

protected

Magazine of National Parks Association of Queensland

State of the Park 2018

New government
New opportunities
Same concerns

PLUS

National Parks:
where to from here?

ALSO FEATURED

- Community response to invasive ants
- D'Aguilar National Park



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Lamington - Binna Burra section

Photo: Yvonne Parsons

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Connect and Protect

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Graeme Bartrim
President, National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ)

Banner: Girraween National Park
(Jeannie Rice)

The Christmas and New Year period has given many of us the chance to step out of our routines, rely less on the clock and often to connect more with the natural world through camping, bushwalking or beach holidays.

John Gleese's comedy movie, *Fierce Creatures*, is about the tension created between caring for animals in a zoo and the size of its profit. There are many reasons to laugh throughout the movie, but a serious point is made when Jamie Lee Curtis, playing a corporate go-getter, is transformed by a connection experience gazing into the eyes of a gorilla.

Tony Groom, whom we were fortunate enough to speak with recently, has had a long association with NPAQ and has taken people on many walks in national parks around the world. He describes similar frequent occurrences where people have a moment of awakening or connection, an *ah ha* moment, triggered by a scene, a plant or observing some creature. This seems often to be associated with silence. This experience can be the beginning of an active interest and engagement in nature conservation. My

mum and a band of people in Lismore, NSW, get pleasure and meaning out of establishing a botanic garden (showcasing species that occur within 200km of Lismore).

Some of Tony's thoughts on the future of national parks and the tensions of economics and conservation are outlined later in this edition of *Protected*.

Holidays often revitalise and relax us. Getting away from busyness and our devices may contribute to this along with more blue and green in our days. There is much literature on the health and well-being effects of experiencing aspects of nature. Professor Susan Prescott and Alan Logan, in a David Suzuki Foundation blog titled *Connecting with Nature Has Real Health Benefits*, is but one reference.

Prescott and Logan refer to:

- The Japanese concept of *shinrin-yoku* (forest bathing) and Japanese research finding lower stress hormone production in those that walked in a forest compared to those using an indoor treadmill.
- Elizabeth Nisbet finding that participants exposed to nature for 30 minutes

each day for 30 days report reduced stress compared to those not maintaining such a regime. Similar results have been found in other studies.

- E.O. Wilson (referred to in the last edition of *Protected*) coining the term *biophilia* meaning pleasure derived from being surrounded by a diversity of plants and animals.

E.O. Wilson was fascinated by nature from a very early age whereas many of us grow towards this over time or are influenced by a particular event. Regardless of how and when we arrive at it, this fascination is available to us all thanks to our protected conservation areas – our national parks.

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THE 55TH QUEENSLAND

New government, new opportunities,

Graeme Bartrim
President, National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ)

New faces, same concerns

Only a couple of months ago we were wondering what the outcome of the Queensland election would be. There was much speculation but now a Labor majority has been confirmed, along with the election for the first time ever in Queensland's parliament of a member of the Greens, Michael Berkman. With Christmas and the New Year rapidly fading, new ministers, rearranged government departments and a new opposition front bench are settling into their work. Congratulations to all of those who have won seats and gained positions in the new parliament.

The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) is looking forward to working with the new government and opposition, initially in finalising the Queensland Protected Area Strategy. We also anticipate the return of land clearing laws and implementation of greenhouse

gas reduction projects through a \$500 million Land Restoration Fund.

We await honouring of further election commitments relevant to protected areas (though unfortunately none were specifically related to national parks). It was stated that the government would purchase land proposed for development at Earl Hill (a local beauty spot and popular walk at Trinity Beach) and purchase land around Kimberly Plateau for conservation purposes and to link with Daisy Hill Conservation Park. The enactment of legislation supporting special wildlife reserves is also anticipated.

The election also served as a reminder that politicians can make commitments in the heat of an election campaign that seemed like a good idea at the time. The then Environment Minister offering \$5 million to support the construction of a track and accommodation on

Whitsunday Islands National Park and \$25 million in support for developers to redevelop disused/damaged resorts in the Whitsunday islands appears to be in this category. NPAQ has asked for the strategic prioritised decision process that led to these proposals but to date no response has been

We firmly believe that extending and managing the protected area estate is very important for Queenslanders in the long term.

forthcoming.

NPAQ wishes Steven Miles well in his new portfolio of Health and hope that his keen interest in environmental matters will see Queensland Health actively supporting the generally accepted link between wellbeing and a connection with nature.

We look forward to working with Leeanne Enoch, Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts. And similarly, with David Crisafulli, the Shadow Minister for Environment, Science and the Great Barrier Reef and Shadow Minister for Tourism, and with Greens MP Michael Berkman.

Platform and promises

Politicians generally work



ND PARLIAMENT: same concerns.

extremely hard and it is no easy task remaining true to a party's platform and election commitments whilst dealing with the workings of parliament, budget realities and responding to the myriad of issues that arise.

The Labor Party platform *Putting Queenslanders First* was determined in Townsville in July 2017 and is over 100 pages long. It addresses a strong economy, creating jobs and opportunities, learning, industrial relations, our environment and future, healthy living, connected communities, and caring and secure communities. There are many priorities given to guide the party in government.

NPAQ supports a number of Labor priorities that are relevant to our purpose. For example:

- "... conserving Queensland fauna, flora, ecosystems and genetic diversity by expanding the protected area estate"
- "...endorses the convention on Biological Diversity to preserve 17% of Australia's land mass. To meet this target Labor will expand Queensland's protected area estate."
- "... will ensure that national parks and the protected area estate is managed in accordance with the cardinal principle."
- "...will ensure that development and other types of

activities within national parks and the protected area estate are managed in accordance with the cardinal principle."

- "...ensure that comprehensive scientific management plans are established for all national parks and the protected area estate."
- "...supports UNESCO co-ordinated World Heritage List... will work with Federal Government to manage listed properties in accordance with best practice and UNESCO recommendations and support new listings."
- "...will provide incentives to freehold property owners and rural leaseholders to establish nature refuges on their property and introduce regulatory mechanisms to protect nature refuges and other protected areas from mining and other incompatible land uses."
- "... commits to developing a new biodiversity strategy including prioritising corridors for climatic adaptation and climatic refugia."

Competing priorities

Of course, other interest groups could point to the platform's stated priorities that are aligned with their causes. Conflicting demands, a limited budget and the imperatives of day-to-day issues mean that the focus on lofty long-term goals can be lost.

We firmly believe that extending and managing the protected area estate is very important for Queenslanders in the long term. Governments are spending much time and money on attempting to address degradation of the Great Barrier Reef. This has been triggered by clear threats to biodiversity being identified over many years and recognition that the state's tourism income is at risk. Could short-term decision making regarding our land based biodiversity lead us down the same path? Long term solutions that prevent degradation could help avoid crises that will need huge investment.

We believe our objectives support the work of newly formed Department of Environment and Science and are committed to the development of a sound, scientifically-based Protected Area Strategy that is genuinely supported with government structure and both acquisition and management funding.

We look forward to working with the new parliament and will be diligent in ensuring the conservation role of national parks is not forgotten or neglected among the range of competing interests.

Images: banner: by Kgbo [CC BY-SA 3.0], via Wikimedia Commons; left: Minister Hon Leanne Enoch MP, Hon David Crisafulli MP, Michael Berkman MP Member for Maiwar

NATIONAL PARKS:

Tony Groom
Churchill Fellow in National Park Visitor Facilities

Good and bad

The Chair of Tourism and Events Queensland, Brett Godfrey has a message: open up national parks for more ecotourism. This call is both exciting and terrifying, good and bad, hopeful and discouraging.

There are enough examples around the world of visitor facilities inside national parks that enhance the visitor experience and at the same time, through education, help to protect the park. If you will forgive a little circular meme:

Through conservation – knowledge.

Through knowledge – respect.

Through respect – conservation.

National parks – a place for us?

As a starting point we should ask – should people even be in national parks?

As their prime purpose is preservation and conservation, many people would clearly answer *no*.

I know rangers who, having cleaned up yet another human scat and toilet paper, would happily ban *homo sapiens* from all national parks. That, however, brings us back to education and the Three Capes Track offers a perfect example. Recently hiking this 46km trail, we saw not a single human scat on the first 40km. On the last 6km, there were dispiriting signs of human toiletry everywhere. The difference? Hikers staying in the three Park Service huts

were told about bush toileting in both print and word at the first ranger briefing and were asked to carry a trowel. Walkers on the last 6km were “day hikers” who could walk from the car park without seeing a ranger.

A ranger in the Yosemite National Park once told me that every national park needs a sign at the entrance saying – if you can do it somewhere else then don't do it here.

Taken to the extreme, that would mean we could not walk in a national park. Of course, walking is the best – the only – way to truly experience a national park – and preferably slowly and in silence. We would do well to emulate the Japanese with their concept of *shinrin-yoku* or forest bathing. It's easy if we try – just be in the moment, in silence.

The arguments for and against visitor facilities inside or outside national parks are circular, endless and divisive. The most

important question is how much control is there? Gatlinburg or Cherokee are cautionary tales of exploitative ecotourism. These towns offer fun rides, flashing neon signs and theme parks. The towns are so ugly that anybody attracted to national park values would not want to stay there – yet they exist entirely because of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and there is no other viable place to stay. We must remain ever vigilant that access does not turn into exploitation of precious protected areas.

Our national park estate is so limited and precious that the thought of sacrificing even one hectare for a building is abhorrent to many. When ownership remains with the park service, control is not lost, and standards can be maintained. The ideal, of course, is for accommodation to be built on buffer land outside the park,



WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Finding the balance.

close enough to hear the dawn chorus of birds in the forest, but still controlled by the national park service.

To me the liquid notes of a lyrebird calling in Lamington are akin to Greta Bradman singing *Casta Diva*. If I can step outside my bedroom and gaze at a night sky undiminished by the lights of a town, then I'm in heaven.

Finding the balance

So where to from here? Having walked the magnificent Arthur Thorsborne track on Hinchinbrook Island several times, carrying a six-day pack, I have a selfish wish that it remains accessible only to those able and willing to carry a 20kg pack. That position is indefensible, and I must admit that a Three Capes type walk on Hinchinbrook would be a magnificent addition. It would do less damage than the existing track, especially if all human waste is helicoptered out.

One of our oldest and most respected national parks, Lamington, already offers 147km of walking tracks and two lodges. Most visitors would regard these as *national park* based lodges but there is no guarantee that they remain so. Both are built on private freehold land, surrounded by national park with little control over them by the government park service. There is a possibility, admittedly small, that either could be sold and the land subdivided for urban homes or unsuitable development.

Lamington is also the site of our first great walk, 54km from O'Reilly's to Springbrook. Like the Thorsborne Trail, this is currently limited to those carrying a full pack. The Three Capes Track cost an eye watering \$25,300,000 to build the three accommodation centres, many kilometres of boardwalk and stone steps. For a fraction of this sum, the Gold Coast hinterland could be changed to offer a hiking experience catering to everyone from pack carrying wilderness devotees, to those who can carry a lighter pack, or those who seek the full food and accommodation experience – like the choices offered on the famous New Zealand walks and the Overland Track in Tasmania.

The wilderness experience could also be offered in the Daintree but surely there is enough private land to build facilities adjacent to the park. Rainforest Rescue has spent 16 years and millions

of dollars, patiently buying up uncleared blocks left over from the disastrous real estate development of the 1970's. They would be mortified if a single rainforest tree was felled for a tourist facility.

It doesn't reflect well on our past governments that most of our great national parks are the result of one or two people, or under-funded conservation groups beavering away for their protection. We owe it to these people, who helped create our national parks, to consult with them before more visitor facilities are added to areas set aside for conservation purposes.

Tony Groom will present his views on the current state of national parks in Queensland and elsewhere at the next members meeting on the 21st of February.

Images: banner: *Daintree National Park (Marika Strand)*; left: *Tony Groom in his natural habitat (supplied)*; below: *Lamington National Park (NPAQ Library)*.



PEOPLE POWER BRINGS

Reece Pianta
National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) staff

My guide, a birdwatcher, couldn't disguise his excitement at the return of life we were seeing all around us. The rainforest at Russett Park in Kuranda was once eerily quiet, but now, in a place where birds and insects had been stripped away, there is new life.

Yellow crazy ants had denuded this tropical rainforest of its most vibrant lifeforms. Targeting bird nests and chicks, outcompeting local insects and feasting on amphibians and lizards, they were rapidly altering the rainforest ecosystem.

The ants, most likely introduced through the careless movement of soil, had infested the area of rainforest bordering the Barron River and from there these rafting ants had spread downstream to take over new sites.

In the middle of a typically wet north Queensland summer there was plenty of evidence that the yellow crazy ant eradication program was hitting its straps. Native green ants are returning, as are azure kingfishers, and the number of yellow crazy ants being caught in survey bait traps is falling - proof that local eradication is on track.

How did they do it?

The volunteer, community-based Kuranda Envirocare, working with funding from Terrain NRM, mobilised an extraordinary and highly effective response to this serious environmental invader.

Coordinating volunteers,

green army teams, indigenous rangers, in-kind contributions from council, and advice from the Wet Tropics Management Authority and James Cook University, the yellow crazy ant community taskforce has contained and reduced the local yellow crazy ant infestation.

The key to the community taskforce's success has been letting community volunteers and local property owners lead on-ground surveillance and control work, backed up by professional scientific advice. It's a model that has great application elsewhere.

For such an ambitious program, setbacks are part and parcel of the job. They are not considered a reason for ending the program but instead treated as lessons from which to build.

The program continually fine tunes its awareness efforts, to aid both surveillance and improve quarantine measures. It is this openness of the community taskforce to review its own processes and its ability

to deliver a creative community-led response that means their model deserves replication.

Townsville infestation

Beyond Kuranda, the prospects of eradicating yellow crazy ants from the much larger infestation in the Cairns region remain positive, but only if full funding is maintained to support eradication efforts led by the Wet Tropics Management Authority. There are also a number of other small infestations in Queensland in need of greater attention.

At Nome, south of Townsville, a 40 hectare infestation was essentially ignored until January last year. Residents in the infestation site, which neighbours onto Bowling Green Bay National Park, raised the issue with local and state governments prompting action.

The Townsville City Council, with advice from CSIRO, conducted a full survey of the site and obtained funding through Queensland's Feral Pest Initiative to conduct a



RAINFOREST BACK TO LIFE

Community responses create surprising outcomes to protect our environment from new invasive species.

quarantine and control program. The Invasive Species Council has also recently won funding to apply the Kuranda Envirocare community-led model to the Nome infestation.

Successful deployment of community led responses is starting to show that it can be a cost-effective solution to environmentally threatening invasive species over small areas.

One step from Fraser Island

Yellow crazy ants had also been found and eradicated from Hervey Bay, just a short boat trip from Fraser Island, a scary proximity to this World Heritage-listed national park area.

Surveys conducted over the last twelve months show that the local eradication was not entirely successful and some ants remain. Yellow crazy ants have crossed an ocean to reach Australia and spread to locations thousands of kilometres apart. If they ever make the short trip onto Fraser Island we can expect a huge loss of native wildlife.

Professional surveillance of invader populations in the past has been left wanting. It is often poorly coordinated and slow. New species are frequently detected years after they establish in an environmentally sensitive area. An educated and engaged community participating in regular monitoring can offer permanent vigilance against new invasive species.

The Brisbane region also has several yellow crazy ant infestations, and surveillance and control work is largely falling to council teams to monitor and contain the ants to protect wetlands, bushland corridors and nature reserves.

Part of the solution

The Kuranda experience mobilises community and science-based forces as part of a broad-reaching pincer movement against dangerous new invasive species. For invaders in their early stages, like yellow crazy ants, it is clearly a model that could be taken up across Queensland and the rest of Australia.

Property owners, community groups and volunteer teams working together with the support of local governments, natural resource management groups and scientific experts can create a highly effective force.

Supporting communities to

be part of the solution creates local interest in protecting their patch of nature, coastal area or marine hotspot, and may be the only realistic way we can deal with the growing numbers of new invasive species threats emerging in Australia.

The Kuranda Envirocare team are continuing their work in the rainforest and have already started their 2018 monitoring program. If they succeed in their eradication, it will become an inspiration for us all.

If you would like to help out with either the Kuranda or Nome yellow crazy ant programs, please contact NPAQ and we will pass your details on to program coordinators.

Adapted with permission from an article first published in the Invasive Species Council's Feral Herald.

Images: banner: Kuranda canopy (Reece Pianta); left: Volunteers in Kuranda, (Kuranda Envirocare & ISC); below: YCA up close (David Wilson).



PARK IN FOCUS

D'Aguilar National Park

John and Lyn Daly

Sourced from their book: *Take a Walk in Queensland's National Parks, Southern Zone*

D'Aguilar National Park, the park on Brisbane's doorstep, lies northwest of Brisbane city. The section along the southern end of the D'Aguilar Range was formerly known as Brisbane Forest Park. A naturebased recreation area, it was formed in 1977 after several small national parks, scenic reserves, some state forests, water catchment areas, and parcels of freehold land were amalgamated.

It is the largest and most accessible reserve of its type so close to a major city, anywhere in the world. At approximately 36,000 hectares it's the second largest park in south-east Queensland, only surpassed by the Cooloola section of Great Sandy National Park.

History

Timber-cutters came to the Samford Valley and Mount Mee areas around 1870 and soon expanded to more areas on the D'Aguilar Range in search of prized red cedars, hoop pines and other quality timbers. Evidence of early logging can be seen by many stumps throughout the park and the notches cut into them where the springboard platforms were placed. There's also ever present evidence of the forest's ability to renew itself.

Gold fever gripped the new colony of Queensland in the mid-1800s. Although it was doubted that gold deposits existed in the volcanic soil and rocks of the D'Aguilar Range and Mount Coot-tha areas, optimistic miners began small scale mining from around the 1880s and continued to the early 1950s.

Sporadic mining over seventy

years yielded very poor results of low quality ore and in 1959 the lease for the last active mine, which was located at Mount Coot-tha was surrendered, for non-payment of rent. Relics of this mine, the Ghost Hole Mine, remain in that section of the park.

