

# Rungulla National Park

Incorporates: Rungulla Resources Reserve



## Management Statement

2020

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

© State of Queensland, 2020.

March 2020

Front cover photo: © Chris White, Queensland Government.

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs and printed material that some people may find distressing.*

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (CC BY) licence.



Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms.

You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.

For more information on this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en>

#### Disclaimer

This document has been prepared with all due diligence and care, based on the best available information at the time of publication. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties.

If you need to access this document in a language other than English, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to telephone Library Services on +61 7 3170 5470.

This publication can be made available in an alternative format (e.g. large print or audiotape) on request for people with vision impairment; phone +61 7 3170 5470 or email <library@des.qld.gov.au>.

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1 Approach to best practice management.....	3
1.2 Management planning .....	4
<b>2. First Nations People</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 Ewamian People.....	5
2.2 Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation .....	5
2.3 Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation and QPWS Partnership .....	6
<b>3. Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve</b> .....	<b>7</b>
3.1 Management statement and thematic strategies .....	7
3.2 Park overview .....	7
3.3 Resource use .....	7
<b>4. Key values</b> .....	<b>8</b>
4.1 Ewamian culture and Connection to Country — <i>Wamin abu-dha</i> .....	10
4.2 Woodlands with perennial grasses — <i>Wundu</i> .....	12
4.3 Wetland ecosystems — <i>Arburə kogo</i> .....	13
4.4 Sandstone landscape — <i>Madha</i> .....	14
<b>5. Management direction</b> .....	<b>15</b>
5.1 Fire management .....	16
5.2 Pest management .....	17
5.3 Natural values management.....	18
5.4 Historic cultural heritage management.....	19
5.5 Visitor management.....	20
5.6 Community, partnerships and other interests.....	21
5.7 Field management capability.....	22
5.8 Operational planning and management support .....	23
<b>6. References</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendix 1. Summary of strategic management directions</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Table 1. Summary of strategic management direction for the Ewamian People .....	25
Table 2. Summary of strategic management direction for key values .....	25
Table 3. Summary of strategic management direction for management direction.....	26
<b>Appendix 2. Glossary</b> .....	<b>27</b>

# 1. Introduction

QPWS works with First Nations Peoples to ensure the protection of Country and culture. We pay our respects to all peoples, and to the Elders past, present and future, for land and sea on which we work, live and walk.

## 1.1 Approach to best practice management

Queensland's parks, forests and reserves are places we want to protect for future enjoyment and wellbeing. What makes these places special are the presence and diversity of natural, cultural, social and economic values. These areas experience natural cycles—they live and breathe—and therefore our management needs to be dynamic too. The QPWS (QPWS), within the Department of Environment and Science (DES), applies a contemporary management process that is based on international best practice and targets management towards the most important features of each park—its **key values**.

The **Values-Based Management Framework** (VBMF) is an **adaptive management** cycle that incorporates planning, prioritising, doing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting into all areas of our business. This enables the agency to be more flexible and proactive and to improve management effectiveness over time. We want to keep our parks, forests and reserves healthy by:

- managing and protecting the things that matter most—our key values
- strategically directing management effort towards priorities
- delivering our custodial obligations as a land manager
- setting a level of service for all parks, forests and reserves
- building systems that support decision making for adaptive management
- building support for what we do through accountability and transparency
- striving for improvement through structured learning and doing.

As a land manager, QPWS has a **custodial obligation** to ensure our estate is managed to provide appropriate and safe access, protect life and property, be a good neighbour and work cooperatively with partners across the landscape. The agency does this as part of setting **levels of service** for each park. Levels of service is a management standard that considers an area's values, threatening processes, custodial obligations, risks and overall management complexity.

By assessing an area's key values and levels of service, QPWS can prioritise management efforts, balancing the importance of values and threats with our custodial obligations. Each year, we track work programs, monitor the condition of values and evaluate our performance across all aspects of management. The evaluation process documents how efficiently and effectively we are working toward achieving the objectives we set for managing parks, forests and reserves, and how the condition of key values is changing in response to our management efforts. This evaluation supports transparent and accountable reporting, enabling us to continuously improve park management and demonstrate outcomes to the community.

Figure 1 illustrates phases of the VBMF cycle for management planning. A glossary of the key concepts (in **bold**) used throughout the document is listed in Appendix 2.

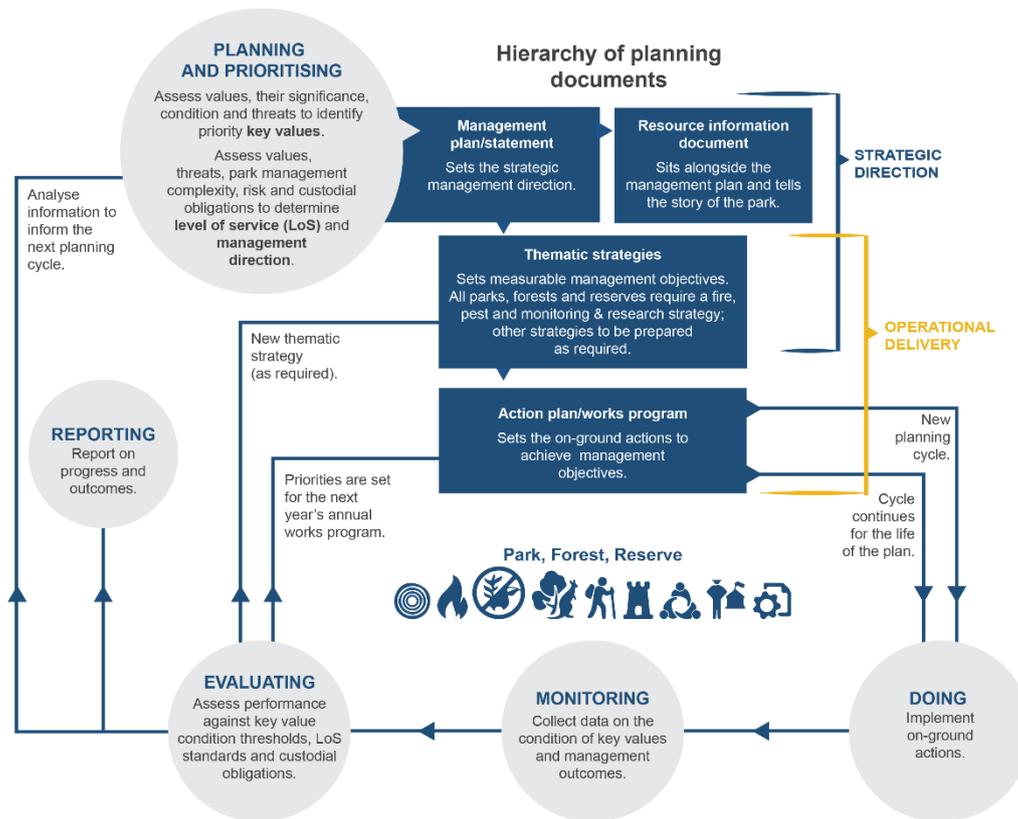


Figure 1. Phases of the VBMF cycle for planning and the hierarchy of planning documents

## 1.2 Management planning

Management plans and statements are developed through a process of research, assessment and consultation to establish priorities and set **strategic management direction** for the park. They are legislative requirements under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Qld) (NCA). Some planning areas may include forest and reserves (*Forestry Act 1959* (Qld)) and marine parks (*Marine Parks Act 2004* (Qld)). All plans are prepared in keeping with legislative management principles, supporting regulations, government policies and procedures, and international agreements. Planning for each park is brought together and communicated through planning documents:

- Management plans and management statements provide the high-level strategic direction for managing an area’s key values, levels of service and custodial obligations. Management plans and statements are statutory documents and are generally reviewed every 10 years.
- Resource information documents support management plans and statements and provide a compendium of park information that tells the story of the park. These documents accompany management plans and management statements, providing contextual information. They support information provided in the plan but do not provide management direction.
- Thematic strategies provide specific objectives to achieve the strategic management directions identified in management plans and statements. While all parks and forests require a fire strategy, pest strategy and monitoring and research strategy, others are developed based on a protected area’s management requirements and priorities. Thematic strategies are generally reviewed every three to five years to enable adaptive management.
- Action plans outline the work program for delivering on-ground actions.

Further information on the VBMF, copies of management plans/statements and resource information documents are available on the department’s website at [www.des.qld.gov.au](http://www.des.qld.gov.au).

## 2. First Nations People

### 2.1 Ewamian People

Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve lies within part of the lands of the Ewamian (pronounced *Oor-a-min*) people who have an ongoing connection to Country. The ancestors of present-day Ewamian people were born, lived and hunted in this area before the arrival of Europeans. Ewamian people are the Traditional Owners of Country located in Queensland's Gulf of Carpentaria savannah lands in the upper Gilbert and Einasleigh River catchments. The boundaries of Ewamian Country broadly align with Etheridge Shire local government area that includes the townships of Georgetown, Forsyth, Einasleigh and Mount Surprise. They have a successful Native Title determination (QUD6018/2001) over part of the area.

### 2.2 Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation

*"We care for country, we share country and we respect country and each other"*

**Ken Georgetown, Board Member, Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation 2019.**

The Ewamian people play an active role in caring for Country. QPWS works collaboratively with the Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation (EAC) across the protected area estates within Ewamian Country to ensure both cultural and environmental values are conserved.

The EAC was established in 1994 and is registered under the Office of the Register of Indigenous Corporations (*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* (Cwlth) and the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (Cwlth)). In 2019, the corporation had 330 Indigenous members and is governed by a board of seven Indigenous Directors.

The EAC provides services to the Ewamian people, with the vision of enhancing their culture and connection to Country through positive change, and partnering with key stakeholders.

Services provided by the EAC include:

- implementing the Ewamian Strategic Plan (2016)
- managing the EAC's Talaroo Indigenous Protected Area/Nature Refuge
- implementing the Department of Environment and Science's Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program (five rangers in 2019)
- facilitating employment opportunities (for example, Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) projects, working on Country employment with various land management agencies, Commonwealth funded works programs)
- managing native title rights and interests
- managing and protecting cultural heritage (such as cultural heritage assessments, cultural heritage database)
- administering community funding, and
- identifying business opportunities and developing skills through training.

As at 2019, a major project currently being developed by the EAC is the Talaroo Hot Springs Tourism Infrastructure Project. Since developing the Ewamian Strategic Plan in 2016, the EAC has been planning to reopen the springs to tourists and has undertaken significant planning, design, business development and experience planning in preparation for opening a 'culturally and environmentally sensitive' tourism offering that allows people to visit the springs, spend time with Ewamian people, and participate in a range of activities on Talaroo and Ewamian Country. Funding for the project is being finalised and it is hoped to open to the public in 2021.

## 2.3 Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation and QPWS Partnership

*“Our people are here, they are watching over us, and we can feel they are proud of us, for working together with you fellas [QPWS] to build a better future for our people and country”*

**Jenny Lacey, Board Member, Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation 2019.**

QPWS works in partnership with the EAC, across the protected area estates that are within Ewamian Country, to ensure both cultural and natural values are conserved.

To foster this approach between the EAC and QPWS, both parties have identified strategies to be implemented and considered in managing Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve.

### Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
The relationship with Ewamian people and the protection of their cultural heritage will be managed by improved knowledge and partnership, and recognising their connection to Country and their role in managing the cultural heritage values that occur across protected areas within Ewamian Traditional Lands.		
Threatening process	Strategic management direction	Priority
Loss of connection to Country	<b>Involvement in decision making</b> Improving connection to Country by incorporating the EAC in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of park management across Ewamian Country.	1
	<b>Sharing knowledge</b> Increase capacity and knowledge of both the EAC and QPWS through joint participation in park management activities.	1
	<b>Getting back on Country</b> Provide opportunities and support to Ewamian Elders and People to visit and connect with Country on Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve.	1

*“We are turning the negatives of the past into positives of the future”*

**David Hudson, Board Member, Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation 2019.**

As part of the efforts by today’s Ewamian people to reconnect with Country and culture, they are working to rebirth the Ewamian language, which is derived from Agwamin society. QPWS is working with Ewamian to include the Wamin language on QPWS interpretive materials across Ewamian Country. Some of the key values within this document have also had Wamin language names included as provided by the EAC. A glossary for these terms including pronunciation is provided in **Table 1**.

**Table 1. Wamin language glossary**

Wamin word	Definition	Pronunciation
<i>Wamin abu-dha</i>	Ewamian land	<i>Wa-min ar-boo-da</i>
<i>Wundu</i>	Forest country	<i>Woo-n-doo</i>
<i>Arburə kogo</i>	Flat country water	<i>Ar-bor-er gu-gu</i>
<i>Madha</i>	Mountain, rock/stone	<i>Ma-da</i>

## 3. Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve

### 3.1 Management statement and thematic strategies

The Rungulla National Park Management Statement incorporates Rungulla National Park and Rungulla Resources Reserve. The management statement provides the strategic direction for managing their keys values (Section 4) and meeting our custodial obligations across eight **management themes** (Section 5). The management statement is supported by the *Rungulla National Park Resource Information* document, a compendium of park information that tells the story of the park. The strategic management direction set out in this management statement links to a set of thematic strategies that detail management objectives, providing the connection between high-level strategies and on-ground operations. The complexity of a park's values and custodial obligations determine the requirements for specific strategies. Rungulla requires four thematic strategies:

- Fire
- Pest
- Monitoring and research
- Ewamian Peoples' engagement and cultural heritage

### 3.2 Park overview

Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve (Rungulla) is located approximately 116km south-west of Forsyth, and is in the Queensland Government electorate of Mount Isa and the local government area of Etheridge Shire, **Map 1**.

