

Goneaway National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	24,800ha
Bioregion:	Channel Country
QPWS region:	Central
Local government estate/area:	Barcoo Shire
State electorate:	Gregory

Legislative framework

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

Thematic strategies

a	Level 2 fire management strategy
a	Level 2 pest management strategy



Open woodlands with a spinifex understory.
Photo: NPRSR.

Vision

Goneaway National Park will continue to conserve the quality and integrity of the park's natural values, including species of conservation significance and spinifex communities of the Channel Country Bioregion.

Conservation purpose

Goneaway National Park was originally dedicated as an environmental park in 1974 under the trusteeship of Barcoo Shire Council. It was gazetted in 1995 as a national park.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Goneaway National Park lies in the headwaters of the Mayne River within the Diamantina River catchment. The park is dominated by low sandstone ranges topped by silcrete and contains ecosystems of open shrublands and hummock grasslands on dissected residuals. The landscape is mostly a mix of gravel, rocks and skeletal soils with some areas of shallow sands overlying Cretaceous sediments. Semi-permanent rock-holes are a feature in this stony landscape and provide a focus point for animals.

The park is bounded on all sides by cattle grazing properties. The eastern and southern flanks are fenced but these are currently not stock proof. Cattle do enter the park on the eastern side, but without a reliable water supply they rarely go far in.

Regional ecosystems

Thirteen regional ecosystems are conserved on the park. One is of concern and the remaining 12 are not of concern for their biodiversity status (Table 1). Five regional ecosystems have low representation in protected area estate.

The landscape is comprised of a mosaic of vegetation communities including tall acacia shrublands, open woodlands, low open shrublands and spinifex hummock grasslands in a harsh and unforgiving terrain. River red gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and coolabah *E. coolibah* line Middle Creek and Spring Creek in the northern half of the park.

In the more dense shrublands on shallow stony soils the ground layer can be quite sparse in contrast to the lush annual grasses that grow in the deep shade of mulga *Acacia aneura* groves along ephemeral drainage lines after rain.

Native plants and animals

Two hundred and forty seven native plant and animal species are recorded on the park. Four are near threatened under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Table 2).

Species recorded just outside the park at Ju Ju and Limestone Rockholes have been included in the number of species present as they are on the park boundary and it is expected that once intensive surveys have been conducted, these species will be recorded on park.

A number of species occur at the edge of their range at Goneaway National Park, including the western limits for the black-chinned honeyeater *Melithreptus gularis* and grey goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*. It is near the western limit for mountain yapunyah *Eucalyptus thozetiana* and represents the north western extent of *Acacia ensifolia* and the southern limit of *Scaevola glutinosa*.

Species that are restricted to rocky ranges and tablelands in western Queensland which dominate the park include the spinifex slender blue-tongue *Cyclodomorphus melanops*, striated grasswren *Amytornis striatus*, *Eremophila alatisepala*, *Goodenia atriplexifolia* and *Ptilotus remotiflorus*.

Aboriginal culture

Goneaway National Park is culturally significant to the Maiawali and Karuwali people. There are significant cultural sites on park including corroboree sites and artefacts. No active management of these sites is occurring.

A known culturally significant site occurs within five km of the park boundary on Connemara Station and is registered with the Register of National Estate.

A native title claim is currently active—Federal Court No: QUD585/11, Tribunal No: QC11/9 for the Maiawali people.

Shared-history culture

Prior to being set aside as an environmental park, Goneaway National Park was considered too hard a landscape for pastoralists to make a living on, so relatively few non-Indigenous artefacts are likely to be found in the area. Opal mining has historically occurred in the area.

There is a high netting fence that runs most of the eastern boundary and was part of a local dingo fence. It is no

longer considered necessary and may be removed if the fence is upgraded to a stock proof standard.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Visitor access is limited as there are no constructed gazetted roads to access Goneaway National Park. People wishing to visit the park must be fully self-reliant in this remote and largely undisturbed arid landscape. The park has no visitor facilities, vehicle tracks or walking tracks. Any visitor access to the park requires permission from the neighbouring landowner. Due to the parks extremely remote and rugged nature, significant safety issues have been identified for visitors. There is very limited potential for visitor opportunities to be developed, beyond a remote walking experience, until the issues of safety and access are resolved. The current management intent is to continue to manage the park as an undisturbed and completely natural area.

Education and science

The park is a valuable scientific reference area and provides opportunities for comparative research with other more disturbed areas.

Partnerships

There is an opportunity for QPWS to co-manage Goneaway National Park with Traditional Owners, but the details of any arrangement are yet to be established.

Neighbours are important partners for QPWS in park management and assist greatly by:

- checking park boundary fences and keeping stock off the park
- alerting QPWS about any unlawful use of the park
- cooperating in managing fire and pest species.

It is extremely important for positive and complementary relationships to exist between QPWS and park neighbours. This partnership is critical to resolving issues regarding visitor access which currently is at the discretion of the property owners.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Goneaway National Park has a current Level 2 pest management strategy with no pest plant species known to occur on park.

Pest animal species recorded on park include camels *Camelus dromedarius*, horses *Equus caballus* and pigs *Sus scrofa*. Camels can cause significant damage to shrubs through browsing and create noticeable pads across the fragile landscape, however, they generally only occur in low densities throughout the stony country.

The park does not participate in local dog baiting programs as the Traditional Owners have requested that no control take place. The neighbours, however, do bait along the western and eastern boundaries of the park.

Fire management

Goneaway National Park has a current Level 2 fire management strategy.

The acacia shrublands, low woodlands and mixed species woodlands on drainage lines have very little ground cover and are not expected to carry fire except after a series of wetter than average seasons. Open shrublands with spinifex hummock grasslands require mosaic burning to maintain biodiversity.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Regional ecosystems</p> <p>The diversity and distribution of natural plant and animal communities typical of the Channel Country Bioregion are conserved.</p>	<p>A1. Establish key monitoring objectives for regional ecosystems of conservation significance on the park, and support monitoring programs that achieve these objectives.</p>
<p>Species of conservation significance</p> <p>Knowledge of plant and animal species distribution and habitat requirements are enhanced and used as a basis for future management directions.</p>	<p>A2. Implement a survey program to create a plant and animal inventory and identify species of management significance.</p> <p>A3. Establish basic annual monitoring programs for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · restricted species, e.g. spinifex slender blue-tongue, striated grasswren. · species at the limit of their extent, e.g. black-chinned honeyeater.
<p>Cultural heritage</p> <p>Aboriginal and shared-history sites and associations of cultural heritage significance are recorded and protected.</p>	<p>A4. Encourage Traditional Owners to participate in management; including jointly identifying and mapping Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and then in implementing protective management of those sites.</p> <p>A5. Survey the park for any pastoral history relics, identify which sites need protection, document all sites and maintain those identified for retention. Record and photograph the dingo netting fence before upgrading to a stock proof fence.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitors</p> <p>The park is retained in its natural state for the use of self-reliant visitors.</p>	<p>A6. Consider visitor safety and access when assessing future recreation opportunities.</p> <p>A7. Provide self-reliant visitors with the opportunity for nature-based recreation to experience the natural values.</p>
<p>Education and science</p> <p>Research will contribute to the knowledge base for improved management.</p>	<p>A8. Research that contributes to improved management outcomes will be encouraged.</p> <p>A9. Encourage tertiary institutions and special interest groups to undertake surveys and scientific studies of the area.</p>
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>Management of the park is shared with Traditional Owners.</p> <p>Maintain cooperative relations with neighbours and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>A10. Encourage cooperative management of natural and cultural resources with Traditional Owners.</p> <p>A11. Explore the option of developing a partnership agreement with Traditional Owners.</p> <p>A12. Consult with neighbours and other stakeholders on key issues including fire, pest and visitor management.</p>
<p>Pest management</p> <p>A pest control program is developed and implemented.</p> <p>Impacts of pest species on natural values of the park are reduced.</p>	<p>A13. Continue to review and implement the pest management strategy with neighbours and other stakeholders.</p> <p>A14. Develop a fence replacement and maintenance schedule (based on SAMS) and seek funding to complete works required for existing fences.</p>
<p>Fire management</p> <p>Fire is managed to protect life, property and commercial assets and to protect the natural and biodiversity values of the management area.</p>	<p>A15. Continue to review and implement the fire management strategy with a particular focus on the development of appropriate fire regimes for the spinifex hummock grasslands to benefit species reliant on those communities.</p> <p>A16. Develop a fire break maintenance schedule (based on SAMS) in cooperation with neighbours and seek funding to complete works required.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
5.5.1	<i>Acacia aneura</i> low woodland on Quaternary deposits	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
Plants				
<i>Ptilotus pseudohelipteroides</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
Animals				
<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	grey goshawk	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Amytornis striatus</i>	striated grasswren	Near threatened	-	Medium
<i>Melithreptus gularis</i>	black-chinned honeyeater	Near threatened	-	Low