

Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	21,188ha
Bioregion:	Desert Uplands
QPWS region:	Central
Local government estate/area:	Barcaldine Regional Council
State electorate:	Gregory



Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park. Photo: NPRSR.

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>
a	<i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

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

Thematic strategies

a	Level 2 Fire Management Strategy
a	Level 2 Pest Management Strategy

Vision

The natural ecosystems, flora and fauna populations within Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park are conserved.

Outdoor recreation activities and commercial tourism opportunities that are in keeping with the area's natural values will be encouraged. Established partnerships with the Traditional Owners, local community, neighbours, research institutes and council contribute to the area's ongoing management.

Conservation purpose

The objectives for Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park are to:

- protect and promote recovery of regional ecosystems and species of significance
- conserve and protect the management areas natural, cultural and aesthetic values

- recognise and respect the interest and rights of Traditional Owners by cooperatively protecting and managing cultural heritage places of significance
- provide sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities, where appropriate
- provide direction and actions to protect the values of the area through appropriate research and monitoring
- foster working relationships with interested parties to build stronger partnerships to assist management.

Protecting and presenting the area's values

Landscape

Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park is located approximately 100km north-west of Alpha Township and 130km west of Clermont in the Barcaldine Regional Council and the Desert Uplands Bioregion.

The management area holds sandstone ridges and valleys, red sandy soils and intact remnant vegetation. The sandstone ridges and gullies in the north compare with similar landforms to the Carnarvon Ranges. The management area is situated within the Galilee Basin in a sequence of late Carboniferous to Middle Triassic sedimentary rocks. These geological features provide a scenic backdrop to the open agricultural landscape.

Regional ecosystems

The vegetation communities in the management area are largely intact, except for an area of brigalow *Acacia harpophylla* which has regenerated significantly after being cleared for past agricultural purposes. Twenty-one regional ecosystems are mapped for Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park. Fourteen of these regional ecosystems are poorly represented on any other Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) estate; four of those are listed as of concern and one endangered under their biodiversity status (Table 1).

Native plants and animals

Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park is the distribution limit for the plant species *Corymbia clandestina* which is restricted to the Drummond Range. *Corymbia clandestina* is of conservation significance under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006 and under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) (Table 2). This species grows on hillsides where it forms a minor component of woodland dominated by *Eucalyptus crebra*.

In 2001 a fauna survey of Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park reported five amphibians, 94 bird, 31 mammals and 34 reptiles. A fauna survey on the adjacent Alpha Coal project site recorded the little pied bat *Chalinolobus picatus* (Hancock Galilee 2011). This species is listed as near threatened under State legislation (Table 2). They occur in a wide variety of arid, open habitats including dry open forests and roost in caves, mines and tree hollows.

Several animal species in the Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park are at or near their distribution limits. The chestnut-rumped thornbill *Acanthiza uropygialis* is at or near its northern distribution limit in Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park, where it is found commonly in forests with thick understorey. The grey-fronted honeyeater *Lichenostomus plumulus* and desert mouse *Pseudomys desertor* both reach the eastern limit of their distribution. The koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*, listed as vulnerable (EPBC), reaches the western limit of its distribution within the vicinity of the national park (Table 2). The heathland communities are a haven for the many bird species within the park.

Even though the black-throated finch *Poephila cincta cincta* has not been recorded on Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park to date, it is expected that the area will become an important refuge for them in the future as their habitat is cleared for agricultural or resource extraction purposes. Future management needs to ensure that the current extent of diverse grassy woodlands with effective pest control provides suitable habitat for the conservation of this and other species.

Aboriginal culture

A native title claim by the Wangan and Jagalingou people (QC2004/006) and the Bidjara people #7 (QC2012/018) exist over the management area. No formal cultural heritage assessments have been undertaken in the management area; however, some artefacts and cultural sites are known to exist, including artwork on sandstone overhangs. It is important for QPWS to work with the Traditional Owners to identify cultural connections and ensure appropriate measures are taken to protect known sites and areas.

Shared-history culture

Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park was a cattle property until 1998. Infrastructure including cattle and horse holding yards glimpse into pastoral life in the area.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

With an increase in activity by the resources industry in the region, the spectacular geology and natural environments on Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park will become greater draw cards for locals and visitors.

Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park provides low-impact outdoor recreation and appreciation opportunities such as four wheel driving, bushwalking, bird-watching and photography. Wildflowers during the winter and spring months provide a significant visitor and tourism opportunity.

A gazetted road suitable for four-wheel-drive vehicles only, provides access to Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park through Cudmore Resources Reserve. This road does not provide all weather access and access may not be possible after rain. There are currently no visitor facilities provided. Visitors must be completely self-reliant. Visitors are encouraged to inform others of their intended trip to the area. Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park provides a remote experience in a natural landscape.

Education and science

The management area provides abundant opportunities for scientific research and monitoring including the presence and distribution of flora and fauna species of significance. Research activities conducted on Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park require a permit. Results from research and monitoring can benefit the area's management.

Partnerships

QPWS is directly responsible for planning, managing and regulating activities in the management area. Working with Traditional Owners, Barcaldine Regional Council, user groups, emergency services and neighbours in managing the area is highly desirable to achieve the vision. Efficiencies in resource sharing, improved communications, decision making and enhanced on-ground outcomes is to be facilitated, where possible, through working partnerships.

Hancock Coal has proposed a project, Kevin's Corner, which will involve the extraction of material from under the neighbouring Cudmore Resources Reserve. Waratah Coal has a similar development proposal in development. Relationships will be built and maintained to ensure appropriate management and good environmental outcomes.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

A Level 2 pest management strategy exists for the park.

Parthenium *Parthenium hysterophorus* occurs in the area; however, the distribution is unknown. Some spraying occurs, in order to ensure control methods are effective, the distribution of this species should be established. Prickly pear *Opuntia* spp. occurs sparsely throughout the management area. Mealey bug (biocontrol) is present and provides some control.

Buffel grass *Cenchrus ciliaris* occurs throughout the area. Heavy buffel infestations in the areas associated with the cleared brigalow communities need to be carefully managed to ensure wildfires do not impact on regrowth. Buffel has the potential to impact directly on natural ecosystems by competing with native species and indirectly by changing fire intensity and frequency.

Low numbers of goats *Capra hircus* and pigs *Sus scrofa* are present. Numbers are stable or declining due to an active shooting program. They are generalist herbivores and will selectively browse but also extensively graze, selecting the highest quality food available. Both species potentially compete with native species for resources and pigs cause erosion of water sources and consume native species such as frogs and earthworms.

Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and wild dogs *Canis lupus familiaris* are present in low numbers throughout the management area. Populations are monitored and control will be implemented, if required. Baiting along boundaries for wild dogs in collaboration with neighbours may occur if required.

One of the main considerations in minimising the risk of pest plant spread throughout the park is vehicle hygiene, particularly for parthenium. Visitors should use wash-down points in surrounding townships prior to and after visiting the park.

Fire management

A fire management system has been adopted statewide by QPWS which is the primary agency for fire management on protected areas and State forests. Fire strategies provide the overall framework and direction for fire management and are the foundation from which planned burn programs are developed. A fire management strategy exists for Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park.

The long-term fire management aims for the area are to maintain the current diversity of native plant and animal species while allowing for natural change to ensure the conservation of fire sensitive ecosystems. Several of the vegetation communities including; brigalow *Acacia harpyophylla*, river red gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* open woodland and lancewood *Acacia shirleyi* are fire sensitive and fire should be restricted in these communities.

The main threat is inappropriate fire regimes and wildfires. A coordinated approach with neighbouring properties will help to ensure fire is managed appropriately. Appropriate fire regimes will aim to reduce fuel loads with consideration to vegetation type. Planned burn programs occur annually.

Resource use

Exploration and mineral development approvals exist for Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park and Cudmore Resources Reserve. Exploration and mineral development licenses are assessed in accordance with the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and the *Mineral Resources Act 1989*. All mining permits and licences issued on QPWS estate are assessed by Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection and the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing.

Cudmore (Limited Depth) National Park was gazetted to a depth of 50m in recognition of the coal resources that exist in the area. Any mining activity will need to ensure the significant scenic and natural values associated with the sandstone scarps are not impacted by subsidence.

References

Hancock Galilee Pty Ltd 2011, *Keivins Corner Project Environmental Impact Statement*, Vol 1 2011.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Natural values</p> <p>The full range of naturally occurring biological diversity, ecological processes and landscape dynamics are maintained.</p> <p>Plant species and communities and animal species of significance are protected.</p> <p>The composition and extent of vegetation is maintained or increased.</p>	<p>A1. Monitor the impacts from natural processes, pests, fire and recreation. Use the information to guide management decisions and amend current and future plans and strategies.</p> <p>A2. Manage activities to be consistent with the high scenic landscape values.</p> <p>A3. Review and implement pest management and fire management strategies when required.</p> <p>A4. Manage the frequency and intensity of fire to maintain the regional ecosystem composition, structure and ecological dynamics of all vegetation communities.</p> <p>A5. Encourage and allow access for the implementation of research programs, particularly those that will benefit conservation management.</p>
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>The effectiveness of future management is strengthened through cooperative partnerships.</p> <p>Traditional Owners are actively involved in the management of the area.</p>	<p>A6. Maintain relationships with neighbouring properties to ensure collaborative management of fire and pests.</p> <p>A7. Build relationship with Traditional Owners to maintain cultural connections and ensure appropriate measures are taken to protect known sites and areas.</p> <p>A8. Continue to build relationships with the neighbours, visitors and interest groups to improve knowledge of the management area, and to highlight its significance to the region and gain support for park management initiatives.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor management</p> <p>The park provides a range of recreational and tourism activities which highlight its special character and complements other local and regional opportunities.</p> <p>Recreation and tourist access and facilities on the national park complement the natural setting and do not compromise natural and cultural values.</p>	<p>A9. Promote minimal impact and safe walking and camping practices.</p> <p>A10. Develop cooperative liaison with user groups to ensure that the park is promoted in a manner appropriate with the level of services and facilities provided.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem	Description	Biodiversity status
10.3.13	<i>Melaleuca fluviatilis</i> and/or <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> woodland along watercourses	Of concern
10.3.14	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> and /or <i>E. coolabah</i> open woodland along channels and on floodplains	Of concern
10.3.27	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i> open woodland on alluvial plains	Of concern
10.7.5	<i>Eucalyptus thozetiana</i> open woodland on scarps and on pediments below scarps	Of concern
10.9.3	<i>Acacia harpophylla</i> and/or <i>Eucalyptus cambageana</i> open woodland to woodland on Mesozoic sediments	Endangered

Table 2: Species of conservation significance or at the limit of their distribution

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
Plants				
<i>Corymbia clandestina</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
Animals				
<i>Acanthopis antarcticus</i>	common death adder	Near threatened	-	Medium
<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	koala	-	Vulnerable	Low
* <i>Chalinolobus picatus</i>	little pied bat	Near threatened	-	Medium
<i>Ctenotus capricorni</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Medium
* <i>Geophaps scripta scripta</i>	squatter pigeon	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium

* highly likely to be present

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Apus pacificus</i>	fork-tailed swift	-	Ü	Ü	Ü
<i>Ardea ibis</i>	cattle egret	-	Ü	Ü	-
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	eastern great egret	-	Ü	Ü	-
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle	-	Ü	-	-
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	-	Ü	Ü	Ü

Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Latham's snipe	ü	ü	ü	ü
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	ü	-
<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Australian painted snipe	-	ü	-	-

Bonn – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement