

Coombabah Lake 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 park included in this management statement, including their locality, legislative framework and applicable plans/agreements.

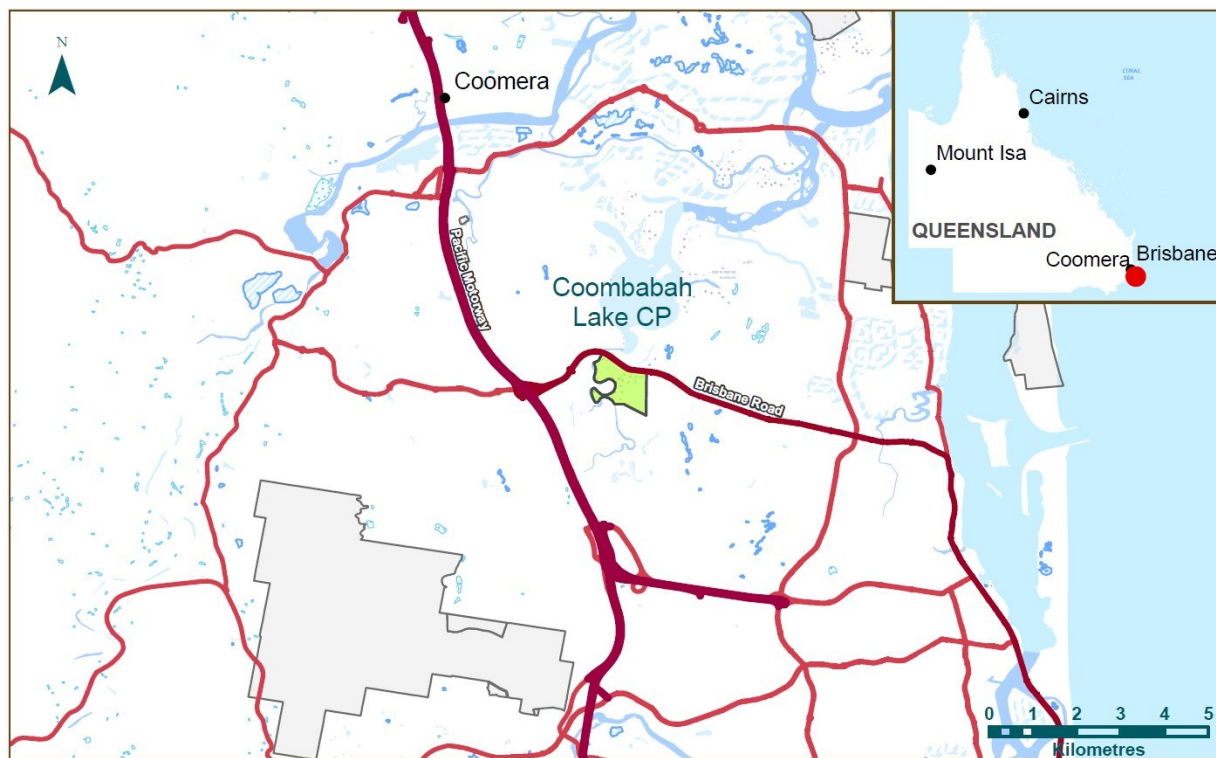


Figure 1. Locality of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park

Park size	Coombah Lake Conservation Park	68.1 ha
Bioregion	South East Queensland	
QPWS region	South East	
Local government area	City of Gold Coast	
State electorate	Bonney	
Relevant legislation	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth) (EPBC)</i> <i>Fire Services Act 1990</i> <i>Fisheries Act 1994</i> <i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>	
Plans and agreements	<i>National Recovery Plan for the Koala Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory), 2022</i> <i>Ramsar Convention on Wetlands</i>	

