

Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve

Management Statement 2016

Introduction

The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Qld) requires a management statement or plan for all Queensland parks—to set high level strategies and priorities for managing each park. Management statements or plans are succinct, management oriented documents, which focus on maintaining or improving the condition of key park values and outlining how we will meet management standards (or ‘levels of service’) for the park.

This plan may be read alongside the park’s ‘resource information’ document. Resource information documents provides more detailed background on Queensland’s parks—providing an understanding of each park’s purpose, values, resources, issues, management considerations, and legal and administrative framework. Resource information may be used for a quick overview of the park or to gain a more in-depth understanding of the park’s management issues and background.

Statements, plans and resource information documents are available on the NPSR website at www.npsr.qld.gov.au

Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve will also be managed consistent with the management principles for the tenure as defined in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Qld) and supporting regulations; other appropriate legislation including the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (Qld), *Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999* (Qld), *Native Title Act 1993* (Cwth), *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld), government policies, procedures, and protocols, Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA), government policies, procedures, and protocols.

Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve

The Queensland Heritage Register lists Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve as an area displaying the heritage of one of Australia’s richest nineteenth century gold rushes.

A primary purpose for conserving Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve is to protect and conserve historical artefacts while enabling access to potential mineral deposits. The reserve is managed to preserve and present the rich mining and cultural heritage of the area. The reserve provides low-impact, remote, nature-based and historical-investigation recreational opportunities.

Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve has very high heritage values based on the gold mining and associated infrastructure. This heritage has produced subterranean roosts and dens for mammal species of conservation concern, which when combined with natural roosts on the reserve are of State and National Significance.

A very high value has been attributed to the Aboriginal cultural heritage across the area including the reserve.

The reserve lies within the lands of the Western “Sunset” Yalanji People who have determined Native Title that includes the reserve (Western Yalanji People #4 – QUD6008/1999). This determination recognises ongoing connection to country and the rights and interests of Traditional Owners on country. The Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC) is the Western Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

Key park management considerations

The management of Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve is overlaid by a number of management considerations that must be considered in management decision-making.

Heritage

The entire resources reserve is listed on the Queensland Heritage Register under the Wild Irish Girl Mine and Battery (QHR600428). This means that any on-ground works will require either an exemption or conditioned approval from the Queensland Heritage Council. Sections of the listed Laura to Maytown Coach Road (QHR600427) are also on the reserve.

Native Title

The Western Yalanji Aboriginal People have a successful Native Title Claim that includes Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve. Activities that may impact on Native Title or Native Title Rights are required to be submitted to the Registered Native Title Body Corporate before being undertaken.

Resource Use

Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve enables reasonable access to the mineral resources within the reserve and management needs to both consider this access and the rights of leaseholders within the reserve.

Key park values

While all parks are important, and all values help make parks worthwhile, management needs to focus on protecting and presenting the most important values—the key values. These are the values that will form the basis of ongoing evaluation of management effectiveness. Protecting these key values will help frame the purpose of management for each park. The table below shows how each key value’s condition is represented, how the condition is trending and the confidence in the information used to make the ratings. Details of key values are listed in Table 1 and illustrated in Map 1.

Condition	Good	Good with some concern	Significant concern	Critical
				
Description	<i>The value is in good condition and is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, provided that current conservation measures are maintained.</i>	<i>The value is likely to be essentially maintained over the long-term with minor additional conservation measures to address existing concerns.</i>	<i>The value is threatened by a number of current and/or potential threats. Significant additional conservation measures are required to preserve the value over the medium to long-term.</i>	<i>The value is severely threatened. Urgent additional large-scale conservation measures are required or the value may be lost.</i>
Trend rating	Improving 	Stable 	Deteriorating 	No consistent trend 
Confidence	Inferred 	Limited 	Adequate 	

Figure 1 Key to condition, trend and confidence icons

1. Palmer Goldfield Heritage Precinct

Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
	2016:	Desired:		Condition	Trend
Palmer Goldfield Heritage Precinct	2016: 	Desired: 			

The resources reserve was incorporated into the protected area estate due to its mining heritage. This value is scattered over much of the property and is recognised on the Queensland Heritage Register.

Threats:

- ❖ Primary: destruction or disturbance of the material heritage during contemporary mining operations or associated works (such as road building) — threat rating very high.
- ❖ Secondary: theft of heritage by visitors, such as the collection of cartridges, bottles and crucibles for potential sale—threat rating very high.
- ❖ Other: fire, reduced by the management of fuel around heritage features; termites impacting on wooden structures and rubber vine encroachment—threat rating high.

Desired outcome: The tangible heritage of Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve gracefully declines and continues to be the primary feature of the reserve.

2. Subterranean roost/den areas

Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
	2016:	Desired:		Condition	Trend
Subterranean roost/den areas	2016: 	Desired: 			

The endangered large-eared horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus philippinensis*), the vulnerable ghost bat (*Macroderma gigas*), and the near threatened diadem leaf-nosed bat (*Hipposideros diadema reginae*) are known to use old mine workings on the reserve. It is highly likely that the northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*) is using these structures for shelter and breeding on the reserve. These species are roost/den limited and the old mine workings and natural cave features on the reserve provide suitable habitat. Outside the protected areas further potential roosts exist including an extensive tower karst system. These areas are not on protected area tenure.

Threats:

- ❖ Primary: disturbance or destruction by mining activities, including exploration, or by curious visitors negatively impacting these species. The species of conservation significance that use these structures are sensitive to disturbance at these sites; areas are often abandoned after disturbance events—threat rating very high.

Desired outcome: Maintain the condition and availability to wildlife of subterranean features on the reserve.

3. Aboriginal cultural heritage

Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
	2016:	Desired:		Condition	Trend
Aboriginal cultural heritage Evidence of past Aboriginal occupation and use of the reserve.	2016: 	Desired: 			

Aboriginal heritage is known for many places on the reserve. It is significant for the Traditional Owners of the country and for reserve management. This heritage includes rock art, stone arrangements and artefacts.

Threats:

- ❖ Primary: increasing use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and four-wheel drive vehicles by an increasing numbers of recreational users has resulted in impacts on material evidence of past Aboriginal use—threat rating high.

Desired outcome: Aboriginal cultural heritage on Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve is protected and the Traditional Owners for the reserve are engaged in reserve management.

Table 1. Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve — Strategic management directions for key values

Condition	Trend	Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority (1-5)
1. Palmer Goldfield Heritage Precinct				
2016: 	↓	Fire	Mitigate the risk of wildfires at heritage sites through the management of fuel on or adjacent to sensitive sites.	3
Desired: 		Disturbance by mineral extraction and associated works	Actively manage and administer mining and exploration activities and tenures in accordance with the DNRM-NPSR MoU.	2
		The theft of mining heritage by visitors	Undertake annual joint compliance actions with EHP, QPS and NRM.	2
		Pest	Prevent damage to timber heritage structures from termites.	2
			Reduce the impact of rubber vine within the heritage precinct.	3
2. Subterranean roost/den areas				
2016: 	⊖	Disturbance by mineral extraction and associated works.	Actively manage, and administer mining and exploration activities and tenures in accordance with the DNRM-NPSR MoU.	2
Desired: 			Maintain (do not close) roost voids.	3
		Disturbance of roosts by visitors.	Maintain fencing and direct visitors away from roost areas to reduce roost/den disturbance.	3
3. Aboriginal cultural heritage				
2015: 	↓	Accidental destruction or disturbance by visitors especially off-road driving.	Undertake greater engagement with the Western Yalanji people to establish protocols for the recording and protection of Aboriginal cultural items that may be found on the reserve.	2
Desired: 			Direct visitors away from known Aboriginal cultural material and sites.	3
		Theft of Aboriginal material heritage by visitors.	Undertake annual joint compliance actions with EHP, QPS and NRM.	2

Levels of Service

Levels of Service (LoS) standards have been developed to identify the current and desired future standards for a range of critical management elements and associated performance measures. Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve has been assessed as requiring a medium level of service for most aspects of management based on the identified:

- values
- threats and pressures
- community interface challenges
- special management intervention.

