

Operational policy

Visitor Management

Camping and vehicle access permit fee and gift card refunds

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of Environment and Science (incorporating the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service). Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Purpose

To outline how the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) manages claims for refund of fees paid by private individuals or groups for camping permits, vehicle access permits and gift cards issued through the Queensland National Parks Booking Service.

Acceptance of this refund policy is a condition of all permits.

Background

To increase the opportunity to visit and camp in areas managed by the QPWS, camping areas can be booked and paid for by using the Queensland National Parks Booking Service (online bookings), over-the-counter agents, self-service kiosks or by telephoning the Queensland Government Integrated Contact Centre operated by Smart Service Queensland (SSQ). To help people make firm arrangements for their visits, QPWS accepts payments for camping permit fees for most areas up to 12 months before proposed camping.

However, as many areas have limited capacity and limited means of access, clients who change or cancel proposed camping at short notice may limit or prevent others from using the camping facilities.

Cancellation limits

The following refund policy situations apply regardless of how the permit was obtained or the type of payment.

The cancellation limit is two (2) calendar days prior to the permit start date. All requests for a refund must be submitted to QPWS within 28 days of the end of the permit or booking period.

1. Request to modify or cancel camping or vehicle access permit prior to the cancellation limit

QPWS will allow the camping details to be altered as requested or allow the permit to be cancelled and will refund the remaining balance back to a payment card, Gift Card or as an electronic funds transfer.

2. Request to modify or cancel camping or vehicle access permit after the cancellation limit

QPWS will not offer alternative camping options or a refund unless extenuating circumstances apply.

Where death, serious illness or severe injury occurs in the immediate family before or during the permit or booking period and written details such as a certificate being received by the issuing centre or QPWS office, a refund may apply.

Other extenuating circumstances not outlined above may be put forward on a refund application; QPWS will consider circumstances, however in most instances a refund will not be provided.

3. Access prevented by weather extremes, emergency situations or facilities closed by QPWS for all or part of a camping or vehicle access permit

QPWS will offer alternative camping for the unused balance of the camping permit period in the form of a Gift Card valid for use prior to that Gift Cards expiry date. If the alternative is unavailable or unacceptable, QPWS will refund the payment for the unused balance of the period in full to the payment card or Gift Card used for payment of the original permit. If purchased over-the-counter, a refund will be issued by QPWS as a gift card or as an electronic funds transfer.

4. Self-registration

There are no self-registration camping areas in the Queensland protected area estate.

5. Incorrect information provided by QPWS or permit issuing centre

If a booked permit is unable to be used because incorrect information is provided by QPWS or any of its permit issuing agents, the incorrect information and the channel which provided it (permit issuing centre or website) must be clearly communicated to the issuing centre within 28 days of the permit start date.

QPWS will allow the camping details to be altered as requested and where availability exists, or will allow the client to use the balance towards other camping or vehicle access permits, depending on the nature of the error and the inconvenience to the camper. Alternatively QPWS will issue a refund to a payment card, Gift Card or as an electronic funds transfer.

Vehicle Access Permits – Annual Permits

If a permittee dies during the period of the annual Vehicle Access Permit and the family advises it does not intend using the balance of the permit period, the fee will be refunded on a pro rata basis. Alternatively, should the family wish to retain the permit for the balance of the permit period or seek another permit with a name change and/or different vehicle registration, another permit will be issued without charge. Note: documents such as a certificate or notice will be required and if necessary, the original permit should be returned to QPWS.

Gift Card

Gift Cards purchased from 1 July 2019 are valid for 36 months from date of purchase. Gift cards purchased before 1 July 2019 are valid for 24 months from date of purchase. If cards purchased or issued as a refund are not used within this period, you are unable to exchange for other refund options.

Refund Rejection

QPWS will reject a claim for a refund based on circumstances outside of its control including but not limited to:

- unfavourable or unpleasant weather conditions before or during the camping or other activity;
- personal decisions to change visit plans;
- personal decisions to arrive after the permit start date or leave before the permit end date;
- the failure of a person or group to obtain a transport booking or the failure of their chosen transport to operate; and
- ill health or sickness not life-threatening.

Claims for refunds

When a claim is made in writing and sent by post, the date of claim will be taken from when the claim was received.

All amounts are in Australian dollars (AUD).

Definitions

QPWS managed areas include:

- protected areas such as national parks, regional parks and forest reserves managed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*;
- State forests managed under the *Forestry Act 1959*; and
- recreation areas managed under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*.

Access prevented means access routes or designated landing areas could not be used because of extreme weather conditions such as rough seas, heavy rains, storms, cyclones or emergency situations such as bushfires.

Facilities closed means QPWS closed particular camping area amenities or services such as maintenance, water supplies due to a public health issue, drought, or safety evacuation in the face of a natural disaster.

VAP means a vehicle access permit.

Cancellation limit is the final date that a refund can be obtained without supporting documentation when a camping permit is altered or cancelled.

Disclaimer

While this document has been prepared with care, it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of Environment and Science should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

Approved By

Ben Klaassen

Signature

28 April 2014

Date

Deputy Director-General
Queensland Parks and Wildlife and Partnerships
Department of Environment and Science

Enquiries:
QPWS Online Booking Services
Ph. 07 3330 5016
Email: qpws@des.qld.gov.au