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 	

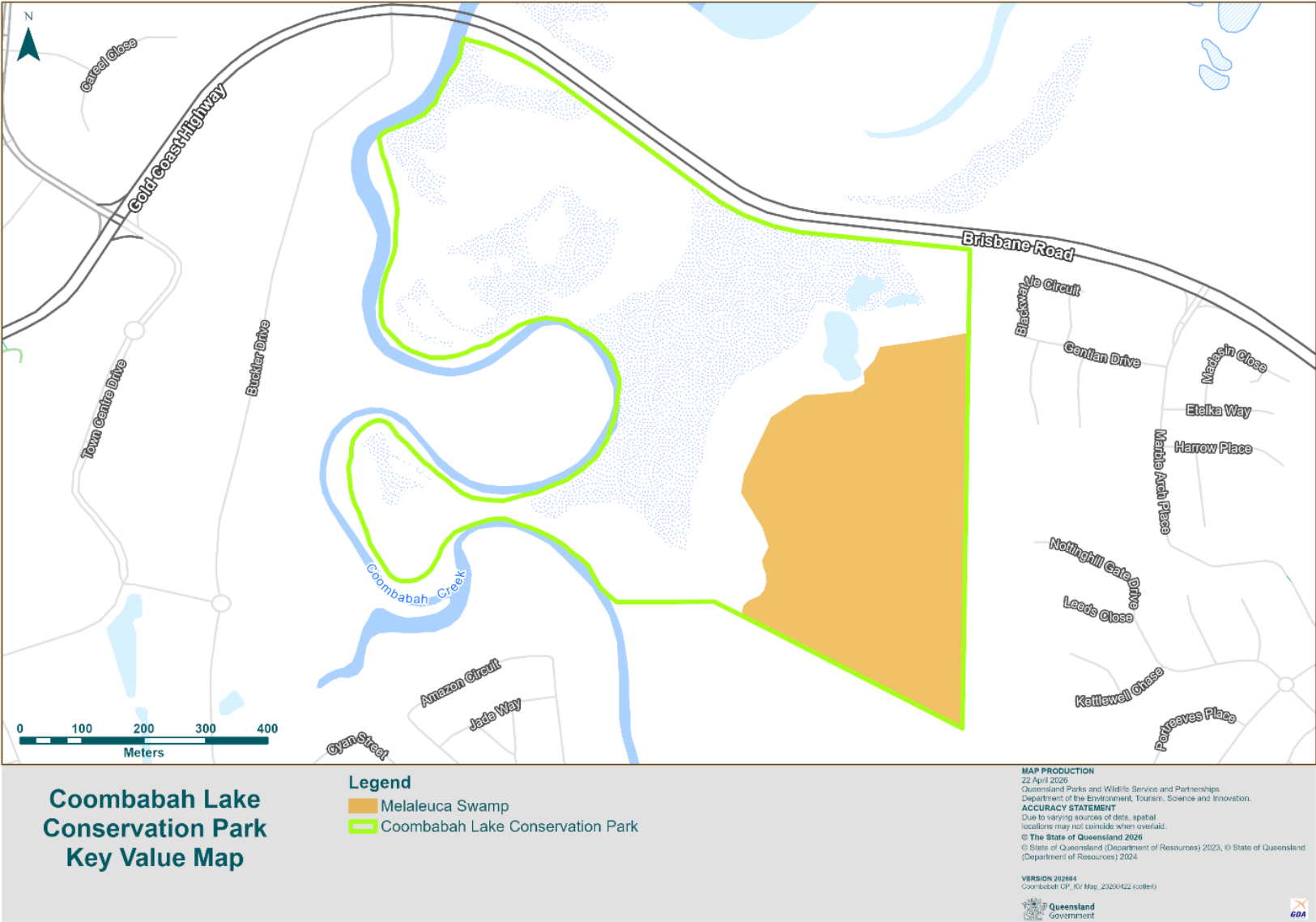


Figure 2 Coombabah Lake Conservation Park key values

3.1 Melaleuca Swamp

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Significant ecosystem	Coomababah Lake Conservation Park lies within the internationally recognised Moreton Bay Ramsar site and therefore possesses intrinsic values of international significance. The south-eastern section of the park has been identified as a Key Value due to its substantial and undisturbed patches of paperbark swamp (Regional Ecosystem 12.3.20). This periodically inundated community represents one of the three largest remaining occurrences on the Gold Coast and, occurring adjacent to the Coombabah Wetlands, it is pivotal to the ecological function and integrity of the Ramsar site. RE 12.3.20 is poorly represented within Queensland's protected area estate, with approximately 81.83% of the community occurring on unprotected land. This under-representation reinforces the conservation significance of the patches protected within Coombabah Lake Conservation Park. The Key Value includes the following regional ecosystem - RE 12.3.20 <i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i>, <i>Casuarina glauca</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i>, <i>E. siderophloia</i>, <i>M. styphelioides</i> open forest on low coastal alluvial plains (listed as 'endangered' under the VMA and EPBC). (BVG 22ab)	Good with some concern 	Inferred 	Stable 	Inferred 	Good with some concern 	Good with some concern 
Desired outcome The melaleuca swampland is healthy, resilient, protected and effectively managed, protecting Ramsar values, supporting ecosystem services, thriving biodiversity, sustaining natural processes, and providing long-term viable habitats for fauna species that depend on it.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
Introduced weeds	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Easter cassia <i>Senna pendula</i> var. <i>glabrata</i> or <i>Senna pendula</i> var. <i>pendula</i> and ground asparagus <i>Asparagus aethiopicus</i> are present along the fringes of the park along the Gold Coast Highway. It is not known how deep these plants have penetrated into the park, however easter cassia prefers disturbed areas such as roadsides. Ground asparagus is a significant environmental weed. It can grow in a wide variety of soil types including wetlands and marshes. Ground asparagus can outcompete native flora in the ground and shrub strata.	Primary	Low
Sea level rise and drought	Climate change and severe weather	Impacts to the wetland from climate change may include sea level rise and increased temperatures. Sea level rise may result in longer periods of inundation or permanent inundation of normally tidal areas. This would reduce suitable habitat and feeding grounds for shorebirds which are reliant on tidal action. Longer periods of inundation may also result in mangrove dieback, melaleuca dieback and subsequent conversion to sparsely vegetation saltmarsh or even a permanent marine environment. Rising temperatures from climate change may increase environmental stressors on already vulnerable species.	Secondary	Low
Introduced animals	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	European red fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> have been found in the park. Trail cameras have confirmed sightings of individuals and incidental reports from park neighbours show that foxes are active in the park. The total population of foxes in the park is poorly understood. It is expected foxes are adding pressure on shorebirds in the Ramsar area by preying upon eggs, young and adults, and their presence may prevent shorebirds from foraging at low tide.	Other	Low
Recreation	Human intrusions and disturbance	Illegal camping has been identified in the park. Access to the park is limited, however damaged vegetation and emerging paths appear throughout the park. Long-term, the damage to vegetation may become permanent and result in areas of dieback. Human activity may decrease the appeal of Coombabah Lake Conservation Park as animal refugia within the Ramsar area.	Other	Low
Roads and railroads	Transportation and service corridors	The Coomera Connector (M9) motorway is a motorway is currently under development which runs north-south approximately 100 metres west of the park. The City of Gold Coast Council have noted sediment build up into Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area which is nearby to the QPWS estate. Sediment may start to enter or may already be entering Coombabah Lake Conservation Park. Sediment build up may smother root systems or create areas of permanent inundation or otherwise prevent normal tidal movements, resulting in areas of dieback and allowing encroachment of environmental pests.	Other	Low

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Monitor the condition of the Wetland and adapt management where required to reduce climate change associated impacts.	5
Reduce the impacts of European Red fox <i>Vulpes vulpes</i> on the Wetland.	2
Minimise visitor impacts of illegal camping and vegetation trampling on the Wetland.	2
Minimise pollution impacts from development through better understanding of known and potential threats presented to the Wetland by the Coomera Connector through monitoring and research.	4
Reduce impacts of Easter cassia <i>Senna pendula</i> var. <i>pendula</i> and <i>Senna pendula</i> var. <i>glabrata</i> and ground asparagus <i>Asparagus aethiopicus</i> on the Wetland.	2

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.

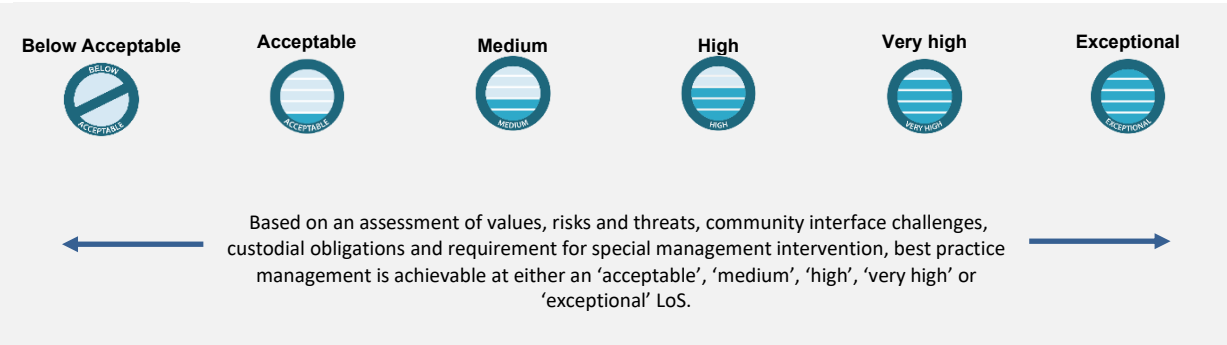


Figure 3. Description of LoS icons

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 priority of fire management to protect life and property and improve the condition of identified key values.	3
Pest management			Improve the knowledge of pest species that might threaten key values.	4
			Maintain the current priority for pest management to protect life and property and improve the condition of key values.	4
Natural values management			Maintain contemporary knowledge of natural values and their management requirements, particularly for the improvement of key value health.	4
			Improve natural values management through incorporating scientific research and monitoring into on-ground management.	4
			Consult with the Gold Coast City council in managing the Wetland in alignment with the City of Gold Coast Climate Resilience and Sustainability Strategy 2023-2033.	5
			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 the current approach to post-contact cultural heritage management.	5
Visitor management			Improve level of knowledge of illegal camping through improved data capture.	3
			Maintain current approach to visitor management.	4
Community, partnerships and other interests			Maintain contemporary knowledge of all stakeholders and management requirements.	4
			Improve consultation and engagement with First Nations partners by re-establishing an effective relationship and communication with Danggan Balun Five Rivers People for on ground park management as required.	3
			Maintain current approach to management of partnerships, community and other interests.	4
Field management capability			Improve staff knowledge and capacity to manage key values through training and information sharing.	3
Operational planning and management support			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.