

# Nerang National Park, Nerang Conservation Park and Nerang Forest Reserve Management Statement 2013

Park size:	Nerang National Park, 1,614ha  Nerang Conservation Park, 113ha  Nerang Forest Reserve, 45ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	South East
Local government estate/area:	Gold Coast City
State electorate:	Gaven

## Legislative framework

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

## Plans and agreements

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

## Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 Fire Management Statement
✓	Level 2 Pest Management Strategy

## Vision

Nerang National Park and Nerang Conservation Park is valued for the conservation of biodiversity, community engagement in park management and as a venue for sustainable recreation. The Nerang Forest Reserve is managed to provide sustainable recreation, compatible with the surrounding national park.

## Conservation purpose

Nerang National Park and Nerang Conservation Park have high biodiversity values and conserve many species and ecosystems of conservation significance. Nerang National Park is the largest (1,614ha) remnant of bushland in the Gold Coast lowlands. Together with Nerang Conservation Park (113ha) it provides important local green space and catchment protection for the headwaters of several streams, including Coombabah Creek. A further 45ha of forest trails that are interspersed throughout Nerang National Park are part of the South East Queensland horse trail network and are gazetted as Nerang Forest Reserve.

The national park, conservation park and forest reserve were gazetted in 2007 to 2009 following the South East Queensland Forests Agreement transfer of Nerang and Clagiraba State forests.

## Protecting and presenting the park's values

### Landscape

The topography of Nerang National Park is steep and rugged with deep gullies and narrow wetlands at lower elevations. Erosion of steep sections of the track network necessitates regular maintenance. The Nerang district is undergoing rapid urban development. Increasing vandalism, arson and illegal dumping within the park is adversely impacting high quality visitor experiences, the control of weeds and other pests and the objectives of best practice fire management.

### Regional ecosystems

The vegetation at Nerang consists of eleven regional ecosystems most of which are open eucalypt forests typically containing forest red gum, grey gum, ironbarks, stringy barks and tallowwood and are of no concern at present (REs 12.11.3, 12.11.5, and 12.11.18). These ecosystems occur on the slopes and ridge lines on metamorphic rocks.

A small area of notophyll vine forest with *Araucaria cunninghamii* RE 12.11.10 occurs on metamorphic rock in the centre of Nerang National Park. This regional ecosystem is also of no concern at present, but it does support vulnerable and near threatened plants.

Woodlands of *Melaleuca quinquenervia*, *Eucalyptus tereticornis* and *Lophostemon suaveolens* on coastal alluvial plains (RE 12.3.6) and fringing forest of *Eucalyptus tereticornis*, *Melaleuca viminalis* and *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (RE 12.3.7) occur at lower elevations.

A small area of concern RE 12.3.2 *Eucalyptus grandis* tall open forest on alluvial plains occurs in the south-west corner of Nerang National Park. Another of concern RE 12.3.11 *Eucalyptus siderophloia*, *E. tereticornis*, *Corymbia intermedia* open forest on alluvial plains occurs in narrow riparian bands at both Nerang National Park and Nerang Conservation Park. Regional ecosystems that are endangered or of concern are displayed in Table 1.

### Native plants and animals

Both reserves support a high diversity of native plants and animals with 301 vascular plants and 146 vertebrate animals recorded, some of which are listed under international treaties (Tables 2 and 3). Nerang National Park is recognised as a stronghold for the vulnerable glossy black-cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami* that feed on the seeds of Allocasuarina trees. Other vulnerable animals that utilise habitat in the park are the powerful owl *Ninox strenua*, koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* and grey-headed flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*. Stephens' banded snake *Hoplocephalus stephensii*, previously listed as rare but now listed as least concern, is another noteworthy species conserved in Nerang. Other noteworthy species include the echidna *Tachyglossus aculeatus*, greater glider *Petauroides volans* and the eastern spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*, all of which require large areas of intact forest for survival.

Both areas support a high diversity of native bird species and are especially important as habitat for migratory and nomadic species including cuckoos, monarchs and fantails.

The vulnerable plant, brush cassia *Cassia marksiana* occurs in the Araucarian vine forest in the centre of the national park. The vulnerable macadamia nut *Macadamia integrifolia* and two near threatened species, Richmond birdwing vine *Pararistolochia praevenosa* and long-leaved tuckeroo *Cupaniopsis newmanii*, also occur in the park. The Boonah cordyline, *Cordyline congesta* has a limited distribution in South East Queensland. Its presence in Nerang National Park is locally significant.

### Aboriginal culture

Nerang is considered to be the country of the Yugembeh people. The natural bushland of the parks is important to the Yugembeh people as many of the native plants and animals were used for food and other material needs and it is a place of spiritual significance. The Drumley Walk within Nerang National Park celebrates Yugembeh culture. Both parks are included within native title claim by the Gold Coast Native Title Group (claim number QC06/010, Federal Court Number QUD346/06).

## Shared-history culture

Nerang National Park is listed on the cultural heritage database as an 'aesthetic precinct' because "the eucalypt forest and dry rainforest are highly regarded by the community for their aesthetic value as a backdrop to suburban development". A 3.7ha historic rifle range is also listed on the database. Nerang National Park and Nerang Conservation Park were logged when they were State forests.

## Tourism and visitor opportunities

Nerang National Park is managed as a nature-based recreation area, with numerous roads and tracks providing opportunities for bushwalking, cycling, horse riding and club-based four-wheel driving.

The 2.8km Casuarina Grove Track has gentle gradients and has been especially designed to allow walkers and bicycle riders to experience the different vegetation types in the forest. The Three Hills Track has been purpose built for mountain bike riding. The other management roads and trails are shared between bushwalkers, horse riders, cyclists and four-wheel-drive clubs. Trail bike riding is not permitted. Scenic four-wheel driving is available to people who are members of clubs affiliated with the Queensland Association of four-wheel-drive clubs.

The Drumley Walk and the Kokoda Challenge Walk are annual events held in Nerang National Park which allow large numbers of people to appreciate the scenic and natural values of the park.

The rapid encroachment of urban development around these reserves has led to major changes in use over the past 10 years. Activities associated with rural living such as horse riding have decreased and are increasingly being replaced by urban recreation activities such as mountain bike riding. The demand for outdoor recreation opportunities at Nerang is expected to increase over the next 20 years.

Two commercial operators currently hold permits to undertake four-wheel-drive tours and one operator holds a permit to undertake mountain bike riding tours.

## Education and science

An animal survey is currently being conducted in Nerang National Park by university students. The Gold Coast City Council conducts water quality monitoring in some of the streams in the park. Both areas provide excellent opportunities for learning and research in all aspects of park management including nature conservation and recreation management.

## Partnerships

The Nerang Community Association encourages greater community participation in park management activities and mountain bike riding clubs regularly assist with trail maintenance and actively encourage other riders to keep to the designated trails.

The Lower Beechmont Conservation Area is a Gold Coast City Council reserve adjacent to Nerang Conservation Park and a coordinated approach is being adopted to manage these areas, particularly in relation to fire management and the provision of recreation opportunities.

## Other key issues and responses

### Pest management

Dumping household rubbish along the outskirts of the reserves is creating pest plant problems. Fifty exotic plant species have been found in Nerang National Park. Some of the most serious of these include silver-leaved desmodium *Desmodium uncinatum*, Easter cassia *Senna pendula*, climbing asparagus *Asparagus plumosus*, mistflower *Ageratina riparia*, camphor laurel *Cinnamomum camphora*, ochona *Ochna serrulata*, molasses grass *Melinis minutiflora* and lantana *Lantana camara*.

Feral deer are present throughout the Nerang district, including the national park. The deer are a threat to the biodiversity values of the park and also represent a safety hazard to vehicle traffic. Feeding stations have been established and movement patterns are being monitored in an effort to trap the deer. Pest management is guided by a Level 2 pest management strategy.

### Fire management

Arson and the dumping and burning of cars in and adjacent to both parks have contributed to regular wildfires. Many of the wildfires in Nerang National Park have been attributed to arson.

A Level 2 fire management strategy has been prepared for the parks. Maintaining the network of fire trails in the parks is a priority for protecting life and property and achieving good conservation outcomes. The strategy includes a mix of conservation, wildfire mitigation and protection zones with the aim of creating a mosaic of burning in the open forests and protecting riparian vegetation and vine forests from fire. The Allocasuarina trees that are the food source of the vulnerable glossy black-cockatoo also need special fire management to survive.

## **Other management issues**

There are 23 apiary sites in Nerang National Park which are used whenever there is good flowering of the open forest tree species.

## Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p><b>Fire management</b></p> <p>Fire management will balance protecting life and property and the biodiversity values of the park.</p>	A1. Update the Level 2 fire management strategy.
<p><b>Tourism and visitor opportunities</b></p> <p>A range of settings and opportunities for safe and sustainable outdoor recreation are provided.</p>	<p>A2. Develop a visitor management strategy for the protected areas of the Gold Coast lowlands with an emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing the supply of and demand for recreation opportunities across the landscape including all tenures</li> <li>• consolidating trail linkages between adjacent and nearby areas</li> <li>• ensuring safety, sustainable use and protection of biodiversity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pest management</b></p> <p>The impact of pest plants and animals on park values, neighbours and visitors is minimised.</p>	A3. Continue to review and implement the Level 2 pest management strategy.
<p><b>Partnerships</b></p> <p>Opportunities for community engagement in park management will be developed.</p>	A4. Support existing trail care activities and investigate options for community engagement in natural resource management and other aspects of park management.
<p><b>Aboriginal culture</b></p> <p>Cultural heritage values are documented and protected.</p>	A5. Identify and document items of Aboriginal cultural heritage in association with the Traditional Owners.

## Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
12.3.2	<i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> tall open forest on alluvial plains	Of concern
12.3.11	<i>Eucalyptus siderophloia</i> , <i>E. tereticornis</i> , <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> open forest on alluvial plains	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>Plants</b>				
<i>Cassia marksiana</i>	brush cassia	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Cupaniopsis newmanii</i>	long-leaved tuckeroo	Near threatened	-	Medium

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
<i>Macadamia integrifolia</i>	macadamia nut	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Pararistolochia praevenosa</i>	Richmond birdwing vine	Near threatened	-	High
<b>Animals</b>				
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i>	glossy black-cockatoo	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	powerful owl	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>	grey-headed flying-fox	Common	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i> (South East Queensland bioregion)	koala (South East Queensland bioregion)	Vulnerable	-	-

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

Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Ardea ibis</i>	cattle egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Ardea modesta</i>	eastern great egret	-	✓	✓	-
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	-	✓	-
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	✓	-
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-
<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-

Bonn – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement