

Daisy Hill Koala Bushland Directions Paper

2017–2027

Contents

Foreword	1
Purpose of the Directions Paper.....	2
Daisy Hill Koala Bushland.....	2
Preparation of the Directions Paper	3
Responding to consultation feedback.....	3
Map of Daisy Hill adjoining tenures	4
A snapshot of Daisy Hill Koala Bushland.....	5
Opportunities and directions:	6
1. Building and improving coordinated management	7
2. Enhancing conservation values.....	8
3. Encouraging recreation in nature	9
4. Revitalising the Daisy Hill Koala Centre	10
5. Increasing the economic benefits from nature-based recreation and tourism	11
6. Adding value through our Indigenous culture.....	12
7. Creating a Commonwealth Games legacy	13



Prepared by: **Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service,
Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing.**

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Foreword

Daisy Hill Koala Bushland is an iconic pocket of conservation park surrounded by urban development.

The Palaszczuk government has a vision of the Daisy Hill Koala Bushland as a refuge for southside residents and a tourist attraction for visitors from around the world.

Daisy Hill is already growing in popularity; attracting up to 400,000 visitors to the area each year and 65,000-plus visitors to the Daisy Hill Koala Centre.

The government has been consulting with Queenslanders to determine the future development of the Bushland and Koala Centre.

We have now committed \$3.3 million to implement stage one of this vision.

With this investment Daisy Hill become an outdoor hub for locals, interstate and overseas visitors, and sporting groups for mountain biking, bushwalking, horse riding, nature-based activities, and school excursions.

The revamped Koala Centre will be exciting and educational. Interactive displays will improve the visitor experience—and make it easier to have an up close and personal encounter with our most iconic species.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to provide feedback on a plan setting a new direction and vision for Daisy Hill Koala Bushland.



The Hon. Steven Miles,
Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection
and Minister for National Parks and the Great
Barrier Reef.

As Queenslanders we are spoilt for choice when it comes to idyllic locations to engage in active recreation.

Whenever anyone asks me what's my favourite spot in the state I answer Daisy Hill Forest straight away.

For me, the bushland that's home to Daisy Hill Koala Centre has long been the centre of why we as locals love to call this place home. It's one of these fantastic local places where horse and bike riders, as well as walkers and runners can all get active in a clean, green environment.

Beyond that it is a showcase of urban conservation, that I protect fiercely as a custodian for future generations. That's why I've been determined to work with our local community to make this plan a reality.

As a government, we recognise the importance of sport and recreation and the importance of conserving bushland for flora and fauna as well as education.

After securing a key stop on the Commonwealth Games Baton Relay, it's appropriate that one of the first stages of this plan will see the iconic Koala Centre undergo a major revamp in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

This plan will enshrine my commitment to working with locals and user groups to ensure the improvements to recreational facilities provide an urban environment for people of all ages and abilities to get outdoors and get active—and benefit those who are fortunate to live close by.

I look forward to seeing Daisy Hill Koala Bushland develop as an important community hub where people can connect with nature and participate in active recreation.



The Hon. Mick de Brenni,
Minister for Housing and Public Works
and Minister for Sport.

Purpose of the Directions Paper

The Daisy Hill Koala Bushland Directions Paper (the Directions Paper) has been prepared by the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR) to guide the area's management, use and enjoyment over the next ten year period.

The Directions Paper has been developed following an extensive review of the site, assessment of relevant policy and planning frameworks, and review of recreation and tourism market opportunities.

This final version of the Directions Paper has been prepared following valuable input from a wide range of stakeholders.

Two public information sessions were held to inform the draft Paper with representatives from conservation groups, recreation groups and other community representatives attending and contributing.

Daisy Hill Koala Bushland

Daisy Hill Koala Bushland (referred to as the 'Koala Bushland' throughout this report), 25km south of Brisbane, is a core koala habitat area and one of South East Queensland's most significant outdoor recreation hubs. The Koala Bushland features important flora and fauna, the Daisy Hill Koala Centre, recreation trails and day-use facilities.

The Koala Bushland comprises approximately 1,500ha of protected reserves and habitats in multiple tenures managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP), Logan City Council and Redland City Council (see Figure 1).

The areas within the Koala Bushland include:

- the Koala Bushland Co-ordinated Conservation Area
- Daisy Hill Conservation Park
- Venman Bushland National Park
- Ford Road Conservation Area
- Don and Christine Burnett Conservation Area
- Neville Lawrie Reserve
- Kimberley Forest Park
- Cornubia Forest Park.

In addition to koala habitat, the Koala Bushland provides habitats which are home to a wide range of flora and fauna, including the powerful owl, glossy black-cockatoo, great barred frog and greater glider.

From a recreation perspective, the recreation trails and day-use facilities provide important recreation and amenity options for local communities and visitors.

Photo: Anna Osetroff © Queensland Government



Preparation of the Directions Paper

The Directions Paper has been prepared within the context of a range of strategic considerations, including:

- the policy and direction on koala habitat and conservation measures which will emerge from the Koala Expert Panel established in 2016 by the Queensland Government.
- preparation of the Queensland Protected Area Strategy.
- the growing population in the Logan City Council and neighbouring areas, and associated need for recreation options.
- growing popularity of recreational activity in South East Queensland.
- the focus provided by Gold Coast's hosting of the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Responding to consultation feedback

The Draft Directions Paper was published for public consultation between 16th November 2016 and 13th February 2017. Access to information on the consultation process and an online survey was made available on several Queensland Government web pages. Feedback from the survey was overwhelmingly positive, with a wide range of views expressed. This feedback has enabled the completion of the Directions Paper incorporating the following amendments:

Vision and Direction: Reiteration of the Queensland Government's commitment to achieving conservation objectives, complemented by appropriate directions on nature-based recreation and securing available economic benefits.

Enhancing Co-Ordinated Management: Inclusion of a commitment to prepare a detailed management strategy.

Building and Improving Conservation Values: Addition of a renewed commitment to developing a strong evidence base for management decisions, and prioritisation of identified conservation and habitat maintenance programs.

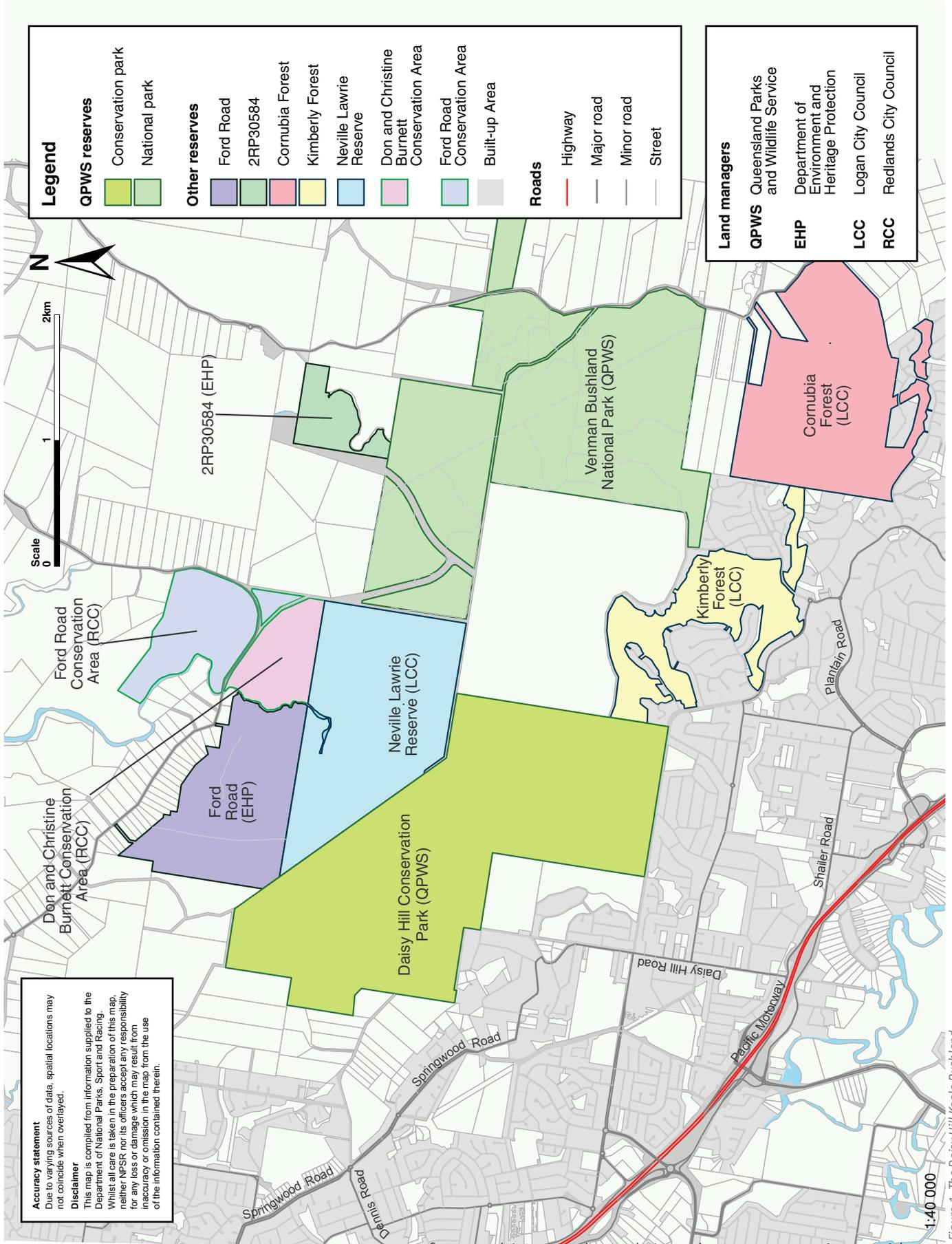
Encouraging Recreation in Nature: Incorporation of firm actions to better manage peak demand through implementing a program of trail head and parking improvements, and introduction of a new rolling infrastructure investment program.

The amended overall vision and directions set out in the Directions Paper confirm the Queensland Government's commitment to achieving conservation, recreation and economic benefits for the Daisy Hill Koala Bushland. Actions and investment over the next ten years will be based on a clear understanding of the characteristics of the Koala Bushland.

Photo: © Visible Focus



Map of Daisy Hill adjoining tenures



© State of Queensland, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing.

Figure 1: The Daisy Hill Koala Bushland

A snapshot of Daisy Hill Koala Bushland



Natural values

- Open eucalypt forest, paper bark wetlands and the headwaters of Tingalpa Creek.
- Habitat for a wide range of wildlife including koalas, possums, wallabies, birds, fish and reptiles.
- Distinct zones within the Koala Bushland such as Venman Bushland National Park which have higher conservation values and areas such as Daisy Hill Conservation Park, parts of which are valuable recreation hubs.



Neighbours

- High residential interface with a growing population. Logan City Council's population is increasing by two per cent each year and is projected to be 473,000 by 2031.
- Surrounding suburbs include Springwood, Shailer Park, Rochedale South, Priestdale and valuable conservation habitats and recreation spaces including the Brisbane Koala Bushland.



Cultural values

- Indigenous cultural heritage associated with the region and specific sites.
- European cultural heritage values and history.



Visitation

- Attracts around 400,000 visitors per year—nearly double the visitation of 10 years ago.



Koala Centre

- Attracts around 70,000 visitors per year, predominantly local residents and school groups (primary school, school holiday program groups and some tertiary students).
- Visited by a growing number of international travellers, including those visiting friends and relatives.



Recreation

- Mountain bikers are the most visible recreation users, originating from local suburbs and the wider Brisbane/South East Queensland region.
- School sports activities.
- Walkers, dog walkers and runners, predominantly from nearby areas.
- Horseriders predominantly from local areas.



Day-use areas

- Popular for picnics, enjoyment of nature, and events including weddings, birthday celebrations, child care excursions and other social occasions.

Opportunities and directions:

Summary

Directions which will guide management and investment over the next 10 year period are as follows:

1. building and improving coordinated management
2. enhancing conservation values
3. Encouraging recreation in nature
4. revitalising the Daisy Hill Koala Centre
5. increasing the economic benefits from nature-based recreation and tourism
6. adding value through our Indigenous culture
7. creating a Commonwealth Games legacy.



Photo: Anna Osetroff © Queensland Government



1. Building and improving coordinated management

To achieve the vision for the Koala Bushland, a common purpose and coordinated action by management agencies and stakeholders is essential across the multiple tenures. The range of reserve purposes, tenures and managing agencies creates complexity in the Koala Bushland’s management.

While much of the existing policy framework remains valid, increasing demand for outdoor recreation within a sensitive environment, together with emerging policies in koala conservation, requires a renewed approach.

Our objective

To establish a shared vision and priorities across the multiple tenures and stakeholders for the sustainable management of Daisy Hill Koala Bushland

Priority directions

1. To assist with delivery of the first stage of priority directions, a park user reference group will be established, which will include representatives from tourism, recreation and conservation sectors and traditional owners.
2. Develop a management strategy for the Koala Bushland.
3. Develop a consistent approach to communications on and about the Koala Bushland.
4. Build on collaboration and engagement with local interest groups (including conservation and recreation), adopting a partnership approach to maximise the achievement of objectives.
5. Sharing of information across management agencies as the basis for informed decision making and planning.

Photo: Margrit Sycamore © Queensland Government



2. Enhancing conservation values

The Koala Bushland is an important part of one of Australia's significant regional koala habitats. The Directions Paper seeks to reinforce this conservation status and grow awareness regionally and locally of its conservation values.

Within the Koala Bushland, the Koala Centre provides valuable insight and education to the local community and visitors on the conservation of these unique animals and their habitat.

Our objective

To enhance the Koala Bushland's conservation values

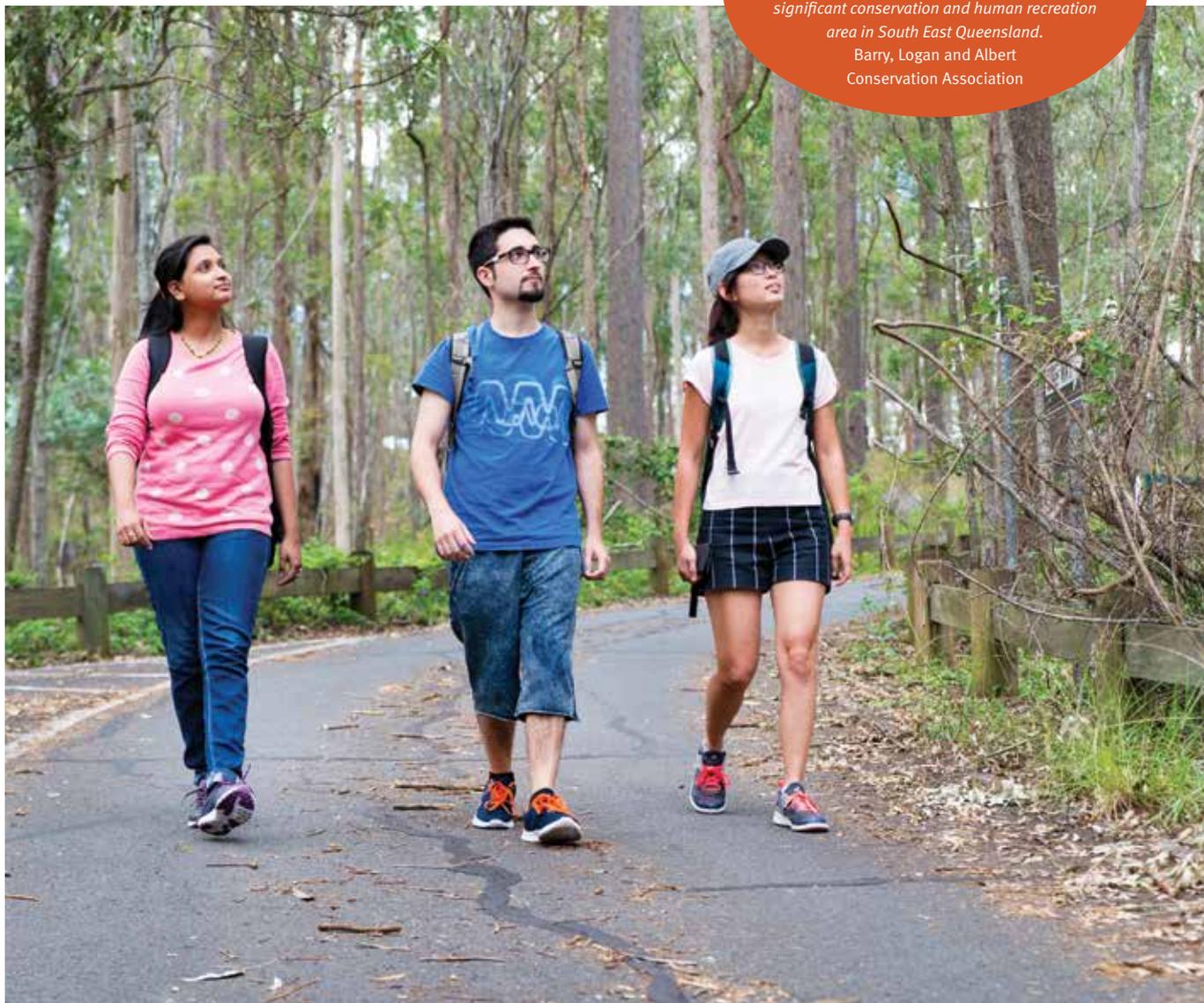
Priority directions

1. Undertake a number of conservation programs including pest, revegetation and fauna monitoring.
2. Continue to reinforce the importance and permanency of the Koala Bushland's protected status in conservation and planning.
3. Identify and further protect biodiversity hotspots within the Koala Bushland to inform management planning.
4. Introduce new technologies alongside traditional forms of interpretation in raising public awareness and understanding of conservation priorities.
5. Increase the use of land protection mechanisms such as voluntary conservation agreements and covenants, nature refuges and land acquisition.

Prioritisation of biodiversity conservation and establishment of a coordinated management mechanism will together ensure the lasting success of the Koala Bushland as a significant conservation and human recreation area in South East Queensland.

Barry, Logan and Albert Conservation Association

Photo: © Visible Focus



3. Encouraging recreation in nature

The Koala Bushland is a well-known and loved conservation and recreation destination. It provides local residents and visitors a place to relax and enjoy nature. Alongside its value as an important flora and fauna habitat, the area is an increasingly popular mountain bike hub. The horse and walking trails are also growing in popularity. To provide a high quality experience and support increased use, improvements are needed to the Koala Bushland's facilities and infrastructure.

QPWS and the Logan and Redland City Councils actively manage the trail network and provide visitor facilities and trail infrastructure in partnership with local mountain bike and other activity partners.

Our objective

To enhance opportunities for recreation and enjoyment through targeted investment in facilities that ensures sustainable and safe use by all visitors

Priority directions

Recreation management

1. Undertake a trail audit to assess environmental impacts, trail usage and potential demand for facilities in the future.
2. Enhance visitor activity monitoring to assist in informing trail management decisions.
3. Develop a coordinated Koala Bushland trails plan including management and maintenance of the existing network, improvement of trails and trail heads, and management and dispersal of visitors.
4. Align trails with international standards across the Koala Bushland tenures including classification, signs, trail design and maintenance.
5. Continue to build working relationships with community-based user groups in planning on communication about the Koala Bushland.
6. Work in partnership with local government to promote the area as a recreation hub, taking a regional approach to meeting identified need and demand.

Access and wayfinding

7. Improve wayfinding with better signs at access points and along trails.
8. Use social media to promote sustainable recreation opportunities.

9. Embrace digital technologies as a means of providing current and consistent information and wayfinding on trails and other facilities.
10. Investigate the option to develop new car parking facilities including off-road coach parking and introduce float parking for horse riders.

Visitor facilities

11. Subject to funding, develop a five-year investment program in facilities that enhance the recreational opportunities in the Koala Bushland, including a focus on a multi-use trail network, day-use areas, improved facilities and signage.
12. Investigate the use of the Ford Road land parcel as a gateway for the Koala Bushland with connecting trails to DC Burnett Reserve, Ford Road Conservation Area and Neville Lawrie Reserve.
13. Subject to the outcomes of the proposed trail audit, consider investments in upgrading trail heads at the Underwood Road and Avalon Road access points and renewal of the Daisy Hill Road trail head.
14. Establish Nature Play nodes to encourage un-structured outdoor play.

Nature Play

Nature Play Queensland is a collaborative initiative to encourage the Queensland community to value unstructured play outdoors and in nature, i.e. nature play, and support families to prioritise it in children's lives. The Nature Play Queensland program includes a 'Passport to an Amazing Childhood', which encourages kids and their families to complete passport 'missions' such as climbing a tree, visiting a beach, camping under the stars or visiting a local park. Families can form Family Nature Clubs where they meet with other families to make a regular date with nature.

The nature play opportunities at Daisy Hill will focus on unstructured play in the open spaces, supported by appropriate infrastructure.

4. Revitalising the Daisy Hill Koala Centre

The Koala Centre offers the opportunity to see koalas and learn about koala conservation in South East Queensland. The greatest value of the Koala Centre is in a niche role as an integral part of the koala conservation and education efforts of the Queensland Government and partners.

The proposed role seeks to differentiate the Koala Centre from the experiences offered by nearby commercial and state-managed facilities (Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary, Dreamworld, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and David Fleay Wildlife Park). This will be achieved by focusing on:

1. Targeted investment to improve the experience, focusing on interpretation and visitor orientation
2. An upgraded education program
3. Positioning as ‘Koala Central’—presenting a high profile public face for the Queensland Government and conservation partners’ work on koala conservation.

This concept is considered to offer the most appropriate balance of value for money and opportunity for return on investment.¹

1. Relocating the Koala Centre to a new site was not an option considered. Should the policy and direction emerging from the Queensland Government’s expert panel recommend that other parts of South East Queensland are given a higher priority in terms of koala conservation in the future, the location of the Koala Centre may be worthy of review.

Our objectives

- To become a showcase for the work of the Queensland Government and partners in koala conservation in South East Queensland
- To inspire, inform and orientate visitors and increase the understanding and appreciation of the conservation values of the Koala Bushland habitat and the Indigenous heritage and cultural values of the area

Priority directions

Management direction

- Develop and implement a clear vision and business plan for the management of the Koala Centre integrated with the Bushland experience.
- Position the Koala Centre in communications and marketing as ‘Koala Central’—a key component of the Queensland Government and partners’ work on koala conservation and education.
- Foster the Koala Centre as the gateway to the Koala Bushland and other national parks in South East Queensland, and a hub for visitor information and services.

Education

- Refresh the Koala Centre’s education and communication to provide a more contemporary approach and allow for commercial activities.

Experience delivery

- Introduce a guest-oriented approach with a welcoming arrival area and layout that complements the conservation-led visitor interaction with the animals.
- Undertake a comprehensive refresh of interpretive materials and media across all audiences, and incorporate a consistent storyline and readily updatable media formats.
- Extend interpretative media into the walkway leading to the Koala Centre and along the trails in the Koala Bushland.

Partnerships

- Work with local and regional councils and tourism industry partners to build awareness of the Koala Centre and maximise visitation.
- Explore opportunities with Traditional Owners to offer services such as performance events, guided walks and storytelling sessions.
- Continue to work with local conservation groups in the delivery of the objectives for the Koala Centre and Bushland.
- Encourage visitors to play an active role in koala conservation using incentive programs.
- Build relationships with commercial service providers to enhance the experience offered at the Koala Centre and throughout the Koala Bushland.
- Link with programs to support delivery of overall koala conservation policy objectives and strengthen educational content at the Centre.

I love bringing my kids to Daisy Hill. They love being outside and being with their friends.
Kathy, Rochedale South

5. Increasing the economic benefits from nature-based recreation and tourism

The Koala Bushland delivers economic benefits for the region from direct spend by local residents and visitors at the Koala Centre, and indirectly by encouraging visitors to extend their time in the area.

The sensitive nature of the Koala Bushland environment necessitates a focus on low impact, small-scale tourism activities that complement the Koala Centre.

Our objective

To develop the nature-based recreational and tourism potential to encourage investment and job creation

Priority directions

1. Foster on-park commercial opportunities that complement conservation and recreation objectives such as mobile food and drink vendors at the Koala Centre, service/hire facilities for mountain bikers, events, walks and talks.
2. Seek private sector and community partners that add value to the existing experiences at the Koala Centre and throughout the Koala Bushland.
3. Work with Logan and Redland City Councils and local businesses to promote the area as a focus for recreation and tourism opportunities, including leveraging opportunities available from the Koala Bushland's proximity to the Springwood Road commercial services hub.
4. Promote the region as a recreation hub in communications and marketing.
5. Work closely with regional and local tourism partners to promote and enhance the visitor experience.

Photo: © Visible Focus



6. Adding value through our Indigenous culture

Cultural inclusion in visitor experiences builds Queensland's competitive advantage and adds depth and value to established nature-based experiences. There is potential to enable Bushland visitors to gain an understanding of Indigenous culture, language and stories, and form a greater connection with the natural environment.

Our objective

To deliver high quality experiences that engage and connect visitors with nature and our Indigenous culture and heritage

Priority directions

1. Foster engagement with Traditional Owners to share understanding and appreciation of the area's Indigenous history and culture at the Koala Bushland.
2. Identify opportunities to incorporate Indigenous history, culture and stories into interpretation and messaging at the Koala Centre and throughout the Koala Bushland.
3. Investigate the potential for the Koala Centre and other locations within the Koala Bushland to host Indigenous events and celebrations, coinciding where possible with 'family fun days' at the centre to maximise mutual benefits.

Photo: © Visible Focus



7. Creating a Commonwealth Games legacy

The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018) will showcase and celebrate Queensland's climate, natural environment, heritage and history, and distinctive lifestyle. Leading up to and beyond the event, GC2018 will create valuable legacies for:

- our community—celebrating our diversity and promoting community cohesion and pride
- our lifestyle—leading our community to a more healthy, sustainable and active lifestyle
- our economy—leveraging opportunities to strengthen Queensland's economy and grow business and employment.

Our objective

To offer Games visitors authentic local experiences and respond to the anticipated increased interest from Queenslanders in healthy lifestyles and activities

Priority directions

1. Promote the Koala Centre to Games visitors as the place to learn about an iconic Queensland species.
2. Work with conservation and state tourism partners to promote awareness of the Koala Centre and the Koala Bushland in GC2018 communications and marketing activity.
3. Position and promote the Koala Bushland's open spaces and network of walking, riding and mountain bike trails for active pursuits and contributing to healthier lifestyle choices.
4. Assess the potential to use parts of the Koala Bushland as host venues for social or cultural events associated with the GC2018; bringing the Games to local communities.

The Daisy Hill Koala Bushland is already a hugely popular venue for nature based recreation activities like mountain biking—we need to ensure we have sustainable, world-class facilities to help encourage these activities and support their growth.

Andrew, South East Queensland Trails Alliance (SEQTA)

Photo: Anna Osetroff © Queensland Government