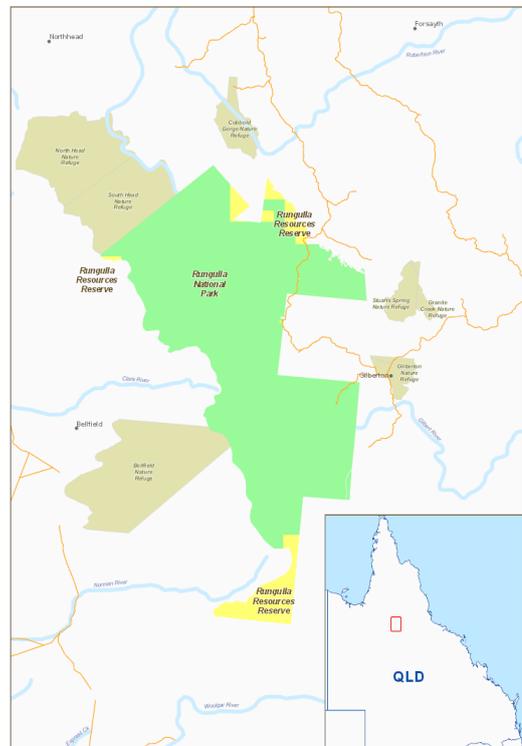
The area contains spectacular rugged sandstone country, dissected by the Gilbert River and straddles two bioregions. Rungulla is part of the Great Artesian Basin Rim state-wide corridor and protects several ecosystems that are poorly represented in the protected area estate.

Rungulla (pronounced Roong-ala) has significant natural values including springs and spring-fed watercourses, plateau lagoons, and varied refugia habitats. Its low level of disturbance, altitudinal variation and local refugia provide resilience to climate change and disturbance.

Rungulla's wide range of sandstone landforms and features—folded sediments, outcrops, sculptured caves and pagoda like formations—create a spectacular landscape. Woodlands with perennial grasses provide habitat for species of conservation significance such as the Gouldian finch *Erythrura gouldiae* and koala *Phascolarctos cinereus*. Rungulla possesses a diversity of wetlands of state significance including springs, perched sedge swamps on plateaus and riverine areas.

### 3.3 Resource use

Rungulla Resources Reserve enables reasonable access to the mineral resources within the reserve and management of the area needs to both consider this access and the rights of current leaseholders within the reserve. Note that when current resource authorities expire it is anticipated that the areas of Resources Reserve will be incorporated into the national park.



# 4. Key values

All parks, forests and reserves have an array of natural, cultural, social and/or economic values that are important and contribute to the state’s comprehensive and representative protected area and forest estate. The VBMF supports a process for identifying and protecting the most important values, the key values, and this directs the allocation of resources.

In this section, a **key value statement** is provided for each key value, identifying the current **condition and trend**, and a desired condition. The main threatening processes are identified and rated from high to low. A strategic management direction provides a broad strategy to address the threatening process to achieve the **desired outcome** over time. Each strategic management direction is prioritised according to the need for action to prevent further decline, stabilise current condition, or restore and enhance the value (refer to **priority rating** in Appendix 2).

The condition of all key values is (or will be) assessed through regular **health checks** or other monitoring. The monitoring and research strategy outlines opportunities and needs for scientific monitoring and research programs that will enhance our knowledge. Any change to a key value’s condition will be identified through health checks and/or monitoring, enabling QPWS to act quickly, applying best practice adaptive management.

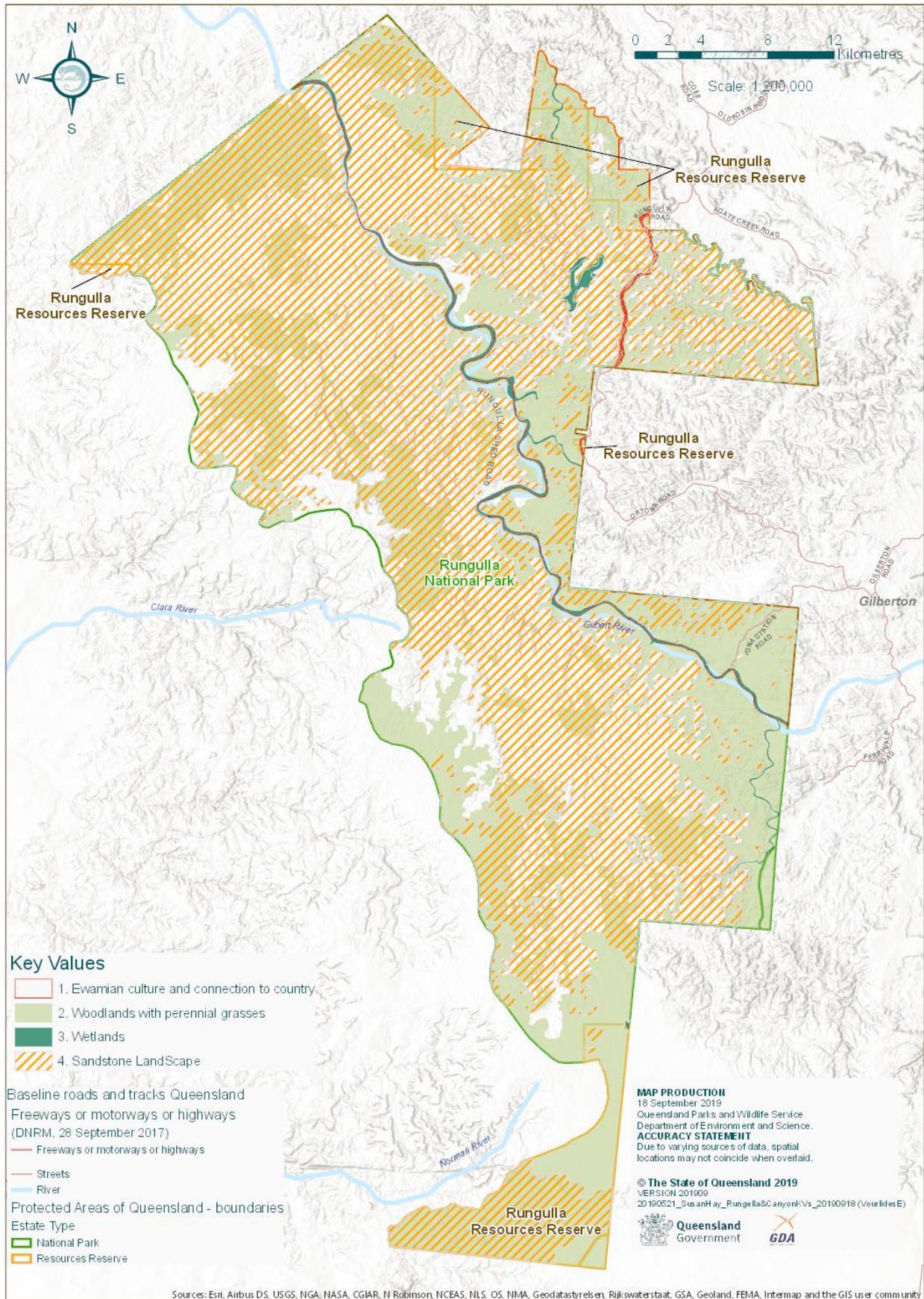
## Summary of key values

A summary of the key values is detailed below. The location of each key value is shown in Map 2. Figure 2 provides a key to interpreting the condition and trend icons used in this section.

	Current condition	Confidence in condition assessment	Current trend	Confidence in trend assessment	Desired condition
<b>4.1 Ewamian Culture and Connection to Country — <i>Wamin abu-dha</i></b>	2018 	Adequate 	↑	Adequate 	
<b>4.2 Woodlands with perennial grasses — <i>Wúndu</i></b>	2016 	Limited 	↑	Limited 	
<b>4.3 Wetlands — <i>Arburə kogo</i></b>	2016 	Limited 	↑	Limited 	
<b>4.4 Sandstone landscape — <i>Madha</i></b>	2016 	Limited 	↔	Limited 	

Figure 2: Key to condition, trend and confidence icons

<b>Condition of key value</b>	<b>Good</b>  The value is in good condition and is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, provided that current measures are maintained	<b>Good with some concern</b>  The value is likely to be maintained over the long-term with minor additional conservation measures to address existing concerns	<b>Significant concern</b>  The value is threatened by a number of current and/or potential threats. Significant additional conservation measures are required to preserve the value over the medium to long-term	<b>Critical</b>  The value is severely threatened. Urgent additional large-scale conservation measures are required or the value may be lost
<b>Trend rating of condition</b>	<b>Improving</b> 	<b>Stable</b> 	<b>Deteriorating</b> 	<b>No consistent trend</b> 
<b>Confidence in assessment</b>	<b>Inferred</b> 	<b>Limited</b> 	<b>Adequate</b> 	



Map 2: Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve key values

## 4.1 Ewamian culture and Connection to Country — *Wamin abu-dha*

### Key value statement

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Rungulla National Park is highly significant to Ewamian people. The sandstone and surrounding areas contains a high number of unrecorded significant places including rock shelters, stone tools and cultural resources such as bush tucker	Condition and trend	2018 		
	Assessment confidence	Adequate 	Adequate 	

***“Our culture is more than just the physical, it is the spiritual connection that we feel when we are on Country; it’s the old People here.”***

**Jenny Lacey, Board Member, Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation 2019.**

Ewamian Country is a diverse cultural landscape that encompasses a spiritual connection to places and sites. Ewamian people connect with cultural sites including rock art, scar trees, artefacts, occupation sites, bora grounds, stone groovings and ceremonial grounds. The recent history of the Ewamian people includes their displacement from, and dispossession of, traditional lands as European settlement expanded throughout the area. Despite these historical events that affected the continuous connection to Country for Ewamian people, they maintain a strong connection to their lands, traditional culture and lore.

The full range of cultural values of Rungulla National Park are only just beginning to be understood as Ewamian and QPWS conduct surveys within the park (Buhrich 2018, Winn 2017). Vast areas remain unrecorded. To date, site inspections have identified a highly intact cultural landscape, which includes archaeological sites, natural springs, grinding grooves, burials, ochre and extensive plant resources.

The park has high potential for archaeological and historical research. Records from the 1980s identified a high concentration of rock art at Agate and Cave creeks, some of which are within the Rungulla Resources Reserve.

The history of early contact on the Gilbert River includes a violent period between 1864 and 1875 when there were major conflicts between Ewamian people and European and Chinese prospectors. A series of attacks on Chinese prospectors by Ewamian people contributed to the abandonment of the Gilbert River Mining Field in 1873.

The reason the cultural landscape remains so intact is because access to the pastoral properties was restricted. Introducing visitors to the area has the potential to impact Aboriginal cultural values by unauthorised removal of items by visitors, graffiti or other threats to the rock art.

It is important to QPWS that cultural heritage management on Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve does not just seek to conserve the tangible cultural values but also respect the need for cultural practices, to be maintained or reconnected with, by Ewamian people. Cultural surveys across Rungulla National Park are continuing to help Ewamian people connect to Country and also increase our capacity to jointly protect cultural values. The capturing of Ewamian culture and connection to country (*Wamin abu dha*) as a key value in this management statement will ensure this protection is integrated into future management decisions.

### Threats

**Primary threat:** Visitors without the appropriate education may negatively impact on the tangible cultural values of Rungulla National Park, through carelessness, vandalism and theft. **Threat rating: Unknown**

**Secondary threat:** Deterioration to tangible cultural values can be caused by both native species, including wasps and termites (directly damaging timber artefacts and rock art), and feral animals, including cattle and horses (rubbing against artefacts and rock art). Natural erosion can also present a threat by deteriorating the tangible cultural values. **Threat rating: Unknown**

### Desired outcome and strategic management direction

Desired outcome		
Threatening process	Strategic management direction	Priority
 The condition of Ewamian culture and connection to Country will be improved by continuing to protect cultural values from visitor and problematic species impacts		
<b>Visitor impacts</b>	Minimise impacts of visitors on cultural values.	<b>2</b>
<b>Pest animal</b>	Reduce impacts of termites and wasps on cultural values.	<b>2</b>
<b>Natural deterioration</b>	Minimise impacts of natural erosion on cultural values.	<b>2</b>
<b>Pest animal</b>	Reduce impacts of cattle and horses on cultural values.	<b>3</b>

See Appendix 2. Glossary for priority rating definitions.

## 4.2 Woodlands with perennial grasses — *Wúndu*

### Key value statement

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Woodlands with ground coverage dominated by perennial grasses	Condition and trend	2016 		
	Assessment confidence	Limited 	Limited 	

The open woodlands of Rungulla represent both ‘of concern’ regional ecosystems as well as potential habitat for a number of conservation significant species including koala, northern quoll *Dasyurus hallucatus*, Gouldian finch and the black-throated finch *Poephila cincta cincta*. The improvement in the condition of this value is associated with reduced total grazing pressure through the ongoing reduction of numbers of cattle and horses from the property, and re-instating appropriate fire regimes.

Regional ecosystems of this value: RE 2.10.4, 2.10.2, 2.10.5, 2.11.1, 2.3.21, 2.5.25, 2.7.2, 9.10.3, 9.11.16, 9.11.23, 9.11.28, 9.11.30, 9.12.11 and 9.8.9.

### Threats

**Primary threat:** Difficulty in managing appropriate fire regimes resulting in changes to perennial grass composition, and age-class structure of the woodland ecosystem. **Threat rating: High**

**Secondary threat:** The incursion of pest plants, including yellow oleander *Cascabela thevetia* and especially grasses brought into this open habitat by vehicles and livestock. High biomass grasses are present on lands outside the park and reserve and have the potential to threaten the environmental values of these restricted communities. Potential species for establishment include thatch *Hyparrhenia hirta* and grader grass *Themeda quadrivalvis*. **Threat rating: High**

**Other threat:** Horses and cattle selectively feed on specific grasses and transport pest plants into and around the protected areas. **Threat rating: High**

### Desired outcome and strategic management direction

Desired outcome		
	The condition of woodlands and their perennial grasses will be improved to <i>good</i> by creating a landscape of mosaic of fire age-class, minimising pest plant impacts and continued management of introduced grazing stock.	
Threatening process	Strategic management direction	Priority
Pest plant	Contain yellow oleander within current mapped locations in woodland with perennial grasses communities.	1
	Prevent the establishment of grader grass and thatch in the woodlands with perennial grasses communities.	2
Fire	Restore critical structural elements and age class variation of woodland with perennial grasses communities through the targeted application of fire.	2
Pest animal	Reduce impacts of horses and cattle on woodland with perennial grasses communities.	2

See Appendix 2. Glossary for priority rating definitions.

## 4.3 Wetland ecosystems — *Arbure kogo*

### Key value statement

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
The wetland ecosystems of Rungulla include palustrine, lacustrine and riverine ecosystems and provide refugia and ecosystem services to the region	Condition and trend	2016 		
	Assessment confidence	Limited 	Limited 	

Rungulla has significant wetlands, especially springs feeding the headwaters of several creeks and streams, sedge lagoons on plateau surfaces, as well as riverine areas. The Gilbert River is the main waterway through the park. All of these wetland and waterway areas contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the park, as well as providing habitat species of conservation significance including nationally recognised migratory birds and the nationally endangered sawfish *Pristis pristis*. The condition of these freshwater systems range from severely degraded—with gully erosion, weed invasion and pig damage—to excellent condition in locations where the geology has protected the values.

### Threats

**Primary threat:** Pest plants such as rubber vine *Cryptostegia grandiflora* and calotrope *Calotropis procera* have the capacity to change the ecosystem through forming a dense mono-specific plant culture along the riparian zone. **Threat rating: Medium**

**Secondary threat:** Pest animals (particularly pigs, cattle and horses) damaging vegetation, soil structure and water quality through grazing, intensive trampling, wallowing and digging. **Threat rating: Medium**

**Other threat:** Wildfire has the potential to significantly impact on wetland ecosystems. **Threat rating: High**

### Desired outcome and strategic management direction

Desired outcome		
	The condition of the wetland areas on Rungulla will be improved to <i>good</i> by minimising the impacts of pest plants and animals on the riparian zone and within the wetlands themselves.	
Threatening process	Strategic management direction	Priority
<b>Pest plant</b>	Reduce the impacts of rubber vine and calotrope along fringes of wetland ecosystems.	<b>2</b>
<b>Pest animal</b>	Reduce impacts of pigs, cattle and horses on wetland ecosystems.	<b>2</b>
<b>Fire</b>	Protect wetland ecosystems through appropriate fire management of adjacent fire adapted communities.	<b>2</b>

See Appendix 2. Glossary for priority rating definitions.

## 4.4 Sandstone landscape — *Madha*

### Key value statement

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
The rugged sandstone landscapes of Rungulla contain variable landforms and features with varying degrees of folded sediments and metamorphism	Condition and trend	2016 		
	Assessment confidence	Limited 	Limited 	

### Value statement

Areas of Rungulla display spectacular sandstone geology that is nationally significant and often contrasted with the nearby, but different, sandstones of Cobbold Gorge. The property is dominated by Jurassic Hampstead Sandstone Formation, a complex of basal sediments of the Great Artesian Basin. This landscape is characterised by sculptured caves, pagoda-like formations, ledges, low scarps and folded sediments. In some locations these formations are overlain by younger sediments, particularly along the Gregory Range, where ledges and plateaus are comprised of more ironstone and residual sand sheets (Brown & Morgan, 2011).

Many of these features contain and protect numerous examples of Aboriginal material culture in the form of rock art, etching and grinding grooves.

It is anticipated that one of the most accessible visitor experiences on Rungulla will be viewing the sandstone features while traversing park areas. Opportunities for low-impact camping and recreation are being explored with the EAC.

### Threats

**Primary threat:** Visitors without the appropriate education may negatively impact on the cultural sites and artwork through carelessness, vandalism and theft. **Threat rating: Unknown**

**Secondary threat:** Resource exploration or extraction may damage geological features in the resources reserve (see section 3.3). **Threat rating: Low**

### Desired outcome and strategic management direction

Desired outcome		
	The condition of the sandstone landscape will be maintained at <i>good</i> by encouraging low-impact visitor use through enhanced interpretation. The impacts of resource exploration and mining on the sandstone landscape will also be mitigated.	
Threatening process	Strategic management direction	Priority
Mining and quarrying	Reduce impacts of resource exploration and extraction on the sandstone landscape through specific conditions in authorities granted.	2
	Upon expiry of current resource authorities, incorporate the areas of resources reserve into the national park.	1
Visitor impacts	Minimise impacts of visitors on cultural values.	2

See Appendix 2. Glossary for priority rating definitions.

## 5. Management direction

QPWS manages protected areas and forests to protect their values and deliver our custodial obligations as a land manager. Levels of service (LoS) assessment allows QPWS to consider the management of each park in a state-wide context and determine desired levels of management effort for each park in a consistent and equitable way. LoS assessment lets QPWS staff and the public know what type or level of management activity to expect on each park, forest and/or reserve. There are five LoS ratings ranging from 'acceptable' to 'exceptional': an acceptable rating is the minimum standard required to deliver good management and meet our legislative and custodial obligations.

A greater focus will be required to improve the approach to managing natural values. The key areas to maintain a management focus for improving the condition of natural values are fire and pest management. This section provides a **management direction statement** for each management theme, identifying its current LoS, desired LoS and the strategic management direction for management.

### Summary of management direction

A summary of the current and desired LoS for Rungulla is shown below; Figure 3 provides a key to the LoS icons.

	Current LoS	Desired LoS
1. Fire management	 Medium	 Medium
2. Pest management	 High	 High
3. Natural values management	 Medium	 High
4. Historic cultural heritage management	 Acceptable	 Acceptable
5. Visitor management	 Acceptable	 Medium
6. Community, partnerships and other interest	 Acceptable	 Medium
7. Field management capability	 High	 High
8. Operational planning and management support	 High	 High

Figure 3. Key to condition, trend and confidence icons



## 5.1 Fire management

### Management direction statement

Description	Current level of service
Fire management for Rungulla	

Fire control and prevention are vital for QPWS to protect life and property, mitigate wildfires and maintain natural diversity in accordance with the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Qld) (NCA) and the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* (Qld). QPWS works cooperatively with First Nations Peoples, state and local government agencies, rural fire brigades, adjoining landholders, and local communities to manage fire across the landscape.

The strategic management direction in this management statement, combined with Ewamian people’s knowledge of traditional burning practices and the Queensland Government’s *Planned Burn Guidelines: Einasleigh Uplands Queensland Bioregion of Queensland*, will guide the formation of the Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve Fire Strategy.

The Ewamian people and QPWS consider fire critical to managing Country and maintaining Ewamian culture.

The *Rungulla Fire Strategy* will detail QPWS custodial obligations for protecting life and property, and fire management objectives for maintaining key values through the use of fire management zones and cultural burn practices.

### Desired level of service and strategic management direction

Desired level of service	
	Fire will be managed at a <i>medium</i> LoS through maintaining efforts to manage natural and cultural key values and reduce risks associated with life and property.
Strategic management direction	Priority
<b>Custodial obligations</b>	
Mitigate the potential severity and impacts of wildfire on neighbouring properties.	1
<b>Level of service</b>	
Continue to engage with the Ewamian people to ensure that cultural fire management obligations are met.	1
Maintain knowledge of fire ecology and the impacts of fire on key values.	2
Maintain the current level of stakeholder engagement with park neighbours.	2

\*KEY: Priority ratings: M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

## 5.2 Pest management

### Management direction statement

Description	Current level of service
Pest management for Rungulla	

Pest management is core business for QPWS to mitigate the threats to biodiversity in accordance with the NCA. QPWS has a responsibility under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (Qld) to take all reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks associated with plant and animal pests on lands under our control. Recognising that effective management of pests across the landscape is a shared responsibility, QPWS works cooperatively with First Nations Peoples, other state and local government agencies, landholders and natural resource management groups.

The strategic management directions in this management statement guide the formation of the *Rungulla Pest Strategy*. The strategy details pest management objectives for preventing and mitigating pest impacts on key values and QPWS’s custodial obligations for managing pests and priority pest species.

### Desired level of service and strategic management direction

Desired level of service	
	Pests will be managed to a <i>high</i> LoS through maintaining knowledge and engagement to minimise threats to natural and cultural key values.
Strategic management direction	Priority
<b>Custodial obligations</b>	
Maintain the current level of engagement with stakeholders to mitigate the potential impacts of pests on neighbouring properties.	2
<b>Level of service</b>	
Maintain the current level of knowledge of pests and their impacts and investigate emerging threats.	2
Maintain current approach to pest management by ensuring that priority is placed on protecting key values from pest impacts.	2
Engage with the EAC on managing pests in the vicinity of art sites.	2

\*KEY: **Priority ratings:** M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

## 5.3 Natural values management

### Management direction statement

Description	Current level of service
Natural values management for Rungulla	

QPWS manages natural values in accordance with Ewamian Traditional knowledge, the NCA, *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (Qld), *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth), and relevant international agreement guidelines.

Rungulla has significant values, including endangered regional ecosystems and threatened species that are underrepresented across the protected area estate. The condition of natural values will be monitored through implementing the *Rungulla Monitoring and Research Strategy*.

Threatening processes will be managed through implementing Rungulla’s fire and pest strategies.

### Desired level of service and strategic management direction

Desired level of service	
	Natural values will be managed to a <i>high</i> LoS through improved knowledge and engagement, to improve the condition of the natural values.

Strategic management direction		Priority
<b>Level of service</b>		
Increase traditional ecological knowledge and baseline information on the natural values of the protected areas.		2
<b>Health check monitoring</b>		
Monitor the condition of natural key values through health check monitoring.		1

\*KEY: Priority ratings: M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

## 5.4 Historic cultural heritage management

### Management direction statement

Description	Current level of service
Historic cultural heritage management for Rungulla	

QPWS manages historic sites in accordance with the NCA and *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* (Qld).

No sites are listed on the Queensland Heritage Register or Australian National Heritage List.

### Desired level of service and strategic management direction

Desired level of service	
	Historic cultural heritage will be managed at an <i>acceptable</i> LoS through maintaining knowledge and engagement, to identify any values and associated threats.
Strategic management direction	
Level of service	Priority
Maintain current approach to protecting the historic cultural heritage values.	5

\*KEY: Priority ratings: M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

## 5.5 Visitor management

### Management direction statement

Description	Current level of service
Visitor management for Rungulla	

Queensland’s parks, forests and reserves provide local communities and visitors from around the world with opportunities to experience our rich natural and cultural heritage, and diverse recreational and ecotourism opportunities. QPWS and the EAC seek a responsible balance between visitor opportunities and protecting the natural and cultural values of the area. Permitted commercial tour activities, agreements and events are administered in accordance with the NCA and other relevant legislation.

QPWS supports the EAC’s aspirations for greater engagement and involvement in the tourism sector.

The condition of, and visitor satisfaction with, visitor experiences will be monitored through the implementation of the *Rungulla Monitoring and Research Strategy*.

The visitor experience will be maintained through facilities that are appropriate for the remote setting of the area.

### Desired level of service and strategic management direction

Desired level of service	
	Visitor use will be improved to a <i>medium</i> LoS, through identifying and developing new visitor opportunities to support low-level visitor use.
Strategic management direction	Priority
<b>Level of service</b>	
Identify and develop appropriate visitor opportunities in consultation with the EAC.	2
Improve visitor experiences through interpretation of park values via agency website.	3
Enhance visitor experience of the sandstone landscape and protection of cultural values through interpretation and education.	4
Culturally appropriate interpretive material is developed by the EAC to enhance visitor experience.	2
<b>Health check monitoring</b>	
Monitor the condition of visitor key values through health check monitoring.	1

\*KEY: Priority ratings: M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

## 5.6 Community, partnerships and other interests

### Management direction statement

Description	Current level of service
Community, partnerships and other interests associated with Rungulla	

Queensland’s parks, forests and reserves provide sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits. The agency is committed to working with the community and its partners to ensure activities and infrastructure are ecologically sustainable and continue to benefit Queensland’s economic and social wellbeing as outlined in Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service’s *Master Plan* (QPWS, 2014). Permitted activities are administered in accordance with the requirements of the NCA and other relevant legislation.

### Desired level of service and strategic management direction

Desired level of service	
	Community and commercial interests will be managed to a <i>medium</i> LoS, by improving levels of engagement, to address any significant community issues.
Strategic management direction	Priority

Level of service	
Improve relationships with neighbours, in particular with respect to managing impacts of fire and pests on park values and the community.	4

\*KEY: Priority ratings: M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

## 5.7 Field management capability

### Management direction statement

Description	Current level of service
Field management capability for Rungulla	

Managing natural and cultural areas has varying degrees of complexity. Field management capability is a measure of this complexity and considers the significance of the planning area’s values, potential threats, intensity of visitor use and community expectations. It considers the required proximity, frequency and intensity of on-ground management that is needed to manage key values and meet custodial obligations. The rating provides QPWS with a means for gauging resource requirements and staff training needs.

### Desired level of service and strategic management direction

Desired level of service	
	Field management capacity will be managed to a <i>high</i> LoS, through maintaining knowledge and understanding of operational needs, to manage key values.

Strategic management direction	Priority
<b>Level of service</b>	
Maintain the current operational capacity to actively manage the values of Rungulla.	2
Maintain knowledge of the values of Rungulla.	3

\*KEY: Priority ratings: M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

## 5.8 Operational planning and management support

### Management direction statement

Description	Current level of service
Operational planning and management support for Rungulla	

Operational planning and management support covers all aspects of management direction including information, assessments, systems, tools and monitoring. As with field management capability, the area’s values, potential threats, intensity of visitor use and community expectations are considered when determining the appropriate levels of service.

### Desired level of service and strategic management direction

Desired level of service	
	Operational planning and management support will be managed to a <i>high</i> LoS, by maintaining current levels of support, to manage key values.

Strategic management direction	Priority
<b>Level of service:</b>	
Ensure that the EAC is included in operational planning and management.	2
Maintain support from regional technical experts around key management challenges, issues and planning.	3

\*KEY: Priority ratings: M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

## 6. References

Brown, S & Morgan, G and contributions from Martin, K. 2011 'Field Assessment of Environmental Values for Rungulla Pastoral Holding' Unpublished report, Department of Environment and Resource Management – Queensland Government, 31 pgs.

Buhrich, A. 2018, 'Managing Ewamian values on Rungulla National Park' Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation, Report to QPWS.

Cole, N. 1989, 'Rock Art at Agate Creek' Brief report to the Heritage Branch, Dept. Environment and Heritage, 13 pgs.

Horsfall, N. 1990, 'Agate Creek – Report on Archaeology' Unpublished report by Regional Archaeologist, Cultural Heritage Branch, Dept of Environment and Heritage, 4 pgs.

Winn, N. 2017 'Rungulla National Park and the Canyon Resources Reserve, Cultural Heritage Surveys' Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation, Report for EAC and QPWS.

# Appendix 1. Summary of strategic management directions

A summary of strategic management directions for key values (Table 2) and management direction (Table 3).

## Table 1. Summary of strategic management direction for the Ewamian People

Strategic management directions	Priority (1-5) *
Improving connection to Country by incorporating the EAC in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of park management across Ewamian Country.	1
Increase capacity and knowledge of both the EAC and QPWS through joint participation in park management activities.	1
Provide opportunities and support to Ewamian Elders and People to visit and connect with Country on Rungulla National Park and Resources Reserve.	1

## Table 2. Summary of strategic management direction for key values

Key value	Current	Desired	Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority (1-5) *
<b>Ewamian Culture and Connection to Country</b>			<b>Visitor impacts</b>	Minimise impacts of visitors on cultural values.	2
			<b>Pest animal</b>	Reduce impacts of termites and wasps on cultural values.	2
			<b>Natural deterioration</b>	Minimise impacts of natural erosion on cultural values.	2
			<b>Pest animal</b>	Reduce impacts of cattle and horses on cultural values.	3
<b>Woodlands with perennial grasses</b>			<b>Pest plant</b>	Contain yellow oleander within current mapped locations in woodland with perennial grasses communities.	1
				Prevent the establishment of grader grass and thatch in the woodlands with perennial grasses communities.	2
			<b>Fire</b>	Restore critical structural elements and age class variation of woodland with perennial grasses communities through the targeted application of fire.	2
			<b>Pest animal</b>	Reduce impacts of horses and cattle on woodland with perennial grasses communities.	2
<b>Wetland ecosystems</b>			<b>Pest plant</b>	Reduce the impacts of rubber vine and calotrope along fringes of wetland ecosystems.	2
			<b>Pest animal</b>	Reduce impacts of pigs, cattle and horses on wetland ecosystems.	2
			<b>Fire</b>	Protect wetland ecosystems through appropriate fire management of adjacent fire-adapted communities.	2
<b>Sandstone landscape</b>			<b>Mining and quarrying</b>	Reduce impacts of resource exploration and extraction on the sandstone landscape through specific conditions in authorities granted.	2
				Upon expiry of current resource authorities, incorporate the areas of resources reserve into the national park.	1
			<b>Visitor impacts</b>	Minimise impacts of visitors on cultural values.	2

**Table 3. Summary of strategic management direction for management direction**

Management theme	Current LoS	Desired LoS	Strategic management directions	Priority (1-5) *
<b>Fire</b>			Mitigate the potential severity and impacts of wildfire on neighbouring properties.	1
			Continue to engage with the Ewamian people to ensure that cultural fire management obligations are met.	1
			Maintain knowledge of fire ecology and the impacts of fire on key values.	2
			Maintain the current level of stakeholder engagement with park neighbours.	2
<b>Pests</b>			Maintain the current level of engagement with stakeholders to mitigate the potential impacts of pests on neighbouring properties.	2
			Maintain the current level of knowledge of pests and their impacts and investigate emerging threats.	2
			Maintain current approach to pest management by ensuring that priority is placed on protecting key values from pest impacts.	2
			Engage with the EAC on managing pests in the vicinity of art sites.	2
<b>Natural values</b>			Increase knowledge and baseline information on the natural values of the protected areas, including incorporating Traditional knowledge.	2
			Monitor the condition of natural key values through health check monitoring.	1
<b>Historic cultural heritage</b>			Maintain current approach to protecting the historic cultural heritage values.	5
<b>Visitor</b>			Identify and develop appropriate visitor opportunities in consultation with the EAC.	2
			Improve visitor experiences through interpretation of park values via the agency website.	3
			Enhance visitor experience of the sandstone landscape and protect cultural values through interpretation and education.	4
			Monitor the condition of visitor key values through health check monitoring.	1
<b>Community, partnerships and other interests</b>			Culturally appropriate interpretive material is developed by the EAC to enhance visitor experience.	2
			Improve relationships with neighbours, in particular with respect to managing impacts of fire and pests on park values and the community.	3
<b>Field management capability</b>			Maintain the current operational capacity to actively manage the values of Rungulla.	2
			Maintain knowledge of the values of Rungulla.	3
<b>Operational planning and management support</b>			Maintain support from regional technical experts around key management challenges, issues and planning.	3
			Ensure that the EAC is included in operational planning and management.	2

\*KEY: Priority ratings: M – maintain current priorities; Scale 1 (extremely urgent and extremely necessary) to 5 (optional and not urgent).

# Appendix 2. Glossary

## Interpreting key values-based management framework concepts

<b>Adaptive management</b>	The process of adjusting and improving how we manage parks, forests and reserves after assessing the outcomes of previous strategies and on-ground actions.
<b>Condition and trend</b>	The condition of a key value is assessed as either good, good with some concern, significant concern or critical. Trend describes what is happening to the condition: is it improving, stable, or deteriorating. A key value's current condition is determined during the planning process. A desired condition is a realistic goal for the future condition of the key value. The ongoing condition of key values is assessed with regular health checks, monitoring and scientific assessment.
<b>Custodial obligations</b>	The requirements under law as a land manager to ensure that QPWS & Partnerships' parks, forests and reserves are lawfully managed and good neighbours. Management provides for the protection of life and property, biosecurity and positive relationships with adjacent communities and landholders, as well as enhancing and protecting our values.
<b>Desired outcome</b>	A statement in the key value and management direction statements about moving from the current status (condition or LoS) to a desired status. The goal for management.
<b>Health check</b>	Basic monitoring 'tool' that uses indicators and visual assessments to regularly evaluate the condition of key values. Regular health checks ensure QPWS & Partnerships can respond quickly to adverse change and redirect management priorities.
<b>Jurassic Hampstead Sandstone Formation</b>	About 180 million years ago in the Jurassic period, large river systems, probably similar to the Gulf rivers of today, flowed across the region. They carried coarse sand and sometimes gravel, derived from highlands of granite and metamorphic rocks to the southeast and east. As the rivers meandered back and forth across the flood plains, the sand was deposited as a sheet that eventually covered the entire area. With time the sand hardened into sandstone which is referred as the Hampstead Sandstone.
<b>Key value</b>	A natural, cultural, and/or social value that is of most significance to that area. It is what makes the area special and if lost, would diminish what makes the area distinct from others.
<b>Key value statement</b>	A statement in the management plan/statement that is developed for each key value. It describes the key value, current condition, desired condition, current threats and threat ratings, strategic management direction and priorities for further thematic strategy planning and on-ground management action.
<b>Levels of service (LoS)</b>	A planning tool used to identify the acceptable management standard, or level of resourcing that is required to maintain an area based on its values, threats and the complexity of management. There are five LoS ratings ranging from 'acceptable' to 'exceptional' noting that an acceptable rating is the minimum standard required to deliver good management and meet our custodial obligations under law as a land manager. A 'current' LoS rating is the level at the time of planning, the 'desired' LoS is where we want to be.
<b>Management direction</b>	How we manage each management theme to protect and enhance our key values and meet our custodial management obligations.
<b>Management direction statement</b>	A statement in the management plan/statement, developed for each management theme that describes the current LoS, desired LoS, custodial obligations, strategic management direction and priorities for further thematic strategy planning and on-ground management action.
<b>Management theme</b>	QPWS & Partnerships has identified a number of management themes that are common to most of the parks, forests and reserves in our estate: fire management; pest management; natural values management; historic cultural heritage management; visitor management; community, partnerships and other interest; field management capability; operational planning and management support.
<b>Management instrument</b>	A management plan or management statement.
<b>Priority rating (key value SMDs)</b>	<p>A rating given to a strategic management direction according to the need for action to prevent further decline, stabilise current condition, or restore and enhance values, with consideration given to legislative obligations, cost, social, economic and political factors.</p> <p>Critical (1) Loss or very significant decline in the condition of key value/s is highly likely if action not taken OR significant improvement in the condition of key value/s is highly likely if action is taken.</p> <p>Very high (2) - Significant decline in the condition of key value/s is likely if action is not taken OR significant improvement in the condition of key value/s is likely if action is taken.</p> <p>High (3) -Decline in the condition of key value/s is likely if action is not taken OR improvement in the condition of key value/s is likely if action is taken.</p> <p>Moderate (4) -Some decline in the condition of key value/s is possible if action is not taken OR some improvement in the condition of key value/s is possible if action is taken.</p> <p>Desirable (5) - While decline in the condition of key value/s is not likely in the short term, the action, if taken would help build long-term resilience of key value/s.</p>
<b>Priority rating (LoS SMDs)</b>	A rating given to a LoS or custodial obligation strategic management direction. A scale from 1 (extremely urgent) – 5 (not urgent or optional) is assigned, with consideration given to legislative obligations, cost, social, economic and political factors.
<b>Strategic management direction</b>	A broad strategy aimed at mitigating or removing a threat to a key value and maintaining or improving the condition of a park's value; or addressing the gap between the current LoS and desired LoS for a management theme.
<b>Threat or threatening process and threat rating</b>	Based on IUCN's classifications, QPWS & Partnerships has identified threatening processes that have the potential to affect Queensland's values (e.g. natural systems modifications, invasive species etc.). Current threats to key values are identified and given a threat rating based on a combination of the extent of the impact, the severity of the impact, and the urgency of action.