

Blackwater 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

Blackwater Conservation Park is six kilometres west of the inland town of Blackwater. The small park runs parallel to the northern side of the Capricorn Highway and railway for around 800 metres. Amaroo State Forest is 14 kilometres south-west of the park, while Arthurs Bluff State Forest and Blackdown Tableland National Park are 17 and 25 kilometres south-east of the park respectively.

The broader surrounding landscape has been highly modified for agriculture (mostly grazing) and mining. Surrounding tenures are freehold, leasehold and road reserve. While there is an airfield located to the south of the park, there are no commercial flights operating. Blackwater open cut coal mine is south of the park on the other side of the highway. It has been operating since 1967 and is one of the largest producing metallurgical coal mines in Queensland.

The following figure and table (Figure 1, Table 1) provide an overview of information related to the park including locality, legislative framework and applicable plans/agreements.

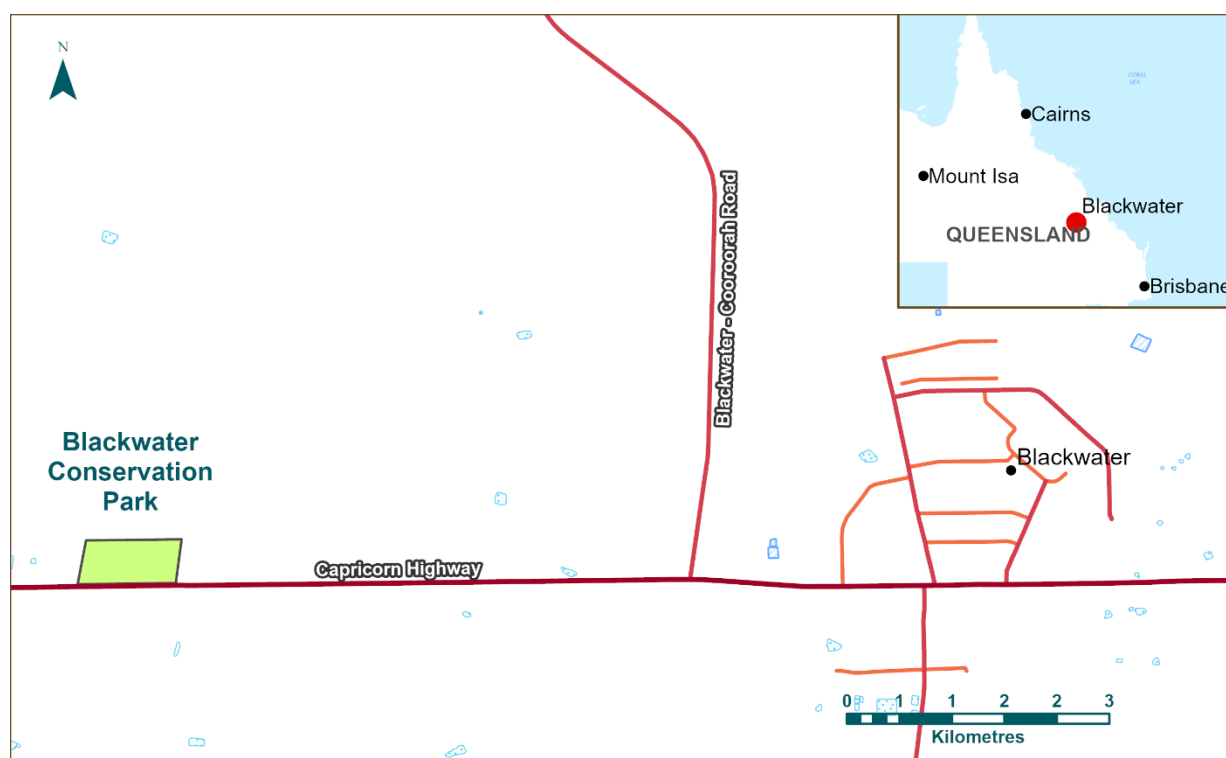


Figure 1. Locality of Blackwater Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Blackwater Conservation Park

Park size	Blackwater Conservation Park	35.1 ha
Bioregion	Brigalow Belt North	
QPWS region	Central	
Local government area	Central Highlands Regional Council	
State electorate	Gregory	
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>Geothermal Energy Act 2010</i>	
	<i>Mineral Resources Act 1989</i>	
	<i>Native Title Act 1993</i> (Cwlth)	
	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>	
Plans and agreements	Threatened Species Action Plan 2002–2032	

3. Resource information

3.1 First Nations people

There is an active native title claim that includes the park. It was lodged on 20 August 2012 and registered on 9 January 2026. The claim is on behalf of the Gaangalu Nation People (Tribunal Number QC2012/2009, Federal Court number QUD33/2019). The claim area is large and covers around 14,646 square kilometres of country inland from Rockhampton.

3.2 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.

3.3 Other values

3.3.1 Brigalow woodlands and forest

Brigalow woodlands and forests extend across almost half the park. There are two endangered regional ecosystems (11.9.1 and 11.4.9) within the park that contain brigalow *Acacia harpophylla* and provide habitat for the endangered plant *Solanum elaeagnifolium*. These regional ecosystems require protection from fire. There has been extensive clearing of brigalow within the Brigalow Belt bioregions.

3.4 Ecosystems and biodiversity

Blackwater Conservation Park is within the Issac-Comet Downs subregion of the Brigalow Belt North Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) bioregion. There is a creek line that runs through the park on the eastern side. While the creek is dry for most of the year, there are associated subdominant riverine and palustrine wetlands in this part of the park. The park is within the Mackenzie River sub-basin of the Fitzroy drainage basin.

The broader landscape surrounding the park has been significantly modified. The park provides a very small area of remnant vegetation that is representative of the landscape pre-clearing. The park is not well connected to nearby vegetation communities, and the nearest regional conservation corridor is 2.5 kilometres to the east along Burngrove Creek.

The park is within Brigalow Country, which covers a large area from Bowen to northern New South Wales. Brigalow is a species of wattle (*Acacia harpophylla*), an ecological community and the name of the wider bioregion. The Australian Government's *Threatened Species Action Plan 2002–2032* identifies Brigalow Country as one of 20 priority places for targeted action over five years, with the objective to improve condition. Since the 1950s, much of Australia's brigalow *A. harpophylla* forests have been cleared for agriculture and are now dominated by exotic grasses (Fensham et al. 2019).

3.4.1 Regional ecosystems

There are five regional ecosystems in the park — two have endangered biodiversity status, two are of concern (Appendix B) and one has no concern at present status. Each regional ecosystem represents less than 0.1 per cent of that regional ecosystem remaining in Queensland or within the protected area estate. Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems cover 25.93 hectares (73.84 per cent) of the park.

Acacia harpophylla-Eucalyptus cambageana woodland to open forest on fine-grained sedimentary rocks (11.9.1) has endangered biodiversity status and covers 16.96 hectares (48.31 per cent) of the park. While this regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) listed species *Solanum adenophorum*, *S. dissectum*, *S. elachophyllum*, *S. johnsonianum* and *Xerothamnella herbacea* — endangered *S. elachophyllum* is the only one of these species recorded from the park. The Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD) fire management guideline is to protect this regional ecosystem from fire.

Acacia harpophylla shrubby woodland with *Terminalia oblongata* on Cainozoic clay plains (11.4.9) has endangered biodiversity status and covers just 0.11 hectares (0.30 per cent) of the park. While this regional ecosystem is known to provide potential habitat for NCA listed species including *Cadellia pentastylis*, *S. adenophorum*, *S. dissectum*, *S. elachophyllum*, *S. johnsonianum* and *Xerothamnella herbacea* — endangered *S. elachophyllum* is the only one of these species recorded from the park. The REDD fire management guideline advises to protect this regional ecosystem from fire.

Eucalyptus tereticornis or *E. camaldulensis* woodland fringing drainage lines (11.3.25) has of concern biodiversity status and covers 4.42 hectares (12.62 per cent) of the park. Although this regional ecosystem is recognised as potential habitat for the threatened freshwater turtle *Rheodytes leukops* in the Fitzroy catchment, as well as important habitat for other riparian freshwater turtle species and suitable habitat for koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus*, none of these species has been recorded within the park. The REDD fire management guideline advises undertaking primarily early dry season burns with low intensity at 3–5 year intervals.

Eucalyptus coolabah woodland on alluvial plains (11.3.3) has an of concern biodiversity status and covers 4.43 hectares (12.61 per cent) of the park. This is the only protected area where vegetation community 11.3.3c is present, it comprises 0.89 hectares within the park. While this regional ecosystem and the vegetation community is associated with a high number of animals and mature trees with hollows for nesting birds and other species, there have been limited species sightings within the park. The REDD fire management guideline advises that this regional ecosystem does not need fire.

Eucalyptus melanophloia +/- *E. orgadophila* woodland to open woodland on fine-grained sedimentary rocks (11.9.2) is classified as having no concern at present status and covers 9.13 hectares (26.01 per cent) of the park. This regional ecosystem is recognised as potential habitat for the endangered *S. elachophyllum*, which has been recorded within the park. The REDD fire management guideline recommends the application of late wet to early dry season burns when there is good soil moisture, early storm season burns, or after good spring rains, with a low to moderate intensity, at 6–10 year intervals, and with less than 30 per cent burnt in any year.

3.5 Species

3.5.1 Native animals

Nine native animal species are recorded from the park. All are birds with least concern status.

3.5.2 Native plants

Two native plant species are recorded from the park. One, the endangered *Solanum elachophyllum*, has conservation significance.

The endangered bush tomato *S. elachophyllum* is strongly associated with brigalow forests but has also been recorded from eucalypt dominated vegetation, especially in proximity to brigalow forests. However, this species is threatened by exotic grasses, with field surveys finding none in areas with more than 50 per cent exotic grass cover (Fensham *et al.* 2019).

3.6 Recreational opportunities

There are no visitor facilities within the park and camping is not permitted.

3.7 Post-contact cultural heritage

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

3.8 Fire

Most of the regional ecosystems within the park require protection from fire. Two regional ecosystems (11.9.2, 11.3.25) require fire to be healthy. Together, they comprise 13.55 hectares (38.63 per cent) of the park.

There are no historical fire records for the park.

There are some established fire breaks outside the park.

Fire is used by nearby property owners to encourage growth of buffel grass for grazing cattle.

3.9 Pests

Cane toad *Rhinella marina* is the only pest species recorded from the park in the department's WildNet Database.

While there is some fencing on adjacent properties, cattle are known to graze and wander through the park.

3.10 Mining

There are numerous mining and petroleum tenements in the area. Multiple mining leases and exploration permits surround the park and there are current and historical exploration permits that include the park.

One coal exploration permit (EPC699) includes the park. It was granted to Constellation Mining Pty Ltd on 30 August 2005. An application to renew the permit, which was due to expire on 29 August 2025, has been lodged.

Australis Energy Pty Ltd has applied for a geothermal exploration permit (EPG2039) that includes the park. The application was lodged on 12 March 2024.

There are mining ground and surface water monitoring locations within the park.

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5. Appendices

Appendix A. Legal, policy and management commitments

Gazettal details

The park was originally gazetted as Blackwater Environmental Park on 23 February 1974 under the *Land Act 1962* and managed under a trustee agreement by Duaringa Shire Council.

It was gazetted as Blackwater 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.

Recovery plans and guides

- *Threatened Species Action Plan 2002–2032*

Appendix B. Regional ecosystems of significance

Regional ecosystem	Description	Regional ecosystem class*	Biodiversity status**
11.4.9	<i>Acacia harpophylla</i> shrubby woodland with <i>Terminalia oblongata</i> on Cainozoic clay plains	Endangered	Endangered
11.9.1	<i>Acacia harpophylla</i> - <i>Eucalyptus cambageana</i> woodland to open forest on fine-grained sedimentary rocks	Endangered	Endangered
11.3.25	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> or <i>E. camaldulensis</i> woodland fringing drainage lines	Least concern	Of concern
11.3.3	<i>Eucalyptus coolabah</i> woodland on alluvial plains	Of concern	Of concern

* Vegetation Management Regional Ecosystem Description Database (VM REDD)

** Queensland Herbarium, Regional Ecosystem Description Database (REDD)

Appendix C. Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	NC Act status	EPBC Act status
Plants			
<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>		Endangered	

Appendix D. Pests

Scientific name	Common name	Biosecurity Act 2014 status
Animals		
<i>Rhinella marina</i>	cane toad	