

Mount Webb National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	414ha
Bioregion:	Cape York Peninsula
QPWS region:	Northern
Local government estate/area:	Cook Shire
State electorate:	Cook

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Land Act 1991</i>
✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Bonn Convention
✓	China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

Vision

Mount Webb National Park is managed to conserve the endangered and of concern regional ecosystems, with a particular emphasis on maintaining the integrity of its vine forests.

Conservation purpose

Originally part of Starcke Pastoral Holding, the original 220ha of Mount Webb National Park was gazetted in 1973. In 1995, the park was extended to better protect its semi-deciduous mesophyll/notophyll vine forests from clearing.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Mount Webb National Park features a low hill rising to an altitude of 127m, and its foot slopes. Volcanic soils within the park and in surrounding areas are very fertile.

Located within the Jeannie River catchment, the Morgan River forms part of the park's southern boundary.

The existing house site offers uninterrupted views towards the Cape Flattery silica dunes.

Cattle and horse grazing occurs on properties surrounding Mount Webb National Park. A gazetted road reserve adjoins the eastern boundary, and an oil palm plantation is situated to the south of the park.

Regional ecosystems

Seven regional ecosystems are mapped within Mount Webb National Park, including one 'endangered' community. Four of concern communities (Table 1) are conserved in the park. The remaining two vegetation communities are not of concern at present.

Most of the park (approximately 80 per cent) is covered by closed vine forest. Semi-deciduous notophyll/microphyll vine forest is restricted to Mount Webb and closed semi-deciduous mesophyll vine forest occurs on loamy alluvia and foot slopes. Vine forests appear healthy, with no significant or visible edge effects evident.

Northern and western sections of the park are dominated by eucalypt woodland, which is heavily infested with sicklepod *Senna obtusifolia*.

Native plants and animals

Mount Webb National Park is currently known to protect two species of state conservation significance (Table 2)—Malay apple *Syzygium malaccense* and the skink, *Lygisaurus tanneri*. Five birds recorded from the park are listed in international agreements (Table 3).

Within Australia, Malay apple is restricted to north-east Queensland. It is conserved in only a few protected areas, and grows within the vine forests. The species management profile for Malay apple identifies habitat disturbance by cattle as a threatening process.

Lygisaurus tanneri is subject to disturbance, and threatened by feral pigs *Sus scrofa*, feral cats *Felis catus*, cane toads *Rhinella marina* and clearing. Park staff have never surveyed for this species and little is known about its ecology.

Further survey work and field collections are needed to develop extensive species lists for the park.

Aboriginal culture

Currently no formalised management arrangements have been established with the relevant Traditional Owners for Mount Webb National Park. No current native title applications exist over Mount Webb National Park.

Subject to successful negotiation with Traditional Owners, the park is identified for future transfer to Aboriginal ownership under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*. A joint management regime will be established under the framework provided by the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* for the Cape York Peninsula Region.

It is unknown whether any sites of Aboriginal material culture exist on Mount Webb National Park.

Shared-history culture

The only known relic of European pastoral heritage remaining on Mount Webb National Park is an old dwelling. This building is in a state of disrepair and cattle are currently using the building to shelter. While removal of the dwelling will improve the site's aesthetics, the associated soil disturbance will favour weed growth, and potentially lead to erosion of the hill slope.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Mount Webb National Park offers few tourism or visitor opportunities. Camping is not provided for on the park.

Visitors need to traverse dense infestations of sicklepod to access the Cape Flattery viewing site. Pest plant infestations have reduced the aesthetic amenity of the park.

Education and science

The conservation significant species within the park may be of educational and research interest.

Partnerships

Where possible, fire and pest management activities are coordinated with park neighbours.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Pest plants

Hyptis *Hyptis suaveolens*, and sicklepod up to 2m in height, grows in dense infestations within the cleared area around the house site and along the access road. There is no evidence that these species are spreading into the vine forest. It is assumed that the density of the sicklepod infestations prevents fire impact to the vine forests.

Eucalypt woodlands in the western section of the park are infested with dense stands of sicklepod. Consequently park staff rarely access this area.

Snake weed *Stachytarpheta* sp. and lantana *Lantana camara* are scattered amongst the hyptis and sicklepod infestations. Lantana extends approximately 10m into the edge of the vine thickets.

Park staff spray pest plants at the house site and along the adjacent road reserve. They have discontinued spraying other areas that are not easily accessed, due to the risk of spreading more pest plants than they can control.

Pest animals

Cattle *Bos* sp. and horses *Equus caballus* are regularly observed within the park, predominantly around the house site and in other cleared areas on the eastern and northern edges of the park. They shelter in the old dwelling and in the vine forests, and are vectors for pest plant dispersal. The boundary fence is currently damaged, and gates are not in place.

Pig wallows and rooted up areas are evident in the vine forests and along the roads. Cats *Felis catus* are likely to occur on the park given its close proximity to surrounding residences. Given the park's proximity to neighbouring properties, baiting and shooting are not suitable pest control measures.

Fire management

A late season, high intensity fire entered the park in 2009, impacting the northern, eastern and southern edges of the park. Vegetation appears to be recovering well. However, staff are unsure of the fire's impact on the vine forests.

Hot fires are required to reduce sicklepod infestations.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Native plants and animals</p> <p>The health and diversity of plant and animal communities on the park is being maintained.</p>	<p>A1. Implement fire regimes that will maintain the current health and diversity of plant and animal communities, with an emphasis on eucalypt woodlands and semi-deciduous mesophyll/notophyll vine forests.</p> <p>A2. Continue to focus pest plant management around the dwelling and along the adjacent gazetted road reserve to reduce the rate of pest plant spread within the park.</p> <p>A3. Explore biological control options and regeneration measures for the park.</p> <p>A4. Exclude stock from the park by installing effective boundary fences.</p>
<p>Aboriginal culture</p> <p>Traditional Owners are involved in park management.</p>	<p>A5. Establish and implement a formal joint management regime with Traditional Owners under the statutory framework provided by the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> and the <i>Aboriginal Land Act 1991</i> for the Cape York Peninsula Region.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>Presentation values of Mount Webb National Park are enhanced.</p>	<p>A6. Emphasise the risk of pest plant spread in all written material relating to the park and encourage visitors to observe pest plant hygiene practices.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem	Description	Biodiversity status
3.3.2a	Semi-deciduous mesophyll/notophyll vine forest. Occurs on alluvia.	Of concern
3.3.2b	Semi-deciduous mesophyll/notophyll vine forest. Occurs on floodplains.	Of concern
3.8.2a	Semi-deciduous notophyll/microphyll vine forest. Occurs on basalt rises.	Of concern
3.8.2b	Semi-deciduous notophyll/microphyll vine forest. Occurs on exposed metamorphic and granitic slopes.	Of concern
3.8.3a	Molloy box <i>Eucalyptus leptophleba</i> + Moreton Bay ash <i>Corymbia tessellaris</i> + Clarkson's bloodwood <i>C. clarksoniana</i> woodland on basalt flows	Endangered

Table 2: Species of State or national conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> status	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> status	Back on Track status
Plants				
<i>Syzygium malaccense</i>	Malay apple	Near threatened	-	Low
Animals				
<i>Lygisaurus tanneri</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Medium

Table 3: Bird species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	BONN	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	-	✓	-
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Monarcha frater</i>	black-winged monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-
<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-

BONN – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement