

Our past , our future

The year 2009 is significant for the State of Queensland and also the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), marking the formation of Queensland 150 years ago and the department this year.

On 6 June 1859, Queensland separated from New South Wales under its own representative government, with Sir George Ferguson Bowen as its first governor. The colony became a state with federation in 1901.

On 26 March 2009, following the state election, the former Department of Natural Resources and Water (NRW) and the former Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were amalgamated to form DERM.

Both agencies and their predecessor organisations were major contributors to shaping the fledgling colony and the state, making Queensland the strong and vibrant place it is today.

DERM's responsibilities can be traced back to activities required as soon as the new colony was created, including:

- surveying the colony—Augustus Charles Gregory became Queensland's first Surveyor-General

- opening of tenders for runs of Crown Land beyond the settled district—announced in the first *Government Gazette*
- passing of four Land Bills (including the Unoccupied Crown Land Occupation Act) in Queensland Parliament's first session in 1860.

In 1862, the Department of Lands and Works was established under the control of a Minister of the Crown to implement the requirements of the Land Acts. The Real Property Transfer Office was established in the Colonial Secretary's Office at that time. Successor organisations since then have included the Lands Department, Titles Office, Valuer-General's Department and Department of Geographic Information.

In 1881, the government established the Water Supply Office in the Treasury Department to take over the water supply functions of the Harbours and Rivers Office. This was in response to the growing population's demand for better services. A Water Supply unit was created in the Treasury Department in 1889 and its functions were managed at various times by Treasury Department, Department of Public Works, and Department of Public Lands.

Lamington National Park



During a world tour in 1878, Queensland pastoralist Robert Martin Collins learned of the world's first national park, Yellowstone National Park, established in the United States in 1872.

On returning to Australia, Collins campaigned for the creation of national parks in Queensland. His dream was realised 30 years later when in 1908, Witches Falls at Tamborine in south-east Queensland became the state's first national park. Barron Gorge in far north Queensland, however, also lays claim to being the first park as it was declared a 'reserve for national park purposes' under the Lands Act in 1900.

Queensland's national parks were administered originally by the Forestry Department. In 1975 the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) was established, incorporating the National Park Branch of Forestry, and the Fauna Conservation Branch of the Department of Primary Industries. The Herbert River ringtail possum has been the symbol of the Service since 1976.

Until the late 1980s, environmental responsibilities were scattered through several departments and smaller bodies, such as the Department of the Co-ordinator General, Beach Protection Authority and Noise Abatement Authority. These functions, which included pollution control, coastal planning and cultural heritage conservation, were eventually brought together.

QPWS became part of this larger agency, known first as Department of Environment and Conservation, then as the Department of Environment and Heritage. In December 1998, the EPA was created and it incorporated QPWS.

In February 1996, the Department of Natural Resources was established by merging the resource management and water resources functions of the Department of Primary Industries with the former Department of Lands. The department was later renamed and became NRW.

DERM is building on this long and successful history by securing the state's water, managing the land, conserving Queensland's natural and cultural heritage, and meeting the challenges of climate change.