

Highworth Bend 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.

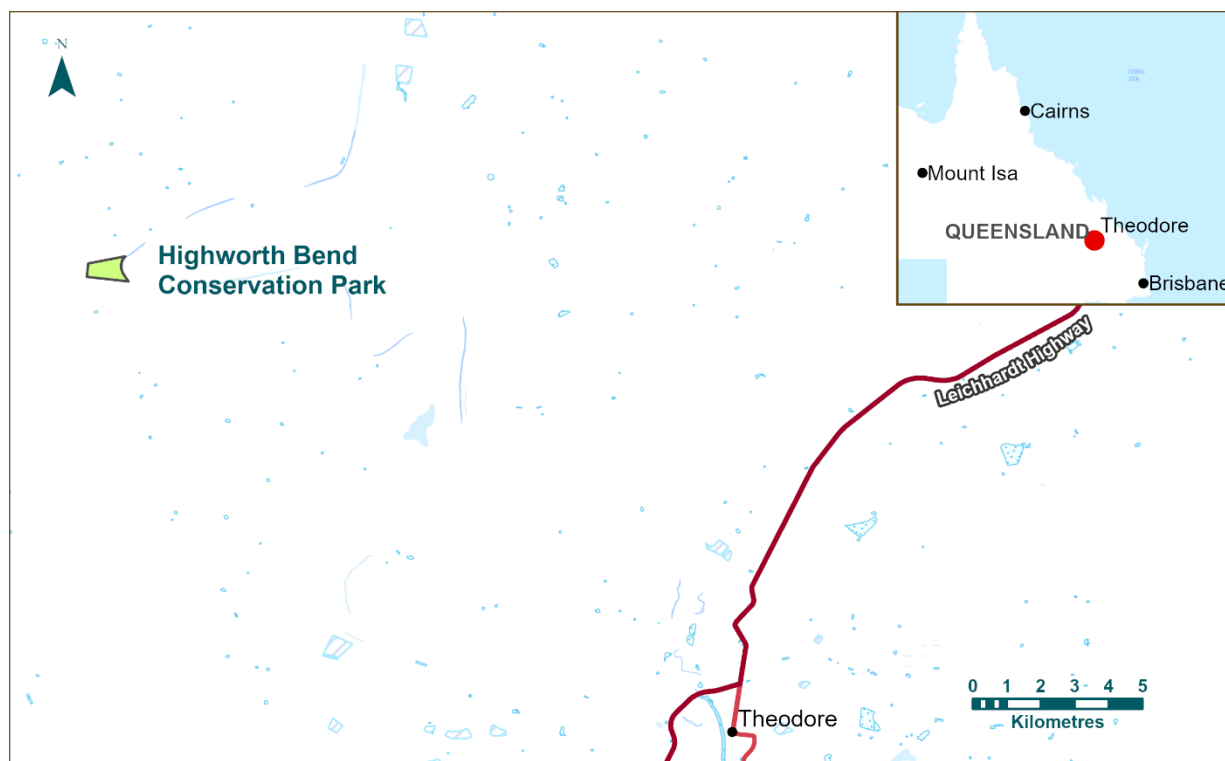


Figure 1. Locality of Highworth Bend Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Highworth Bend Conservation Park

Park size	Highworth Bend Conservation Park	51.6 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 (Cwlth) (EPBC)</i> <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NCA)</i> <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> <i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i> <i>Geothermal Energy Act 2010</i>	
Plans and agreements	<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>	

3. Park values

All parks, forests and reserves contain a range of natural, cultural, social and economic values that contribute to Queensland's protected area and forest estate. The VBMF provides a framework for identifying and protecting the most important of these—referred to as *key values*.

Based on an evaluation, the values on Highworth Bend Conservation Park 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.

Park management will focus on conserving the natural, cultural and social values that support its importance as a protected area, ensuring that management aligns with the legislative and custodial obligations in relation to these values.

Threats to values will primarily be managed through fire and pest management. Key actions will include:

- protecting life and property within and adjacent to the park
- managing fire to conserve and maintain regional ecosystems in line with the planned burn guidelines
- reducing the impacts of existing pest species on neighbouring land uses
- managing pest threats to preserve regional ecosystems and species of conservation significance.

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 2.

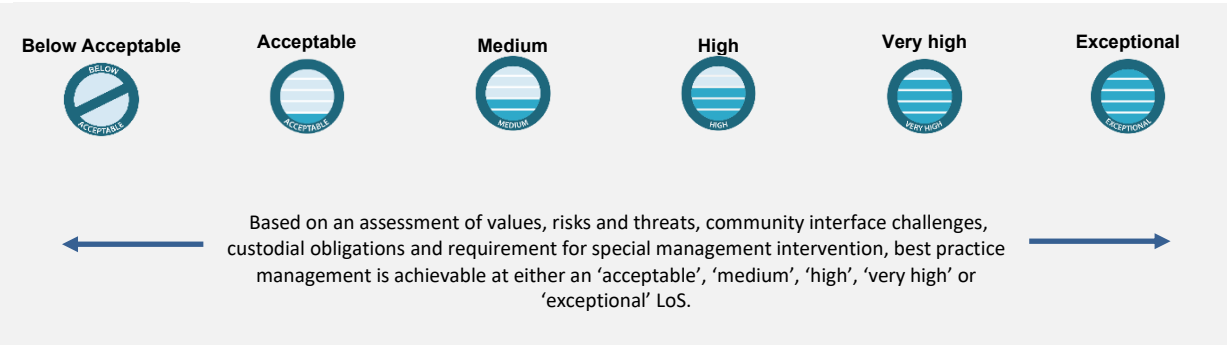


Figure 2. Description of LoS icons

4.1 Management directions

Management theme	Current	Desired	Strategic management direction	Priority (1–5) *
Fire management			Improve the current knowledge and understanding of fire requirements for the park.	4
			Improve the current knowledge and understanding of fire requirements for rehabilitation of the park.	4
			Maintain current level of consultation with neighbours, fire agencies and relevant stakeholders.	4
			Improve fire management in the park through preparation of an area fire strategy.	3
			Improve current approach to fire management by raising the level of priority for fire management to protect life and property and regional ecosystems.	3
Pest management			Maintain contemporary knowledge of pest species that might threaten natural values.	4
			Improve knowledge and understanding of current weeds and the impacts on natural values, including their distribution and extent.	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 natural values.	3
			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.	4
			Improve natural values management through pest and weed management and implementing conservation burns.	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 park values.	4
Post-contact cultural heritage management			Maintain a contemporary knowledge of the park's post-contact cultural heritage and management requirements.	5
Visitor management			Maintain current level of knowledge of visitor use and activity through routine patrols and monitoring.	5
			Maintain current approach to visitor management.	5

Management theme	Current	Desired	Strategic management direction	Priority (1–5) *
Community, partnerships and other interests			Maintain contemporary knowledge of all stakeholders and management requirements.	5
			Increase knowledge of Gaangalu People's native title rights and interests.	3
			Increase staff's capabilities in cultural heritage management and cross-cultural engagement through training opportunities.	3
			Maintain current level of engagement with stakeholders such as neighbours and the rural fire brigade.	5
			Improve the relationship with First Nations partners by establishing an effective relationship and communication with Gaangalu People for on-ground park management as required.	4
			Improve current approach to management of partnerships, community and other interests.	4
			Increase the priority for informed management of Gaangalu People's identified cultural heritage areas through collaborative efforts with centric and regional support units.	4
Field management capability			Maintain a contemporary knowledge base to deliver required management.	4
			Maintain current levels consultation with regional support units regarding field management capacity.	4
			Maintain operational capacity to actively manage the park's values.	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 relationships with regional and centric support units.	4
			Maintain levels of operational planning for key management priorities, including fire and pest.	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.