

# Batavia National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land) Management Statement 2014

The underlying tenure of this park is Aboriginal freehold land, owned by the Batavia Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

Batavia Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service jointly manage this park

<b>Gazettal Date:</b>	23/11/2012
<b>Park size:</b>	56,015ha
<b>Bioregion:</b>	Cape York Peninsula
<b>QPWS region:</b>	Northern
<b>Local government estate/area:</b>	Cook Shire Council
<b>State electorate:</b>	Cook

**This management statement has been prepared with limited consultation to provide interim guidance for park management until a formal management plan is approved.**

The Northern Kaanju, Yinwum and Atambaya people are collectively referred to as the Batavia Traditional Owners for the purposes of this document and are represented by the Batavia Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (BTOAC) in respect to the management of Batavia National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land) (NP (CYPAL)).

BTOAC was established in 2012 for the purpose of being a landholding body for Aboriginal land transferred through a program to return ownership and management of identified lands on Cape York Peninsula to Aboriginal people.

The Batavia Traditional Owners welcome to country those people who will respect and take care of their land and waters, as well as the native plants and animals. They hope visitors enjoy their visit and return home safely to their families to share the knowledge they gained during their visit.

## Legislative framework

✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007</i>
✓	<i>Aboriginal Land Act 1991</i>
✓	<i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>

## Plans and agreements

✓	Batavia Indigenous Land Use Agreement between Rodney Accoom and Batavia Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (ICN 7538) and State of Queensland
✓	Indigenous Management Agreement between Batavia Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and State of Queensland for Batavia National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land)
✓	Bonn Convention
✓	China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	1999 Burra Charter

## Vision

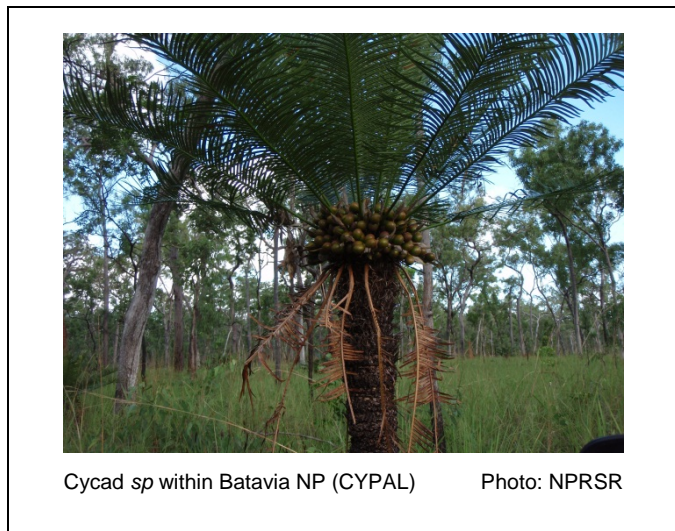
BTOAC and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), provide best practice joint management of the NP (CYPAL) so our lands and culture stay healthy for our children and for the benefit of all people.

## Conservation purpose

On 20 November 2012, Batavia became Aboriginal land held by BTOAC. Three sections (Map 1) were dedicated as national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land). Batavia National Park (CYPAL) was gazetted on 23 November 2012.

This area contains outstanding examples of geo-evolution and biodiversity and represents major stages of geo-evolution. The Wenlock River corridor provides an important connection between the eastern and western Cape York Peninsula. Significant and relatively undisturbed habitats occur within Batavia NP (CYPAL) including various vine forest patches, the Embley Range with its elevated swamps, and important riparian corridors along the Wenlock River, headwaters of the Olive River and other creeks throughout the park.

Batavia NP (CYPAL) protects species and ecosystems of evolutionary and geological significance including many endemic species and ecosystems which have a very limited extent over Cape York Peninsula and are poorly represented in the Queensland protected area estate.



## Protecting and presenting the park's values

### Landscape

Batavia NP (CYPAL) is made up of three sections protecting different landscape types.

The northern section includes part of the Wenlock River corridor and supports significant riverine closed forests, which are of concern. These regional ecosystems provide a wildlife corridor between the rainforest areas on the east coast and the smaller rainforest areas on the western side. It is home to many native animal species including some near threatened species.

The northern part of this section protects small patches of vine forest on lateritic plateau surfaces. The remainder contains large areas of eucalypt woodland and includes parts of the catchments for both the Wenlock and Olive Rivers. Most of this area has an elevation of just over 100m rising to around 150m where the Great Dividing Range separates the two catchments.

The eastern section is adjacent to the Olive River Reserve. It conserves open woodland and patches of rainforest. A lot of small creeks and springs drain ridges and plateaus which rise to an elevation of over 200m in places.

The Embley Range section has high natural heritage values. It conserves a regionally significant area of isolated laterite plateau with elevated melaleuca swamps. This plateau is a remnant of a once much larger plateau and is a good example of geo-evolution. Elevation is mostly from 160m to 180m falling to around 100m within a few kilometres of the park boundary.

## Regional ecosystems

Twenty-four regional ecosystems are mapped on Batavia NP (CYPAL). Two of these are of concern. Many of these regional ecosystems are well represented on the park but have a limited range on Cape York Peninsula or have a very low representation in protected area estate.

The Wenlock River Corridor is an important link between the east and west and may assist with the continued existence of some species in the small rainforest patches in western districts. It mostly conserves of concern regional ecosystems. This closed forest has large variation along the river supporting a rich mix of species. The riverine corridor also acts as a dry season refuge for woodland animals when their normal habitat becomes too dry and hot.

Small patches of vine forest are important remnants of what is believed to be a once more extensive forest type that has contracted to these small patches. These vine forests contain species rarely seen in the wider Cape York Peninsula environment.

The Embley Range contains large seasonal melaleuca swamps surrounded by tall woodland of Darwin stringybark *Eucalyptus tetradonta* and Melville Island bloodwood *E. nesophila*, with some areas of vine scrub on the plateau margins.

## Native plants and animals

Batavia NP (CYPAL) protects endangered, near threatened and vulnerable plant and animal species. It also protects a large number of least concern species, including species rarely found on Cape York Peninsula such as the red-legged pademelon *Thylogale stigmatica* and plant species with very limited known range.

The Embley Range supports good populations of the common brushtail possum *Trichosurus vulpecular* and antilopine wallaroo *Macropus antilopinus*, apparently in higher numbers than surrounding habitats. This area may be important in maintaining the numbers of these species by dispersal into the adjacent habitats. Numerous frog species are found within the park, mostly in and around the melaleuca swamps. The northern quoll *Dasyurus hallucatus*, which is listed under the EPBC Act as endangered, has also been found in the Embley Range area.

The common spotted cuscus *Spiloguscus maculatus* has been seen in the vine forest patches in the northern area of the park. This species is listed as near threatened. The red-legged pademelon, also found in these forest patches, does not live in eucalypt woodland and may not be able to travel to other areas of vine forest. This forest type also supports a large number of bird species, small mammals, flying foxes and reptiles. Other near threatened species found in these patches of vine forest include the palm cockatoo *Probosciger aterrimus* and rufous owl (Cape York subspecies) *Ninox rufa meesi*.

The Wenlock River provides an important corridor for dispersal of species across the Peninsula. It also acts as a refuge from the surrounding dry woodland. Near threatened species including the palm cockatoo and black-necked stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* have been seen along this section of the Wenlock River, as well as a significant number of other bird and aquatic species.

Two cycads, *Cycas xipholepis* and *C. yorkiana*, are found on Batavia NP (CYPAL). These species require active management to protect against the impacts of pest plants, inappropriate fire regimes and disturbance from road corridors. The most northern recording of *C. xipholepis* is in eucalypt woodland near the Embley Range. *C. yorkiana* occurs in the northern section of Batavia NP (CYPAL) and in eucalypt woodland in the surrounding landholdings.

Batavia NP (CYPAL) conserves various endangered, vulnerable and near threatened plants and important ecosystems with limited representation in protected areas. Some of these ecosystems represent important bio-evolutionary processes and contain plants which are not commonly seen on the Peninsula. The eastern parts of Batavia NP (CYPAL) are important extensions of the significant landscapes in the Olive River Reserve.

## Aboriginal culture

The Batavia Traditional Owners have maintained strong cultural links to this area. They have connection to landscapes within the park and the surrounding areas that signify customary lore, and they continue to practice customary lore today. Cultural practices such as collecting materials for traditional costumes, collecting bush medicines, and undertaking traditional hunting and gathering are carried out by the Batavia Traditional Owners within the park. The hunting and gathering skills of the Indigenous people are impressive, and they have been utilising these skills for many thousands of years.

Sites of material Indigenous culture and places of cultural significance exist on the park. Some sites of cultural significance have not been visited for a long time.

As per the Indigenous Management Agreement, the Corporation is responsible for protecting and maintaining the Aboriginal cultural resources and places on this NP (CYPAL). The Corporation also determines what Aboriginal cultural information should be presented to the public and advises QPWS about matters concerning Aboriginal tradition.

## Shared-history culture

The first European settlement in the area was by James Burne who took up Batavia Downs in 1882. In 1892 gold was discovered on the upper Wenlock River by William Baird and the 'Batavia Gold Field' produced the first rush on the Peninsula.

Batavia Downs was run as a cattle station and then as a Government research farm. In 1995 it was assessed by QPWS for inclusion in a proposed national park.

## Tourism and visitor opportunities

Currently no visitor facilities or other infrastructure are provided on Batavia NP (CYPAL). The Old Telegraph Road passes through the northern section of the park, and the Sudley Batavia Road adjoins the northern end of the Embley Range section of park.

Batavia NP (CYPAL) is mainly accessible during the dry season. The Wenlock River at Moreton is a favourite camping spot with many people staying for a few days.

## Education and science

Batavia NP (CYPAL) protects many vulnerable and near threatened species as well as bio-geographically important species and land formations which are of educational and research interest.

Knowledge gained from research and monitoring programs is an integral part of adaptive park management. Research projects should conform to park management objectives and only be undertaken if they cannot be performed satisfactorily off-park.

Research projects involving totem species, or accessing places of cultural significance, need the approval of the Batavia Traditional Owners.

## Partnerships

QPWS and BTOAC manage Batavia NP (CYPAL) in accordance with the Indigenous Management Agreement for the park and relevant legislation.

QPWS and the BTOAC are working together to train other Traditional Owners and QPWS Rangers so they can jointly deliver day-to-day management activities, including fire and pest management and compliance activities on ground.

Park staff and Traditional Owners maintain working relationships with neighbouring landholders, State and local government agencies and other organisations to ensure the values of the NP (CYPAL) are managed appropriately.

Where possible, fire and pest management activities are coordinated with neighbouring landholders.

## Other key issues and responses

### Fire management

The northern section of the park contains numerous rainforest pockets and appears in good condition with well-structured canopy cover with *Buchanania arborescens* and *Syzygium forte* present. Two large swamps (RE 3.3.32 palustrine wetland) perched on the plateau within the park appear in good condition in terms of structure and species composition. Past fire events appear to have maintained the overall landscape in good health and for all intents and purposes future planned burns should be developed to mimic historic fire events.

Historical fires have maintained the open forest (RE 3.9.4/5.22x2/3.9.5), east of Moreton Telegraph Station, community in good health.

The condition of REs 3.9.4/3.5.22/3.9.5 is poor and appropriate fire regimes are needed to restore these communities back to healthy systems. The greatest impediment to applying appropriate fire prescriptions is the spread of fire to neighbouring properties, in particular Bramwell Station to the north and Wattle Hills to the south east of the park.

The greatest challenge facing management when applying burn programs is with fires burning beyond the park boundaries. Most of the park simply does not have any constructed or natural barriers that will prevent fires escaping onto neighbouring properties.

### Pest management

#### Pest plants

Various pest plants have been found on Batavia NP (CYPAL). Most occur in small patches close to roads. Larger areas of pest plants occur near the original Batavia homestead and airstrip. Some of these are associated with research trials conducted when the property was run as a research farm.

Pest plants currently identified on the NP (CYPAL) are Indian hemp *Sida acuta*, knob weed *Hyptis capitata*, sicklepod *Senna obtusifolia*, snake weed *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis* and bush tea bush *Hyptis suaveolens*. A large patch of gamba grass *Andropogon gayanus* occurs outside the NP (CYPAL), near the Batavia Downs homestead. Care must be taken to prevent the spread of this introduced grass which could invade the park.

#### Pest animals

The NP (CYPAL) is not fully fenced so cattle *Bos* spp. can enter the park from neighbouring properties.

Feral pigs *Sus scrofa* are a threat to the elevated melaleuca swamps, riparian areas and vine forests. Their activity can damage regeneration and increase the spread of pest plants by disturbing the natural environment. Feral cats *Felis catus*, feral dogs *Canis familiaris* and cane toads *Bufo marinus* have also been recorded on Batavia.

### Other management issues

#### Safety

The natural environment presents the potential for interaction with dangerous wildlife, including estuarine crocodiles *Crocodylus porosus*. Warnings and information about these natural hazards will be highlighted on information boards and signs within Batavia NP (CYPAL) and in off-park materials.

### References

Forster, PI and McDonald, KR 2008. The diversity, distribution and conservation status of cycads on far north Cape York Peninsula. Internal Technical Report. Queensland Herbarium: Brisbane.

Ahmet, M 2013, Report on field trip undertaken to Batavia National Park (CYPAL), QPWS internal technical report.

## Management directions

Table 1: Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>Landscape and catchment values are largely undisturbed.</p> <p>The health, diversity and integrity of regional ecosystems is protected and maintained.</p>	<p>A1. Maintain the diversity and complexity of native vegetation communities through appropriate fire and pest management.</p> <p>A2. Maintain ecosystem health through appropriate burning regimes and pest programs, and by implementing hygiene regimes to minimise the spread of potential diseases and pest plants.</p> <p>A3. Restore disturbed ecosystems by undertaking cooperative revegetation programs as required.</p>
<p><b>Regional ecosystems</b></p> <p>The health, diversity and integrity of regional ecosystems is protected and maintained.</p>	<p>A4. Maintain the biodiversity and complexity of native vegetation communities, including important ecotone areas, through appropriate fire and pest management.</p>
<p><b>Native plants and animals</b></p> <p>Species of conservation significance and ecosystems with a significant biodiversity status are protected through direct and active management activities.</p>	<p>A5. Increase baseline knowledge of flora and fauna and record data within Departmental databases.</p> <p>A6. Collate existing information and conduct ongoing monitoring and survey work to improve the knowledge of the joint managers – and use the information gained to guide future park management.</p>
<p><b>Aboriginal culture</b></p> <p>Sites, places and species of cultural significance are appropriately protected and presented.</p>	<p>A7. Manage the NP (CYPAL) to ensure the responsibilities, interests and aspirations of the Batavia Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation members are acknowledged, protected and respected.</p> <p>a. Protect special places (such as birthing trees and the two cemeteries' place). Develop projects for mapping and fencing cemeteries and any other identified significant cultural sites.</p> <p>b. Cultural mapping to support particular values and responsibilities of the Yinwum, Atambaya and Northern Kaanju peoples.</p>
<p><b>Shared heritage culture</b></p> <p>Sites of heritage significance are appropriately protected and presented or allowed to decay where appropriate.</p>	<p>A8. Identify and record shared-history cultural heritage places in Departmental databases, including documentation of their significance (if known).</p>

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p><b>Tourism and visitor opportunities</b></p> <p>Batavia NP (CYPAL) offers a range of sustainable recreational opportunities which are consistent with the character of the park and protect and promote its natural and cultural values.</p>	<p>A9. Explore visitor use options which are ecologically and culturally-appropriate which complement and contrast other recreational opportunities on public lands in the region, including remote hiking and camping by experienced bushwalkers and guided access.</p> <p>A10. Support the Corporation in exploring and developing cultural tourism opportunities within the park and on their surrounding lands. This includes exploring options for developing a visitor centre and developing a commercial cultural tourism program in cooperation with Moreton</p> <p>A11. Where necessary, protect sites and places of particular cultural significance through the declaration of Restricted Access Areas.</p> <p>A12. Highlight the hazards and risks presented by the remote, natural environment, the need to be experienced, self-sufficient and respectful of cultural protocols in written materials relating to the park.</p> <p>A13. Ensure joint patrols occur on the NP (CYPAL) with BTOAC and QPWS to ensure compliance and enforcement of legislation.</p>
<p><b>Education and science</b></p> <p>Research and monitoring programs increase understanding of park values and provide information to improve management decisions.</p>	<p>A14. Support recording and mapping of cultural information.</p> <p>A15. Continue to gather wildlife records for the park that assist with management.</p> <p>A16. Support research activities where there are demonstrated benefits to the management of the NP (CYPAL), and no off-park alternatives exist.</p> <p>A17. Ensure Traditional Owners are appropriately consulted and have opportunities to be involved in scientific research activities on the park.</p>
<p><b>Partnerships</b></p> <p>The BTOAC and QPWS have a strong and positive collaborative working relationship, built on trust and respect for each other's knowledge and responsibilities.</p> <p>Relationships with neighbours are maintained and collaborative management occurs across the landscape.</p>	<p>A18. Maintain good working relations with neighbouring landholders and, where possible, cooperatively undertake fire and pest management programs.</p> <p>A19. Further strengthen joint management relationships with the Batavia Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation members by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) ensuring culturally appropriate management and decision-making on the NP (CYPAL);</li> <li>b) cooperatively developing protocols for various park management activities in accordance with the Indigenous Management Agreement for the park;</li> <li>c) supporting the investigation of possible commercial tourism, employment and business opportunities;</li> <li>d) supporting the recording of cultural places; and providing opportunities for cultural interpretation on and off park</li> <li>e) supporting training opportunities for BTOAC member so they can participate in park management; and</li> <li>f) providing opportunities for cultural interpretation on and off park.</li> </ul> <p>A20. Maintain good working relations with neighbouring landholders and, where possible, cooperatively undertake fire and pest management programs.</p>
<p><b>Pest management</b></p> <p>The integrity of native plant and animal communities is maintained through strategic, sustained pest management.</p>	<p>A21. Develop and implement a Level 2 Pest Management Strategy that considers the most effective methods for control and involves cooperative management of species where appropriate.</p> <p>A22. Utilise Indigenous hunting and gathering skills in pest management on the park, coordinated with similar activities on the adjacent Aboriginal freehold land.</p> <p>A23. Provide BTOAC members opportunities to conduct feral animal control on the park as part of their day-to-day management program (subject to QPWS policies e.g. use of firearms and dogs). This will include BTOAC members reporting on their control activities as a component of a broader pest monitoring program.</p> <p>A24. Focus pest animal control activities on essential habitat areas and threatened ecosystems, such as native grasslands.</p> <p>A25. Conduct a survey of pest animals on Batavia NP CYPAL.</p>

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
	A26. Focus pest plant management around visitor sites, such as campgrounds and road networks, and target new pest plant infestations in time to eradicate or contain them. A27. Implement pest plant hygiene measures.
<b>Fire management</b> The integrity of native plant and animal communities is maintained through strategic, sustained fire management.	A28. Develop a Level 2 Fire Strategy for the NP (CYPAL).



## Tables – Conservation values management

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

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
3.3.4	Evergreen mesophyll vine forest with <i>Archontophoenix</i> spp. on stream banks	Of Concern
3.9.5	<i>Corymbia dallachiana</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus leptophleba</i> open-woodland on rolling plains	Of Concern

**Table 2: Species of 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
<b>Plants</b>				
<i>Crudia abbreviate</i>		Near Threatened		
<i>Senegalia albizioides</i>		Near Threatened		
<i>Arthragrostis clarksoniana</i>		Near Threatened		Low
<i>Heterachne baileyi</i>		Near Threatened		Low
<i>Cyathea exilis</i>		Endangered	Endangered	High
<i>Cyathea feline</i>		Endangered		Low
<i>Sticherus milnei</i>		Near Threatened		Low
<i>Marsdenia paludicola</i>		Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Argophyllum verae</i>		Near Threatened		Low
<i>Neosepicaea viticoides</i>		Near Threatened		Low
<i>Calophyllum Bicolor</i>		Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Gardenia psidioides</i>		Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Hydriastele costata</i>		Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Dendrobium johannis</i>	Brown antelope orchid	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Pandanus zea</i>		Near Threatened		Low

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
<i>Garnotia stricta var longiseta</i>		Near Threatened		Low
<i>Caesalpinia hymenocarpa</i>		Near Threatened		Low
<b>Animals</b>				
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	White-bellied sea eagle	Least Concern		Low
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	Eastern great egret	Least Concern		Low
<i>Probosciger aterrimus</i>	Palm cockatoo	Near Threatened		Low
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	Cicadabird	Least Concern		Low
<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	Black necked stork	Near Threatened		Low
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	Rainbow bee-eater	Least Concern		Low
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	Satin flycatcher	Least Concern		Low
<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	Spectacled monarch	Least Concern		Low
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	Rufous fantail	Least Concern		Low
<i>Ninox rufa meesi</i>	Rufous owl (Cape York subspecies)	Near Threatened		Low
<i>Spilocuscus maculatus</i>	Common spotted cuscus	Near Threatened		Low
<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>	Short-beaked echidna	Least Concern		Low
<i>Anomalopus pluto</i>		Near Threatened		Low
<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>	Northern quoll	Least Concern	Endangered	Medium

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

<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Bonn</b>	<b>CAMBA</b>	<b>JAMBA</b>	<b>ROKAMBA</b>
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle		✓		
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	eastern great egret		✓	✓	
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicada bird			✓	
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater			✓	
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	satin flycatcher	✓			
<i>Symposiachrus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled 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 Migratory Bird Agreement

# Maps

Location map of Batavia NP (CYPAL)