The desired LoS standards for nine management elements have been identified to guide the level of management effort required for Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve within a state-wide context (Table 2). These nine elements reflect the most common management activities undertaken by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) across all protected lands and waters and include Aboriginal cultural heritage management and engagement, fire and pest management, visitor management and natural values management.

The management element to receive the highest level of management attention on Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve is heritage which has a very high level of service. Aboriginal culture receives a high level of service.

For further detail on the levels of service standards for Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve, refer to Table 2.

Table 2. Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve – Strategic management directions for Levels of Service

Management element	Current Level of Service	Desired Level of Service	Strategic Management Directions (bridging the gap)	Priority
1. Fire	Medium	Medium	Improve the current level of stakeholder engagement with Palmer Goldfields lessees, RFS and Cook Shire Council as managers of the Maytown Reserve.	2
			Priority of fire management is to protect life and property and improve the condition of key values.	2
2. Pest	Medium	Medium	Maintain relationships with reserve management stakeholders through a management working group.	2
			Continue to mitigate the impacts of pests on key heritage values (termites and rubber vine).	2
3. Natural values	Base	Medium	Improve knowledge of the distribution of conservation significant mammals and their roosts/dens on the reserve.	3
			Provide all historical and contemporary fauna records for inclusion on State Government Databases.	3
			Encourage and where possible support increased botanical knowledge of the reserve.	3
4. Indigenous cultural heritage and engagement	Medium	High	Establish communication protocol with the Western Yalanji Registered Native Title Body Corporate in their role as the holders of Native Title.	2
			Engage with the Western Yalanji Registered Native Title Body Corporate with formal meeting held at least annually.	2
			Engage with the holders of Native Title as required on specific matters such as capital works.	2
5. Historic cultural values	Very high	Very high	Consult with the Principal Heritage Officer during the planning phases of all works to be undertaken on the reserve.	2
			Apply to the Queensland Heritage Council for a general exemption for the annual work program undertaken on the reserve.	1
			Apply to the Queensland Heritage Council individually for exemptions for works outside the annual work program.	2
			Record and map heritage items encountered on reserve.	3
6. Community and commercial engagement	Base	Medium	Engage with a stakeholder working group over the management of Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve on at least an annual basis (minuted, agenda driven, meetings identified as the preference).	2
			Establish protocols to manage site specific governance issues.	3
7. Visitor	Medium	Medium	Increase active compliance to assist in mitigating visitor impacts on all key values.	2
			Maintain ad-hoc relationships with commercial tour operators as required.	3
			Improve the visitor experience by providing additional camping ground options and through the installation of interpretative signs at selected historical sites.	3
8. Field management capability	High	High	Currently meets LoS Standard – maintain.	3
9. Operational planning and management	High	High	Currently meets LoS Standard – maintain.	3

Thematic strategies

Each protected area will require one or more thematic strategies depending on the complexity of the values and service issues. The levels of service prescriptions provide guidance for each individual element to indicate the requirement for a thematic strategy and its appropriate level.

Thematic strategies cover key reserve management detail, values and significant service issues. They provide a linkage between the strategic approach and operational services. Thematic strategies present detailed objectives which are specific to the protected area developed from the strategic management directions – levels of service.

Thematic strategies required for Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve

- fire strategy
- pest strategy
- indigenous cultural heritage and engagement strategy
- historic cultural heritage strategy.

Evaluation and reporting

Management effectiveness will be evaluated for Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve as part of a monitoring framework. This will guide an adaptive management approach to set clear benchmarks for management, ensure the condition of key values is within acceptable thresholds, deliver transparent and accountable reporting and inform future management. Management effectiveness will be measured against:

- condition and trend for key values
- achievement of Levels of Service standards
- implementation of management actions
- outcomes of strategic management directions.

Map 1: Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve - key values

