

# Gympie National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	1,768ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	Sunshine and Fraser Coast
Local government estate/area:	Gympie Regional Council
State electorate:	Gympie

## Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

## Thematic strategies

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

## Vision

Gympie National Park protects endangered and of concern regional ecosystems, while balancing historical recreation use.

## Conservation purpose

Gympie National Park was originally State forest tenure up until 2002 and was logged for its Gympie messmate *Eucalyptus cloeziana*. The current national park was gazetted in 2006 from its holding tenure as forest reserve as part of the South East Queensland Forests Agreement process. The park contains significant proportions of the endangered regional ecosystem (RE) 12.11.16, in which messmate occurs. Gympie National Park also contains the of concern ecosystems flooded gum *Eucalyptus grandis* forest (12.3.2) and northern grey ironbark *E. siderophloia* forest (12.3.11).

Management will focus on mitigating the edge effects created by the fragmented estate, protecting ecosystems and preserving the self-reliant nature of recreational use.

## Protecting and presenting the park's values

### Landscape

Gympie National Park is situated 12km north-east of Gympie. The park is spread out between North Deep Creek to the west and Goomboorian to the east.

The current national park comprises four areas of the old State forest known as Downsfield, Veteran, Home and the Goomboorian strip. The 1,768ha park is fragmented across the landscape, particularly in the eastern (Goomboorian) and southern portions.

The Gympie area forms part of the Mary River catchment, a scenic rural area with forested hills and mountain

ranges supporting beef, dairy, tropical fruit and vegetable industries. The area is located between the popular tourist destinations of the Fraser and Sunshine coasts and incorporates the lower lying coastal areas of the Cooloola Coast.

Relatively fertile soils associated with the intermediate to basic volcanics support extensive patches of Araucarian notophyll and microphyll rainforest and mixed eucalypt forests. Ironbark woodlands replace the mixed eucalypt forests where rainfall is less than about 1,000mm per year.

## Regional ecosystems

Eight regional ecosystems (RE) have been identified in the park with three being conservation significant (Table 1). A large proportion of the park is dominated by Gympie messmate *Eucalyptus cloeziana* forest, an endangered RE 12.11.16 and of concern RE 12.3.2 flooded gum *E. grandis*. Gympie messmate, a large hardwood occurring naturally in the Gympie area, has been heavily logged in the past due to its valuable properties as a timber product. Gullies support simple notophyll vine forest abundant with piccabeen palms *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* and occasional hoop pine *Araucaria cunninghamii* emergent. Any gradual widespread change to temperature and rainfall is likely to impact the distribution of Araucaria forest over a long period.

## Native plants and animals

Recorded plant species for Gympie National Park include 23 species at the northern limit of their distribution range and 12 species at the southern limit of their distribution range. Threatened plants include Deep Creek fontainea *Fontainea rostrata* and hairy hazelwood *Symplocos harroldii*.

The vulnerable red goshawk *Erythrotriorchis radiatus* and the rare grey goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae* have been recorded in reserves across the Gympie area. Many species also occur at the northern and southern limits of their distribution range or are endemic or disjunct to this area. Plant and animal surveys are required to ascertain species diversity and the presence of other species of conservation significance.

## Aboriginal culture

The park is covered by a native title claim QC2013/003 on behalf of the Kabi Kabi First Nation. The area holds high importance to Aboriginal people and there are many sites of Aboriginal cultural importance across the region. The park has not been formally assessed for Aboriginal cultural heritage values but artefact scatters, scar trees and burial sites have been found in the surrounding region.

Opportunities exist to improve relationships with local Traditional Owner groups and involve them in park management.

## Tourism and visitor opportunities

Gympie National Park receives a high level of local use from residents adjoining the park, as well as local Gympie residents. Bushwalking, dog walking and horse riding were popular pursuits while the park was State forest and forest reserve. There is still apparent demand for these activities in the area. There continues to be good opportunities for self-reliant bush walkers on the park.

No facilities are currently provided and visitors are required to be self-sufficient.

Low levels of unauthorised activities have been experienced on the park. Illegal motorised use has had a negative impact on roads and drainage infrastructure. It has also resulted in the formation of a number of unauthorised roads and tracks.

## Education and science

Limited studies have been done on the values of the area.

Schools, universities and other research bodies will be supported and encouraged to carry out research and educate others on the natural resource values of the park. These include opportunities to understand more about the vegetation communities, threatened species, catchment systems, geological processes and the cultural history and values.

## Partnerships

Regular liaison is maintained with neighbours having shared interests in park management. Queensland Parks and

Wildlife Service (QPWS) regularly work with Gympie Regional Council in the management of fire and pests across tenures in the Gympie area.

## Other key issues and responses

### Pest management

Regular baiting and monitoring of wild dogs occurs in the wider Gympie area. Limited data exists on the occurrence and impact of other feral and domestic animal populations in Gympie National Park. Feral pigs *Sus scrofa* have been reported in the area especially on neighbouring macadamia nut farms. Wild dogs *Canis familiaris*, red deer *Cervus elaphus*, feral cats *Felis catus* and foxes *Vulpes vulpes* are also known to be in the national park in low numbers. QPWS will continue to participate in the coordinated effort to mitigate the effects of wild dogs on the local native animals and adjacent rural landholders. With increased residential development adjacent to the protected area, this issue will require continued management.

QPWS continually monitors the park for invasion of giant rat's tail grass *Sporobolus pyramidalis* from neighbouring properties and infestations are sprayed when observed. Roadside spraying of lantana *Lantana camara* also occurs.

A current QPWS Level 2 Pest Management Strategy exists for Gympie National Park and is guiding management practices.

### Fire management

The endangered *Eucalyptus cloeziana* community requires frequent low to moderate mosaic burning to maintain understory integrity and prevent rainforest species encroachment and an occasional high intensity wildfire.

The notophyll vine forests (RE 12.11.1 and 12.11.10) in the park should not be burnt deliberately and may require active protection during wildfire season. Fire mitigation may be achieved by an appropriate fire regime in surrounding areas. Any prescribed burns adjacent to the vine forest should not be allowed to run into this ecosystem.

The adjacent *E. grandis* forest (RE 12.3.2) requires a moderate to high intensity fire every 20+ years for stand regeneration of flooded gum. *E. grandis* forest is difficult to burn outside of fire season and, conversely, burns extremely well in a dry, hot summer. This presents potential threats to property in the rural/residential zones in the local area during severe fire seasons.

A current Level 2 Fire Management Strategy is approved and guides fire management regimes and the maintenance of fire infrastructure.

## Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
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<p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p>Catchment protection services are maintained.</p>	<p>Monitor changes in vegetation structure to identify potential erosion issues and mitigate impacts.</p> <p>Review and rationalise roads and firebreaks.</p> <p>Investigate the adverse impacts from illegal motorised and review options to prevent and mitigate impacts.</p>
<p><b>Native plants and animals</b></p> <p>Information on native plant, animal and ecosystems is comprehensive and current.</p>	<p>Review the currency of species records and conduct surveys where needed to inform management decisions.</p> <p>Review mapping of regional ecosystems and facilitate improvements to mapping refinements where needed.</p>
<p><b>Cultural heritage</b></p> <p>Traditional Owners have meaningful involvement with park management planning and direction.</p> <p>Shared-history cultural values are identified and protected</p>	<p>Encourage Traditional Owners to identify and document values, sites, artefacts and places of cultural heritage significance so that management strategies and decisions relating to fire regimes, access and track maintenance minimise potential threats to these values.</p> <p>Encourage and support an assessment of the shared-history cultural values of the park</p>
<p><b>Tourism and visitor opportunities</b></p> <p>The park is used and enjoyed by the public while retaining its natural values.</p>	<p>Manage visitor use to confine vehicle traffic to formed roads and tracks.</p> <p>Educate park visitors on any restrictions regarding unauthorised activities.</p>
<p><b>Pest management</b></p> <p>Impacts from pests and cattle grazing on the park are managed effectively.</p>	<p>Monitor and control the impacts from pest plants and changes to vegetation structure.</p> <p>Continue participation in wild dog control syndicates and monitoring programs.</p> <p>Work closely with neighbours to restrict the encroachment of grazing stock on to the park.</p>
<p><b>Fire management</b></p> <p>Fire management practises conserve biodiversity values while protecting life and property.</p>	<p>Maintain positive relationships with neighbouring landholders to promote cooperative fire management.</p>

## Tables – Conservation values management

**Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems**

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
12.11.16	Tall open forest with <i>Eucalyptus cloeziana</i> on metamorphics +/- interbedded volcanics	Endangered
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 usually near coast	Of concern

**Table 2: Species of conservation significance**

Scientific name	Common name	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992 status</i>	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status</i>	Back on Track status
<b>Plants</b>				
<i>Fontainea rostrata</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low