

protected

Magazine of National Parks Association of Queensland

SUPPLEMENTING NATIONAL PARKS

PLUS

LAND & SEA RANGER PROGRAM

ALSO FEATURED

Independant EPA
Families for the Forests
NPAQ Strategic Plan
Superb Fairy -wren
Ranger spotlight



Issue 38
Summer 2023

Contact details

Office

Unit 9/36 Finchley St, Milton
QLD

Post

9/36 Finchley St, Milton QLD
4064

Phone

(07) 3367 0878

Web

www.npaq.org.au

Email

admin@npa.org.au

ABN

60 206 792 095

About NPAQ



Our Purpose

The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) promotes the preservation, expansion, good management and presentation of National Parks, and supports nature conservation in Queensland.

Council

President Susanne Cooper
Vice President Steve Noakes
Hon Secretar Joanna Osborn
Hon Treasurer Clare Birnie
Councillor Glenn Tozer
Rod Diaz
Emily Griffiths
Simon Cavendish
Peter Klein

Staff

Chief Executive Officer
Chris Thomas
Conservation Manager
Simone Maynard
Operations Manager
Samantha Smith
Social Media Content Creator
Sagar Pagare
Accounts Manager
Glenys Wilkinson

Advertising enquiries

Please email admin@npa.org.au or phone (07) 3367 0878.

Contributor guidelines

NPAQ invites contributions to Protected articles. Please email admin@npa.org.au for a schedule of future editions.

Contributors, please include contact details and brief personal summary. Articles can be submitted via email or hard copy. Digital photos should be minimum 300dpi.

Images

Cover Photo: Laminton National Park - Samantha Smith

Back Cover Photo: *Corymbia ficifolia* (Dwarf Flowering Gum) - Anthony Rae

Banner Photo (left): *Eucalyptus* & crimson rosella (*Platycercus elegans*) - Samantha Smith

Editor Samantha Smith

Copyright and disclaimer

NPAQ retains copyright of Protected. Articles may be quoted provided that appropriate acknowledgement occurs in the reproduction and use of material. Articles in Protected do not necessarily reflect NPAQ's opinion or position.

Advertising policy

Advertisements are required to align with relevant NPAQ policies. NPAQ reserves the right to refuse any advertisement at any time. Advertisement in Protected does not imply NPAQ's endorsement of products or services.

Want to get involved with NPAQ?

NPAQ welcomes people from all walks of life and offers a variety of ways to be involved:

- Have fun in the bush – come along on a bush walk or other activity
- Get your hands dirty – participate in on-ground conservation efforts
- Join us – become a member
- Step up – become a National Parks
- Conservation member or a National Parks Protector
- Donate – support our work
- Volunteer on exciting projects
- Subscribe to Protected and Neck of the Woods via email
- Connect with us –
- Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram
- Stay in touch – read regular updates on our website
- Share a bush adventure with children – download NPAQ's Kids in National Parks guide

**SUPPORT NPAQ AND HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE
BECOME A MEMBER, DONATE OR VOLUNTEER**

www.npaq.org.au/



In this issue

- 4 From the President
- 6 Supplementing National Parks
- 8 Land and Sea Ranger Program
- 10 Families for the Forests
- 11 NPAQ Strategic Plan
- 12 Independent Environment Protection Agency (EPA)
- 14 Park in Focus
- 15 Superb Fairy-wren
- 16 National Park Experience
- 17 Ranger of the Month



6

Waterfowl at Wongaloo Regional Park wetlands
Photo: Supplied



10

Griffith University Tug-of-War, NPAQ Families for the Forests
Photo: Susanne Cooper



15

Superb Fairy-wren (*Malurus cyaneus*)
Photo: Samantha Smith

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Susanne Cooper

It's great to start the year with hope and on a positive note. Recently there have been some major advances and progress in protecting our nature and biodiversity. The outcomes of COP 15 is one of these, which saw Australia take a much more proactive and positive role than in previous meetings.

The internationally agreed commitment to protecting roughly a third of the world's nature by 2030 (30% of land and sea) has the potential to be a game changer.

Australia has also committed to hosting an international summit in 2024 on biodiversity protection called 'Nature Positive'. Its focus will be on encouraging and guiding private finance to invest in the protection of nature.

The financial models that have driven investment priorities in the past will change as a result of this Summit. Many businesses are interested in investing in nature, as customers, shareholders and government increasingly expect it.

The Summit is anticipated to supercharge business interest and investment in the protection of nature.

The formation of an independent federal Environment Protection Agency is a welcome initiative that will enforce national environmental laws and standards currently being developed, and will require decisions that will improve the environment, not just limit impact.

Clearly this is not a total solution, but part of the progress toward seeing nature as a fundamental and critical asset to our future and well-being.

NPAQ supports the EPA and it's encouraging that the federal government has taken a more active leadership role in protecting and managing our natural environment. We anticipate this will flow on to the State governments.

A more Queensland specific focus gives us the recent announcement of the 43,000ha additions to our Protected Area estate. Most of these are Nature Refuges, many of which are substantial with one being over 34,000 ha.

Nature Refuges form a significant part of the PA estate (around 1/3), they are an agreement (binding in perpetuity) entered into

voluntarily between the landholder and the Minister. **edited from initial article release due to misinformation.*

The small additions to the Main Range (56 ha), Lamington (130ha) and the D'Aguilar Range (52 ha) National Parks are welcome. We look forward to further additions over the year.

On a less technical note, I enjoyed immersing myself in nature over the festive season, including stays on Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) and D'Aguilar Range National Parks. I hope many of you had a similar opportunity and experience.

Of course such areas with wonderful beaches and swimming holes always attract high visitation this time of year, which highlights the challenges for management.

Not only for protecting the natural values, but also maintaining the visitor experience. EcoTourism is a key issue for our national parks, and will only increase in scale and priority over the next decade.

I'm looking forward to the year ahead, as I feel it has many opportunities for NPAQ to be a constructive influence and make

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

Do you have photos from a visit to a national park or protected area? Send them to admin@npaq.org.au or connect with us on Instagram [@nationalparksassocqld](https://www.instagram.com/nationalparksassocqld) for your chance to feature in the next edition of NPAQ's PROTECTED Magazine! The best photos will also be featured on NPAQ social media channels and go in the draw to win some awesome NPAQ prizes*.



Hedleyella falconeri (Australian Panda Snail)
Photo: Steve Sayers



Trichosurus vulpecula (common brushtail possum)
(@emilyboys_ - Instagram)



Basin Lake - Fraser Island
(@mrbenblanche - Instagram)



Twin Falls Circuit - Springbrook NP
(@australia_in_squares - Instagram)

SUPPLEMENTING N

- Hugh Lavery AM & Mark Stoneman AM
Co-founders of The Wetlands and Grasslands Foundation

National parks have proved to be an integral part of society worldwide. In Queensland, “There is increasing demand for access to national parks for a range of tourism and recreational purposes” (NPAQ Protected Issue 34, 2021). But “Queensland has long suffered from an under-investment in conservation and land management” (NPAQ Protected Issue 23, 2018).

This begs the question: If park legislation is inadequate to deliver sustainable outcomes, what else can be done to convey government policy directives in the community’s interest? This can only be answered by demonstrating results achieved through the private sector.

The most recent authoritative book on environmental conservation in the home of the national park movement (USA) concludes: “Threatened and endangered species simply cannot be recovered without private landholders providing assistance in the form of habitat protection....It is the responsibility of the community to manage the environment.”

A field experiment was begun in 1990, following the nomination of a set of ‘core areas’ across Queensland for the purposes of the (forestalled) QZOO Concept. Field observations were later refined to confirm that the alluvial plain at the mouth of the Burdekin River – Queensland’s largest river basin – was indeed of leading priority for conservation management attention.

This 130,000 square kilometre area lies east of the coastal hills of the Great Dividing Range, which the river breeches to enter the flood-prone delta.

Surrounded by RAMSAR-designated National and Conservation Park lands (see *Bowling Green Bay National Park, Protected Issue 35, 2022*), the central area of ‘Wongaloo’ is the habitat of tens of thousands of waterbirds – most importantly, the emblematic brolga.



‘Wongaloo’ is midway between Townville and Ayr. The site is an outstanding example of a lacustrine wetland on a postgraded tropical coast. It is almost entirely occupied by a shallow freshwater lake during most wet seasons. It tends to become brackish when evaporation accumulates salt of marine origin; the lake area shrinks and often disappears.

Bulkuru sedge covers much of the wetlands and is a key food for the principal Australian populations of the brolga. Magpie geese are also abundant, again feeding on the bulkuru seeds and tubers as the waters recede. Other waterbirds are commonplace seasonally. Crabs, fish, estuarine crocodiles and much other wildlife occur.

A backdrop to the wetlands is provided by the imposing Mt Elliot Range (national park). Its watercourses of St Margaret’s Creek, Emmet Creek and McKenzie Creek fan into the wetland and are bordered by evergreen forest giving way to eucalypt woodland and open grasslands nearer the water. On the coastal front of the wetlands and

saltpans, mangrove forests abut the Coral Sea (Pacific Ocean).

The area’s historic use was first described by James (Jimmy) Morill, following 17 years of living among the Aborigines after being shipwrecked there. Subsequently, the land was used for beef cattle production, and there was later collaborative maintenance of the wetlands between the landowner and the Townsville Gun Club.



Some of the large flocks of waterfowl that congregate on Wongaloo Regional Park wetlands in post-wet seasons.

Between 1990 and 1997, a wide range of environmental, legal, community and economic reports were commissioned by an eight-person private Steering Committee. With a view to the sites eventually chosen appealing also to international audiences, advice was sought on Terms of Reference consistent with the discipline of the U.S. philanthropy business category.

These were successfully instituted in 1999, with registration of The Wetlands and Grasslands Foundation (WGF) to address the long-term management of most productive but least reserved ecosystems.

Among its objectives – including preservation of one of Australia’s most

NATIONAL PARKS

iconic emblems (the brolga or native companion) – Wongaloo Conservation Park aspires to serve its regional community as a major environmental bank. In this case, the modelling is aiming to introduce scale and State-wide priority to environmental 'offsetting' – in the course of the further development of the city of Townsville.

In 2016, WGF was jointly appointed Trustee and manager of the park by the State Government. WGF Membership is widespread and continues to increase.

By 2010, a total of AU\$2.5 million had been raised from Queensland Government, Townsville City Council, Burdekin Shire Council, the National Reserves Scheme, and private and Member bequests.

This fund was then used to purchase the 21 lots (2,060 hectares) of core wetland habitat, later (in 2010) officially gazetted as Wongaloo Regional Park. An adjoining 4.8-hectare freehold parcel also was obtained in the name of the WGF for education, parking and ancillary functional uses.

Under the supervision of an Honorary Director (Mark Stoneman, resident nearby), management of the dynamic wetlands and adjacent upland ecosystems began in 2010 – all in terms of the Wongaloo Regional Park Management Statement 2015.

At this juncture, key management activities involve removal of exotic aquatic weeds (most effectively by cattle according to several definitive scientific studies, along with strategically placed fencing), prevention of further invasion of the exotic noxious weeds in the adjacent Parks, modification of saline intrusions by

dams, and prioritization of management of different ecosystems.

The issue of aquatic weed control by cattle: brolgas throughout the stocked pastoral wetlands in 1958 and the same area as Conservation Park destocked and choked by para grass in 2019 (below).



The area is divided (towards the west) by the Pacific Highway and the Great Northern train line. Crossing this line for the purposes of access for visitors remains another on-going problem to be resolved. Management envisages visitation where access is scaled to the seasonality both of the wetlands and the observer's potential experience. This would recognise the need for nominated access periods and seasonal staff.

Specialist management advice has continued to be gleaned on-site from such authorities as Dr Geoffrey Matthews (co-author of the RAMSAR Convention), Dr David Challinor (Smithsonian Institution) and Roger Jaensch (Asia/Pacific Wetlands International).

Benchmarking of on-going progress is by way of a comparable project in Victoria (Heart Morass in Gippsland), where sporting gun clubs have

coordinated using the alternative charity category of organization.

In the proposed education centre, a research library in close collaboration with its adjacent Australian Institute of Marine Science and with James Cook University in Townsville is aimed to be devoted to the practical importance of housing field information over the long term.



Concept planning for visitor access and facilities such as observation points (above left), the latest report on management progress at Wongaloo Regional Park (above centre) and an overview of Queensland placing very high priority on the Burdekin delta wetlands (above right).

The essential difference of this serious on-going endeavour lies in its unprecedented approach in Australia as a Profit-for-Purpose organization – with environmental management undertaken as a business rather than one more dependent on charity (taxpayer or otherwise).

Photo Banner : Brolga (*Grus rubicunda*) - Ed Dunens

Photo Inline (left 1): View northwards over 'Wongaloo' towards Mt Burrumbush - Supplied

Photo Inline (left 2): Some of the large flocks of waterfowl that congregate on Wongaloo Regional Park wetlands in post-wet seasons.

Photo Inline (above 1): The issue of aquatic weed control by cattle: brolgas throughout the stocked pastoral wetlands in 1958 (upper) and the same area as Conservation Park destocked and choked by para grass in 2019 (lower).

LAND AND SEA RANGERS

- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS)

Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea rangers are employed by First Nations organisations across Queensland to care for their traditional land and sea Country.

About the Land and Sea Rangers

Through the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program (the program), the Department of Environment and Science provides funding and partnership support to First Nations organisations to employ rangers and undertake work on Country.

The program works closely with ranger groups and their employing organisations to develop negotiated work plans. It provides additional support with training, leadership development, networking, partnerships, and promotion.

In this way the program successfully empowers Traditional Owners to manage and protect their Country, and work towards their goals and aspirations.

Looking after Country

Land and Sea ranger teams deliver annual workplans that are based on their Traditional Owner group's Country plans (or similar). These identify the cultural, natural, social and economic values of Country and strategies for caring for these values and for communicating them to their communities.

Ranger workplans operationalise their Country plans. Rangers undertake a broad range of

management activities including protecting native plants and animals, restoring land, sea and fresh-water habitats, managing Country with fire, controlling feral animals and pest plants, managing visitor impacts and restoring cultural sites such as rock art, stone arrangements, fish traps, middens and scar trees. Rangers also play a role in reinvigorating culture and sharing traditional knowledge and language.

The outcomes achieved by Land and Sea rangers are significant and contribute to wider environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits for First Nations communities.



