

Danbulla National Park

Management Statement

2013



Prepared by: **Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of Environment, Science, and Innovation**

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The Danbulla National Park Management Statement 2013 has been extended in 2024 in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the statement's original management intent and direction.

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| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Park size: | 8,133ha |
| Bioregion: | Wet Tropics |
| QPWS region: | Northern |
| Local government estate/area: | Tablelands Regional Council |
| State electorate: | Dalrymple |

Legislative framework

| | |
|---|--|
| ✓ | <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Aboriginal Land Act 1991</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> |
| ✓ | <i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i> |

Plans and agreements

| | |
|---|---|
| ✓ | Bonn Convention |
| ✓ | China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement |
| ✓ | Draft recovery plan for the spotted-tail quoll (northern sub-species) <i>Dasyurus maculatus gracilis</i> |
| ✓ | Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement |
| ✓ | National recovery plan for the spectacled flying fox <i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i> |
| ✓ | Recovery plan for the southern cassowary <i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i> |
| ✓ | Recovery plan for the stream-dwelling rainforest frogs of the wet tropics biogeographic region of north-east Queensland 2000–2004 |
| ✓ | Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement |

Thematic strategies

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| ✓ | Level 2 fire strategy |
| ✓ | Level 2 pest strategy |

Vision

Danbulla National Park continues to be managed, presented and valued for its significant wet tropics, high-altitude rainforest biodiversity, mountainous landscape and Yidinji culture. These unique values are being strengthened through strategic collaboration, innovative research and monitoring and through fire, pest and visitor management.

Mount Edith and Mount Haig remain distinctive features in the Wet Topics World Heritage Area. Danbulla National Park is a natural and cultural landscape with very few interruptions and a sense of remoteness and wilderness.

Visitor opportunities are coordinated with these important values to complement the more intensive uses in adjacent Danbulla State Forest and Lake Tinaroo, yet do not detract from the wild and remote character of much of the park.

Conservation purpose

Danbulla National Park is a distinctive part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area which is recognised for containing the greatest diversity of plant and animal species within Australia. It is one of the few World Heritage declarations that meet all the criteria for listing.

The park has a mosaic of ecosystems and contains many species of conservation significance. The range of regional ecosystems provide outstanding examples of high-altitude wet tropical vegetation communities including tall open eucalyptus woodland, complex mesophyll and notophyll vine forests and volcanic crater lakes.

Danbulla National Park's high level of healthy forest cover performs the important ecosystem services of carbon sequestration, local climate regulation and cloud farming.

The national park protects native plant and native fauna species, including a variety of endemic reptiles, frogs, birds and mammals whose core habitat is found in rainforest 600m above sea level. The park also conserves habitat for internationally important migratory birds.

Features protected by the park also hold a significant place in regional shared-history.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Danbulla National Park is a living cultural landscape rich in traditional and contemporary significance for Yidinji Traditional Owners. It is located approximately 50km south-west of Cairns on the Atherton Tableland.

Mareeba granite from the Lower Permian (Proterozoic) era, areas of Devonian Hodgkinson formation metamorphics and Quaternary metamorphics form the park's geology. The majority of the park is granitic. This mountainous terrain rises from 700–1261m above sea level and features three main granite peaks, Mount Haig (1261m), Mount Edith (1149m) and Mount Coobaingalgi (900m). Kalorama Rocks (966m) is a mass of tumbled granite boulders near Mount Edith. They are of similar geological interest to the well known Kahlpahlim Rocks of Lambs Head in nearby Dinden National Park.

The south-eastern section of the park forms part of the Atherton Volcanic Province and is basaltic in character. Prominent landmarks include Lake Euramoo Crater Lake (740m) and Mobo Creek Crater.

Three main water courses cross the park, namely Mobo, Kauri and Robson creeks. These streams and numerous small creeks perform critical landscape and habitat functions.

No easements, excisions or leases relate to the park.

Regional ecosystems

The park is important for the protection of 31 regional ecosystems which have otherwise been extensively modified and cleared on the Atherton Tableland. Of these 11 are of biodiversity concern including six endangered ecosystem types and five of concern ecosystem types. Ecosystems of biodiversity concern are further detailed in Table 1.

Native plants and animals

Danbulla National Park retains a high level of natural integrity and supports many species of conservation significance. QPWS records indicate that 540 species of plants have been identified 17 of which are listed as being of conservation significance under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006 (Table 2).

QPWS records indicate that 250 species of animals have been identified of which 25 are listed as being of conservation significance under the Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation, as summarised in Table 2. Five bird species are protected under international conventions, as summarised in Table 3.

Aboriginal culture

The *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* provides the primary legislative framework across all tenures for the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage through mechanisms such as cultural heritage management plans and culturally appropriate registration of cultural places and items.

Further research is required to determine what Aboriginal information can be shared with the public.

Native Title Determination Application QC99/36 Tableland Yidinji # 1 and 2 relate to 90 per cent of Danbulla National Park. In December 2012, native title was found to exist in the entire determination area.

Shared-history culture

During the 1880s, mineral exploration in the area brought large numbers of non-Indigenous people into the area. The forestry industry was established in the early 1900s and the area has been managed under various forestry arrangements since then. In 1917, the Forestry Department released land for freehold farming. These events created the impetus for settlement of the area, including the development of the Lake Euramoo School and telephone exchange and the creation of the Danbulla community.

During the 1940s, World War II jungle training occurred using the historical Danbulla 'A, B and C' forestry tracks which are now known as Mount Edith and Kauri Creek roads. The Mount Edith World War II observation point within Danbulla National Park is a registered heritage place.

Changes in the dairy industry and a decline in accessible timber led to the decline of the community by the 1950s. Construction of Tinaroo Falls Dam creating Lake Tinaroo, took place in 1958.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Danbulla National Park plays an important role in providing the spectrum of nature-based recreational opportunities available in the world-renowned Wet Tropics World Heritage Area for local residents and international and domestic tourists. The park offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy bushwalking, hiking, mountain bike riding, scenic driving, nature observation and rainforest education as well as an opportunity to learn about rainforest research. Recreational facilities around Lake Tinaroo, outside the park, attract a very high number of visitors with approximately 608,000 people visiting Danbulla State Forest in 2009 (QPWS 2009).

Recreation, group activities and commercial tours in Danbulla National Park usually occur in conjunction with visits to the adjacent Danbulla State Forest and Lake Tinaroo. Camping and day-use areas in Danbulla State Forest service both Danbulla National Park and Lake Tinaroo, offering a variety of settings and facilities. The quiet mountainous setting of Danbulla National Park provides a scenic backdrop to the adjacent Danbulla State Forest and Lake Tinaroo and opportunities for low-key recreation.

Commercial operators use many of the park's recreational assets. The range of diverse commercial tourism products offered in the area coupled with regional population growth may result in increased demand on low-use areas, such as Danbulla National Park, to provide niche market opportunities.

Given the strong Indigenous connection to the area, opportunities exist to develop Indigenous tourism products and other cultural experiences. This approach is consistent with the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement 2005 and Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2000.

Forest landmarks, including the Cathedral Fig which receives large numbers of visitors per year, provide popular attractions. The historical forestry tracks of Kauri Creek Road and Mount Edith Road receive modest levels of visitor use and are valued locally for their history and as an important recreational opportunity.

Some temporary access restrictions relating to Kauri Creek and Mount Edith roads may be imposed for safety purposes during the wet season.

Education and science

Educational groups, particularly those from Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre and the Barrabadeen Scouts, are frequent visitors to the park. They conduct activities, such as bush walking, orienteering and nature studies, to enhance student's appreciation, knowledge and awareness of natural and cultural values.

Danbulla National Park is a valuable scientific reference area and provides opportunities for comparative research with other more disturbed areas. The 25ha Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN) facility which has been constructed adjacent to Robson Creek will allow for detailed biophysical data collection and analysis. It will also provide valuable baseline data against which impacts can be calculated and monitored.

Partnerships

QPWS is legislatively responsible for the day-to-day management of the national park and the Wet Tropics Management Authority regulates activity in the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area. The goal of both agencies is to present the area's values while protecting its natural and cultural values. The provision of safe and sustainable infrastructure may be required to protect those values from impacts associated with high visitor use.

QPWS works cooperatively with park neighbours and local rural fire brigades to manage fire and pest plants.

Traditional Owners are seeking greater involvement in cooperative management of the park. Indigenous engagement is supported in the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement.

Volunteers groups assist in park management to deliver work programs.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Pest plants that pose significant threats to Danbulla National Park are hairy senna *Senna hirsuta*, a Class 2 pest, lantana *Lantana camara*, a Class 3 pest, and several non-declared pests including grader grass *Themeda quadrivalvis*, wild raspberry *Rubus moluccanus* and para-grass *Brachiaria mutica*.

Pest animals identified in the park include feral pig *Sus scrofa*, feral cats *Felis catus*, wild dogs *Canis familiaris*¹, cane toads *Rhinella marina* and wild cattle *Bos* spp.

Pest management is undertaken in accordance with the QPWS pest management system and includes monitoring and containment procedures.

Fire management

Fire management practices in the park and surrounding areas are an integral element of Danbulla National Park's landscape. Optimal timing, frequency and intensity of fire varies from ecosystem to ecosystem.

Fire management is undertaken in accordance with the QPWS fire management system.

¹Of primary concern are wild dogs with hybrid vigour that behave more aggressively than the native dingo *Canis lupus dingo*.

Management directions

| Desired outcomes | Actions and guidelines |
|---|--|
| <p>Landscape</p> <p>Scenic amenity values of the park are protected consistent with the overall character of the park.</p> | <p>Minimise cleared areas such as that required for firebreaks. Use local provenance plants and natural materials to rehabilitate other disturbed and degraded areas.</p> |
| <p>Regional ecosystems</p> <p>The diversity and distribution of natural plant and animal communities (particularly significant species) representative of high-altitude rainforests of the Wet Tropics Bioregion is conserved.</p> | <p>Review monitoring objectives for species of conservation significance on the park and support monitoring programs that achieve these objectives. Particular focus will be on monitoring objectives for species of conservation significance listed in Table 2.</p> <p>Identify key park attributes (conservation values and/or threatening processes) affecting species biodiversity and abundance, and establish a priority list of representative species and communities of conservation concern requiring special management.</p> |
| <p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>Maintain a low-key, self reliant visitor experience without damaging natural and cultural values.</p> <p>Tourism activities occur sustainably.</p> <p>Camping and day-use areas for users of Danbulla National Park are provided for in the adjoining Danbulla State Forest.</p> | <p>Decisions regarding park access and infrastructure including track routes and visitor nodes, involves meaningful consultation with Traditional Owners.</p> <p>Partnerships between tourism operators and Traditional Owners are encouraged and supported by QPWS where appropriate.</p> <p>Bush camping is supported where low impact activity can be demonstrated.</p> |
| <p>Pest and fire management</p> <p>Natural and cultural values are maintained through strategic cross-cultural fire and pest management regimes.</p> | <p>Fire and pest management is undertaken co-operatively with park neighbours and other relevant organisations and groups.</p> |
| <p>Partnerships</p> <p>Strong partnerships are built to assist in the delivery of best practice park management.</p> | <p>Explore new strategic management and community partnerships such as with the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network project and Traditional Owners.</p> <p>Support knowledge exchange and acquisition through partnerships with research institutions and Traditional Owners.</p> |

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

| Regional ecosystem number | Description | Biodiversity status |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 7.3.10a | Mesophyll vine forest. Moderately to poorly-drained alluvial plains, of moderate fertility on lowlands of the very wet and wet zone. | Endangered |
| 7.3.33a | Open water lakes and narrow shoreline sedge fringes, within volcanic craters. | Endangered |
| 7.3.36a | Complex mesophyll vine forest with high rainfall, in cloudy uplands, on alluvium. | Endangered |
| 7.3.36b | Simple notophyll vine forest on alluvium on uplands, in the cloudy wet and moist rainfall zone. | Endangered |
| 7.3.49a | Riverine wetland or fringing riverine wetland <i>Tristaniopsis exiliflora</i> and <i>Xanthostemon chrysanthus</i> layered open-forest and closed-forest. Common associated species include <i>Grevillea baileyana</i> , <i>G. hilliana</i> , and <i>Blepharocarya involucrigera</i> . On rubble terraces of streams. | Of concern |
| 7.8.2a | Complex mesophyll vine forest, in uplands of the very wet and wet cloudy rainfall zones. | Of concern |
| 7.8.2b | Complex mesophyll vine forest recovering from disturbance, with <i>Acacia celsa</i> canopy or emergents, in uplands of the very wet and wet cloudy rainfall zones. | Of concern |
| 7.11.14b | <i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> tall open-forest and woodland, with a well-developed vine forest understorey on metamorphics. | Endangered |
| 7.12.21a | <i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> tall open-forest and woodland on granites and rhyolites. | Endangered |
| 7.12.21b | <i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> tall open-forest and woodland with a well developed vine forest understorey on granites and rhyolites. | Endangered |
| 7.12.22a | <i>Eucalyptus resinifera</i> , <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>Eucalyptus cloeziana</i> , <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> tall open-forest to tall woodland with <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> and <i>Callitris macleayana</i> on uplands and highlands of the moist rainfall zone. | Endangered |
| 7.12.22b | <i>Eucalyptus resinifera</i> , <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>Eucalyptus cloeziana</i> , <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> tall open-forest to tall woodland with <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> and <i>Callitris macleayana</i> and with a very well developed vine forest understorey, on uplands and highlands of the moist rainfall zone. | Endangered |
| 7.12.37i | Complex mesophyll vine forest, in lowlands and foothills of the very wet and wet rainfall zone. | Of concern |
| 7.12.39b | Complex mesophyll vine forest in uplands of the very wet and cloudy wet rainfall zone. | Of concern |
| 7.12.65k | Bare granite and rhyolite rock, of dry western areas, associated with shrublands to closed forests of wattles <i>Acacia</i> spp. and/or swamp mahogany <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> and/or black sheoak <i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i> and/or <i>Eucalyptus lockyeri</i> subsp. <i>exuta</i> , on Granite and rhyolite. Usually in dry western areas. | 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>Crepidomanes endlicherianum</i> | middle filmy fern | Vulnerable | Endangered | Low |
| <i>Lastreopsis grayi</i> | – | Vulnerable | – | Low |
| <i>Lastreopsis tinarooensis</i> | – | Vulnerable | – | Low |
| <i>Oenanthe javanica</i> | – | Vulnerable | – | Data deficient |
| <i>Agathis microstachya</i> | bull kauri | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Antrophyum subfalcatum</i> | ox tongue fern | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Asplenium athertonense</i> | – | Near threatened | – | – |
| <i>Caesalpinia robusta</i> | giant mother-in-law vine | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Cyathea baileyana</i> | wig tree fern | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Diospyros</i> sp. (Mt Lewis L.S.Smith 10107) | – | Near threatened | – | – |
| <i>Endressia wardellii</i> | – | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Eucalyptus lockyeri</i> subsp. <i>exuta</i> | – | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Helicia lamingtoniana</i> | – | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Pseuduvaria mulgraveana</i> var. <i>glabrescens</i> | – | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Schizomeria whitei</i> | – | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Thaleropia queenslandica</i> | pink myrtle or myrtle satinash | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Wendlandia basistaminea</i> | white birch | Near threatened | – | Low |
| Animals | | | | |
| <i>Bettongia tropica</i> | northern bettong | Endangered | Endangered | Critical |
| <i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i> (southern population) | southern cassowary (southern population) | Endangered | Endangered | Critical |
| <i>Dasyurus maculatus</i> subsp. <i>gracilis</i> | spotted-tailed quoll (northern subspecies) | Endangered | Endangered | Critical |
| <i>Litoria nannotis</i> | waterfall frog | Endangered | Endangered | Low |
| <i>Litoria nyakalensis</i> | mountain mistfrog | Endangered | Critically endangered | Low |
| <i>Litoria rheocola</i> | common mistfrog | Endangered | Endangered | Low |
| <i>Nyctimystes dayi</i> | Australian lacelid | Endangered | Endangered | Low |
| <i>Taudactylus acutirostris</i> | sharp snouted dayfrog | Endangered | Extinct | Low |
| <i>Taudactylus rheophilus</i> | northern tinkerfrog | Endangered | Endangered | Low |
| <i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma macleayana</i> | Macleay's fig-parrot | Vulnerable | – | Low |
| <i>Ninox rufa queenslandica</i> | rufous owl (southern subspecies) | Vulnerable | – | Low |
| <i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i> | grey goshawk | Near threatened | – | Low |

| Scientific name | Common name | Nature Conservation Act 1992 status | Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status | Back on Track status |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| <i>Aerodramus terraereginae</i> | Australian swiftlet | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Antechinus godmani</i> | Atherton antechinus | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Coeranoscincus frontalis</i> | a skink with no common name | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Erythrura trichroa</i> | blue-faced parrot-finch | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Eulamprus tigrinus</i> | a skink with no common name | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Hemibelideus lemuroides</i> | lemuroid ringtail possum | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Hipposiderus diadema</i> | diademed leaf-nosed bat | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Kerivoula papuensis</i> | golden-tipped bat | Near threatened | – | Medium |
| <i>Litoria genimaculata</i> | tapping green eyed frog | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Pseudochirops archeri</i> | green ringtail possum | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Pseudochirulus herbertensis</i> | Herbert River ringtail possum | Near threatened | – | Low |
| <i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i> | northern quoll | Least concern | Endangered | Medium |
| <i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i> | spectacled flying-fox | Least concern | Vulnerable | High |

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

| Scientific name | Common name | BONN | CAMBA | JAMBA | ROKAMBA |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------|-------|-------|---------|
| <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> | common sandpiper | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>Apus pacificus</i> | fork-tailed swift | ✓ | ✓ | – | – |
| <i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i> | white-bellied sea-eagle | ✓ | ✓ | – | – |
| <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> | grey wagtail | ✓ | – | – | ✓ |
| <i>Rallina tricolor</i> | red-necked crane | ✓ | ✓ | – | – |

Bonn – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement