

# Fort Lytton National Park Management Statement 2013

|                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Park size:                    | 12.6ha                   |
| Bioregion:                    | South Eastern Queensland |
| QPWS region:                  | South East               |
| Local government estate/area: | Brisbane City Council    |
| State electorate:             | Lytton                   |



Brisbane Garrison Battery. Photo: Richard Marshall.

## 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>                                      |
| ✓ | <i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i>                                      |

## Plans and agreements

|   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ | Burra Charter                                 |
| ✓ | China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement      |
| ✓ | Fort Lytton Cultural Heritage Management Plan |
| ✓ | Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement      |

## Thematic strategies

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ✓ | Level 2 Pest Management Strategy |
|---|----------------------------------|

## Vision

Fort Lytton National Park will have a strong ongoing focus on preserving the built fabric of the site, and developing and implementing high standards in interpretive and educational programs. The area will be managed for public and community access and use. The primary social and conservation value of this cultural heritage site is to play a role in maintaining the integrity of our social and historic records.

## Conservation purpose

After World War II, the fort fell into disrepair until petroleum refining company Ampol took over the site in 1963. Fort Lytton National Park was gazetted in 1988 for its historic and cultural values, and today represents an important link with our military past.

The site is of national significance and is listed on the State Heritage Register. The conservation values of the site are outlined in the draft Fort Lytton Cultural Heritage Management Plan. Values include the remaining structures which formed an important part of Brisbane's defences from 1881 through both the World War I and World War II. The park's values are further enhanced by the fact that the area includes two listed sites—Fort Lytton Military site and Lytton Quarantine Station.

The presentation values of the site will be improved by developing, implementing and managing community based events to the highest possible standards of interpretive and educational programs. This will be achieved by working with community stakeholders and partners such as Moreton Bay Environmental Education Centre (MBEEC), Fort Lytton Historical Association (FLHA) and commercial operators.

Protection of the cultural heritage values of the site will be achieved by preserving and presenting the built infrastructure and historic fabric as far as possible. The historic records, data, photographs and artefacts will also be managed to a high standard to ensure that these values are not compromised in the future. Ongoing relationships will be further developed and maintained with external interest and professional groups to undertake further research and to further develop the historic records.

## Protecting and presenting the park's values

### Landscape

Fort Lytton National Park is located at Lytton, in Brisbane, on the southern bank of the Brisbane River. The park is located in a highly modified environment and enhances the landscape through its provision of open green space within a heavy industry zone. Surrounding land uses include:

- heavy industry including the Caltex oil refineries and significant new road works
- a major river transport network
- the urban centre of Brisbane.

The area has high value as part of a natural riparian corridor and there is the potential to improve vegetation corridor connectivity with adjacent properties.

The river rock wall along one boundary of the park is suffering erosion impacts from river processes and river traffic. This erosion is along the length of the wall but is rated as a low in severity at present.

The potential development of lands next to the park may impact on the historic vistas and landscapes of the site. Potential developments include industry development behind the old Quarantine Station site—currently Caltex lands—and development of Port of Brisbane Authority lands directly behind the current Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) office.

### Regional ecosystems

The site was developed on the Brisbane River estuary ecosystem and is now classified as 100 per cent non-remnant. The wetland communities along the river are considered of State biodiversity significance under the Biodiversity Planning Assessment for the South East Queensland bioregion either as part of a bioregional corridor or a significant wetland. Future management of the park will remain compatible with these values.

## Native plants and animals

Records indicate that Fort Lytton attracts a number of native bird species some of which are listed under international agreements and therefore subject to the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. They include the rainbow bee eater *Merops ornatus*, eastern great egret *Ardea modesta* and the cattle egret *Ardea ibis* (Table 1). There are no native plant species recorded for the park.

Further work is required to complete a comprehensive species list for the park.

## Aboriginal culture

It is believed that Fort Lytton National Park is adjacent to the site of an aboriginal pathway and river crossing. Little is known by QPWS about the Aboriginal cultural values of the park. Further work is required in this area.

There are currently two Native Title claims over the park; Yugara Yugarapul People, QC2011/008 which was not accepted for registration and Turrbal people (QC1998/026).

## Shared-history culture

Fort Lytton National Park conserves significant cultural heritage values associated with the defence of Brisbane up until the end of World War II. Built in 1881, the fort itself is concealed behind grassy embankments. Fort Lytton is one of a number of coastal fortifications built along Australia's coast to safeguard shipping lanes and ports from possible enemy raids. The fort is regarded as the birthplace of Queensland's military history. The pentagonal-shaped fort with its grassy parapets is a unique piece of nineteenth century military architecture, being the only fortress in Australia to be surrounded by a wet ditch.

The Lytton Quarantine Station is listed in the Queensland Heritage Register and retains a number of significant buildings and structures.

All remaining site components of the historic military fortifications and the quarantine station are conserved at Fort Lytton. While the integrity of the core components of the fort is deteriorating, the general condition of the quarantine station components is quite good.

A plethora of historic artefacts and records are held at the site. Further effort and resources are required for curatorship of these historic records which include photos, documents and oral histories.

Fort Lytton National Park encourages and promotes the wider community use of this site. The site is particularly highly valued by community groups interested in aspects of Australia and Queensland's military history. Various local and national groups such as FLHA, MBEEC, Queensland Colonial Forces Study Group (QCFSG), Royal Australian Artillery Association (RAAA) and Queensland Living History Federation currently use the site. There is a need to ensure accurate presentation of the stories associated with the site, to retain the integrity of the historical record, and to treat the past and those involved in the histories with respect. The park also acts as a community site of remembrance of those who did not return from wars and as an opportunity for the broader public to better understand and connect with traditions and culture of our national military history.

Fort Lytton conserves historic colonial and post-colonial architecture as well as the historic landscape. The quality of these values are currently under threat from potential contrasting development of neighbouring lands—Port of Brisbane land behind the QPWS office and Caltex refinery land behind the Quarantine Station.

Weathering is the greatest threat to the remaining fabric of the fort. Many masonry walls are now severely cracked. Walls are leaning due to earth pressure and loss of function of the rubble drains. The waterproofing of roofs of key structures needs to be addressed. A recent program to re-install windows and doors into selected structures has assisted in the process to improve the integrity of the structures. Capital works programs have identified these issues and are under consideration. Weathering is regarded as a lower threat to the Quarantine Station. Masonry components in the fort are also currently impacted by high salt levels. This is resulting in the pointing of the brickwork being in poor condition. Concrete spalling is also evident in a number of components. Significant resources are required to properly address these issues.

Industrial pollution and the nearby marine environment have a corrosive effect on historic and contemporary infrastructure.

Control of termites at the Quarantine Station is being undertaken and monitored. Swallows are posing a minor threat through their nest building activities.

## Tourism and visitor opportunities

Fort Lytton National Park provides access to historic wartime buildings, landscapes and high quality colonial architecture. Most visitor use of the site is associated with a number of regular events. In particular, the spectacular visual appeal of the historic re-enactments of military and social culture through the ages.

The current awareness and use of the site by the broader public is comparatively low. With the river access for commercial operators currently being re-established after 16 years.. There is an opportunity to further develop events and establish world class programs for interpretation and education of these values.

Further work is required to promote the site to the general public via web based and other mediums.

A new has improved access for both public and private transport from the river and support the goals of increasing site use -.

The site is currently closed on Saturdays. An extension to opening hours would assist in improving visitor opportunities.

The current interpretive displays are in excess of 20 years old and are in significant need of redevelopment. Community groups are currently upgrading some displays.

There is currently an increasing use of the site by both professional and amateur photographers.

Ongoing management of the Fort itself for safe public access is an issue. If left unchecked a number of key historic components will have to be closed in the future due to ongoing deterioration.

Commercial operators will be required under their commercial activity permits to have their guides accredited under QPWS and MBEEC standards. Ongoing partnerships will be developed to assist in the funding of educational and interpretive activities and opportunities—

The current visitor rates appear to be having minimal negative physical impact on the site.

## Education and science

Some historical research is currently undertaken by interest groups on an ad-hoc basis, and the park has research value as a site for archaeological studies. Ongoing educational programs are being delivered by a combination of providers including local staff, Fort Lytton guides and MBEEC teachers. The potential educational use of the site is currently being dramatically increased by the roll out of the national educational curriculum. The QPWS objective is to maintain and enhance very high standards in delivery of interpretive and education programs.

Local QPWS staff will maintain good relationships with external community and professional historical research groups.

## Partnerships

Key current partners include the Fort Lytton Historical Association. This is a community-based volunteer group that has been actively managing site interpretation, research and conservation projects since 1989. Caltex Oil Refinery assists with annual financial contributions to educational programs and some conservation projects. The Moreton Bay Environmental Education Centre (Education Queensland) has a longstanding partnership with QPWS and undertakes a range of activities including accrediting guides, running interpretive programs and managing historic data. The Queensland Colonial Forces Study Group also assists in researching and managing historic data and records. The Queensland Living History Association utilises the site for training and meetings and is a key contributor to events including the annual two-day 'History Alive' festival, Artillery day, school holiday interpretive programs and cannon firing days.

## Other key issues and responses

### Pest management

Madeira vine *Anredera cordifolia* and lantana *Lantana camara* are currently having a minimal impact on the site. Both are emerging from neighbouring property. The Level 2 pest management strategy nominates these species as having a potential to spread. The objective for these species is to monitor their location and eradicate as appropriate. The monitoring and control program is generally effective and in-line with the objectives of the Level 2 pest management plan.

Brown hares *Lepus capensis*, cane toads *Rhinella marina*, foxes *Vulpes vulpes* and rodent species are known to occur at the site. Due to the modified landscape, their impacts are rated as low. Other species such as the Indian mynah *Sturnus tristis* and species of swallow are having some impact through building nests on structures. Low key pest animal control is undertaken when and where necessary.

There is ongoing control of emergent pest plants in structures to prevent damage.

## Fire management

Traditional fire management is not required for this modified landscape. As such, the park does not require a fire management strategy.

There is some potential threat from internal grass fires on the site. Cannon firing protocols have been developed to help address this risk.

## Other management issues

This site is already used for a range of activities not necessarily closely associated with military history by a range of groups and organisations. For example, the Fort is regularly used as a setting for commercial photography projects and the old quarantine station buildings are also a popular training venue. Multiple use of the site will be encouraged.

## Management directions

| Desired outcomes  | Actions and guidelines   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>The park is maintained as an historic landscape in a modified environment.</p>   | <p>A1. Work with neighbours to revegetate along property fence lines to maintain and improve vegetation corridors of a consistent ecological nature.</p> <p>A2. Manage erosion on foreshore and at access points through the use of landscaping where appropriate.</p> <p>A3. Maintain and enhance the remaining historic garden elements where possible.</p> <p>A4. Liaise with Port of Brisbane and Caltex regarding possible developments on land adjoining the park.</p>   |
| <p><b>Native animals</b></p> <p>Wildlife surveys, mapping and monitoring contribute to a better knowledge base for ecological management and securing viable populations.</p>   | <p>A5. Implement a program of incidental recordings of all wildlife on-site with the addition of expertise where required to improve knowledge gaps.</p> <p>A6. Investigate potential breeding sites for rainbow bee-eaters and provide protection if required.</p>  |
| <p><b>Cultural heritage</b></p> <p>The distinctive quality of the historic landscape is maintained and improved.</p> <p>The integrity of historic components are preserved and presented.</p>   | <p>A7. Undertake works to address current conservation issues, maintain ongoing preservation and maintenance programs and develop more comprehensive infrastructure monitoring programs.</p> <p>A8. Employ specialised cultural heritage staff expertise to lead and coordinate cultural heritage programs in the Moreton Bay Region with a focus on heritage parks.</p> <p>A9. Improve enforcement and security by installation of a camera network.</p> <p>A10. Continue to develop awareness and understanding of the cultural heritage values and significance by working with local community and user groups in development and delivery of education and interpretation programs.</p> <p>A11. Implement protective management guidelines from the QPWS Cultural Heritage Manual conservation profiles.</p> <p>A12. Support appropriate research and cultural heritage programs such as development of historic records and associated systems, by research institutions and community groups.</p> <p>A13. Encourage Traditional Owners to identify and preserve the Aboriginal history within the historic landscape.</p> |
| <p><b>Tourism and visitor opportunities</b></p> <p>The integrity of the site and structures are enhanced to improve the quality of visitor experience and preserve historic features.</p> <p>The presentation values of the site will be improved by developing, implementing and managing community based events to the highest possible standards of interpretive and educational programs.</p> | <p>A14. Liaise with commercial tourism operators to develop existing presentations and encourage conservation of park values.</p> <p>A15. Continue the mandatory guide accreditation program for commercial operators at the site.</p> <p>A16. Review and renew interpretive displays.</p> <p>A17. Improve and upgrade vehicle access tracks.</p> <p>A18. Maintain high level of community access of facilities and sites and improve general awareness and visitation.</p> <p>A19. Further develop foreshore access and provide appropriate landscaping near river edge.</p> <p>A20. Encourage the establishment of regular public transport access via the river.</p> <p>A21. Investigate opening to the general public on Saturdays.</p> <p>A22. Construct and maintain pontoon jetty in the Brisbane River to facilitate convenient access to the site.</p>  |

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| <p><b>Pest management</b></p> <p>The integrity of native plant and animal communities is improved, and the impacts of pests are minimised through strategic, sustained management.</p>  | <p>A32. Continue to review and implement the Level 2 pest management strategy for the park.</p>   |
| <p><b>Partnerships</b></p> <p>Interested parties are aware of, and help achieve the desired management outcomes for the park.</p>   | <p>A33. Community relations will be promoted by facilitating ongoing broad community use and access</p> <p>A34. Proactively seek relationships with research institutions with interests in military history and historic architecture.</p>   |

## Tables – Conservation values management

**Table 1: Bird species listed in international agreements in the Fort Lytton National Park**

| Scientific name       | Common name         | Bonn | JAMBA | ROKAMBA | CAMBA |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------|-------|---------|-------|
| <i>Ardea ibis</i>     | cattle egret        | -    | ✓     | -       | ✓     |
| <i>Ardea modesta</i>  | eastern great egret | -    | ✓     | -       | ✓     |
| <i>Merops ornatus</i> | rainbow bee-eater   | -    | ✓     | -       | -     |

Bonn – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement