

5.8. DAINTREE NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN SUBMISSION

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DEPARTMENT	Sustainable Communities

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to support and submit the attached Daintree National Park Management Plan Submission to the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (DPSR) has invited Douglas Shire Council to provide a submission regarding the draft Daintree National Park Management Plan.

BACKGROUND

DPSR has prepared a management plan for the Daintree National Park (**Attachment 1.**), this will replace the current Daintree National Park Management Statement 2013. The proposed Daintree National Park Management Plan (the Plan) recognises the Daintree National Park as one of Queensland's iconic parks.

The Plan has been prepared using the new Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) value-based management framework. The aim of this framework is to provide a high level, strategic direction for protecting and managing key park values.

Identified Daintree National Park Values

The five identified values in the Plan are:

1. Indigenous: Yalanji cultural values of the national park and surrounds
2. Ecosystems and biodiversity
 - a. Montane and upland forests
 - b. Tall open forests
 - c. Madja (rainforest)
 - d. Mangurru (Mangroves)
3. Ecosystem Services: Aesthetic value
4. Geological features (terrestrial)
 - a. Yalanji coastal values
 - b. Wawubaja, yilki, yiri (rivers, creeks and waterfalls)
5. Tourism: Sustainable tourism

For each of the five values a number aspects have been scored, these include the value's current condition (good to critical), trend (improving, stable, deteriorating or no trend), level of confidence about this information, and the desired condition (good to critical).

In addition, key threats have been identified and scored in terms of priority (1 being extremely urgent and 5 being optional) with corresponding management initiatives.

Levels of Service within the Daintree National Park

Nine identified levels of service have been identified in the Plan, these guide the level of management effort required and include:

1. Traditional Owner engagement and cultural heritage
2. Fire
3. Pests
4. Natural values
5. Historical cultural heritage
6. Visitors
7. Community, partnerships and other interests
8. Field management capability
9. Operational planning and management support

COMMENT

Based on the available information to date, Council has prepared a report for DPSR enclosed as **Attachment 2**.

PROPOSAL

That Council resolves to support and submit the attached Daintree National Park Management Plan Submission to the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic:	The Plan recognises the importance of the Daintree National Park on the region's economy and in particular the tourism and recreational industries.
Environmental:	The Plan continues to recognise the Daintree National Park as one of international significance for its diverse range of ecosystems, plants and animals.
Social:	The majority of the Daintree National Park lies within the lands of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people, with a small section of the park within the lands of the Western (Sunset) Yalanji people. The Plan places a greater emphasis on Traditional Owner values than the current management statement.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2014-2019 Initiatives:

Theme 4 - Engage, Plan, Partner

4.2.3 - Work with regional, state, national and international stakeholders to promote beneficial partnerships to support strong, resilient and sustainable communities.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

Advocate Supporting communities and groups by advocating for certain actions from other organisations (usually other levels of government)

CONSULTATION

Internal: Consultation has taken place with Councillors at the Workshop dated 24 October 2017.

External: Nil

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement has occurred at this stage. The ability to submit a submission is available to all.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Daintree National Park Management Plan 2017 **[5.8.1]**
2. Daintree National Park Management Plan Submission - Douglas Oct 2017 **[5.8.2]**

Daintree National Park

DRAFT Management Plan 2017



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



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Draft Management Plan

Introduction

The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Queensland) requires a management statement or plan to set high level strategies and priorities for managing each of Queensland's national parks. Management plans are succinct, management-oriented documents, which focus on maintaining or improving the condition of key park values and outlining how we will meet management standards (or 'levels of service') for the park.

This plan may be read alongside the park's 'resource information' and the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) plans (Eastern Yalanji Protected Area Plan Stage 2 Yalanji-Warra Land and Sea Country and Stage 3 – Yalanjiwarra Land and Sea Country). These IPA plans contain the aspirations, goals and actions for Yalanji Bama to manage their Land and Sea Country. Resource information provides more detailed background on Queensland's parks—providing an understanding of each park's purpose, values, resources, issues, management considerations and legal and administrative framework. Resource information may be used for a quick overview of the park or to gain a more in-depth understanding of the park's management issues and background.

Statements, plans and resource information documents are available on the Department of National Parks, Sports and Racing website at www.npsr.qld.gov.au

The Daintree National Park Management Plan will provide the framework for joint management of the park by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Kuku Yalanji Bama. It builds on the provisions for cooperative management agreed in the 2007 Eastern Kuku Yalanji indigenous land use agreements (ILUAs). Joint management will include a greater role for Traditional Owners in decision-making for the park, as well as increased employment opportunities for Kuku Yalanji Bama in park management.

The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* sets out the 'Cardinal Principle' for managing national parks—"A national park is to be managed 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." Daintree National Park will be managed consistently with all management principles for national parks, as defined in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and supporting regulations, the *Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007*, *Native Title Act 1993*, *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* (and any management plan prepared under this Act), Eastern Kuku Yalanji Indigenous Land Use Agreements 2007, and relevant government policies, procedures, and protocols. This plan recognises the management partnership between Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Yalanji and the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Management Authority (WTMA).

An invitation to comment

The release of this draft management plan for public comment provides an opportunity for everyone to have a say on how the Daintree National Park will be managed.

Written submissions on the draft management plan can be made via the Queensland Government's **Get Involved** website www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au.

The Minister will consider all submissions when finalising the management plan.

For further information on the draft management plan or the planning process, please visit the NPSR website www.npsr.qld.gov.au.

Daintree National Park

Park overview

Daintree National Park (the park) is one of Queensland's iconic parks. It is part of the largest tropical rainforest area in Australia and one of the country's most biologically diverse parks. The park is within the significant tourism region of Cairns and has outstanding scenic amenity—it is internationally valued for its spectacular scenery and diverse range of ecosystems, plants and animals.

These exceptional values contributed to Daintree National Park's inclusion as part of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area, which was listed on the UNESCO register of World Heritage sites on 9 December 1988.

A primary QPWS purpose for conserving Daintree National Park is to protect its diverse ecosystems, plants and animals, many of which are internationally significant for protection. The Mount Windsor Tablelands, Mossman Gorge and Cape Tribulation areas are considered biodiversity 'hotspots'. The park contains an almost complete representation of the major stages in the evolution of plant life on Earth.

Traditional Owners

Most of the park lies within the lands of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people, with a small section of the park within the lands of the Western (Sunset) Yalanji people. Traditional Owners continue to use the area for cultural activities and have ongoing commitments and cultural obligations to the management of the area. The continued connection to country and the ongoing use of cultural resources is of great importance to the Traditional Owners of this country. A native title determination over the majority of the park recognises the rights and interests of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people.

Daintree National Park values – a conceptual model

The plan recognises four components of the Yalanji relationship to the land (mountains, hills and valleys, coast, and waterways) and identifies key values that are a focus for management by QPWS. Figure 1 shows how these values relate to each other. Note: The *Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Outstanding Universal Value* and aesthetic value overlays many of these values across the park.

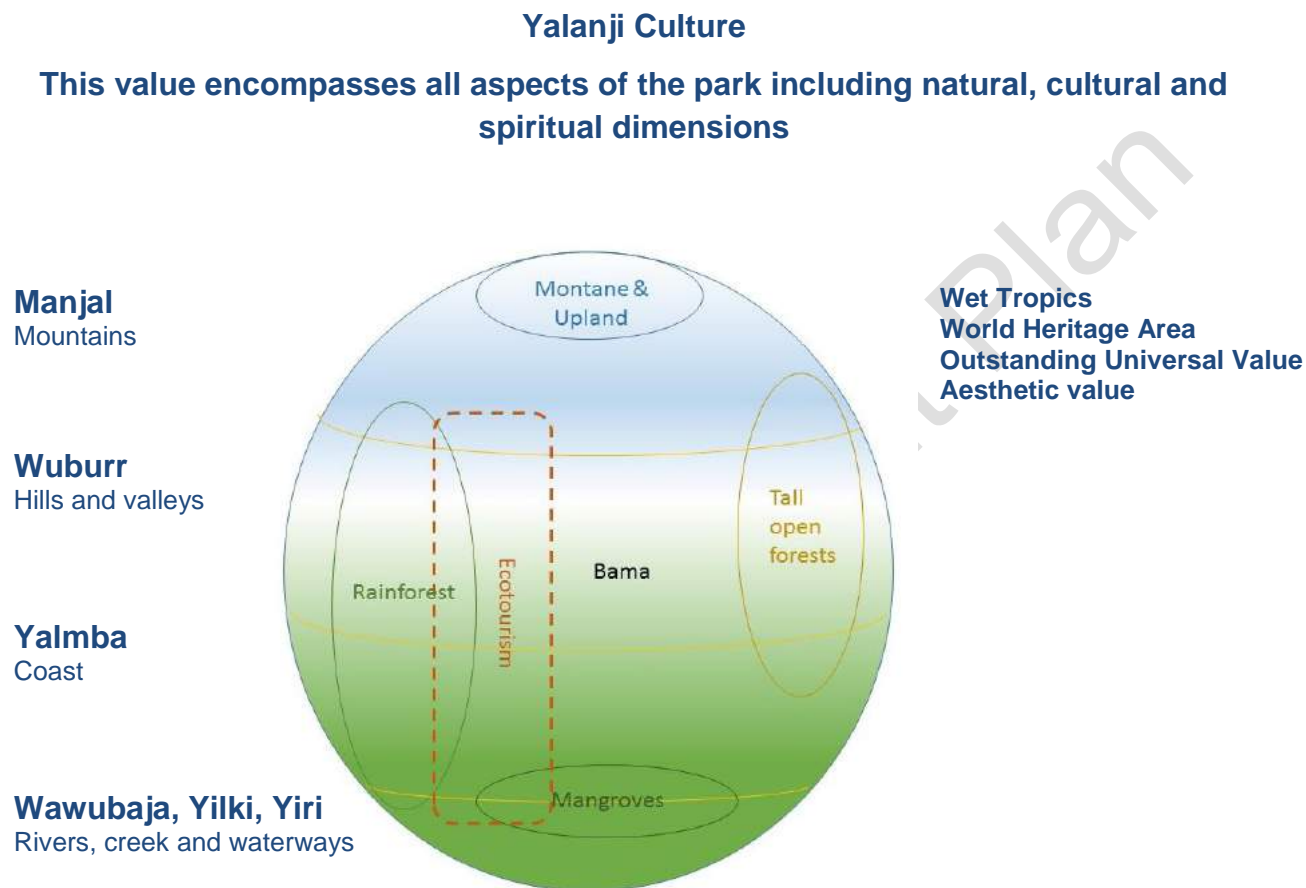


Figure 1. Conceptual model of Yalanji's relationship to the land

World Heritage

Daintree National Park is part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, inscribed upon the World Heritage List of the *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. Inscription on this list confirms the Outstanding Universal Value of a cultural or natural property that deserves protection for the benefit of all humanity.

The listing criteria for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is noted with the park's associated key value in **Table 1**.

Table 1. UNESCO World Heritage Convention criteria		Associated key value
Criterion 7	<p>Contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.</p> <p>It is present in the Manjal (mountains), Wuburr (hills and valleys) and the Yalmba (coast).</p>	<p>Ecosystems and biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mountain and upland forests Tall open forests Madja (rainforest) <p>Ecosystems services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aesthetic
Criterion 8	<p>Outstanding examples representing major stages of Earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.</p> <p>It is present in the Manjal (mountains), Wuburr (hills and valleys), Yalmba (coast), Wawubaja (rivers) and the Yilki (creeks).</p>	<p>Ecosystems and biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mountain and upland forests Madja (rainforest) Mangurru (mangroves) <p>Geophysical features (terrestrial): Wawubaja, yilki, and yiri (rivers, creeks and waterfalls)</p>
Criterion 9	<p>Outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.</p> <p>It is present in the Manjal (mountains), Wuburr (hills and valleys), Yalmba (coast), Wawubaja (rivers) and the Yilki (creeks).</p>	<p>Ecosystems and biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mountain and upland forests Tall open forests Madja (rainforest) Mangurru (mangroves) <p>Geophysical features (terrestrial): Wawubaja, yilki, and yiri (rivers, creeks and waterfalls)</p>
Criteria 10	<p>Contain the most important and significant natural habitats for <i>in-situ</i> conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.</p> <p>It is present in the Manjal (mountains), Wuburr (hills and valleys), Yalmba (coast), Wawubaja (rivers) and the Yilki (creeks).</p>	<p>Ecosystems and biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mountain and upland forests Tall open forests Madja (rainforest) Mangurru (mangroves) <p>Geophysical features (terrestrial): Wawubaja, yilki, and yiri (rivers, creeks and waterfalls)</p>












Key values

While all parks are important, and all values make parks worth protecting, park managers need to focus on protecting and presenting the most important values—the ‘key’ values. These are the values that will form the basis of ongoing evaluation of management effectiveness. Protecting these key values also helps frame the purpose of management for each park.

This management plan provides high level, strategic direction for protecting and managing key park values. Each key value is outlined in this section, including showing the value’s current condition, trend, and level of confidence about this information. A brief description of the value is provided, followed by threats to the value and the proposed ‘strategic management directions’ that aim to protect the value over the long term. As well as managing and monitoring these values, there will be further focus on monitoring the condition and trend of some plants and animals within these broader identified values. This will provide a more detailed picture of the effectiveness of park management. Key values are summarised in **Table 1** and illustrated in **Map 1**.

Figure 2 explains the meaning of the various symbols, which are used in tables to describe and rate the condition and trend for each key value.

Figure 2: Key to condition, trend and confidence icons

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



Indigenous: Yalanji cultural values of the national park and surrounds

Value statement

Indigenous heritage values were included as a part of the National Heritage Listing for the Wet Tropics of Queensland (which includes Daintree National Park) in November 2012:

Yalanji Country is a complex cultural landscape. West of the Great Divide are the Sunset or Western Yalanji People. Eastern Kuku Yalanji Country comprises the bubu (land) and jalun (sea) of the Kuku Nyungkal, Jalunjiwarra and Yalanji dialect groups.

Our Country, both bubu and jalun, is famous around Australia and the world as the place where the "rainforest meets the reef". Our Country has a very high biodiversity of different animals and plants. The World Heritage listing of both our land and sea Country shows our strong land and sea management over thousands of years, protecting our landscapes and seascapes and the plants and animals that live here.

Bama need to be on Country practicing culture including Traditional land and sea management. This keeps our Bama, our bubu and our jalun healthy. We have many obligations and responsibilities for our Country. These include our lore, our Traditional knowledge, our language, our cultural activities and our sacred sites.

Our cultural activities are an important part of caring for bubu and jalun.

Our lore comes from our Country and our ancestors. We follow our Ngujakuramun, our Dreaming, which gives us the rules for respecting our Country and each other. Our management is based on our stories of the plants and animals, our story places, and our seasonal calendars.

Our bidgarr and mulkal-mulkal (totem and moiety) and our cultural connections to bubu through food, law/lore, healing, medicine and ceremonies are part of our identity. Knowing our family relationships, our roles, responsibilities and obligations to be on Country is part of caring for Country. We need to be on Country to properly understand our connections to Country, and Traditional boundaries of our estates. Our lore is kept alive through talking and listening, painting, crafts, books, photos, videos and digital media on computers.

Threats

The Kuku Yalanji Bama have identified threats to the cultural values of their lands. In Daintree National Park, these threats include:

- Not being on country – from the 1870s, many Yalanji people moved or were removed from the Daintree National Park area, disrupting the active Traditional management of country and reducing its health. **Threat rating: To be considered**
- Lack of resources for caring for Country work and lack of power in decision-making – these factors have hindered Yalanji people returning to their Traditional role in managing country. Progress has been made to address these threats through the 2007 Eastern Kuku Yalanji ILUAs, establishing the Jabalbina rangers in 2013 and current negotiations towards dedicating Daintree National Park as a 'National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land)'. **Threat rating: To be considered**
- Culture losing strength – much culture, including knowledge about country and Traditional land management practices, has been lost, leading to less well-informed and less effective management of Country. **Threat rating: To be considered**
- Wrong fires and forest management – lack of Traditional burning has allowed areas, including parts of the north Daintree Coast, to transition from open forest to rainforest. This has reduced the diversity of forest types and habitats for animals such as wallabies. Fires at the wrong times can damage plants or promote weeds. Early selective logging of species, including kauri pine and red cedar, has also reduced the diversity of tree species in many rainforest areas. **Threat rating: To be considered**
-

- Feral animals, weeds and diseases – feral pigs damage native plants and animals, cause erosion and pollute waterways, as well as disturbing springs, wells, burial places and other cultural sites. Other pests include feral cats, cane toads and feral bees displacing native bee species. Many native frogs have disappeared from mountain streams because of the fungal disease chytridiomycosis. Serious weeds include pond apple, which invades coastal ecosystems, and emerging threats such as miconia, hiptage and brillantasia. **Threat rating: To be considered**
- Ill-informed or disrespectful visitors – Yalanji people are proud of our rainforests, mountains, rivers, waterfalls and beaches, and welcome people to visit our country and behave in a respectful way. Daintree National Park contains significant places with strong cultural protocols about visiting—for example, women's and men's sacred sites and places that should not be visited at all. Cultural values are damaged when people visit sacred places without permission. Other visitor impacts include rubbish and erosion. **Threat rating: To be considered**
- Climate change – warmer temperatures, and a potential increase in large floods, severe cyclones and droughts, are likely to have serious impacts on our country. Species now restricted to cooler mountaintops may not survive a warming climate. Yalanji seasonal calendars show the links in the timing of natural events—for example, turtle eggs are ready to gather when the flame tree flowers and the first storms happen. As some events are triggered by temperature and others by day length, climate change might break links between these events. Rising sea levels threaten coastal ecosystems such as Daintree National Park's extensive mangrove forests. **Threat rating: To be considered**

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yalanji cultural values are supported and sustained through jointly developing and implementing opportunities for the continuation and transmission of culture, in particular by QPWS, the Yalanji People and WTMA working together with a goal of a successful joint approach to park management. • Yalanji Lore is recognised and supported in decision-making for the park. • Traditional land and sea management is sustained and renewed through the employment of additional Kuku Yalanji Bama in park management. • Yalanji cultural information is supplied to visitors to increase cultural awareness of visitors, enriching visitor experience and encouraging visitor behaviour that respects Yalanji culture. • Yalanji language names are used on interpretative signs to deepen park users' understanding of Yalanji culture. 		
Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority
Lack of opportunities and resources for Caring for Country work	Build management capacity and opportunities through the Indigenous Management Agreement process, including additional employment, contract and training opportunities for Kuku Yalanji Bama.	2
Lack of power and culture losing strength.	Maintain and strengthen access to Country for Yalanji Bama.	1
	Jointly develop opportunities and processes to build and support culture.	1
	Maintain and renew Traditional management practices by incorporating them into ongoing and agreed park management.	1
	Recognise and support Yalanji Lore in decision-making for the park.	1
Fire	See Mountains and Hills and valley sections below.	2
Pest animals, pest plants and diseases	Investigate opportunities to replant species previously selectively logged.	2
	See Mountains, Hills and valleys, Coast and Waterways sections below.	2
Visitor	Enhance visitor interpretation, including advice on appropriate cultural protocols and use of Yalanji language names, and infrastructure. (See Tourism section below).	3
Climate change	Investigate mechanism to mitigate the impacts of climate change on cultural values.	3
	Work jointly with QPWS to create a Daintree National Park climate resilience strategy.	3

*KEY: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Manjal (Mountains)

World Heritage Criteria 7, 8, 9 and 10

High mountains contain story places and lore areas that can be seen from a wide area of the surrounding lowlands. These areas are intrinsically linked to the scenery and scenic amenity of the park.

Our bubu has important landscape and cultural values. Our mountains are especially significant places; Ngalba Bulal (Mt Pieter Botte), Wundu (Thornton Peak) and Kubirri (the Good Shepherd rock on Mt Demi) are very important story places that should not be visited.

Some of the plants and animals on our Country only live on the high mountains, especially Thornton Peak and the Main Coast Range, where it is cooler than the surrounding areas, and might not survive if these areas become warmer.

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Ecosystems and biodiversity: Montane and upland forests

World Heritage Criteria 7, 8, 9 and 10

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Montane and upland forests (above 800m elevation) in Mount Windsor area, Mossman Gorge—Carbine and Cape Tribulation areas.	Condition and trend	2017 		
	Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Inferred 	

Value statement

The montane and upland forests of these areas contain endangered ecosystems and important habitats for 53 species of conservation significance. A variety of animal species such as the spotted-tailed quoll (northern subspecies), and the endemic plant *Prostanthera albohirta* have populations reliant on these upland habitats.

Threats

- Feral pigs disturbing rainforest, fernland, formland and herbfield communities—causing soil disturbance, increased erosion, and direct predation on plants and native animals (i.e. potential impacts of pig predation on frog populations in this area). **Threat rating: Very high**
- The presence of visitors at some areas compromises culture. **Threat rating: High**
- During dry conditions unplanned fire events may cause impacts over an extensive area; when fires move up-slope from forests and woodlands and natural barriers to fire are less reliable. **Threat rating: High**
- The impact of bush camping needs monitoring in montane ecosystems at Thornton Peak, where recovery from site impacts is slow. **Threat rating: Moderate**
- Climate change causing hotter temperatures could result in some animals and plants disappearing. Threat rating: High

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
	The natural and cultural values of mountain areas are maintained and improved, with a focus on montane and upland forests, by reducing impacts of feral pigs, fire and visitors, and by gaining better understanding of significant species including identifying climate change impacts.	
Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority
Pest animals	Reduce impacts of feral pigs on rainforest, fernland, formland and herbfield communities.	3
Fire	Mitigate extent and severity of wildfires.	2
Climate change	Identify climate change impacts on Yalanji culture and montane and upland forests and assess any potential resilience building strategies.	3
Visitors	Protect montane and upland forest values by reducing visitor impacts, in particular to identify sites where visitor presence compromises culture and monitor the impacts of bush camping near peaks.	2

*KEY: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).



Ecosystems and biodiversity: Tall open forests

World Heritage Criteria 7, 9 and 10

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
<i>Eucalyptus resinifera</i> and <i>E. grandis</i> forests in the Mossman Gorge uplands areas	Condition and trend	2017 		
	Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Inferred 	

Value statement

Tall Open Forests are a value across Daintree National Park including in the Mountain areas where it is represented by *Eucalyptus resinifera* and *Eucalyptus grandis*. Open forest ridges in the Hills and Valleys and the open forest headlands of the Coastal Value landscapes are further expressions of this value.

Managing these forests in the Mountain area requires focused effort by QPWS and Jabalbina. QPWS will judge its success in managing open forests by its success in this area. These endangered forests provide important habitat for species of conservation significance. Given the scope of the issue and the significant effort required to improve the condition of these ecosystems, a target has been established to achieve a forest health condition of 'good with some concern' by 2025.

It is recognised that these open forests represent important areas for travel across the landscape and as significant areas for food and cultural resources for the Yalanji. Managing these forests in the Hills and Valleys, and Coastal Landscapes will be supported to maintain and improve this value in these areas.

Threats

- Ecosystem modification by infrequent fires, resulting in a transition from open to closed forest. This is often irreversible and causes some of these ecosystems to be listed as endangered. Loss of open structure threatens suitable habitat for species reliant on these ecosystems and also results in removing traditional pathways and food resources for the Yalanji Bama. **Threat rating: Very high**
- Invasive species, such as cattle, pigs and pest plants changing forest structure and damaging ecosystem integrity. **Threat rating: High**

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
Desire 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of the tall open forests is improved, through effective fire management and reduced impacts of invasive species. Fire management is effective in maintaining an open forest structure and Traditional pathways. 	
Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority
Fire	Conserve the open forest structure through planned burning at appropriate intervals.	2
	Identify traditional pathways and areas of past open forest to be restored through reintroducing traditional burning practices.	2
Pest plants and pest animals	Reduce the impacts of feral pigs on tall open forest communities.	3
	Reduce the impacts of <i>Lantana camara</i> in upland tall open forests.	3

*KEY: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 - moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Wuburr (Hills and valleys)

World Heritage Criteria 7, 8, 9 and 10

This area includes the slopes and hills that comprise the Daintree lowlands. Specific components within this area, such as rainforest and open forests, hold high natural values. Cultural values exist throughout this area as story places and lore areas.

We have some of the wettest tropical rainforest in Australia, especially around the Noah and Cooper Creek catchments. Scientists have found that areas of our madja in these areas are some of the oldest rainforest in the world, with more than half of the world's primitive flowering plant families found here.

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Ecosystems and biodiversity: Madja (rainforest)

World Heritage Criteria 7, 8, 9 and 10

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Rainforest (below 800m elevation) in the Mt Windsor Tableland, Mossman Gorge—Carbine and Cape Tribulation areas.	Condition and trend	2017 		
	Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Inferred 	

Value statement

Rainforest communities below 800 metres elevation, including palm forest, contain representative species of at least 10 of the 16 primitive flowering plant families found in the Wet Tropics bioregion, and endangered and vulnerable species. It contains the altitudinal representation of continuous forest from the Coral Sea to the summit of Thornton Peak, creating a biodiversity 'hotspot'. These rainforests have remained little-changed over the last 15,000 years. The resulting rare rainforest plants found on the Daintree Coast are very similar to some of the original Gondwanan plants—preserved in fire-resistant rainforest refuges.

Threats

- Degradation of rainforest ecosystems by pest animal and plants presenting a current and increasing threat such as feral pigs—through soil disturbance, increased erosion and direct predation, and miconia, hiptage, siam, brillantasia and coffee—through the suppression of native plants and animals. **Threat rating: Low**
- Climate change causing an increased frequency of severe storms, and changes to the rainfall regime resulting in changes to the forest composition and structure. **Threat rating: High**
- The cultural landscape of the hills and valleys is threatened by changes to Traditional burning practices that remove an overabundance of vine towers. **Threat rating: To be determined**
- Transition of open forest ridges to rainforest due to a lack of fire, removing access to Traditional pathways. **Threat rating: Very high**

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of rainforest communities is maintained and improved through invasive species management, identifying climate change impacts and improving the understanding of significant species. The cultural landscape of the hills and valleys in Daintree National Park is re-vitalised through the (Traditional) application of fire enabling the continued use of Traditional pathways and access to cultural resources. 	
Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority
Pest plants and pest animals	Reduce the impacts of feral pigs to improve forest condition.	1
	Eradicate coffee from the Cape Tribulation area.	1
	Reduce impacts of hiptage, miconia, siam and brillantasia on rainforest in Mossman Gorge area.	1
Climate change	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies.	1
Fire	Jointly reintroduce Traditional burning practices in collaboration with Traditional Owners.	2

*KEY: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Yalmba (Coast)

World Heritage Criteria 7, 8, 9 and 10

Our Traditional ecological knowledge shows us how to look after land and sea Country. Our lore about cultural sites, about how to collect bush foods and how to cook foods on open fires, comes from our old people and our Country and shows the way to care for bama and bubu. Ngujakura has seasonal calendars about hunting and using special places.

Our bubu has a very high biodiversity of vegetation types, including madja (rainforest), ngalkal (open forest), swamps and shrublands and heathlands on rocky headlands and mountain peaks. Many stories connect our bubu and our jalun. Like our bubu, our jalun is full of story places and sacred sites, including Yirrbal places.

Our beaches have great cultural importance. Some of our beaches are very popular visitor areas. Ngawiya (turtle) nest on our beaches, but there is less nesting than before. Important food plants live next to the beach.

Along the Daintree coast are important living areas for kurranji (cassowary) and other important animals.



Ecosystems services: Aesthetic value

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Aesthetic value of Daintree National Park.	Condition and trend	2017 		
	Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Inferred 	

World Heritage Criterion 7

Value statement

The Wet Tropics exhibit exceptional natural beauty. This is particularly apparent between the Daintree River and Cedar Bay, where exceptional coastal scenery combines tropical rainforest and white sandy beaches with fringing and offshore coral reefs (IUCN criterion 7). This value of aesthetic is present across the Daintree National Park (and surrounds) and is intrinsic at all scales from the micro to the vista. QPWS manages this value, from the presentation of specific sites through to landscape scale vistas, by managing large scale threatening processes such as ecosystem changing pest plants. The coastal zone encompasses the components of the nationally 'critically endangered' Littoral Rainforest and Coastal Vine Thickets of Eastern Australia and the endangered Broad leaf tea-tree *Melaleuca viridiflora* woodlands in high rainfall coastal north Queensland Ecological Community.

Threats

- Ecosystems being modified by invasive species, such as miconia, hiptage, feral pigs and pond apple—degrading and disturbing habitat and impacting on the aesthetic value of the area. Invasive pests, such as tramp ants and blue trumpet vine, are a potential threat. **Threat rating: Very high**
- Overall loss of aesthetic value at popular visitor sites, due to visitors disturbing vegetation and soil. **Threat rating: Low**
- Climate change threatens the coastal area through warmer temperatures, more frequent storms and the disruption of normal cycles through increasing temperatures, reduced rainfall, and increased threats from fire and pest plants. **Threat rating: High**
- Potential construction of park and external infrastructure that interrupts or detracts from the areas aesthetic. **Threat rating: Low**
- Wrong burning practices are sometimes being used when Country is burned, both in frequency, resulting in a loss of open habitats, and in timing, resulting in a change in plant composition. **Threat rating: Very high**

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
	Aesthetic values are improved by enhancing the condition of the Outstanding Universal Values and planning aesthetically pleasing infrastructure.	
Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority
Pest plants and pest animals	Reduce the impacts of feral pigs and pond apple. Prevent the establishment of potential high-risk pests; blue trumpet vine and tramp ants.	2
Visitors	Mitigate visitor impacts through education and compliance. Limit, where possible, highly visible infrastructure in areas of high aesthetic value.	2
Climate change	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies for culture and the environment.	3
Fire	Investigate the joint reintroduction of Traditional burning practices in collaboration with Traditional Owners.	2



Geological features (terrestrial): Yalanji coastal values

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Coastal landscape.	Condition and trend	2017 		
	Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Inferred 	

Value statement

Coastal places have great importance for Yalanji Bama. There are many cultural sites along the Yalanji coastline, along with an abundance and diversity of mayi (food plants) and minya (food animals) from both jalun (sea) and bubu (land). Sandy coastal habitats are preferred Traditional camping areas, including coastal littoral forest with its shade, soft ground and access to food and water resources.

Threats

- Ecosystems being modified by invasive species, such as miconia, hiptage, feral pigs and pond apple—degrading and disturbing habitat and impacting on the aesthetic value of the area. Invasive pests, such as tramp ants and blue trumpet vine, are a potential threat. **Threat rating: Very high**
- Overall loss of aesthetic value at popular visitor sites, due to visitors disturbing vegetation and soil. **Threat rating: Low**
- Climate change threatens the coastal area through warmer temperatures, more frequent storms and the disruption of normal cycles through increasing temperatures, reduced rainfall, and increased threats from fire and pest plants. **Threat rating: High**
- Potential construction of park and external infrastructure that interrupts or detracts from the areas aesthetic. **Threat rating: Low**
- Wrong burning practices are sometimes being used when Country is burned, both in frequency resulting in a loss of open habitats and in timing resulting in a change in plant composition. **Threat rating: Very high**

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
	Yalanji coastal values are maintained by monitoring and managing pests, weeds, fire and visitor infrastructure and access.	
Pest plants and pest animals	Reduce the impacts of feral pigs and pond apple. Prevent the establishment of potential high-risk pests; blue trumpet vine and tramp ants.	2
Visitors	Mitigate visitor impacts through education and compliance. Limit, where possible, highly visible infrastructure in areas of high aesthetic value.	2
Climate change	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies for culture and the environment.	3
Fire	Investigate the joint reintroduction of Traditional burning practices in collaboration with Traditional Owners.	2

*KEY: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 - moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Wawubaja and Yilki (Rivers, creeks and waterways)

World Heritage Criteria 8, 9 and 10

Our waterways are very important places on our bubu. There are Yirrbal (rainbow serpent) story places and other sacred sites along our waterways. Some are healing places. Yiri (waterfalls) are especially important places. Some sacred sites are for men only, or for women only, such as Blue Pool, with one family line as Traditional custodians.

Waterways are important for many animals like kuyu (fish) and freshwater prawns (wukuju). We need to continue to look after these fish. Bilngkumu (estuarine crocodiles) are important story animals, and part of our culture.

Springs and wells are important places for Bama and animals to drink, and also have cultural importance. Cleaning and maintaining water flows in springs and wells is an important part of Traditional management.

We also have unique mountain wetlands southeast of Buru and near the summit of Wundu (Thornton Peak). We also have important wetlands. The fan palm forests in Alexandra Bay, the mangrove forests of Alexandra Bay and the Lower Daintree River, are listed as nationally important wetlands.



Geological features (terrestrial): Wawubaja, yilki, yiri (rivers, creeks and waterfalls)

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Wawubaja, yilki, yiri (rivers, creeks and waterfalls).	Condition and trend	2017 		
	Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Inferred 	


Value statement

Waterways provide a cultural, physical and biological connection between the different parts of Yalanji Country—from springs high on Thornton Peak and the Main Coast Range to the mangrove-lined estuary of the Daintree River flowing into the Coral Sea. With its high rainfall and varied terrain, Daintree National Park has a great diversity of aquatic habitats, many with *Yirrmal* (rainbow serpent) cultural significance, supporting highly biodiverse ecosystems.

Threats

- During the wet season, silt from the unsealed creek crossings along the Bloomfield Track flows down the creeks compromising cultural values and damaging cultural resources and runs out onto the fringing reefs
Threat rating: To be determined
- Pests threaten aquatic ecosystems, including plants such as hymenachne, pond apple and salvinia, and animals including feral pigs and non-native fish. **Threat rating: To be determined**
- Uninformed visitors can access cultural sites contrary to cultural protocols and can disturb river and creek banks leading to vegetation damage and bank erosion. **Threat rating: To be determined**
- Climate change could have some big effects on our Country. Scientists believe that the air and sea temperatures will become warmer, there will be more floods, cyclones and droughts, and the sea level could rise. Sea levels rises can already be seen, including beach erosion. Some creeks, like Pannikan Creek, don't flow as much as they used to. **Threat rating: To be determined**
- Climate change breaking the natural cycle and connections of Country. For example our seasonal calendars show how different things happen at certain times. We are already seeing some climate change impacts changing the timing of flowering or animal activities. **Threat rating: to be determined**
- Rising sea levels would cause many changes. Existing coastal freshwater swamps could be taken over by mangroves. Higher king tides could cause more erosion. Sandy beaches could be washed away or covered by sea, meaning less nesting areas for ngawiya (turtles). More cyclones, floods and droughts could also cause problems. **Threat rating: To be determined**

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
	The condition of rivers, creeks and waterfalls is maintained and improved by minimising visitor impacts on rivers and creeks, managing pest plants and pest animals and by mitigating climate change associated impacts.	
Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority
Climate change	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies.	3
Pest plants	Continue to monitor and control outbreaks of pest plants including pond apple, hymenachne and salvinia.	2
Feral pigs	Reduce impacts of feral pigs on springs, wells and waterway banks	2
Visitor impacts	Provide visitor interpretation advising of cultural protocols around accessing and swimming in creeks.	1
Silt runoff from the Bloomfield Track and off car tyres during creek crossings	Encourage road managers to install and service sediment traps, culverts, causeways or bridges on the unsealed sections of the Bloomfield Track to reduce the direct input of sediment into waterways at crossings.	2

*KEY: **1** – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, **2** – very necessary and very urgent, **3** – moderately necessary and moderately urgent, **4** – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, **5** – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).



Ecosystems and biodiversity: Mangurru (Mangroves)

World Heritage Criterion 8, 9 and 10

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Mangrove communities within the Noah and Cooper Creek catchments.	Condition and trend	2017 		
	Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Inferred 	

Value statement

Mangurru (mangrove) and mudflat areas are very important breeding areas for kuyu (fish) and other important food animals like yulba (saltwater mussel), kiju (mud crab) and duwungka (worm living in dead mangrove trunks).

The mangrove forest provides shelter and food for a wide range of animals, especially invertebrates and juvenile marine species, and is an important refuge area and movement corridor for sub-adult and juvenile cassowaries. Mangroves are a buffer between the land and the sea. The dense silt around their root systems prevents erosion in fringing land communities and minimises erosion from wave activity. The forest bears the brunt of storm activity, allowing the coast behind it to remain protected, making it a key contributor to resilience to climate change. Within this landscape component there are wetlands of National Importance, a CSIRO long-term study plot and the Marra Botanical Walk.

Threats

- Climate change is likely to impact mangroves as they are located in the intertidal zone, an area highly vulnerable to climate change effects. Tidal wetlands are extremely sensitive to sea level rise—too much flooding and mangroves will “drown”, too little and they will be less productive and may be replaced with salt marsh or blue-green algae communities. They are also susceptible to high ocean temperatures resulting in tree death. **Threat rating: High**
- The pest plant pond apple can form dense thickets, excluding most native plant species. Pond apple's ability to grow in flooded areas and to tolerate salt water has enabled it to spread through much of the wet tropics area. **Threat rating: Medium**

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
	The condition of mangroves is maintained and improved through climate change mitigation measures and by managing invasive species.	
Threatening processes	Strategic management directions	Priority
Climate change	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies.	3
Pest plants	Reduce impacts of pond apple on mangrove communities.	2
	Present the biological and cultural values of mangrove forest communities.	2

*KEY: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 - moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Tourism



Tourism: Sustainable tourism

Description		Current condition	Current trend	Desired condition
Internationally recognised tourism destinations at Mossman Gorge and Cape Tribulation.	Condition and trend	2017 		
	Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Inferred 	

Value statement

To properly look after visitors, as well as other people living and working on our Country, we need to let people know about our Country and how to respect it. There needs to be a lot more information about us and our Country available for everyone who comes here.

The coastal area of Daintree National Park is an internationally recognised tourism destination. It provides a tropical rainforest experience with ready access to the plants and animals of the World Heritage rainforest. Tourism and recreation in the Wet Tropics plays an important role in community use and enjoyment, and helps educate locals and visitors about the area's Outstanding Universal Value.

Tourism and recreation contributes substantially to the region's economy and it is easily accessible from tourism hubs such as Cairns and Port Douglas. Tourism is centred on two main areas of the park—Mossman Gorge in the south and along the narrow coastal corridor from the Daintree River crossing to Cape Tribulation. Access to Mossman Gorge is managed through the Mossman Gorge Gateway Centre, operated by Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia, a subsidiary of the Indigenous Land Corporation.

Visits to lookouts, swimming and short walks, particularly on boardwalks, are the main activities undertaken.

Threats

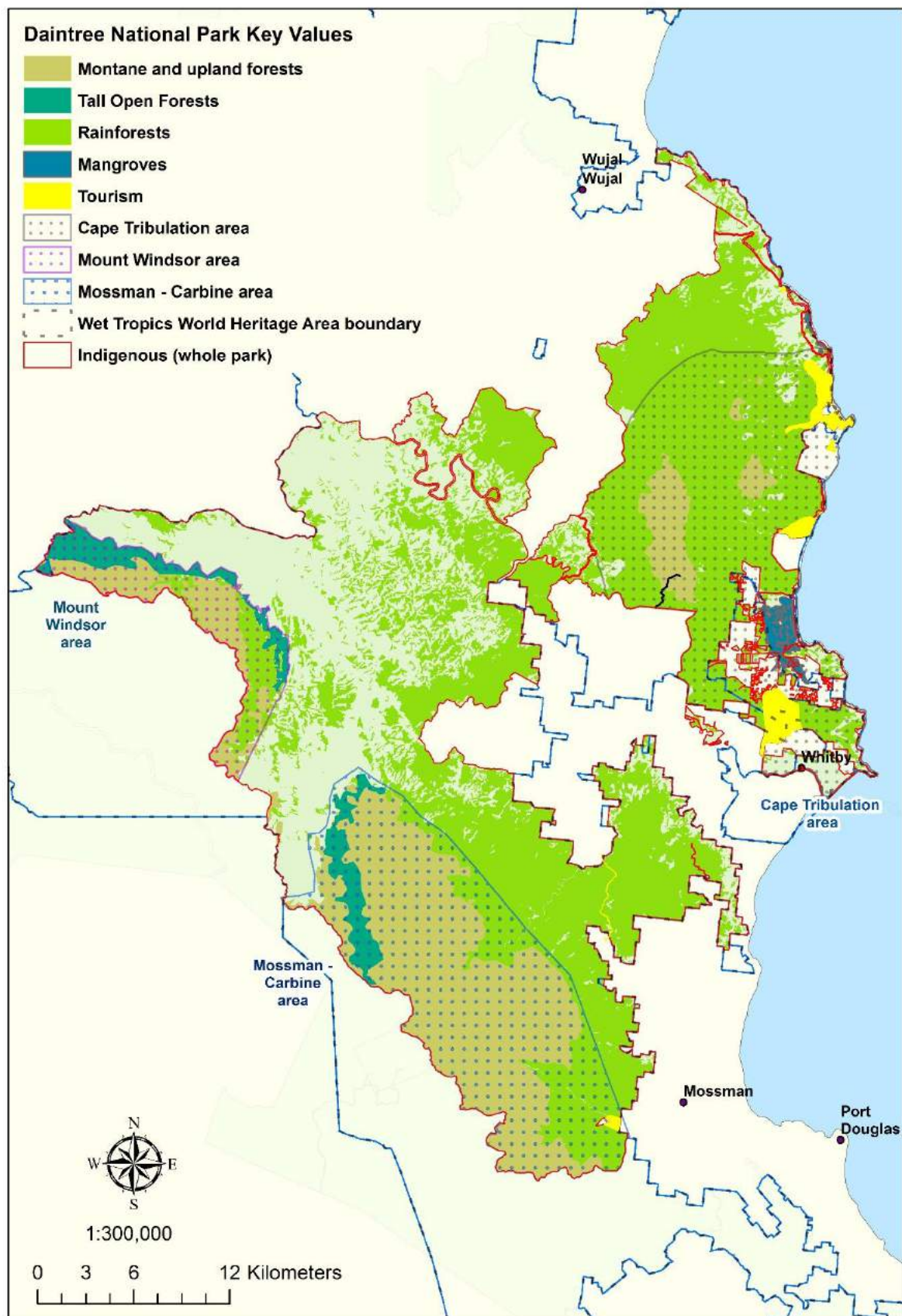
- Visitors' expectations of a high-quality experience may not be met, due to ageing infrastructure at popular tourism sites, limited on-site promotion of available experiences and sites, ageing interpretive material and limited directional signs. **Threat rating: Low**
- Infrastructure that straddles tenures may be poorly designed or maintained, particularly carparks and signs on public roads, and other tourism infrastructure. **Threat rating: Low**

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome		
	<p>The condition of tourism values is improved by enhancing visitor experiences, promoting opportunities, and developing and maintaining strong cross-tenure partnerships.</p> <p>There are increased opportunities for Yalanji businesses, and employment in and roles within the tourism sector for Yalanji People to be able to work on and earn from Country.</p> <p>Sustainable tourism recognises and respects Yalanji culture.</p>	
	Threatening processes	Strategic management directions
	Inappropriate visitor infrastructure and interpretation	Enhance visitor experience through improved infrastructure standards.
		Enhance visitor experience through improved interpretation.
		Enhance visitor access to the Daintree experience by building the Daintree brand.
		Enhance visitor experience through support of Traditional Owner aspirations and commercial opportunities.
		Priority
		2
		2
		2
		2

*KEY: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Map 1: Daintree National Park – Key values



Levels of service

'Levels of service' (LoS) is a tool used to help define management standards for all Queensland parks, and to set priorities for allocating resources to achieve those standards. LoS focus management activities and resources where they are most needed, and also help ensure we are managing parks in a consistent, accountable and effective way across the state. LoS is used to identify the current and 'desired' (future) standards for a range of critical management elements and associated performance measures.

There are five LoS, ranging from 'acceptable' to 'exceptional', which are applied to nine management elements (such as fire management). The management elements are the most common activities undertaken across all parks and forests. Daintree National Park is assessed as requiring an 'exceptional' LoS for most elements of management (based on an evaluation of its natural, cultural and social values, including World Heritage Values).

The desired LoS standards for nine management elements have been identified to guide the level of management effort required for Daintree National Park within a state-wide context, and are summarised below. The nine management elements for Daintree are described below—including their current and desired LoS and strategies for achieving the desired LoS.



Traditional Owner engagement and cultural heritage

Current level of service




Although the desired LoS is very high, it is anticipated to move to an exceptional level upon the declaration of 'National Park Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land' and the associated land dealings within this process.

QPWS is committed to enhancing relationships with the Traditional Owners, who have a continuing and close connection with Daintree, including cultural activities and responsibilities. The Eastern Kuku Yalanji people are the Traditional Owners of the park (Native Title Determination 1907/2007), with a small section of the park within the lands of the Western Yalanji people. Daintree National Park will be managed at a **very high** LoS due to the strong Aboriginal connection to country and level of cooperative management currently in place. The current LoS is **high**.

Guidelines have been agreed around Native Title Rights and Interests to:

- camp
- bury
- use firearms
- bring dogs onto the Agreement Area.

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of knowledge relating to Indigenous cultural heritage is improved by working collaboratively with Eastern Kuku Yalanji People and Western Yalanji People to share information and map sites where appropriate. • Levels of consultation and engagement are improved through formal relationship building and collaborative management arrangements for managing the Daintree National Park. • The approach to protecting known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites is improved through collaborative development of management objectives to maintain and protect the Aboriginal cultural values of the park, with efforts to support Traditional Owners to develop management capacity. • Daintree National Park continues to be managed cooperatively with Traditional Owners until the Queensland Government enters into a joint management arrangement with the Eastern Kuku Yalanji People under the <i>Cape York Peninsula Heritage Act 2007</i> at which time Joint Management will commence. • The Eastern Kuku Yalanji people are supported in collecting and managing cultural heritage data including the Eastern Kuku Yalanji Cultural Information System (EKYCIMS). • The Eastern Kuku Yalanji people are supported in their aspiration to build and operate an on-Country keeping place.
Strategic management directions	Priority
Increase the level of Aboriginal cultural resource information in collaboration with Traditional Owners including investigating support for the Eastern Kuku Yalanji Cultural Information System (EKYCIMS).	2
Improve the levels of engagement and collaboration with Traditional Owners to meet indigenous land-use agreement and memorandum of understanding requirements.	2
Improve collaboration with Traditional Owners to develop management objectives and priorities to maintain and protect Indigenous cultural values.	2
Increase support for Traditional Owners to develop management capacity for park management activities.	2

*KEY: M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).



Fire

Current level of service



The Eastern Yalanji Bama consider fire critical to managing Country and the maintenance of culture.

Natural values in the park will be managed to a **high** LoS due to significant fire-affected key values requiring critical attention and lower life and property risks. The current LoS is **medium**.

An Activity Guideline around Native Title Rights and Interests relating to the Use of Fire has been agreed between Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Jabalbina Yalanji Prescribed Body Corporate and Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome



- Levels of knowledge relating to the fire requirements of key values currently meet desired standards and will be maintained.
- A jointly developed and shared fire strategy with Traditional Owners to improve consultation, engagement and to investigate, and where possible instigate, a return to Traditional fire regimes.
- There is an improved focus on fire management ensuring it is prioritised to achieve key values and higher priority conservation and Aboriginal cultural landscape objectives.

Strategic management directions

Priority

Increase priority of fire management to meet the objectives of protecting life and property, maintaining healthy key values and high priority conservation outcomes.

1

Increased operational capacity and support to complete planned burn programs.

1

Build cooperative fire management capacity with Traditional Owners to protect indigenous cultural landscapes.

1

***KEY: M** – maintain current priorities; **1** – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; **2** – very necessary and very urgent, **3** – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; **4** – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; **5** – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).



Pests

Current level of service



Pest plants and animals are the most significant threatening process; therefore an **exceptional** LoS is required for priority species threatening key values and secondary values. The current LoS achieved is **high**.

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome



- Where possible, pests are managed jointly with Traditional Owner Rangers.
- Improved pest distribution mapping and understanding of some pests through knowledge sharing between management partners.
- Increased pest planning and coordinated joint pest management activity with Traditional Owners to improve levels of consultation and engagement.
- An increase in management capacity and regional support ensures that all pest programs are achieved.

Strategic management directions

Priority

Increase the level of detail in regard to knowledge and mapping of pests and their impacts on all values.

1

Improve the level of engagement with Traditional Owners on pest management.

1

Increase the priority and support for the protection of all values from pest threatening processes.

1

***KEY:** M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).



Natural values

Current level of service



The Yalanji Bama wish to jointly work with QPWS to manage the natural values of Daintree National Park, using shared resources and shared knowledge.

Natural values will be managed to an **exceptional** LoS due to the park's outstanding universal value and the high level of threats to key park values. The current LoS is **medium**.

Activity Guidelines around Native Title Rights and Interests have been agreed between QPWS, Jabalbina Yalanji Prescribed Body Corporate and WTMA:

- to take, keep, use or interfere with Cultural Resources or Natural Resources other than plants or animals addressed by the Rare or Threatened Wildlife Activity Guideline
- to maintain springs and wells
- for Rare or Threatened Wildlife

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of knowledge relating to natural values are improved, specifically relating to regional ecosystem mapping to a finer resolution in areas of coastal littoral rainforest, broad leaf tea-tree, restricted montane forests and the boundaries of the tall open forests. • Traditional knowledge of landscape function and management is incorporated (where appropriate) into jointly managed activities. • Levels of consultation and community engagement are currently meeting the desired level—however cooperative relationships with other government agencies are fostered to better understand and respond to key species management requirements. • The overall approach to natural values management is improved, including increasing the management effort to improve the condition of all park values—including greater regional and central office support. • Yalanji representatives and Rangers are actively engage to identify where shared capacity can produce a coordinated outcome. • Monitoring and research is improved to better coordinate the basic monitoring of key park values and there is a greater investment in partnerships to support improved detailed monitoring and research to focus on filling knowledge gaps and providing data on the condition of key species values within the park. • Existing research and detailed monitoring is reviewing to ensure that outcomes provide condition and trend data for park values as well as review of park management objectives relating to the management of threats to values. • There is a jointly agreed management research prospectus within the Permit to Take, Use, Keep or Interfere (PTUKI) protocol/framework, with a focus on solutions based research and including climate change adaption and mitigation.
Strategic management directions	
	Priority
Improve the level of knowledge and detailed mapping of the key values and species or ecosystems of conservation concern including incorporating appropriate Traditional Knowledge.	3
Increased formal engagement with other government agencies and research institutions to improve cooperative species monitoring and management programs.	3
Increased focus on proactively managing key and significant natural values to improve condition and to gain knowledge on threats to these values.	3
Improve natural values monitoring and research programs through proactively developing internal and external partnerships, including with the Yalanji Bama.	3

*KEY: M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).



Historic cultural heritage

Current level of service



Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome



- Current levels of knowledge, consultation and engagement relating to known sites meet requirements and are maintained.
- Current management approaches for the Bloomfield clearing and the old township of Whitby ('managing as a ruin') meet management requirements and are maintained.

Strategic management directions

Priority

Maintain current LoS standard.

5

***KEY:** M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Draft Management



Visitors

Current level of service



Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome



- Knowledge is improved about visitor-use patterns and industry trends, tourism industry and free and independent traveller demand, visitor expectations and levels of satisfaction with existing experiences and facilities provided on the park.
- Consultation and engagement with the tourism industry meets requirements with scheduled formal meetings undertaken regularly.
- Improved understanding of Yalanji culture, specifically about sacred sites.
- Improved planning and delivery of new and improved asset solutions, to enhance visitor opportunities and manage visitor impacts on park values, are required to improve levels of service standards with the Yalanji People.
- A very high priority is placed on ensuring visitors are safe and have a high quality experience, by providing diverse opportunities for visitors, and ensuring visitors are made aware of these opportunities so they can make informed choices. This includes a stronger focus on public contact and compliance patrols.
- Priority is placed on investigating any new visitor opportunities that are safe, ecologically sustainable, and meet visitor expectations and industry trends.
- The Yalanji Bama's aspirations for greater engagement and involvement in the tourism sector are supported.
- Support from regional and state-wide teams, for visitor management, interpretation and asset management, is given higher priority.

Strategic management directions

Priority

Increase current understanding of visitor use patterns, industry trends, demand and satisfaction.	1
Foster and develop partnerships with the tourism industry and Yalanji representatives to develop tourism initiatives and manage and enhance visitor opportunities and experience.	1
Increase management support to assist delivery of world-class visitor experiences.	1
Increase public contact and compliance patrols of key visitor sites.	1

*KEY: M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent; 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).




Community, partnerships and other interests

Current level of service



Community, partnerships and other interests for Daintree National Park will continue to be managed at a **high** LoS due to high level and moderately complex interactions with community, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome	
	Current levels of consultation and engagement, with neighbours, community, government stakeholders and other interested parties, meet requirements and are maintained.
Strategic management directions	Priority
Maintain current LoS standard	2

*KEY: M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).



Field management capability

Current level of service



Field management capability will continue to be managed to a **very high** LoS.

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current approach to field management capability meets requirements and is maintained. Once land transfers have been completed, the park is jointly managed with the Yalanji People.
Strategic management directions	Priority
Maintain current LoS standard	2
Increased support from the regional joint management team to facilitate cooperative management initiatives.	2

***KEY:** M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent; 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).



Operational planning and management support

Current level of service



Operational planning and management support will be a **very high** LoS. The current LoS is **high**.

Desired outcome and strategic management directions

Desired outcome



- Increased priority for additional support from regional and central office units helps strategic fire and pest management programs, visitor planning and asset planning and management.
- Additional expert support is provided for operational planning and service delivery, particularly of large strategic fire, pest and visitor management programs, to achieve large-scale shifts in overall levels of service.
- Additional support is provided by the regional joint management team to enhance Traditional Owner engagement and cooperative management outcomes.

Strategic management directions

Priority

Increase support from regional and central experts around key management challenges, issues and planning.

1





Increase support from regional joint management team for enhanced engagement with Yalanji Bama and cooperative management outcomes.













1







***KEY:** M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Summary of strategic management directions

Key Values













Value	Key Value	Current	Desired	Threatening processes	Strategic Management Directions	Priority (1-5) *
	Yalanji cultural values of the National Park			Lack of opportunities and resources for Caring for Country work	Build management capacity and opportunities through the Indigenous Management Agreement process, including additional employment, contract and training opportunities for Kuku Yalanji Bama.	2
				Lack of power and culture losing strength	Maintain and strengthen access to Country for Yalanji Bama.	1
					Jointly develop opportunities and processes to build and support culture.	1
					Maintain and renew Traditional management practices by incorporating them into ongoing and agreed park management.	1
					Recognise and support Yalanji Lore in decision-making for the park.	1
				Fire	See Mountains and Hills and valleys sections below.	2
				Pest animals, pest plants and diseases	Investigate opportunities to replant species previously selectively logged.	2
					See Mountains, Hills and valleys, Coast and Waterways sections below.	2
				Visitor	Enhance visitor interpretation, including advice on appropriate cultural protocols and use of Yalanji language names, and infrastructure.	3
				Climate change	Investigate mechanism to mitigate the impacts of climate change on cultural values.	3
					Work jointly with QPWS to create a Daintree National Park (CYPAL) climate resilience strategy.	3
	Mountains: Montane and upland forests			Pest animals	Reduce impacts of feral pigs on rainforest, fernland, forbland and herbfield communities.	3
				Fire	Mitigate extent and severity of wildfires	2
				Climate change	Identify climate change impacts on Yalanji culture and montane and upland forests and assess any potential resilience building strategies.	3
				Visitors	Protect montane and upland forest values by reducing visitor impacts, in particular to identify sites where visitor presence compromises culture and monitor the impacts of bush camping near peaks.	2
















Value	Key Value	Current	Desired	Threatening processes	Strategic Management Directions	Priority (1-5) *
	Mountains: Tall open forest		2025 	Fire	Conserve the open forest structure through planned burning at appropriate intervals.	2
					Identify traditional pathways and areas of past open forest to be restored through reintroducing traditional burning practices.	2
				Pest plants and pest animals	Reduce the impacts of feral pigs on tall open forest communities.	3
					Reduce the impacts of <i>Lantana camara</i> in upland tall open forests.	3
	Hills and valleys: Rainforest			Pest plants and pest animals	Reduce the impacts of feral pigs to improve forest condition.	1
					Eradicate coffee from the Cape Tribulation area.	1
					Reduce impacts of hiptage, miconia, siam and brillantasia on rainforest in Mossman Gorge area.	1
				Climate change	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies.	1
				Fire	Jointly reintroduce Traditional burning practices in collaboration with Traditional Owners.	2
	Coast: Aesthetic value and Yalanji coastal values			Pest plants and pest animals	Reduce the impacts of feral pigs and pond apple.	2
					Prevent the establishment of potential high risk pests such as blue trumpet vine and tramp ants.	2
				Visitors	Mitigate visitor impacts through education and compliance.	2
					Limit, where possible, highly visible infrastructure in areas of high aesthetic value.	2
				Climate change.	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies for culture and the environment.	3
				Fire	Investigate the joint reintroduction of Traditional burning practices in collaboration with Traditional Owners.	2
	Waterways: Wawubaja, yilki, yiri (rivers, creeks, waterfalls)			Climate change	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies.	3
				Pest plants	Continue to monitor and control outbreaks of pest plants including pond apple, hymenachne and salvinia.	2
				Feral pigs	Reduce impacts of feral pigs on springs, wells and waterway banks	2

Value	Key Value	Current	Desired	Threatening processes	Strategic Management Directions	Priority (1-5) *
				Visitor impacts	Provide visitor interpretation advising of cultural protocols around accessing and swimming in creeks.	1
				Silt runoff from the Bloomfield Track and off car tyres during creek crossings	Encourage road managers to install and service sediment traps, culverts, causeways or bridges on the unsealed sections of the Bloomfield Track to reduce the direct input of sediment into waterways at crossings.	2
	Waterways: Mangrove communities			Climate change	Continue to identify climate change impacts and assess any potential resilience building strategies.	3
				Pest plants	Reduce impacts of pond apple on mangrove communities.	2
					Present the biological and cultural values of mangrove forest communities.	2
	Tourism: Sustainable tourism			Inappropriate visitor infrastructure and interpretation	Enhance visitor experience through improved infrastructure standards..	2
					Enhance visitor experience through improved interpretation	2
					Enhance visitor access to the Daintree experience by building the Daintree brand.	2
					Enhance visitor experience through support of Traditional Owner aspirations and commercial opportunities.	2

*KEY: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Levels of service

LoS	Management element	Current	Desired	Section	Strategic management directions	Priority (1-5) *
	Traditional Owner			Daintree National Park	Increase the level of Aboriginal cultural resource information in collaboration with Traditional Owners including investigating support for the Eastern Kuku Yalanji Cultural Information System (EKYCIMS).	2
					Improve the levels of engagement and collaboration with Traditional Owners to meet Indigenous Land-Use Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding requirements.	2
					Improve collaboration with Traditional Owners to develop management objectives and priorities to maintain and protect Indigenous cultural values.	2
					Increase support for Traditional Owners to develop management capacity for park management activities.	2
	Fire			Daintree National Park	Increase priority of fire management to meet the objectives of protecting life and property, maintaining healthy key values and high priority conservation outcomes.	1
					Increased operational capacity and support to complete planned burn programs.	1
					Build cooperative fire management capacity with Traditional Owners to protect indigenous cultural landscapes	1
	Pests			Daintree National Park	Increase the level of detail in regard to knowledge and mapping of pests and their impacts on all values.	1
					Improve the level of engagement with Traditional Owners on pest management.	1
					Increase the priority and support for the protection of all values from pest threatening processes.	1
	Natural values			Daintree National Park	Improve the level of knowledge and detailed mapping of the key values and species or ecosystems of conservation concern including incorporating appropriate Traditional Knowledge.	3
					Increased formal engagement with other government agencies and research institutions to improve cooperative species monitoring and management programs.	3

LoS	Management element	Current	Desired	Section	Strategic management directions	Priority (1-5) *
					Increased focus on managing key and significant natural values proactively to improve condition and to gain knowledge on threats to these values.	3
					Improve natural values monitoring and research programs through proactively developing internal and external partnerships including with the Yalanji Bama.	3
	Historic cultural heritage			Daintree National Park	Maintain current LoS standard.	5
	Visitors			Daintree National Park	Increase current understanding of visitor use patterns, industry trends, demand and satisfaction.	1
					Foster and develop partnerships with the tourism industry and Yalanji representatives to develop tourism initiatives and manage and enhance visitor opportunities and experience.	1
					Increase management support to assist delivery of world-class visitor experiences.	1
					Increase public contact and compliance patrols of key visitor sites.	1
	Community, partnerships and other interests			Daintree National Park	Maintain current LoS standard	2
	Field management capability			Daintree National Park	Maintain current LoS standard	2
					Increased support from the regional joint management team to facilitate cooperative management initiatives.	2
	Operational planning and management support			Daintree National Park	Increase support from regional and centric experts around key management challenges, issues and planning.	1
					Increase support from regional joint management team for enhanced engagement with Yalanji Bama and cooperative management outcomes.	1

*KEY: M – maintain current priorities; 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary; 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent; 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent; 5 – optional and not urgent (addressed after other priorities).

Thematic strategies

Thematic strategies translate strategic management directions, outlined in this management statement, into measurable objectives, providing a link between high-level strategy and on-ground actions.

Strategies provide a more detailed guide to delivering key management elements or activities, such as fire and pest management.

One or more 'thematic strategies' are required for each park, depending on its key values, threats to those values, or the complexity of management issues. Levels of service indicate which strategies are required for each park, and the type or level of strategy required.

Thematic strategies required for Daintree National Park:

Fire strategy

Assessment and monitoring strategy

Pest strategy

Indigenous cultural heritage and engagement strategy

Visitor strategy

Water

Evaluation and reporting

Every five years we will evaluate and report on how effectively the Daintree National Park is being managed. An 'adaptive management' approach helps us to set clear benchmarks for management, ensure the condition of key values is within acceptable thresholds, deliver transparent and accountable reporting and inform future management. Management effectiveness will evaluate the following.

- Are we maintaining or improving the condition and trend of the park's key values?
- Are we achieving the desired levels of service standards for the park?
- Are we implementing thematic strategy objectives, and are the objectives effective?
- Are strategic management directions delivering the desired outcomes?

Once the national park becomes 'National Park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal Land)', the evaluation and reporting cycles will be synchronised to avoid repetition.

Yalanji words

This list does not include place names or some animals and plants only mentioned once in this plan. (from Bloomfield *et al* 1986).

Bama	An Aboriginal person
Bama	A group of Aboriginal people
Bubu land	A person's country – where he or she belongs
Bubu	Land
Jalun	Sea
Kurranji	Cassowary
Madja	Rainforest
Mangurru	Mangrove
Ngalkal	Open forest
Ngawiya	Turtle
Ngujakura	Dreaming, Aboriginal lore
Wawubaja	River
Yalmba	Coastline
Yilki	Creek
Yiri	Waterfall

References

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DAINTREE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017

*A Submission to the Department of
National Parks, Sport and Racing
(DPSR)*

31 October 2017

DOUGLAS **SHIRE**
COUNCIL

*Improving Environmental Performance
Ngaral Kulji Bubungu - Eastern Kuku Yalanji
Pulmpa dakit jarral-a-kaling - Yirrganydji*

Ordinary Council Meeting - 31 October 2017

Image: Daintree Rainforest

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Daintree National Park Management Plan

Introduction

Douglas Shire Council recognises the work done to date by the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (DPSR) and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) in creating the draft Daintree National Park Management Plan. The applied new value-based management framework is a welcomed addition to managing and measuring the performance of key values attributed to the Daintree National Park, in a practical and transparent way.

Douglas Shire Council has prepared the below submission in response to the current public consultation round.

Submission

General Comments

The Daintree National Park is of significant value to the Douglas Shire communities, offering employment, scientific and educational opportunities; as well as being a hot spot for biodiversity, iconic flora and fauna and of cultural significance.

Douglas Shire Council appreciates the challenge of managing the Daintree National Park, particularly given the number of parties interested in its key values (e.g. WTMA, UNESCO, Douglas Shire Council, Cook Shire Council, Traditional Owners and Tourism Port Douglas Daintree among others). Douglas Shire Council commends DPSR and QPWS for their work with Traditional Owners during the development of the Plan; and is interested in how the proposed (QPWS and Kuku Yalanji Bama) joint management of the park will work in practice. In addition, the recognition of climate change impacts and threats throughout the Plan is a welcomed addition.

Areas and properties adjacent to the Daintree National Park have not been fully explored as part of the Plan. Douglas Shire Council would encourage QPWS to explore the impacts of adjacent areas and properties have on the National Park. This could include wandering dogs (domestic, feral and pig hunting) and the transfer of weeds and diseases. In addition, any further allowable Traditional Owner fire regimes (as noted in the Plan) could have serious negative impacts on adjacent areas and properties, and this risk needs to be fully explored and mitigated before any additional allowances are given. This is particularly pertinent due to the remoteness of the area and additional challenges facing emergency response units when responding to incidents, e.g. access routes and available water, particularly in the dry season.

A number of suggested amendments to the Plan have been proposed in Table One below.

Daintree Management Plan 2017

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Table One: Suggested Amendments to the Plan

Item #	Page(s)	Topic	Suggested Amendment
1	4	Park Overview 'The park is within the significant tourism region of Cairns...'	This statement is incorrect; the Daintree National Park (as correctly noted in the Resource Information document) is located within Douglas Shire and Cook Shire.
2	5	Figure 1. Conceptual model of Yalanji's relationship to the land	The intent of the figure is acknowledged, however visually it does not illustrate the message effectively. It is suggested that the figure illustration is redesigned.
3	6	Table 1: UNESCO World Heritage Convention criteria Column two of the table	It is suggested that the distinction between the UNESCO criteria definitions and the Daintree National Park areas that these apply to is reinforced by separating the two into separate columns. This will make the table easier to read.
4	7	Key values Overview	It would be helpful to list the key values prior to scoring them using the value-management approach. Currently the headings, sub-headings and page breaks make the Plan overly complicated to read.
5	8 - 24	Key values Reorganise Headings	<p>The headings that the key values fall under are not logical. Currently they are set out as below (please note for ease, the Traditional Ownership language has been omitted, however Douglas Shire Council recognises the value of including these within the Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indigenous 2. Mountains <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ecosystems and biodiversity: Montane and upland forests b. Ecosystems and biodiversity: Tall open forests 3. Hills & Valleys <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ecosystems and biodiversity: Rainforest 4. Coast <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ecosystem services: Aesthetic value b. Geological features (terrestrial): Coastal 5. Rivers, Creeks & Waterways <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Geological features (terrestrial): Rivers, creeks and waterfalls b. Ecosystems and biodiversity: Mangroves 6. Tourism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sustainable Tourism

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			<p>It is advised that instead the following headings and sub-headings are used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ecosystem and Biodiversity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Montane and upland forests b. Tall open forests c. Rainforest d. Mangroves 2. Geological features (terrestrial) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coast b. Rivers, creek and waterfalls 3. Traditional Owners* 4. Ecosystem Services <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Aesthetic value b. Carbon Stores** 5. Sustainable Tourism <p>*Please note 'Indigenous' has been renamed as 'Traditional Owners' to better reflect the value statement noted in the Plan.</p> <p>**Proposed additional value, please see 'Carbon Store' (Item #8).</p> <p>Note: the order of the headings has been reorganised to place more emphasis on the environmental aspects of the Daintree National Park. Without the Ecosystem & Biodiversity and Geological Features the remaining values attached to the area (Traditional Owners, Ecosystem Services and Sustainable Tourism) values would not exist to the same extent as they do today.</p>
6	12	Ecosystems and biodiversity: Tall open forests	It is proposed that the priority rating for the strategic management direction around pest plants and pest animals is raised, to better address the negative impact feral pigs, weeds and diseases have on the Daintree National Park.
7	14	Ecosystems and biodiversity: Rainforest	Douglas Shire Council would like more information on the strategic management direction under 'Fire' - 'Jointly reintroduce Traditional burning practices in collaboration with Traditional Owners'. Please see 'Levels of Service - Fire' (Item #13).
8	16	Ecosystem Services Additional value – Carbon Stores	It is proposed that 'Carbon Store' is added under Ecosystem Services to reflect the importance of protecting the rainforest and mangroves due to their vital role in storing carbon emissions. Loosing the Daintree rainforests and mangroves would accelerate the impacts of climate change.

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9	21	Mangroves Value Statement	It is proposed that the mangrove value statement notes the importance of mangroves as a vital carbon store (mangroves store two to four times the amount of carbon that tropical rainforests can). This would link well with identified climate change threat.
10	23	Sustainable Tourism Strategic management directions	It is proposed that the third strategic management direction 'Enhance visitor access to the Daintree experience by building the Daintree brand' is done in conjunction with the tourism industry, e.g. Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree (TPDD).
11	25	Levels of Service Overview	<p>It is proposed that the nine levels of service identified in the Plan are listed in the overview. This would include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditional Owner engagement and cultural heritage 2. Fire 3. Pests 4. Natural values 5. Historic cultural heritage 6. Visitors 7. Scientific research and education* 8. Community, partnerships and other interests 9. Field management capability 10. Operational planning and management support <p>*Proposed additional level of service, please see 'Scientific research and education' (Item #12).</p>
12	25	Levels of Service Additional service – Scientific Research and Education	It is proposed that 'Scientific Research and Education' services are recognised under a new Levels of Service heading. These are recognised in the existing Daintree Management Statement 2013, however haven't been identified as a key service within the new Plan. These areas are too significant to be included under the 'Community, partnership and other interests' heading, it is not clear from the Plan whether they have been included under this heading or not.
13	27	Levels of Service Fire	<p>Douglas Shire Council acknowledges the importance of the connection Traditional Owners have with the Daintree National Park, however is wary of moving towards allowing traditional fire regimes to return as noted to in the Plan. Fire poses a number of safety and health risks to the Daintree National Park and surrounding areas and properties.</p> <p>Fire has been classed as a Number 1 Priority (extremely urgent and extremely necessary), it is requested that this score is re-evaluated, particularly given the ecosystem and biodiversity values of the area are in direct conflict with this practice.</p> <p>Douglas Shire Council requests the opportunity to be consulted during the development of any</p>

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			fire related strategies covering the Daintree National Park and surrounding areas.
14	31	Levels of Service Visitors	It is proposed that visitor safety is added as a desired outcome, particularly with regards to education around crocodiles and cassowaries.

Conclusion

Douglas Shire Council recognises the benefits of the new value-based management model presented in the Plan, in managing the Daintree National Park. Given the environmental, cultural, economic and social significance of the Daintree National Park to the Douglas Shire area, Douglas Shire Council would have appreciated the opportunity to participate in earlier discussions regarding the new Plan. Douglas Shire Council would welcome the opportunity to further discuss this submission with DPSR and QPWS and requests to be involved in future discussions, particularly around fire regimes.

Additional Information

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