Unique skills and roles

Indigenous Land and Sea rangers bring to their jobs a unique mix of traditional knowledge and connection to Country combined with specialised skills in resource management.

In many communities, Land and Sea rangers serve as important role models and contribute to the transfer of traditional knowledge across generations.

Many ranger teams educate younger generations about caring for Country, through Junior Ranger programs

for school students, and work experience and vocational education programs for secondary students. Some teams work with young people who are disengaged from school and community, helping them to reconnect with Country and their culture.

The program supports rangers to develop their leadership skills and project management skills through specialised training and development programs.



Many tenures, strong partnerships

Land and Sea rangers work across Queensland, in locations stretching from Cape York Peninsula to the Lake Eyre Basin and the Gold Coast.

Land and Sea rangers work across their Country - which can be a variety of tenures including Native Title lands, leasehold and freehold lands, national and marine parks, and Indigenous Protected Areas.

Rangers work in partnership with landholders for access to Country, and with other stakeholders including government and non-government agencies, natural resource management groups, universities and community

ER PROGRAM



organisations for access to resources, expertise and training.

These partnerships are 'win-win' arrangements, with partners benefiting from Land and Sea rangers' knowledge of Country, cultural understanding, and practical skills and experience.

Many Land and Sea ranger teams work in partnership with QPWS on the protected area estate within their Country.



Dulabed Malanbarra Yidinji partnership

Near Cairns, the Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation (DMYAC) manages one of the 'newer' Land and Sea ranger teams, the Jawajawa rangers.

DMYAC has a partnership arrangement with QPWS for co-stewardship of protected areas that fall within Country, including the Native Title determination area.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding, DMYAC and QPWS jointly negotiate an annual shared works program which considers both partners' priorities

for parts of Wooroonooran National Park, and other parks within Country. DMYAC's Country Plan sets out the Traditional Owners' interests and priorities and informs their Jawajawa ranger workplan.

The Jawajawa rangers received Land and Sea ranger program funding in 2022. As with many ranger teams, fire work is an important part of their workplan, with Traditional Owners prioritising traditional burns to eradicate weeds, restore ecological systems and protect cultural sites from wildfires.

Jawajawa rangers undertake conservation and hazard reduction burns in partnership with QPWS. The Jawajawa and QPWS rangers have developed a strong, respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with shared goals for fire management.

Jawajawa rangers are using fire as a management tool for weeds that impact culturally-significant sites on their Country, such as bora grounds within the national park.

'I love doing cool burns. There's less destruction and more rejuvenation', says Jason Ambyrum, Jawajawa Ranger.

The partnership with QPWS has fostered cross-cultural knowledge transfer with respect to conservation science and traditional burning methods, creating a diverse and dynamic information exchange.



The future

The DMYAC partnership with QPWS is just one of many examples across the State. With increasing recognition of the importance of traditional knowledge and practices, and the threats posed by a changing climate, Queensland's Indigenous Land and Sea rangers are increasingly vital to the protection and management of our ecosystems, including protected areas.

From 20 rangers in 2007, the program has grown to over 150 rangers and now operate from 37 locations. During 2023, additional ranger positions will be funded to bring the total number of Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers to 200.

Photo Banner : Olkola Rangers sharing traditional knowledge of Country | © Olkola Aboriginal Corporation

Photo Inline (left 1): Laura rangers recording cultural sites | © Laura Rangers

Photo Inline (left 2): Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers gathered for a state-wide conference, Cairns 2020 | © Queensland Government

Photo Inline (left 3): Gidarjil (Bundaberg) Sea rangers collect marine debris, Capricornia Cays National Park | © Gidarjil Development Corporation

Photo Inline (above): Jawajawa ranger Luke Clubb watches over the fire used to control guinea grass and wild raspberry (bramble) on a bora ground in Wooroonooran National Park | ©DMYAC

FAMILIES FOR THE FORESTS

- NPAQ

A huge thank you to all of the families who attended our Families for the Forests event on January 14th at Mt Roberts, Binna Burra.

We are so grateful for the support of all the volunteers and sponsors who made the event possible.

Special mention to **Binna Burra Lodge** for the use of Mt Roberts and to **Griffith University** who was our Gold Sponsor for the event.



Congratulation to the 'Kids Team' for winning the Griffith University Tug-of-War!



We also would like to thank our amazing vendors for their performances and services.

True Blue Reptiles shared a great reptile show where attendees were able to learn all about reptiles, their habitats, and get up close and personal with some of the amazing creatures featured in the show.



Everyone also enjoyed sampling and learning about the wide variety of delicious bush tucker, from damper to spreads and teas. The **Park Tours** stall was a great opportunity to get a taste of Australia's unique native food culture, and it was great to see so many people enjoying themselves.



We would also like to make special mention to our live band - **The Gypsy Duo** who performed throughout the event and made a great atmosphere for the event.



We hope that the event provided a fun day out in nature for all the families that attended.

We look forward to seeing you at our next NPAQ outdoors event and hope you will continue to support our cause and help us in our mission to protect our national parks.



NPAQ STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-25

- NPAQ



National Parks Association
of Queensland Inc.

We have recently published our 2023-25 strategic plan.

The strategic plan outlines NPAQ's vision for the future of Queensland's national parks and the ways in which NPAQ will help to achieve this.

The 2032 Olympics and Paralympics being hosted in Brisbane is a key driver for NPAQ wanting to increase our profile and capability, and the appointment of a CEO and our new strategic plan have been designed to help achieve this.

Our Vision: A world-class network of protected and conserved areas across Queensland in which nature and people thrive.

Our Mission

- To actively promote the preservation, expansion, effective management and appreciation of Queensland's network of protected and conserved areas.
- To advocate for a

Queensland network of protected and conserved areas that includes at least 30% of our lands and 30% of our waters by 2030 ("30 by 30").

Our Strategic Objective:

By the end of 2025, NPAQ will have driven a step change in the expansion, effective management and appreciation of Queensland's network of protected and conserved areas.

The plan focuses on five strategies:

1. Grow our profile and influence to become the go-to advocacy organisation for Queensland's network of protected and conserved areas
2. Demonstrate our unique value to the Minister responsible for the Environment and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
3. Strengthen our organisational capacity, efficiency and effectiveness

4. Generate sufficient income to sustain our business operations
5. Elevate our outreach to build greater appreciation for Queensland's network of protected and conserved areas

Within each of these areas, NPAQ's key action and performance indicators have been outlined.

With this plan, NPAQ is aiming to ensure the long-term conservation of Queensland's national parks and the protection of their valuable biodiversity.

The plan is a commitment to ensuring that Queensland's parks remain healthy and accessible for generations to come.

The strategic plan will be discussed in more detail at the next NPAQ members meeting in February (see upcoming events on the NPAQ website for more details).

QUEENSLAND INDEPENDENT

- Graeme Bartrim

Introduction

Queensland is considering establishing an independent Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and this gives us the opportunity to take an important step to repair our environment.

Such a step is needed as our environment is in decline and we have managed it poorly. The number of threatened species is growing and legislation affecting the environment is confusing and poorly administered.

An effective EPA could enhance the environment both for its own sake and for future generations.

Below I briefly discuss the state of Queensland's environment and the important step we should now take. I have focused on biodiversity recognising there are other urgent environmental issues.

Background: Commitment to a possible EPA

Prior to its re-election in 2020 the Queensland Labor Party committed to "Investigate and consult on the establishment of an independent Environmental Protection Agency which other states have to protect our environment, create jobs, and support economic growth."

This election commitment speaks to our dilemma; that there are many Queenslanders who are concerned about the long-term health and resilience of our environment. It also

suggests that we, as a community, value the short term benefits of exploiting that very same environment.

Getting it right for the long term is a challenge. Consultation around establishing an EPA in Queensland was conducted in 2022 and although it was perhaps too constrained, 193 survey responses and 23 submissions were received.

A resultant business case is being developed for the Queensland Government and its' becoming public is eagerly awaited.

Where are we at? - Environmental Values

Much of Australia's environment is in decline. This was clearly articulated in the recently-released Federal State of the Environment report. The report makes repeated reference to the potential demise of two Queensland icons, the Great Barrier Reef and the Koala.

Threats to biodiversity are not limited to the iconic ones. As at 30 April 2021, there were 1020 threatened species listed in Queensland (236 animal species and 784 plant species), with 216 of these species being added since 2016. We now have more introduced plants in our country than native ones.

A key database used to inform the status of Queensland biodiversity is "WildNet". Unfortunately, the database appears to be under-resourced and its inconsistent use is hampering our understanding of the state's true

biodiversity status. Furthermore, it is generally accepted that the threatening processes adversely affecting native species, are not under control. Sound long term management is required.

For some years Queensland has embraced a target of 17% of its area to be protected (through National Park and similar tenures). It is presently around half of that and the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) in Montreal, in which Australia was an active participant, called for 30% of the planet's surface to be protected. Queensland needs to revise its target upwards.

Federal Environment Minister Plibersek recently committed to the following in her response to the Samuel's review of the EPBC Act:

- Establish an Independent Federal Environment Protection Agency
- Reform the biodiversity offsets regime
- Establish a regional planning regime, and
- Develop national environmental standards.

These are global and national commitments, and recognise the perilous situation we are in. And yet they can also give us hope.

Where are we at? - Legislation

Queensland is subject to a plethora of legislation and associated regulations and policies which address environmental management. This legislation is across federal, state and

NDANT EPA

local government jurisdictions but I believe it is administered inadequately. I also believe the legislation focuses on process not outcomes.

The website of the Queensland Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning indicates that of over 70 projects assessed since 2000, only 2 have been refused. The typical path for a development application is for it to be approved with conditions (often a juggle between Environment protection and short term economic benefit) and this again indicates a focus on process not outcome.

The Appendix below provides the objects and purposes of some of Queensland's legislation that has a bearing on our environment. These objects are far from co-ordinated and fail to give a clear priority for our environment.

Thoughts from others

EO Wilson* (possibly the greatest biologist of recent times) said, "Blinded by ignorance and self absorption, humanity is destroying the creation. There is still time to assume the stewardship of the natural world that we owe to future generations."

"The Creation, An Appeal to save Life on Earth." Norton Paperback, 2006.

Ken Henry (a former Federal Treasury Secretary was reported by ABC journalist Gareth Hutchens on the 28 November 2022) said, "After all, almost all of human activity on earth rests one way or another upon the condition

of the natural environment, and if we don't address the deterioration of the natural environment sometime pretty damn soon, the rest of it's going to come crashing down."

He and others have been espousing natural accounting as a way of truly valuing nature and bringing it into our economic framework. The environmental audit of the Burnet Mary Region is seen as a significant step in developing commercial opportunities that could enhance and repair nature.

Big thinkers such as these are telling us it is time for action!

Conclusion: Where to from Here

As a community, we now have an important decision to make about what priority we will give to our environment. Do we align with broader national and global initiatives by introducing an independent, effective EPA in Queensland, or do we find a new way to "kick a recycled can a little further down the track?"

This is a real opportunity and Queensland must be prepared to make the necessary adjustments. For success the following is required.

Queensland should align with the commitments recently made by the Federal government and introduce an EPA that is genuinely independent and has the power to guide the state to meet long term environmental goals in a co-ordinated way. Clear long term goals for our Environment are

a necessity. Goals for Environmental values eg biodiversity, air quality, water quality, erosion control and beyond can and should be established in an open democratic way.

An effective EPA would need independence and the authority to guide achieving long term environmental goals. An EPA would need some primacy in decision making powers. It would need the power to be able to influence government decisions where there is a likelihood of affecting state-wide long term environmental goals.

Given the complexity of Queensland Environmental Legislation the EPA must be given a right to intervene/ be part of decision making across jurisdictions. Some clever parliamentary drafting is required here.

It is not suggested that this is easy or cost free, simply, that it and resultant adjustments are necessary.

Appendix and reference materials available here:

<https://npaq.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/QLD-Independent-EPA-Protected-article-Appendices.pdf>

PARK IN FOCUS

Binna Burra, Lamington National Park

**This article has been amended since release due to misinformation - we apologise for any confusion caused.*

Lamington National Park is renowned for its beauty and biodiversity. The park is part of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area and is a popular destination for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Located in the Gold Coast hinterland on the border with New South Wales, the park is one of the most popular destinations for locals. It is known for its stunning mountains, lush rainforest and abundant wildlife.

The park was established in 1915 and is one of the oldest national parks in Queensland*[*\(parks.des.qld.gov.au\)](http://parks.des.qld.gov.au). It covers more than 20,000 hectares of land, and is made up of varying ecosystems including eucalypt and rainforests.

The park's most famous feature is its series of ancient, volcanic rock peaks known as the Lamington Plateau. These peaks are home to a variety of flora and fauna and offer some of the most breath-taking views in the area.

The Binna Burra section of Lamington National Park is situated on the northern side of the park and is renowned for its stunning views, lush rainforest and picturesque waterfalls. It is one of the most visited sections of the park.

The Binna Burra section of the park is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including a variety of birds, reptiles, and mammals. Some of the most unique species include the endangered Albert's Lyrebird, the threatened Eastern Bristlebird, and the vulnerable Richmond Birdwing Butterfly.

The park also supports a number of threatened and endangered plant species, including *Ochrosia moorei*, *Gaultheria viridicarpa* and *Davidsonia johnsonii*.



The park also offers many activities to cater to all levels of fitness and experience. There are a number of different walking tracks ranging from easy to challenging as well as the 'Lamington Classic' run trail which has been running for about 50 years every October.

The park also offers a range of camping and accommodation options, from camping grounds to luxury cabins.

The Binna Burra section of Lamington National Park is an ideal destination for those seeking a nature-based holiday or just a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

With its stunning scenery and diverse wildlife, it is no surprise that it is one of the most popular sections of Lamington National Park.

Photo Banner : Binna Burra, Lamington National Park National Park - Samantha Smith

Photo Inline (left above) : Eastern Bristlebird (*Dasyornis brachypterus*) - Grant Fraser

Photo Inline (left below) : Richmond Birdwing Butterfly (*Ornithoptera richmondia*) - Bob Decker

Photo Inline (left bottom) : Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby (*Petrogale penicillata*) - Thomas Frisby

WILDLIFE FEATURE

Superb Fairy-wren

The Superb Fairy-wren (*Malurus cyaneus*), also known as the Superb Blue Wren, is a species of Australian passerine bird found in the east and south of Australia.

It is the largest species of fairy-wren and is one of the most recognizable birds of the region.

The Superb Fairy-wren is a small bird, with a body length of around 15 cm and a wingspan of up to 21 cm.

The male has a bright blue-purple upper body, with a black mask and bright blue tail. The female is brown on the upper body, with a white throat and breast and a brown tail.



Both sexes have a short, fine bill.

The Superb Fairy-wren lives in open forests and woodlands, often near water sources such as rivers, creeks and swamps.

They feed mainly on insects, spiders, and other invertebrates, which they find by foraging on the ground and in low shrubs and trees.



The Superb Fairy-wren is an active and social bird.

It is usually found in pairs or small family groups, with several males and females in each group.

During the breeding season, the males become more brightly coloured and sing loudly to attract a mate.



The female builds a dome-shaped nest of grasses and other plant material, often in a shrub or tree, and lays 3-5 eggs.

The male helps to incubate the eggs, and both parents help to feed and protect the young.

The Superb Fairy-wren is a common and widespread species and is not considered to be threatened.

However, it is vulnerable to the destruction of its habitat, and is also at risk from cats and other predators.

The Superb Fairy-wren is an iconic species of Australia and is often featured in art and literature.



It is an important part of the Australian bush, and its colourful plumage and cheerful song make it a favourite of birdwatchers and nature-lovers alike.

Photo Banner & Inline: Superb Fairy-wren (*Malurus cyaneus*) - Samantha Smith

Photo above: Blue Fairy Wren mosaic - denisbin

NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE

- Jessica

Paluma Range National Park is a beautiful and unique nature reserve located in Far North Queensland, Australia.

This beautiful park is home to a variety of wildlife and breathtaking landscapes.

I recently had the pleasure of visiting this amazing park and it was an experience I will never forget.

The drive to Paluma Range National Park is an adventure in itself.

I was amazed by the lush tropical rainforest and the tall mountains that surrounded me.

After winding and twisting through the winding roads, I finally arrived at the park's entrance.

The first thing that struck me upon entering the park was how lush and green it was.



The rolling hills and lush forests made for a gorgeous landscape that was a sight to behold.

The variety of wildlife in the park was also quite impressive.

I saw wallabies, kangaroos, and even a cassowary!



It was a great chance to see some of Australia's native wildlife up close.

The park also offers some great trails for hikers and adventurers.

I spent the day exploring the park and taking in all its beauty.

I hiked up to the top of the mountain and was rewarded with stunning views of the surrounding landscape.

I also had the opportunity to go swimming in the pristine waters of Little Crystal Creek.



The water was crystal clear and made for a refreshing swim.

My time in Paluma Range National Park was an unforgettable experience.

The park is a great place to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and enjoy the beauty of nature.

I would highly recommend this park to anyone looking for a unique and unforgettable nature experience.



Photo Banner & Inline : Paluma Range National Park & Cassowary - Supplied

RANGER SPOTLIGHT

Insights into the diverse backgrounds and day-to-day activities of Queensland's park rangers

Senior Ranger Martin Ambrose
Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS)



Photo Banner & inline : QPWS Senior Ranger Martin Ambrose, Heathlands Resources Reserve - © Queensland Government.

Martin is a Senior Ranger based in Dalby in the Western Downs region. On reflection, he was born to be a Ranger. Being looked over by tall trees was always part of his formative years and for Martin, forests always seemed to go on forever with an endless quality. Growing up in Brisbane in the 1970s, he spent his childhood exploring the vast tracts of forests surrounding the suburbs and his schools. During lunch times, he and his mates would disappear into the trees until the bell rang (and some)—all part of his early Ranger training.

How long have you worked in national parks?

I came to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service from the Department of Forestry. In total, between the two departments, I have worked in Queensland forests for 36 years. The marriage of Forestry the builders and QPWS the planners, produced well-rounded Rangers with many skills.

Which parks have you worked in?

In all those 36 years, I worked west of the Great Dividing Range – except at Emerald where the range takes a big kick to the west. With Forestry, I would have worked on the Northern Territory border if it had an office there. I thrive in endless flat, dry, dusty country where life hangs on the anticipation of rain. Working in central and southern Queensland, largely in State forests, I have experienced literally hundreds of reserves.

Where do you work now and what is special about your current park?

I work in the Western Downs in an office based in Dalby. Together with the Taroom base area, I administer about 80 reserves – mainly State forests. I have a couple of favourite reserves which are Barakula and Gurulmundi State forests. I can't tell you my special secrets about them,

otherwise they wouldn't be 'secrets'. Needless to say, they are on the Great Dividing Range, have significant cultural and natural values and largely no one is there most of the time.

What is your most memorable moment as a ranger?

My most memorable times as a Ranger has been with fire management and working on the hot, black, pointy edge with good people. Fire has largely been a great friend. Like all good friends and soul mates, there are difficult times and fire can be petulant. The largest, destructive wildfire always has an end. It's a matter of thinking long, working hard, and looking after the welfare of like-minded people. It is always rewarding celebrating with the crew after long days in smoke and heat.

Can you describe your favourite national parks experience?

My favourite national parks experience has been walking through Sequoia trees on the west coast of the United States of America and watching a pride of lions kill and gorge on a giraffe in Africa. Some of you may have been lucky enough to witness the scale of the scenery in the USA or interact with apex predators in Africa. These experiences are different to those in Australia and were transformational to my understanding of the world. In Queensland, my favourite experience was visiting western parks such as Currawinya and Idalia and dreaming of owning my own 50 000 acres of mulga and mesas.

What is the best part about working in a National Park?

The best thing about working in parks is the cultural and 'family' connections that you develop through working on country for extended periods, and through working with some amazingly-talented and knowledgeable people for

years, including other rangers, scientists, park neighbours and some of our many stakeholders.

What is the best part about working on the QPWS estate?

QPWS reserves are all different. They lie across the landscape in different shapes and sizes and comprise of a wide range of values. For me, the best part about managing them is trying to make each one relevant to its local community. If local people do not value the reserves, everything is difficult. Owning land comes with obligations and responsibilities. Discharging these duties and bringing people with you is a challenge and requires steadfast dedication.

What is your top tip for visitors to your park?

Be gentle.

After many years of amazing service, Martin is retiring, and we want to thank him for all his hard work caring for and protecting our parks and state forests for future generations. As for his retirement plans - "I want to live in a small world and learn how to be time rich. I want to become one with a herd of cattle, protect and give home as many little creatures as possible and enjoy time with my family that I largely missed over the last 36 years."

NPAQ thanks Martin for taking time to answer our questions. We appreciate the work all QPWS rangers undertake in protecting Queensland's national parks.



WHAT'S



NPAQ activities

Jolly's Lookout Mt Nebo Village – Day Walk

Date: 29th January 2023

Meet: 8:15am - Mount Nebo Road, Mount Nebo, Queensland, 4520

Cost: \$5

Leader: Frank Freeman (0427 655 514)

What to bring: Hat, light jacket, rain gear (just in case), insect repellent (leeches), torch, whistle, 2 litres of water, morning tea (in case the cafe is closed), lunch, \$5.00 NPAQ Fee.

Twilight Celebration

Date: 12th February 2023

Meet: 2:30pm - 247 Simpsons Road, Bardon, Queensland, 4065

Cost: \$20

Leader: Laurelle Lowry (0480 153 617)

What to bring: Folding chair, torch, water bottle, wear walking shoes, hat, insect repellent, rain gear (in case!), walking pole.

NPAQ Major events

NPAQ - Members Meeting

Date: 25 February 2023

Meet: 9:30am (10am start) *venue to be confirmed

Cost: Free

Vales

NPAQ is deeply saddened by the passing of Ailsa Rutherford, a real character with a passion for national parks and our Association – an enthusiastic supporter and stickler for protocol. She joined in 1963 and shortly after, was appointed Assistant Honorary Secretary. Overall, Ailsa was on Council for 18 years.

She participated in and then co-ordinated the mailout of the NPA News (precursor to the Protected) for almost 40 years. After her retirement from work, Ailsa spent many extra hours in the Office collating the Library, doing the Office filing and contacting unfinancial members to discourage resignations. She attended all member meetings and enjoyed the Association's early camping and bushwalking days of which she shared interesting stories.

She was granted Honorary Life Membership in 1981. Her long-standing involvement with NPAQ really celebrates what our members give to the Association – and the positive legacy they leave.

Ailsa will be missed by her many NPAQ friends to whom we send heartfelt condolences.

WANT TO RECEIVE PROTECTED TO YOUR DOOR?

YES! I WANT TO BECOME A NPAQ MEMBER AND RECEIVE PROTECTED EVERY QUARTER

As part of your NPAQ membership you receive four PROTECTED magazines every year both digitally and in hard copy, if you choose. You will also receive our monthly Neck Of The Woods newsletter, exclusively for members with organisation updates, including advocacy work and NPAQ event information.

Membership registration Details

Title _____

First Name _____

Middle Name _____

Last Name _____

Date of Birth / /

Street (or PO BOX) Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode (Australia)

Telephone ()

Mobile

Email _____

Type of membership

- Individual (\$45)
- Household (\$70)
- Conservation Partner (Individual) \$245
- Conservation Partner (Household) \$370

*Conservation Partner membership include one year registration + a tax deductible donation

I would you like to receive print copies of

- PROTECTED
- NECK OF THE WOODS

Payment Details

- Visa
- MasterCard
- Cheque
- Cash

Card Number

Expiry / CVV/CVC

Name on card _____

Please send GIFT registration to

Name _____

Date of Birth / / Winter 2022

Street (or PO BOX) Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode (Australia)

Mobile

Email _____

Missed one of our recent issues?

Order a backdated issue with your registration

I would like to receive the marked back copies with my first edition of PROTECTED.



Spring 2023



Winter 2022



Autumn 2022



Celebrating 92 years.