As the 19th century turned, the Forestry Department began establishing reserves for a sustainable timber industry and for public use. In 1903, land on Mount Glorious became available for public purchase. Some areas were cleared for farming; others were subdivided for housing.

D'Aguilar National Park was originally six separate areas totalling 3270 hectares. Four were gazetted as individual national parks following submissions from the local progress association, forestry officials and well-known conservationists like Romeo Lahey. Two other environmental parks made up the national park. They were on undeveloped lands with limited public access, west of Mounts Nebo and Glorious.

Jollys Lookout National Park, proclaimed in 1938, was the first of the D'Aguilar national parks.

From the lookout there are great views of the D'Aguilar Range, down into the Samford Valley and all the way to Moreton Bay's northern islands. Interpretive signs at the lookout highlight the importance of the range in capturing clean water for southeast Queensland.

Maiala National Park followed in 1940. Sections had been set aside for 'public enjoyment' since 1901, including Love Creek in 1930. Maiala's picnic area was previously cleared and used for cattle grazing. Later, hoop pines were planted and a steam-powered sawmill was built in 1918 to process timber from the rainforests. Brown pine and quondong timber was in demand for the boat-building and plywood industries. The mill was eventually abandoned and the land forfeited to the Crown.

The first walking track in Maiala National Park was started in 1946 following the Second World War when the state's economy was low and unemployed men were used to construct tracks. To instill a sense of national pride, people were encouraged to get out and enjoy their natural





environments. Walking was also a cheap recreational activity in those poorer times. Track extensions to Cypress Grove and Greene's Falls were completed in 1947 and in 1965 Queensland's first self-guided nature trail along the Rainforest Circuit was opened.

Boombana and Manorina National Parks were proclaimed in 1948.

In 2006, sizeable parcels of state forest land were transferred to the national park estate creating a 60 kilometre long unbroken chain of protected land, linking the smaller, isolated national parks. D'Aguilar National Park forms the largest protected area on the edge of any capital city in the world.

Environment

D'Aguilar Range forms a connection between the Border Ranges to the south, the Conondale Range to the north, and Bunya Mountains to the west. It's the result of relatively recent volcanic activity. Some water from the catchment area flows into Wivenhoe Dam that supplies parts of Brisbane.

Open eucalypt forests cover about 90 per cent of the park. About 20 different species have been identified. Blackbutts, Sydney blue gums, red and pink bloodwoods, grey gums, broad-leaved red ironbarks, tallowwoods and brush box are some examples. The remainder of the park is made up of rainforests, closed forests and grassed clearings.

Subtropical rainforests grow in patches from Mackay in Queensland, to northern New South Wales. On the D'Aguilar

Range, they tend to grow on the southern slopes in areas that have resisted fires. Maiala, Manorina and Boombana sections protect examples of quickly disappearing subtropical, closed-canopy rainforest ecosystems and are the closest rainforest parks to Brisbane. They provide habitat for rare and vulnerable animal and plant species. Some brush box in the rainforests, and tallowwood that grow along the margins, reach 50 metres high and tower above the canopy. Understorey plants have adapted to the darker, moister conditions below the canopy. There's an almost pure stand of weeping myrtle along the creek in the Manorina section, as well as the only stand of cabbage tree palms on the range. Small-leaved figs and groves of piccabeen palms also feature throughout the rainforests. During summer, yellow flowering wattles and red lilly pilly fruit are evident along the tracks.

The diverse habitats of the forest provide sanctuary for many different animals and birds. Colourful finches, parrots and honeyeaters flit among the trees. Noisy pittas, regent bowerbirds and paradise riflebirds are usually seen closer to the ground. Brush-turkeys, a seemingly permanent inhabitant of Queensland's rainforests, are regular visitors to the tracks and picnic areas.

Most of the park's animals are nocturnal and koalas, echidnas, brushtail possums, tiny Queensland blossom bats, marsupial mice, and dingoes are the most common residents of the forests. Lizards, frogs, snakes, butterflies and beetles

are also plentiful. Over 900 insect species have been recorded from just one of the subtropical rainforest tree species.

The Critically Endangered Mount Glorious spiny crayfish (*Euastacus setosus*) are endemic and only live in one creek system that's protected in Maiala. They only survive in running, unpolluted water with temperatures below 20°C. Growing up to 12 centimetres long, this orangey-brown crayfish is distinguished from other freshwater crayfish by the short, soft spines on their abdomen and nippers. At night they emerge from their burrows along the creek bank to feed on fruit and rotting vegetation that has fallen to the forest floor.

The Southern Day Frog (*Taudactylus diurnus*) once inhabited fast-flowing waterways and fed on insect larvae in the rainforest areas of Mt Glorious, Mt Nebo and the Blackall and Conondale Ranges. When disturbed the tiny 30mm frogs were able to dive into swift torrents and cling beneath rocks until danger had passed. While most frogs are nocturnal, these little creatures were mostly active during the day. They have not been sighted in the wild since 1979 and after years of searching were listed as extinct in 2002.

Sourced from: Take a Walk in South-East Queensland by John and Lyn Daly

www.takeawalk.com.au

Images: banner: Boombana Forest Mist (NPAQ Image Library); inset: Boombana Grass Trees Westridge Outlook (NPAQ Image Library).

WILDLIFE FEATURE

Lantana (*Lantana Camara*)

Jeannie Rice
National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) staff



Images: banner: Boombana (NPAQ Library)
inset: up close (Ruth Read)

Lantana camara has been designated a Weed of National Significance by the Federal Government.

It is one of the worst weeds in Australia due to its invasiveness, potential for spread, and economic and environmental impacts. It smothers and kills native vegetation, impacting habitat and food sources for native animals, and contributes to fuel load, creating hotter bushfires. It also reduces the productivity of pastures and plantations and is toxic to livestock.

Lantana is native to tropical and sub-tropical areas in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America, and flourishes in similar environments around the world.

First brought to Australia in the 1840's as an ornamental garden plant, it has spread throughout the tropical and sub-tropical areas of the east coast, from Cairns to south coast NSW. With the right conditions it will also grow in warmer temperate regions and has been found in smaller infestations in central west Qld, northern parts of NT, WA, in southern and eastern SA, Vic, Lord Howe island and Norfolk Island.

Typically, lantana is found growing in disturbed areas such as roadways, cultivated areas, fence lines and along waterways, forest margins, and the understory of open woodlands. Lantana is not very shade tolerant, so does not thrive in a rainforest environment with a heavy canopy. However, it will quickly spread should the canopy open-up.

There are two main forms of lantana. The ornamental form used in landscaping is much smaller and produces less seeds. However, it should not be grown as it has the potential to cross-

pollinate with wild forms, creating new varieties that could spread in the wild.

The weedy variety found in bushland grows to 2-4m, with multiple prickly woody stems, and oval shaped leaves. The leaves are rough and have a pungent smell when crushed.

Flowers grow in clusters of 20-40 individual tubular flowers. They range in colour from white, yellow, orange, red, pink and can also be multicoloured. They can flower all year but are most prolific during spring and summer.

Fruit are small and berry-like. They are green when immature and ripen to a purple-black colour. Each berry contains a single seed, which can remain viable for several years. The seeds are spread by birds and mammals that eat the fruit.

Lantana has a short taproot and many shallow side-roots. Horizontal stems can also take root in contact with soil, creating dense impenetrable thickets that smother native bushland and pastures. Dumped garden waste, or movement by machinery will spread Lantana, as fragments of rootstock can also sprout, generating new plants.

Methods to control Lantana depend on the severity and location of the infestation. An integrated approach, combining a variety of methods and long-term follow-up is the key to keeping it under control. Control methods include mechanical removal, use of herbicides, regular burning, biological control and revegetation of the affected area.

Since 1986 the Vegetation Management Group, an ongoing Lantana management project, has operated in the Boombana and Jolly's Lookout sections of

D'Aguilar National Park. Each month, a dedicated group NPAQ members and volunteers work together to remove Lantana and other weeds from historically logged parts of the park, and to assist in regeneration of native vegetation.

If you would like to be part of this ongoing NPAQ project to control Lantana in D'Aguilar National Park, please keep an eye on the Activities & Events page on the NPAQ website www.npaq.org.au/ events. The clearing days are held on the 3rd or 4th Saturday of each month.

In 1995, the National Parks Association was given the John Herbert Award by the National Trust for Excellence in Heritage Conservation Works or Action.

This award was for the Boombana Lantana Project which is an ongoing project in the Boombana section of D'Aguilar National Park. The objective of this community-based work is to remove a prolific growth of lantana and other weeds from previously logged parts of the former forest and to assist in regeneration of native vegetation to a near natural condition.

References

- <https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/l-camara.pdf>
 - <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/weeds/lantana>
 - https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/62010/IPA-Lantana-PP34.pdf
 - <http://weeds.ala.org.au/WoNS/lantana/>
- Key Threatening Process Nomination Form - For adding a threatening process under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) <https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/87ef6ac7-da62-4a45-90ec-0d473863f3e6/files/nomination-lantana-camara-invasion.pdf>

THE NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE

Personal reflection on why our parks must be valued

Demi-Rose Walter
National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) Project Officer

When I was a child, visiting a national park was like going on some grand adventure.

You followed a track, were directed by a wooden signpost, climbed over rocks, crossed rivers and learnt new things. I dreamed someday I would know everything about these magical places and be able to walk along and name every creature, so when it came time for me to go to university, I studied the environment.

However, I learned things which filled me more with unease and discontent than joy and wonder. I learned that nowhere in our world is truly pristine. Although I continued to visit national parks as often as I could, I began to feel as if I had peeked behind the curtain. On every walk, I could see the challenges park management faced: demand for more facilities taking focus from conservation activities, hordes of visitors eroding the paths



and tracking in weeds, the intensity required to build good relationships with neighbours.

All this changed when I had the chance to spend three days in Carnarvon Gorge National Park. The ongoing spiritual significance of this place was immediately apparent to me even before I saw the ancient paintings and carvings or knew about its power as a place for the transmission of knowledge. I came to appreciate the obvious dedication to Carnarvon possessed by its previous caretakers, both Indigenous and rangers. The stairs to Boolimba Bluff lookout are a monument to this dedication because of the effort put into building them, all so that others could share in the wonder of the place. It is a remote park, not just because of its distance to the nearest town, but the inaccessibility created by the ruggedly beautiful cliffs.

Further experiences buoyed my waxing sense of wonder, including a chance encounter with a zoologist who showed us the frogs hidden in the stones, the discovery of a feathertail glider near our tents when spotlighting, and finding myself on a rock by a creek at dusk with a cup of chamomile tea waiting hopefully for a glimpse of a platypus. The most enduring experience, however, was the presentations, conversations and my own reflections. Conversations about things like the complex structure of vegetation communities not usually found outside of



national parks and knowing how three kinds of granite and soil microbes filter rainwater giving a high-quality supply to the surrounding farmers.

The atmosphere of Carnarvon was so intoxicating and its inhabitants so fascinating that for a while it seemed there was no topic anyone would rather speak or think on. National parks are restorative places, they reconnect us and provide a space that cannot exist in a manufactured world. There is a communal feeling there which could not be regained once we had left. I left more committed than ever to these places of wonder, adventure, solitude and quiet reflection. It is fitting that these repositories of history, heritage, and natural processes remain places to learn and share knowledge.

Images: banner: Carnarvon NP walking; inset right: rock pool; inset left: Boolimba Bluff.
PHOTOS: SUPPLIED (DEMI-ROSE WALTER)

RANGER OF THE MONTH

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

Elly Blow

Green Mountains section of Lamington National Park, Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS)

Elly Blow is a Park Ranger in the Green Mountains section of Lamington National Park, but she also has a deeper connection. Elly is a Mununjali woman from the Beaudesert area, where she grew up. As part of the Yugambeh kinship group, her family has cultural connections with the area around, and including, Lamington National Park.

How long have you worked in national parks?

I have worked in national parks for about five and a half years now. I started with QPWS as a trainee in 2012 and completed a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management while working at David Fleay Wildlife Park (DFWP).

Which parks have you worked in?

When I became Park Ranger I was first based in the Gold Coast Management Unit and worked in Burleigh Head and Tamborine National Parks. Then I spent time in the Visitor Management team, taking school groups and tours around Fleays. I've also worked at Springbrook and now I am based at Green Mountains in Lamington National Park.

What is your most memorable moment?

I really enjoyed caring for Wally, the platypus, at David Fleay Wildlife Park. Wally initially came to us undersized and injured — unfortunately he was deemed unfit to return to the wild. There is no better feeling than being a part of his rehabilitation and watching him grow into a healthy adult platypus.



QPWS ranger Elly Blow (above).

PHOTOS: QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT (SUPPLIED)

Can you describe your favourite national parks experience?

My favourite walking track at Green Mountains is the Toolona Creek Circuit (17.4 km) that follows the creek up through a gorge, past cascades and waterfalls and pops you out into the best part of Lamington National Park—the Antarctic beech forest. It is there that you can feel that you are standing in an ancient Gondwana rainforest. Lamington National Park is within the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area, and when you walk through Antarctic beech forest, you can tell that the forest is obviously a very, very old place.

For me, the highlight of the park is the abundance of plants and animals. People travel from all

over the world to come to see the park and, in particular, the birdlife. There wouldn't be a day when I'm out and about in park that I'm not in awe, observing animals in their natural environment.

What is the best thing about working in Lamington National Park?

When you are out on the Border Track at Mount Wanungara ('Mother of the mountain'), you can feel that it is a special place by looking at the landscape. Looking to the south and seeing Wollumbin (Mount Warning) and knowing both the cultural and historic creation stories of the area, I know I am lucky to work in, and manage, the country that my ancestors walked, and told stories of.

What is your top tip for visitors to parks for bushwalking?

When you visit Lamington, my advice is to take your time and connect with the park. Walk one of the longer tracks, be quiet and connect with the nature around you—it really is a very special place. Our Yugambeh name for Green Mountains is 'Woonoongoora', which means 'unhurried and leisurely place', and that explains Green Mountains (and Lamington) pretty well.

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

WHAT'S 25 N

NPAQ activities

Boots and Boardies

Date: Saturday, 17 February 2018

Meet: 8am Car park southern end of Burleigh Heads National Park.

Grade: Easy

Cost: \$5 per person NPAQ fee

Leaders: Jennifer Parker (walking) Frank Freeman (kayaking) 07 3824 3954

Directions: Take exit 85 from M1 Continue on State Route 80. Drive to Gold Coast Hwy/State Route 2, Car park at 1711 Gold Coast Highway. Park south of the Jellurgal Information Centre.

Bring: Drinks, morning tea, lunch, chair or sit upon, hat, sunscreen, swimmers, towel.

Don your boots and hitch up your boardies as you join us for a social day of family friendly activities of your choosing. Walking, birdwatching, swimming, paddling or just chill out on the Tallebudgera Creek. We aim to provide a program to suit all tastes. The walking will be easy to moderate along the Tallebudgera Creek Conservation Park to the mangrove boardwalk reaching David Fleay Wildlife Park, before returning to Burleigh Heads for a swim and or headland walk. If kayaking or paddle boarding is your preference you can paddle the creek. Kayaks and SUP's can be hired from Smoothwaters <http://www.smoothwaters.com.au>. We will likely base ourselves at Echo Beach on the Tallebudgera creek for a BYO picnic lunch meet up.

Nudgee Waterhole Reserve

Date: Sunday, 25 February 2018

Meet: 7:30am carpark of Nudgee Rd (corner of Childs Rd).

Grade: Easy

Cost: \$5 per person NPAQ fee

Leader: Ian Peacock 07 3359 0318, ianpeacock@hotmail.com

Directions: If travelling north or south on the Gateway Motorway exit at exit sign 112 with signs marked "Nudgee Rd" / "Nudgee Beach"/"Nudgee".

Bring: Binoculars, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, water, chair, morning tea (lunch optional)

This is a pleasant walk through eucalyptus and tea tree forest around Nudgee Waterhole. Many bush and water birds have been sighted on our previous walks. Following this walk we will move down to Nudgee Beach for cooling breezes and park at UBD map 111 L16 at the northern end of O'Quinn Street for morning tea, followed by a walk on the raised boardwalk along the bank of Nudgee Creek. People wishing to remain for lunch are welcome to. Low tide will be at 11:49am and this will allow walking along the sand flats later in the morning to view wader birds.

Axis Place Bird Watching

Date: Sunday, 25 March 2018

Meet: 7.30am at the end of Axis Place UBD 239

Grade: Easy

Cost: \$5 per person NPAQ fee

Leader: Geraldine Buchanan 07 3349 1109

Bring: Binoculars, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, water, chair, morning tea (lunch optional)

We were supposed to visit this section of Dan

Stiller Reserve in June 2016. However, due to wet weather this trip was cancelled. BCC has made a circuit track which includes a section close to a lagoon on a minor tributary of Oxley Creek. The track continues onto an ex-sandmining lake. For those interested we could follow this track for views of the lake. On pre-outings I was surprised at the number of fairy-wrens feeding on Australian native trees planted on the footpath in Axis Place, an industrial estate. There are no facilities at Axis Place. For morning tea we will move to Lincoln Green Drive UBD 239 H16 where there are facilities for morning tea.

NPAQ events

NPAQ Member's Meeting

The first NPAQ member's meeting for 2018:

Date: Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Time: 7:15pm for 7:30pm start

Venue: NPAQ Office, 10/36 Finchley St, Milton

Well known national park enthusiast Tony Groom will present his views on the current state of national parks in Queensland and elsewhere.

Vale

Noel Askin

NPAQ was recently made aware of the passing of member Noel Askin. Noel joined NPAQ in 2008. He passed away in April last year.

We extend our sincere condolences to Noel's family and friends.



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NATIONAL PARKS CONNECT AND PROTECT



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IMAGES (TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE TO BOTTOM RIGHT):
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MACKAY CONSERVATION GROUP LINDEMUND ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK;
TRACEY HARRISON-HILL GIRRINGUN NATIONAL PARK;
WONNE PARSONS BUNYA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK.

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