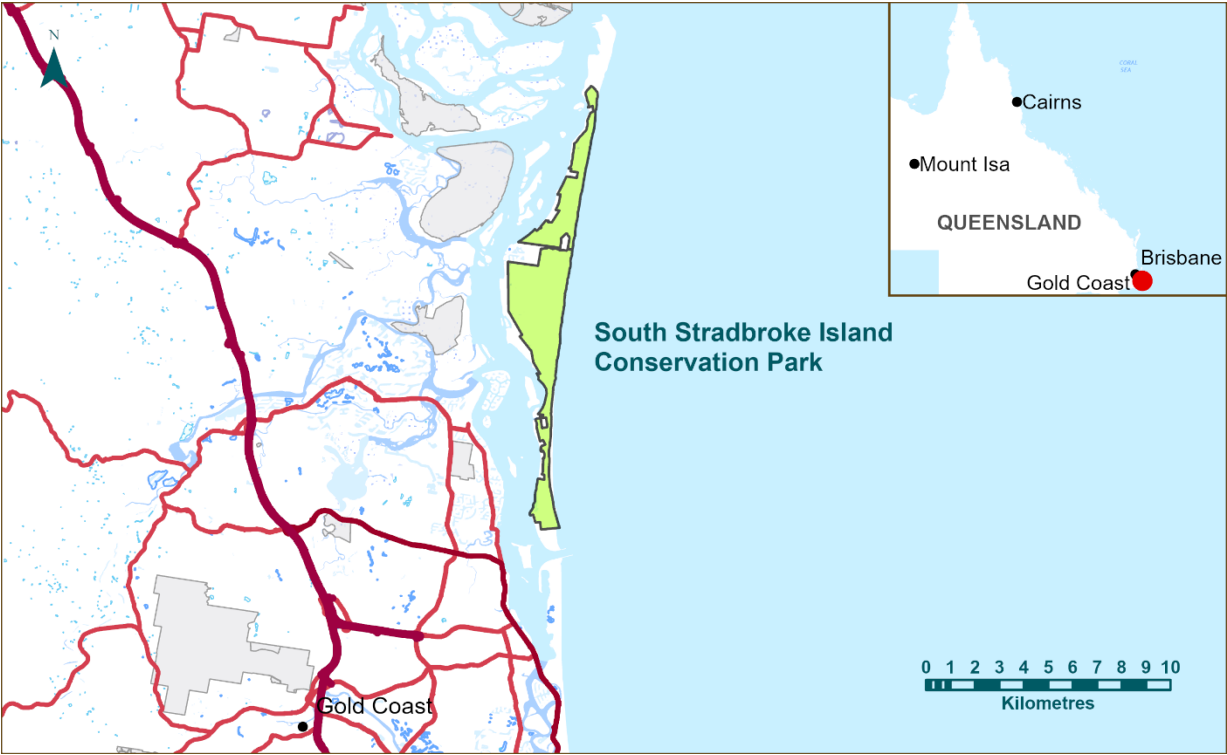


Figure 1. Locality of South Stradbroke Island Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of South Stradbroke Island Conservation Park

Park size	South Stradbroke Island Conservation Park	1493.9 ha
Bioregion	South Eastern Queensland	
QPWS region	Coastal and Islands	
Local government area	Gold Coast City Council	
State electorate	Broadwater	
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)	
	<i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i>	
Plans and agreements	<i>Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance)</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>	
	Fire Ant Response Plan 2023–2027	
	The Action Plan for Australian Mammals 2012	
	National Recovery Plan for the Water Mouse (<i>Xeromys myoides</i>) 2022	

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 	

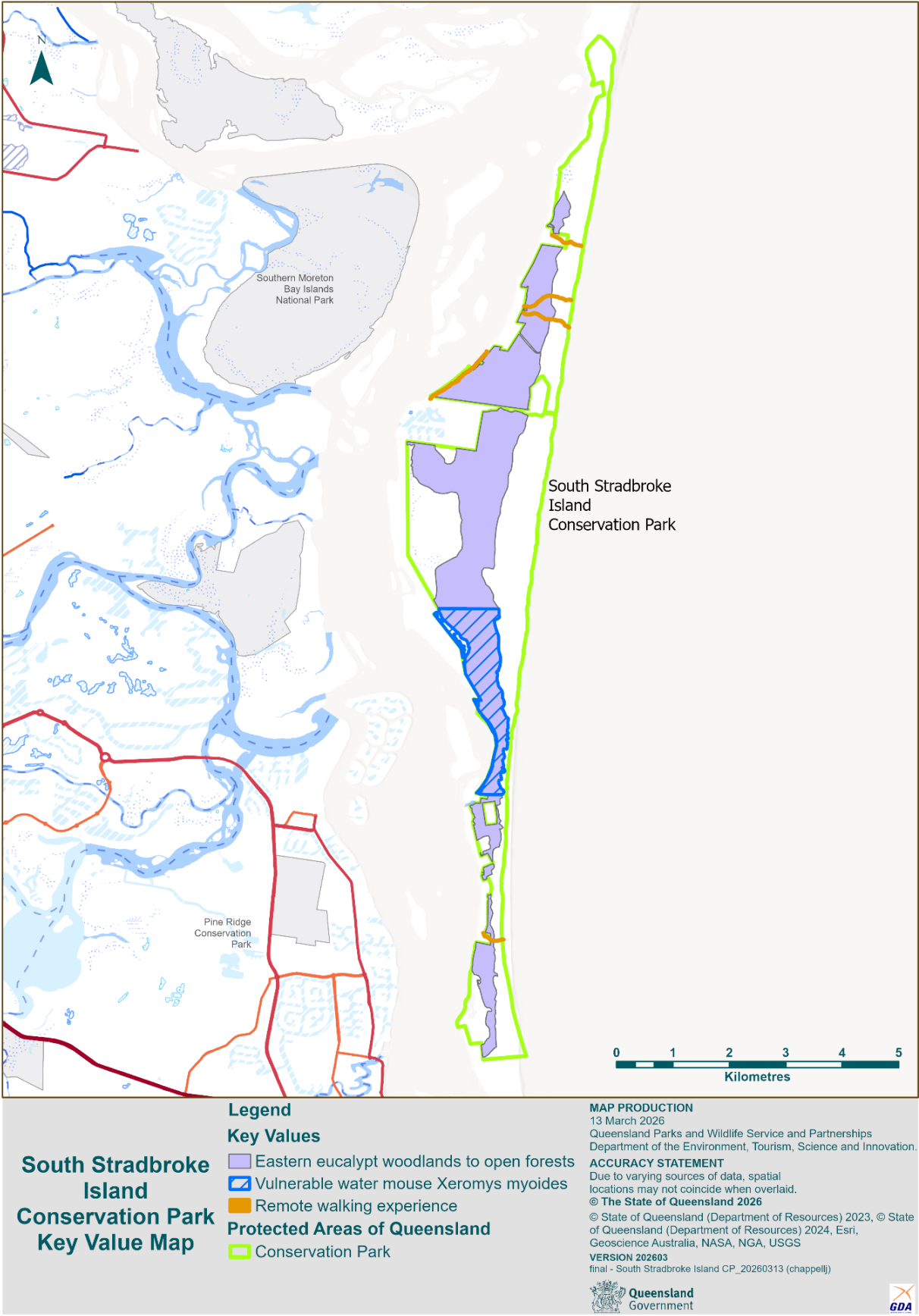


Figure 2. South Stradbroke Island Conservation Park key values

3.1 Eastern eucalypt woodlands to open forests

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Significant ecosystems (terrestrial)	The park's eucalypt woodlands to open forests extend across almost half of the park (44.51%), and include just one regional ecosystem (12.2.5), which is sensitive to fire. Cabbage palm <i>Livistona australis</i>, golden swamp-wallaby <i>Wallabia bicolor</i> and the orchid <i>Phaius australis</i> are also found within these woodlands and forests. The unique colour of the golden swamp-wallaby is rarely seen on the mainland; they are more regularly seen on Moreton Bay's southern islands. The cabbage palms are likely remnants of littoral rainforest and vine scrub that once existed on the island. The orchid <i>P. australis</i>, commonly known as the swamp lily, is endangered under the NCA and the EPBC Act. BVG 9f: Eucalypt woodlands to open forests – woodlands dominated by <i>Corymbia</i> spp., e.g. <i>C. intermedia</i> (pink bloodwood), <i>C. tessellaris</i> (Moreton Bay ash) and/or <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp., e.g. <i>E. racemosa</i>, <i>E. tereticornis</i> (blue gum), frequently with <i>Banksia</i> spp., <i>Acacia</i> spp. and <i>Callitris columellaris</i> (white cypress pine) on coastal dunes and beach ridges. RE 12.2.5 <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> +/- <i>Lophostemon confertus</i> +/- <i>Banksia</i> spp. +/- <i>Callitris columellaris</i> open forest on beach ridges usually in southern half of bioregion. Species can include <i>C. intermedia</i>, <i>L. confertus</i>, <i>B. integrifolia</i> subsp. <i>integrifolia</i>, <i>B. aemula</i>, <i>Callitris columellaris</i>, <i>Acacia</i> spp., <i>Livistona</i> spp. and <i>Endiandra sieberi</i>. Covers 664.5 ha of the park (44.51 per cent), of concern biodiversity status. Comprises 6.17% of that remaining in Queensland and 8.91% of that within the Queensland protected area estate (ranked 3 out of 23 parks that have the RE). While this RE is known to provide suitable habitat for koalas and potential habitat for NCA listed plant species such as <i>Acacia attenuata</i>, <i>A. baueri</i> subsp. <i>baueri</i>, <i>Boronia rivularis</i>, <i>Duringtonia paludosa</i>, <i>Glycine argyrea</i>, <i>Macarthuria complanata</i>, <i>Maundia triglochinosoides</i>, <i>Persicaria elatior</i> and <i>P. australis</i>, the only one of these species recorded from the park is the endangered <i>P. australis</i>. Special least concern cabbage palm <i>Livistona australis</i> is found within the park, south of Couran Cove. These may be remnants of what original vegetation records showed as littoral rainforest/vine scrub that once existed over the central and southern parts of the island. Endangered orchid <i>P. australis</i> is found on the park, in the same area as the cabbage palm. The orchid, commonly referred to as the swamp lily, is also endangered under the EPBC Act. It is widely cultivated in the nursery industry. REs 12.2.5 and 12.2.7 are potential habitat for the species. Previously known as <i>P. tancarvilleae</i>. SPRAT profile and threats database says that regular fuel reduction burns may have contributed to a decline in population on the Sunshine Coast hinterland, but that in coastal north-east Queensland, populations may be maintained by fire preventing succession of habitat to rainforest.						
Desired outcome Eastern eucalypt woodlands to open forests are healthy, resilient, protected and effectively managed, supporting thriving biodiversity, sustaining natural processes, and providing long-term viable habitats for fauna species.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
Bushfire	Natural system modifications	Bushfire impacts the wet forests, which are fire-sensitive with plants such as the swamp orchid and cabbage palm requiring protection from intense or regular fires.	Primary	Low

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Protect the eucalypt woodlands, cabbage palms and the orchid <i>Phaius australis</i> through appropriate fire management of adjacent fire-adapted communities.	3

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

3.2 Vulnerable water mouse *Xeromys myoides*

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Significant species	Australia's southernmost population of vulnerable water mouse <i>Xeromys myoides</i> is well established on the island. The island has one of the highest concentrations of nest sites recorded in south-east Queensland (Van Dyck and Gynther 2003). A 1997 survey recorded 19 nests at Browns Bay (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment 2021). The water mouse has a variety of nesting strategies which on the island include free standing nests on the landward side of the mangroves, island nests surrounded by water, and tree trunk nests. There is a higher incidence of tree trunk nesting on the island, which is attributed to the rise in water level following the breaching of the north and south islands, and subsequent erosion, flooding and sedimentation. The eucalyptus stumps where water mouse nests were found are now 125 metres from the marine/terrestrial interface (Van Dyck and Gynther 2003). The water mouse is listed as vulnerable under the NCA, EPBC Act, The Action Plan for Australian Mammals 2012 and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The water mouse is found on the western side of the island near Brown Island. Many of the water mouse nests mentioned above are outside the conservation park in the surrounding marine park. Within the conservation park, the BVGs where the mouse is nesting and foraging are 35a and 9f. BVG 35a – Closed forests and low closed forests dominated by mangroves BVG 9f – Woodlands dominated by <i>Corymbia</i> spp., e.g. <i>C. intermedia</i> (pink bloodwood), <i>C. tessellaris</i> (Moreton Bay ash) and/or <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp., e.g. <i>E. racemosa</i>, <i>E. tereticornis</i> (blue gum)), frequently with <i>Banksia</i> spp., <i>Acacia</i> spp. and <i>Callitris columellaris</i> (white cypress pine) on coastal dunes and beach ridges.						
Desired outcome The water mouse is thriving within its core habitat with strategic management intervention as required, supporting a healthy population with minimal threats, and sustainable interactions with human activities while fulfilling its ecological role and cultural significance in a balanced and healthy ecosystem.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
Introduced animals	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	The introduced European red fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> (Stobo-Wilson et al. 2021) is a primary threat to the water mouse in areas where the distribution of these two species overlap (i.e. along the central and southern Queensland coast, including on K'gari/Fraser Island, Minjerribah/North Stradbroke Island and Bribie Island. Foxes are an emerging threat South Stradbroke Island, where they established as recently as 2013 (Allen et al. 2017). Predation and dismantling of critical shelters by the introduced feral pig <i>Sus scrofa</i> are major concerns for the water mouse across its distribution. Predation by cats <i>Felis catus</i> may have a negative impact on the water mouse population. With an increasing number of people purchasing properties at Couran Cove, there are more domestic dogs and cats on the islands. Cat footprints have been observed in the coastal dunes.	Primary	Medium

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
Bushfire	Natural system modifications	Fire is known to destroy and degrade water mouse shelters within saltmarsh communities (Van Dyck & Gynther 2003) and fire removes supratidal and intertidal vegetation cover, exposing the water mouse to increased predation pressure (Burnham 2000; Kaluza 2019). Extensive and frequent fire intrusion into saltmarsh and other supratidal habitats is likely to increase in extent and severity across the known distribution of the water mouse as climate change progresses (Ward et al. 2020; State of Queensland 2021). Fire is unlikely to impact mangrove habitat (Woinarski & Winderlich 2014).	Secondary	Low
Tourism and recreational development	Residential and commercial development	Water mouse habitat is close to a camping area and waste facility, which may have flow on impacts through potential disturbance from human activity and increased numbers of pest species (e.g. cats) being attracted by the food waste.	Other	Low

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Reduce impacts of foxes, pigs, cats and other pests on the water mouse.	2
Maintain water mouse habitat through the targeted application of fire.	3
Minimise impacts of adjacent land uses on the water mouse habitat.	3

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

3.3 Remote walking experience

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 park's five walking tracks provide a remote walking experience through open forests and woodlands. This is an opportunity to leave the built environment of the Gold Coast behind and enjoy a natural island landscape. When arriving by vessel on the western side of the island, the built environment of the Gold Coast is an obvious feature in the landscape. The park's walking tracks provide an opportunity for visitors to walk away from the built environment into a natural island landscape, where they can experience solitude, appreciate the native forest around them, and spot native wildlife such as the unique golden swamp-wallaby. The walks provide an opportunity to see open forests and woodlands, swamps and sandy beaches. The walks have high natural amenity and healthy vegetation, and no built infrastructure is visible once on the walking tracks. Track surfaces are natural (not hardened). It provides a different experience to other sand islands such as K'gari, Moreton and Bribie, where visitor use is high and people and vehicles are more obvious in the landscape. While walking the park's tracks, visitors are unlikely to see anyone else on the tracks or any vehicles on the eastern beach. Weekends are busier but notably quieter than the other islands. Noise from vehicles or vessels is not pervasive. It dissipates as visitors walk away from the western side of the island. Aircraft flying overhead may be heard but there are no regular flights over the island. There are five walking tracks in the park: Dux's Hut walk; Tipplers walking trail; Surf Beach walk; Broadwater trail; and South Currigee walk. These provide access from the west side of the island (where camping and water taxis operate to) to the east side of the island.						
Desired outcome The South Stradbroke walking experience 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
Overcrowding	Impacts on visitor experience and commercial opportunities	Increased development and use of the island, including the adjacent reserves, USL and freehold properties, would lead to increased use of the walking tracks and overcrowding. Increased use may be from free and independent visitors, commercial tourism or residents.	Primary	High
Loss of experience	Impacts on visitor experience and commercial opportunities	Increased development and use of the island would lead to increased use of the walking tracks, impacting the remote walking experience.	Secondary	High

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Maintain the existing visitor experience in the park.	3
Minimise social impacts on the remote walking experience.	3

*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.

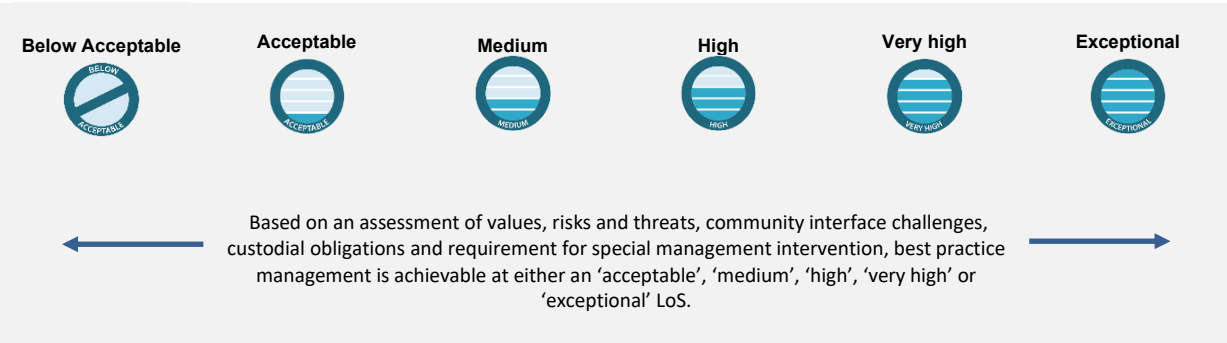


Figure 3. Description of LoS icons

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.	1
			Maintain current level of consultation with neighbours, fire agencies (Wasp Creek Rural Fire) and relevant stakeholders.	2
			Maintain existing collaboration through the Area Fire Management Groups to support a shared responsibility approach to fire management.	2
			Improve collaboration through increased engagement with Couran Cove Resort management and the City of Gold Coast to support a shared responsibility approach to fire management.	2
			Maintain current priority of fire management to protect life and property and improve the condition of identified key values.	1
Pest management			Maintain contemporary knowledge of pest species that might threaten key values.	3
			Improve knowledge of the impacts red fire ants and emerging pests (including pigs and foxes) may have on key values.	2
			Maintain the current level of consultation for the development of the annual pest program.	3
			Maintain the current level of engagement with stakeholders to mitigate the potential impacts of pests.	3
			Maintain existing collaboration with the City of Gold Coast, Biosecurity Queensland and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development to support a shared responsibility approach to the National Fire Ant Eradication Program.	3
			Improve consultation with neighbours and Friends of Parks Queensland to explore opportunities for community involvement in park management.	3
			Investigate ways to prevent domestic cats and dogs from entering the park and impacting key values, in collaboration with the City of Gold Coast.	3
			Maintain the current priority for pest management to protect life and property and improve the condition of key values.	1
			Improve prioritisation of pest threats to water mouse.	2
Natural values management			Improve knowledge of the condition of the vegetation communities through the collation of historical vegetation monitoring, and management of the health check program.	2
			Improve current knowledge and understanding of cabbage palms and the orchid <i>P. australis</i> .	3
			Improve the knowledge and understanding of the distribution and threats to the water mouse.	2
			Improve consultation with centric units, research institutions and local community natural resource groups to support natural values management and develop monitoring programs for key values.	2

Management theme	Current	Desired	Strategic management direction	Priority (1–5) *
			Maintain the current management effort to improve the condition of key values.	3
			Improve management of key values through preparation of a monitoring and research strategy.	2
Post-contact cultural heritage management			Maintain a contemporary knowledge of the park's post-contact cultural heritage and management requirements.	3
			Maintain the current level of consultation with heritage groups and stakeholders, and QPWS&P Principal Heritage Officer to guide post-contact cultural heritage management.	3
Visitor management			Maintain current level of knowledge of visitor use.	3
			Maintain current level of engagement with visitors to the park.	4
			Maintain visitor experiences through interpretation of park values via the agency website.	4
			Maintain the current level of consultation with City of Gold Coast and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development to retain the remote walking experience.	3
			Maintain current approach to visitor management.	3
			Maintain current approach to facilities management.	3
			Maintain the current level of visitor safety at key visitor sites.	3
			Investigate developing a visitor strategy to reduce threats to key values.	5
Community, partnerships and other interests			Maintain contemporary knowledge of all stakeholders and management requirements.	3
			Maintain current consultation and engagement with key stakeholders.	3
			Maintain ongoing relationship and communication with Jabree Aboriginal Corporation for on-ground park management.	3
			Maintain current approach to management of partnerships, community and other interests.	3
			Maintain current approach to the management of Jabree Aboriginal Corporation's identified cultural heritage areas.	3
Field management capability			Maintain a contemporary knowledge base to deliver required management.	3
			Enhance field management capacity by increasing the strategic use of regional and centric teams as needed.	2
			Maintain operational capacity to actively manage the park's values.	3
			Maintain field management capability to undertake education and compliance activities during high visitation periods.	3
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 relationships with regional and centric support units.	3
			Maintain levels of operational planning for key management priorities, including fire, pest and visitor management, and threatened species.	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.