

# The Palms National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	73ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	South West
Local government estate/area:	Toowoomba Regional Council
State electorate:	Nanango



Grey-headed flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*. Photo: NPRSR

## Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

## Plans and agreements

✓	Bonn Convention
✓	National recovery plan for the black-breasted button quail <i>Turnix melanogaster</i>

## Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 fire strategy
✓	Level 2 pest strategy

## Vision

The Palms National Park will continue to protect the natural spring and the surrounding remnant palm vine forest and subtropical rainforest located in both sections of the park.

Significant ecosystems that provide habitat for diverse plant communities and wildlife of conservation significance will also be protected.

Recreation opportunities will focus on presenting the natural values and nature appreciation.

## Conservation purpose

The smaller western section—12.4 hectares (ha)—of The Palms National Park was originally gazetted in 1950 under the *Forestry Act 1959*. This section, which the local community refer to as Boldery Park, occurs on a natural spring and conserves a small remnant of mixed palm vine forest and subtropical rainforest dominated by piccabeen palms *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*.

An additional section located to the east of the original area, but not adjoining it, was added to The Palms National Park in 2008 to conserve a large tract of microphyll, notophyll rainforests and tall open forests. The purpose of the park is to conserve the natural spring and the surrounding vegetation, particularly ecosystems of conservation significance and associated plant and animal species.

## Protecting and presenting the park's values

### Landscape

The Palms National Park is located in the upper catchment of the Brisbane River. It is centred on a gully that flows to the west from a range of hills that support open, dry eucalypt forest. The gully itself has a small perennial spring, supporting a dense stand of piccabeen palms *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, which is located in the smaller western section of the park. Surrounding that is a small area of microphyll vine forest with several very large ficus and other rainforest tree species.

Little is currently known about the landscape values of the eastern section of the park.

The park is located approximately 10 kilometres (km) north-east of Cooyar and is an island of natural vegetation surrounded by cleared grazing and cropping lands.

A number of State forests and national parks are located close to The Palms National Park, including Yarraman State Forest, Tarong National Park and Benarkin State Forest.

### Regional ecosystems

Six regional ecosystems are represented in the park, two of which have a biodiversity status of endangered and three classed as of concern status (Table 1).

Regional ecosystems 12.5.13 (endangered), 12.8.13 (of concern) and 12.9 - 10.16 (endangered) contain *Araucaria cunninghamii* and vine forest, which is susceptible to degradation from pest plant infestations and fire. Regional ecosystem 12.8.13 is located in the middle of the eastern section of the park and is bordered by endangered regional ecosystems 12.5.13 to the north and 12.9 - 10.16 to the south. The whole western section of the park is covered by endangered regional ecosystem 12.9 - 10.16.

A small area of regional ecosystem 12.8.26 is located in the western area of the eastern section of the park. This regional ecosystem is restricted to the south-west of the South Eastern Queensland bioregion. It prefers a mosaic burning regime to maintain its health.

### Native plants and animals

The Palms National Park contains approximately 66 native animal species, including four that are of conservation significance and three birds listed under international agreements (Tables 2 and 3). The vegetation provides a refuge for over 60 migratory and transient bird species, and also the black-breasted button-quail *Turnix melanogaster* that is listed as vulnerable under both State and Commonwealth legislation. It is also ranked as a critical priority species under the Back on Track species prioritisation framework. Threats to the black-breasted button-quail include clearing of vegetation resulting in an increase in feral predator effects, as the bird is unable to disperse between patches of habitat. The powerful owl *Ninox strenua* has been recorded in the Boldery section of The Palms National Park.

Grey-headed flying-foxes *Pteropus poliocephalus* can be seen roosting in the trees around the gully during the spring and summer. This species is listed as vulnerable under Commonwealth legislation and is ranked as a critical priority species under Back on Track. The vulnerable tusked frog *Adelotus brevis* is also found around the natural spring and gully in park. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) have been monitoring the grey-headed flying-fox population on park for the last six years as part of the coordinated Commonwealth Government population count.

Other notable species found within the park include the red-necked pademelon *Thylogale thetis* and short-beaked echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*.

Most formal records of plant and animal species are from the small originally declared western section (12.4ha). Further surveys are required of the newer eastern section.

### Aboriginal culture

The landscape is of intrinsic cultural value to Traditional Owners. Evidence of past occupation, in the form of scarred trees, has been recorded in an area adjacent to the park but no evidence has been found on the park.

Opportunities exist to improve relationships with local Traditional Owner groups and involve them in park management.

## Shared-history culture

The degree of shared-history culture remains largely unknown in The Palms National Park. However, the presence of an old well near the visitor parking area suggests that this area may have been a stopover point for bullock teams before the Second World War.

It is believed the original western section of the park was given to Council in 1927, by Mr Charles Boldery, to be set aside as a reserve. This section was called Boldery Park. Council gave this reserve to QPWS and it was gazetted as The Palms National Park in 1950. Members of the local community have requested by petition to the Minister that the park be renamed Boldery Park in Mr Boldery's honour. As the park is split into two separate sections and there is difficulty involved in re-gazetting the whole park to change the name, the preferred option has been to name the western section 'Boldery Section'. This could be done through boundary signs and interpretative materials. There is an old 'Boldery Park' council sign located in the day-use area and the community have been advised that there is no intention of removing this sign.

## Tourism and visitor opportunities

Picnic tables are provided at the day-use area in the western section of the park. The Palms 800 metres (m) circuit walk allows visitors to view piccabeen palms, strangler figs and a variety of native pines and birds along a graded track and boardwalks through the rainforest.

## Education and science

There is an opportunity for looking into the early white settlement of the Boldery Park section in liaison with community groups to get a better understanding of the shared-history cultural values of the park. Apart from this, the degree of educational opportunities in The Palms National Park is limited due to its small size.

## Partnerships

Managing pests and fire is significantly enhanced with the co-operation and involvement from park neighbours. Partnerships with neighbours, State and local government agencies and other stakeholder's needs to be encouraged to ensure the values of the protected area are managed appropriately.

## Other key issues and responses

### Pest management

The small size of the park makes it more susceptible to impacts from pest animals and pest plants. Lantana *Lantana camara* has established around the edges of the park with thick infestations along the road close to the day-use area car park. It is a weed of national significance and requires control measures to be implemented.

Feral cats *Felis catus* and dogs *Canis lupus familiaris* have been recorded on the park. Wild poultry *Gallus gallus* has also been observed. During the warmer months the natural spring attracts large numbers of cane toads *Rhinella marina*.

The park is managed under the Kingaroy South Level 2 pest management strategy. Wild tobacco *Solanum mauritianum* has colonised after the last two flood years, it is being contained and controlled by QPWS. Moth vine and velvety tree pear are also controlled.

### Fire management

The Palms National Park contains a mixture of vegetation communities some of which are fire sensitive, including regional ecosystems 12.5.13 and 12.9-10.16. Of concern regional ecosystem 12.8.26 prefers a mosaic burning regime to encourage regeneration.

Fires have occurred in the adjacent dry eucalyptus forests but to date have not impacted the moist gully and spring areas. The threat from wildfire is considered to be low.

The Palms National Park is managed under the Kingaroy South Level 2 fire management strategy.

## Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p><b>Natural values</b></p> <p>Rainforest and eucalyptus communities are conserved and habitat diversity maintained. Knowledge of native plant and animal species distribution and habitat requirements are increased</p>	<p>A1. Establish or review key monitoring objectives for endangered and of concern regional ecosystems and for species of conservation significance.</p>
<p><b>Cultural heritage</b></p> <p>Cultural heritage values in general and at specific sites have been identified and preserved and interpreted where appropriate.</p>	<p>A2. Continue to develop awareness and understanding of the cultural heritage value of the park with the local community and user groups through education and interpretive programs.</p> <p>A3. Encourage and support Traditional Owners in conducting a comprehensive cultural heritage survey of the park including recording stories, language names and cultural heritage places.</p> <p>A4. Maintain the original council Boldery Park sign and develop interpretation to explain the name and associated history of the park.</p> <p>A5. Liaise with local community to rename the Boldery Section and develop boundary signs and interpretation.</p>
<p><b>Fire management</b></p> <p>Fire is managed to protect natural and biodiversity values of the national park.</p>	<p>A6. Implement and review the fire management strategy to protect the diverse plant communities.</p>
<p><b>Pest management</b></p> <p>An effective pest control program minimises the impacts on pest species on the natural ecosystems.</p>	<p>A7. Continue monitoring lantana infestations and where feasible control outbreaks, particularly in areas containing threatened vegetation communities.</p> <p>A8. Continue monitoring pest animal impact on native vegetation and species.</p>
<p><b>Partnerships</b></p> <p>Neighbours and interested parties are aware of, and help achieve the desired management outcomes for the park.</p>	<p>A9. Continue to liaise with park neighbours and interested parties about cooperative arrangements for park management issues, including fire, pest management and boundary fences.</p>

## Tables – Conservation values management

**Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems**

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
12.5.13	Microphyll to notophyll vine forest +/- <i>Araucaria cunninghamii</i> on remnant Tertiary surfaces.	Endangered
12.8.13	Araucarian complex microphyll vine forest on Cainozoic igneous rocks	Of concern
12.8.26	<i>Corymbia trachyphloia</i> and <i>Eucalyptus major</i> woodland on igneous rocks	Of concern
12.9-10.16	Araucarian microphyll to notophyll vine forest on sedimentary rocks	Endangered
12.9-10.18	<i>Angophora leiocarpa</i> , <i>Eucalyptus crebra</i> woodland on sedimentary rocks	Of concern

**Table 2: Species of conservation significance**

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
<b>Animals</b>				
<i>Adelotus brevis</i>	tusked frog	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	powerful owl	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>	grey-headed flying-fox	Least concern	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Turnix melanogaster</i>	black-breasted button-quail	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical

**Table 3: Species listed in international agreements**

Scientific name	Common name	BONN	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	satin flycatcher	✓	-	-	-
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-

BONN: Bonn Convention

CAMBA: China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA: Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA: Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement