1 Management directions and purposes

1.1 Management directions

Pipeclay National Park will be managed to conserve its natural and cultural values, in particular the bora ring located within the park. The park will be managed in cooperation with Aboriginal people who have links with the area. Recreational use will not be encouraged. Access to the park will be restricted and by permit only. Any additions to the park will have the same access restrictions.

1.2 Purposes

The major purposes of management will be to ensure that:

- cultural sites within the park are managed and maintained in cooperation with Aboriginal people who have links with the area;
- the public are informed of the cultural values of the park and are aware of management and access restrictions;
- the park suffers minimal impact from weed invasion and feral animals; and
- appropriate fire management protects cultural sites and maintains the diversity of plant communities.

2 Basis for management

Pipeclay National Park is gazetted under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 as a national park 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 Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and other State and Commonwealth agencies will be met where necessary.

2.1 Bioregional context

Pipeclay National Park lies roughly 8km west of Rainbow Beach and 3km south of the township of Tin Can Bay, and covers an area of approximately 2.5 hectares. The park lies in the parish of Torow and the local authority area of Cooroy. The park is in the South East Queensland biogeographic region. The park was gazetted in 1974 to protect an intact Aboriginal bora ring. According to locals the park is named after the clay available in a nearby creek, which was first used by Aborigines, and later by Europeans for clay pipes.

The park is located in the Great Sandy Region, which includes Fraser Island, the Cooloola sandspit, Noosa Northshore, and the western Great Sandy Bay and the Great Sandy Scarp covering an area of about 840,000 hectares.

The Great Sandy Region has been subject to extensive planning as a result of the Conservation Management and Use of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region appointed in 1990 which resulted in the Production of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan in 1994.

The Great Sandy National Park-Cooloola section and the Fraser Island World Heritage Area lie to the east and north of the park and provide extensive coastal recreational opportunities for significant numbers of local, regional and international tourists. The park is adjacent to residential development to the west and proposed residential development to the south.

The park is managed in cooperation with the Great Sandy Region Heritage Advisory Committee. This committee has been formed to represent the interests of Aborigines affiliated with the Great Sandy area in regards to the management of cultural heritage issues. It consists of representatives from the traditional owners of the area. The aim of the committee is to ensure:

- Standard owners and relevant Aboriginal groups have input into and give advice to QPWS on issues in relation to cultural heritage in the Great Sandy Region. In this instance cultural heritage relates to all spheres of Aboriginal heritage including natural and traditional, archaeological sites, spiritual sites, traditional use of areas and items, relationship to land. The committee will give advice on management of cultural heritage and this would include aspects of land management where it is felt that cultural heritage values may be compromised.

The committee is also set up to advise QPWS on aspects of historical cultural heritage which would include the built environment where there are Aboriginal interests or areas where historical affiliations are still maintained.

2.2 Values of Pipeclay National Park

Geology and landform

The park is part of a low lying coastal plain which drains into the upper reaches of the Tin Can Bay Inlet. This inlet expands into the Great Sandy Strait and Wide Bay Harbour, which is next to Inskip Point and the southern end of Fraser Island. Tin Can Bay Inlet is a drowned valley that was filled by the rising sea. To the west of the park lies the Cooma Swamp which is an extensive feature formed as the divide between the high gradient, aggressive coastal streams and the less energetic, lower gradient streams which drain inland to Tinaroo Creek.

Plants and animals

The park contains open heath and woodland with Leptospermum floribundum, Leptospermum semibaccatum and Banksia oblongifolia. The park provides a small area of habitat for native birds with surrounding native habitat rapidly being cleared for residential development.

Cultural heritage

The bora ring in Pipeclay National Park is known as the ‘Little bora ring’ and was a major initiation site for Aborigines from Fraser Island and the adjacent mainland. There is another bora ring in the area, however the little bora ring represents the highest level that an initiate could achieve in his quest for manhood. According to Aboriginal customary law only those who were