

Littabella National Park

Management Plan

1999

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

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The Littabella National Park Management Plan 1999 has been extended in 2023, in line with s120 of the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the plan's original management intent or direction.

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Summary

This management plan provides the framework and guidelines on how Littabella National Park will be managed. It sets out the considerations, outcomes and strategies that are proposed to form the basis on which day-to-day management decisions are made.

This plan was prepared in July 1999, in accordance with s 125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act). In 2023 the plan was extended, in keeping with s 120G of the Act. For further information on this plan or the planning process, please contact the Department of Environment and Science at ParkManagementPlans@des.qld.gov.au.

This management plan was prepared by Department of Environment and Science staff. Thanks are due to those groups and individuals who made submissions in response to the draft plan.

1. Management directions and purpose

1.1 Management directions

Littabella National Park covers an area of 2440 hectares and is approximately 45 kilometres (km) by road north west of Bundaberg. The park will be managed to retain its biological values by minimising the impacts of weeds and feral animals. In particular, the park will be managed to maintain populations of rare or threatened plants and animals. It will operate as a low-density recreation area for day-use only, where visitors must be totally self reliant. The site will not be modified for recreation and no structures or facilities will be built.

1.2 Purpose

The major purposes of management will be to ensure that:

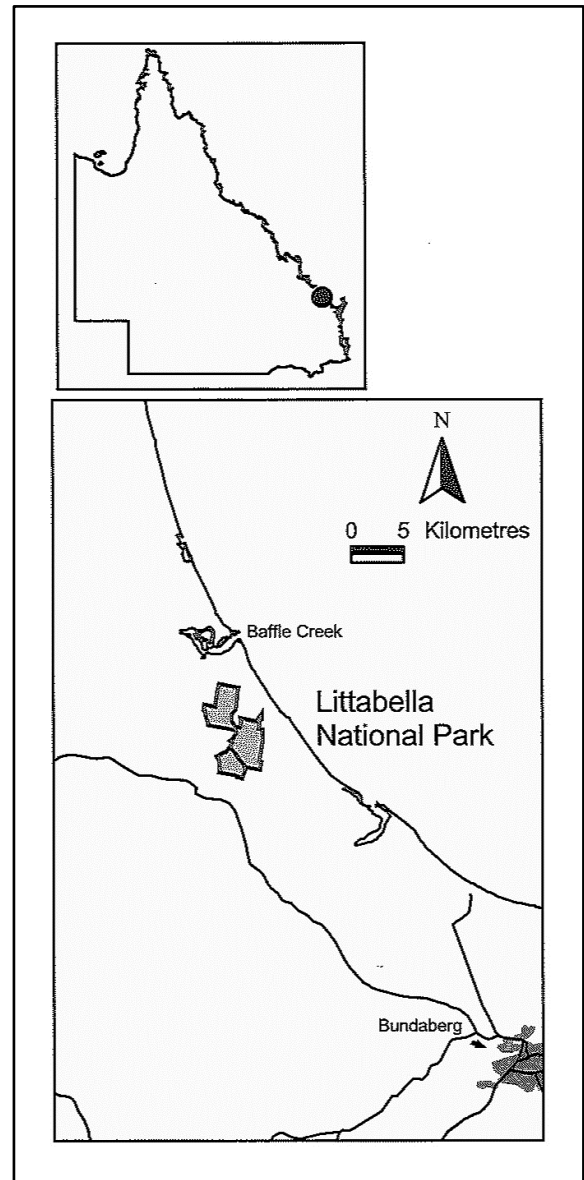
- natural and cultural resource understanding is advanced to facilitate effective park management
- life and property both on the park and on neighbouring properties are protected from fire
- a fire regime suitable for the various vegetation communities on the park continues to be implemented
- the park suffers minimal impact from weed invasion and feral animals
- the park is kept free from disturbance caused by the encroachment of neighbouring cattle
- the cultural heritage values of the park are preserved in consultation with relevant community representatives, and
- recreation is not promoted, but day-use recreation is permitted provided visitors are self-reliant and observe appropriate safety and emergency precautions.

2. Basis for management

The Littabella National Park is gazetted under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and will be managed in accordance with s 17 of the Act, which sets out the following principles for management:

- to provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values
- to present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values; and
- to ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.

The requirements of other legislation administered by the Service and other State and Commonwealth agencies will be met where necessary.



Map 1. Littabella National Park location map

2.1 Bioregional context

Littabella National Park, in the Burnett Shire, was gazetted in 1980 to conserve a section of coastal lowland vegetation. The park falls within the Burnett Curtis Coastal Lowlands province of the South East Queensland biogeographic region. This province is drier than the Great Sandy and Southern Coastal Lowlands provinces to the south and adds a marked tropical component to the biota. Other major protected areas within the province include Deepwater National Park to the north and Burrum Coast National Park to the south.

The park adjoins Watalgan State Forest, and together, these two areas conserve a significant component of the local ecosystems. Other adjoining land uses include beef cattle, sugarcane, fruit and aquaculture production.

2.2 Values

2.2.1 Geology and landform

The geology of the park is based upon the sedimentary rocks of the Maryborough Basin as well as marine and alluvial sediments. Structural units underlying the area include Quaternary Alluvium, the Tertiary Elliot Formation and the Lower Cretaceous Graham's Creek Formation.

The park's topography consists of undulating low rises to a maximum height of approximately 35m intermixed with swampy lowlands. Some drainage lines contain a mixture of small permanent and semi-permanent freshwater lagoons.

Park soils range from loamy sands in the lowland areas to sandy loams at higher elevations. Topography, soils and vegetation are linked in their distribution across the park.

The water lying in lagoons has been tested and found to have naturally moderate acidic pH levels which may affect the type of animals found in these areas for example, acid frogs.

2.2.2 Plants and animals

The park contains a mixture of heath and banksia/melaleuca woodlands in the lowland areas, while on the slopes melaleuca woodlands dominate, grading into eucalypt woodlands and forest at higher elevations.

A total of 167 vascular plant species have currently been recorded on the park. Of these, two plant species are listed in the *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulations 1994*. One, *Acacia attenuata* is listed as vulnerable, and another, *Melaleuca cheelii* is listed as rare, and is at its northern limit of distribution.

A total of 117 animal species have been recorded on the park, including: two crustacean spp., one fish sp., 18 amphibian spp., 17 reptile spp., 61 bird spp., and 18 mammal spp. Some of the animal species found on the park include the sugar glider *Petaurus breviceps*, squirrel glider *Petaurus norfolcensis*, water rat *Hydromys chrysogaster*, wonga pigeon *Leucosarcia melanoleuca*, red tailed black cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus banksia*, spangled drongo *Dicrurus braeteatus*, frilled lizard *Chlamydosaurus kingii*, and the scarlet-sided pobblebonk *Limnodynastes terraereginae*.

The wallum froglet *Crinia tinnula* is listed as vulnerable in the *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 1994*.

2.2.3 Cultural heritage

The park has no documented Aboriginal or European cultural sites or references to Aboriginal use. Comprehensive surveys to identify the cultural resources in these areas are yet to be undertaken.

Native title claim applications have been submitted by the Gooreng Gooreng, the Tarinbelang Bunda and the Gurang people for an area that includes the park.

2.2.4 Scenic and aesthetic

Many attractive and colourful seasonal wildflowers and birds can be found on the park.

2.2.5 Scientific and educational

The park has generated scientific interest due to the discovery of the wall um froglet, *Crinia tinnula*. This discovery extends the northern limit of this species' distribution.

3. Management strategies

3.1 Native plants

Current situation

The park has a vegetation map and a plant list.

Seven vegetation types occur on the park. These are:

- heath with isolated emergents; banksia low open woodland
- melaleuca woodland with heath understorey; melaleuca woodland
- mixed eucalypt/corymbia woodland
- mixed eucalypt/corymbia woodland with rainforest understorey
- mixed eucalypt/corymbia open forest.

Significant plant species are *Acacia attenuata*, listed as vulnerable and *Melaleuca cheelii*, listed as rare.

Investigation and recording of the park's plant species is an ongoing process.

Desired outcomes

- The structure and native species composition of existing vegetation communities are maintained, subject to natural change.
- The population and distribution of any rare or threatened plant species are maintained, subject to natural change.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Update the vegetation map and the species list as required.
- Map and monitor the distribution and abundance of any rare or threatened plant species on the park.
- Establish and maintain a monitoring program to investigate the effect of fire on *Acacia attenuata*.

3.2 Native animals

Current situation

The fauna on Littabella National Park was surveyed between June-December 1997. A report has been completed. The park has a fauna list. *Crinia tinnula*, a significant frog found on the park is listed as vulnerable in the *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 1994*.

Investigation and recording of animal species on the park is an ongoing process.

Dingoes may be present on the park.

Desired outcomes

- The population and distribution of all native animal species, particularly any rare or threatened species, are maintained subject to natural change.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Update the animal species list as required.
- Map and monitor the distribution and abundance of any rare or threatened animal species.
- Establish and maintain a monitoring program to investigate the effect of fire on *Crinia tinnula*.
- No control program for dingoes will be undertaken on the park.

3.3 Introduced plants and animals**Current situation**

The major weed found on the park is lantana, however it is confined to very small infestations. Where giant rats tail grass has been found on boundary firebreaks it has been eradicated.

Domestic cattle from neighbouring properties have been occasionally observed on the park. Feral animals found on the park include foxes and hares, however rabbits and cats may be present.

Desired outcomes

- There is no increase in the impact of introduced species on the biological values of the park.
- All domestic stock are excluded from the park.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Conduct a control program for lantana as resources permit.
- Monitor for and eradicate any infestation of giant rat's tail grass as soon as it is discovered.
- Monitor feral animal numbers as part of general duties and through liaison with neighbours.
- Implement a control program if feral animal numbers are considered to be having an impact on the biological values of the park.
- Continue boundary fencing program in co-operation with neighbours.

3.4 Fire management**Current situation**

The last major wildfire occurred in 1994 and burnt over half of the park. Active fire management undertaken since 1994 has reduced the likelihood of similar wildfires occurring in the future.

There is an approved fire management plan for the park which is composed of a wildfire response procedure, a fire management strategy and a fire management program. There are a number of firebreaks and an annual firebreak maintenance program is undertaken.

The Ranger-in-Charge and park neighbours liaise on issues regarding fire management.

Failure to implement appropriate planned burning in Littabella National Park is likely to decrease species diversity within the majority of vegetation types.

Desired outcomes

- The current distribution and extent of all plant and animal populations and communities are maintained through appropriate fire management, as outlined in an approved fire management plan.
- Wildfires do not enter or exit the park.
- Knowledge of plant and animal species response to fire, particularly rare and threatened species is improved.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Implement the approved fire management plan. Maintain firebreaks as required.
- Liaise with neighbours over fire management issues.
- Conduct a monitoring program for *Crinia tinnula* and *Acacia attenuata* to assess their response to fire. Incorporate results of these studies into the fire management strategy for the park.

3.5 Landscape, soil and catchment protection

Current situation

Soils on the park are prone to erosion however the only areas of concern are firebreaks, powerlines and vehicle tracks. Drainage works have been constructed where considered necessary.

Desired outcomes

- There is no soil erosion on firebreaks, powerlines and vehicle tracks.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Continue to monitor firebreaks, powerlines and vehicle tracks for soil erosion and construct "whoa-boys" where necessary.

3.6 Cultural heritage

Current situation

The park has no documented Aboriginal or European cultural sites or references to Aboriginal use.

Comprehensive surveys to identify the cultural resource base in these areas have yet to be undertaken.

The park currently falls within the area of native title claim applications submitted by the Gooreng Gooreng, the Tarinbelang Bunda and the Gurang people.

Desired outcomes

- Cultural sites are identified and managed in co-operation with relevant Aboriginal groups.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Liaise with relevant Aboriginal groups to assist in the identification of any cultural sites on the park.
- Existing Aboriginal interests in the park will be identified, and those groups or individuals will be consulted on park management.

3.7 Recreation and tourism

Current situation

The park is rarely visited by the public. No recreation facilities exist on the park.

Desired outcomes

- Recreation has no impact on the natural values of the park.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Recreational opportunities are restricted to day-use only for self-reliant visitors.
- No recreation facilities will be constructed on the park.
- No camping will be permitted on the park.

3.8 Education and interpretation

Current situation

A scientific purposes permit to research frogs is current for the park. The park has no education and interpretation programs or visitor information.

Desired outcomes

- Scientific research is conducted on the park's natural resources.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Provide support for continued scientific research on the park's natural resources as required.

3.9 Resource use

Current situation

There are several powerlines traversing the park.

The area beneath the powerlines is slashed and maintained by QPWS as firebreaks. This is based on an agreement between QPWS and the Wide Bay Burnett Electrical Board.

Desired outcomes

- Public utilities have no increasing impact on the park's natural values.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- QPWS will continue to maintain the area beneath the existing powerlines as required. The construction of further public utilities on the park will be discouraged.
- Maintain liaison with the Department of Energy and Public Works regarding maintenance of the area beneath the powerlines.

3.10 Management plan implementation and monitoring

Current situation

Currently the national park is managed according to the management guidelines, a fire management plan, a disaster control plan, a weed control strategy, and a systematic fauna assessment plan.

The Burnett Management Unit in Bundaberg manages Littabella National Park and other protected areas with the Bundaberg City, Burnett, Perry and Kolan Shires.

Desired outcomes

- The management plan is an effective set of operational guidelines.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Ranger-in-charge of the park to submit a brief annual report on the status of the plan's implementation.
- There will be a biannual review by park management professionals to assess compliance with, and effectiveness of, the strategies outlined in the plan.
- Review of the management plan within 10 years of the approval according to s125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, or as necessary.