

Goal 10

Supporting authentic and sustainable tourism experiences.

Provide meaningful and authentic tourism experiences and lead the world in sustainable tourism practices.

Why is this important?

Queensland's national parks, World Heritage areas and Great Barrier Reef are internationally renowned for their beauty, diversity and unique natural values. These natural treasures attract more than 16 million visits to Queensland each year, and provide an important competitive advantage in the international and domestic tourism markets.

Visiting national parks is the most popular activity for international and domestic visitors to the state. These visitors bring major benefits to the economy by using the services of local tourism operators and by staying longer in regional communities.

In a world where many natural areas are under increasing pressure, managing tourism growth while conserving natural values is a fine balancing act. World-class protected area management practices employed by QPWS ensure that these natural attractions retain their integrity and continue to attract people.

The way visitors want to experience protected areas has changed over recent years—activities now range from sea kayaking and mountain biking to picnicking and sightseeing. Tourism events such as music festivals and organised fund-raising walks on protected areas or forests are becoming more common and can provide significant economic boosts to local areas.

Historically, camping has been the only way a visitor could stay overnight in a national park. While tent camping is still popular, people are often now travelling in off-road and luxury 4WD camper-trailers. There is increasing demand for 'glamping', established camps

so that visitors can experience the great outdoors and end the day with their dinner cooked and bed made. Luxury accommodation located near protected areas is also a desire of many visitors, who seek unique characteristics in the property itself or its surrounding natural environment.

Diversity in accommodation offerings in or near national parks is regarded as an important ingredient in Queensland remaining a competitive tourism destination. Reuse of existing buildings and other infrastructure on protected areas could provide an innovative way to accommodate different needs without increasing the development footprint. As Queensland's protected area system expands, there is also an opportunity to identify strategic tourism opportunities during the acquisition and dedication process for new protected areas.

Cooperative management arrangements with Queensland's Traditional Owners can provide an opportunity for authentic Indigenous tourism to be a major drawcard for many visitors.

Queensland's nature-based tourism sector is a critical partner in delivering authentic and sustainable protected area and wildlife tourism experiences. A regulatory environment that fosters innovation, efficiency, long-term investment, and best practice is essential for providing environmentally and commercially sustainable tourism experiences.

Queensland has the opportunity to be the leading destination of choice for authentic and meaningful protected area and wildlife tourism experiences.

What is our approach?

A nature-based tourism industry based on Queensland's protected areas, forest and wildlife will be promoted and managed sustainably in cooperation with industry and Indigenous partners. QPWS will:

- invest in tourism planning to identify current and future opportunities and to achieve sustainable management of visitor sites and regions.
- work closely with and understand the aspirations of the nature-based tourism industry and Traditional Owners to provide experiences that foster environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.
- provide support to ensure that tourism operators can deliver a diverse range of ecologically sustainable tourism experiences.
- work with tourism operators to ensure there is the highest level of compliance, that there is increased monitoring of impacts, and to take remedial action where necessary.
- provide a contemporary, effective and efficient framework and business environment for tourism on protected areas.
- provide for and actively identify opportunities for private investment in low impact, economically and environmentally sustainable nature-based tourism opportunities on protected areas. Ensure long-term sustainability of these activities by assessing and monitoring compliance of operators.
- continue to research and promote the economic benefits of protected areas to state and regional economies.

◆ National parks like Noosa (above) and Great Sandy (below) provide a diversity of experiences for visitors.



DERM



Robert Ashdown, DERM

What we will do: priorities for 2020

10.1 Implement the Tourism in Protected Areas (TIPA) initiative.

- a) Implement an efficient, best practice and commercially focused business environment for tourism operators by applying the TIPA initiative.
- b) In consultation with industry and the community, complete tourism planning and reviews in accordance with approved policy in all TIPA sites.

Target

- By 2013, implement the regulatory simplification measures outlined in the TIPA initiative¹⁸.

¹⁸ These sites will include Fraser Island Recreation Area, Natural Bridge in Springbrook National Park, Whitsunday Islands, Cooloola Recreation Area, Moreton Island Recreation Area, Daintree National Park, Cape York (subject to existing and proposed Indigenous management agreements for each protected area).

10.2 Work in partnership with the nature-based tourism industry.

- Convene regular forums at state and regional level with peak industry associations and operators to progress strategic actions and refine policy.
- In consultation with industry and Tourism Queensland, develop an industry capacity-building program aimed at best practice interpretation of natural values and cultural heritage.
- Improve communication channels between the tourism industry and QPWS by facilitating information sharing and partnerships, and by providing quality information for tourism operators to use in their communication and interpretation activities.
- Promote voluntary best practice in addition to required mandatory standards in TIPA.



Mark Simmons



- In consultation with the nature-based tourism industry, identify strategic compliance priorities, and implement a compliance program to underpin a best practice and sustainable nature-based tourism industry.
- Provide a viable investment environment and conservation-focused framework for private investment in tourism infrastructure on protected areas.
- In consultation with industry, identify opportunities for private investment in tourism infrastructure on protected areas.
- In consultation with industry, create a quality and commercially viable industry by refining the policy framework for the offer of commercial capacity.
- Proactively manage the commercial capacity of tourism on protected areas to achieve triple bottom line sustainability for all commercially accessed sites.

▲ Protected areas of the Cape York Peninsula provide a unique experience for visitors.

♦ Wildlife experiences on protected areas provide opportunities for tourism that help to support the Queensland economy.

10.3 Support sustainable and innovative protected area and wildlife tourism experiences.

- a) Develop a protected area and wildlife tourism strategy that identifies: nature-based experiences, visitor precincts, competitive strengths, gaps and opportunities for the future positioning, development planning, management and marketing of QPWS business.
- b) In consultation with industry, identify and invest in strategic and iconic protected area and wildlife tourism experiences.

10.4 Value protected area and wildlife tourism.

- a) At least every five years, complete an economic study of the value of protected areas and wildlife to the state and regional economy to support tourism industry monitoring and reporting.
- b) Regularly obtain and analyse data on visitors to protected areas and forests, including international and domestic tourists.

Tourism in Protected Areas

The Tourism in Protected Areas (TIPA) initiative was developed by the Queensland Government, in partnership with the tourism sector, to achieve sustainable and prosperous nature-based tourism at Queensland's iconic national parks.

It provides an efficient, effective and equitable system of allocating commercial tourism operators' access to key protected areas based on visitor capacity.

The TIPA initiative seeks to respond to the business needs of tourism operators by offering greater certainty and flexibility through longer tenures and streamlined administrative processes.

More broadly, the initiative provides the basis for ensuring sustainable use by all visitors to Queensland's protected area network.



Courtesy of Tourism Queensland