



Building a capable, learning organisation

Goal 11 **Valuing our skilled workforce**

Goal 12 **Improving adaptive management
for protected areas, forests and wildlife**

Goal 11

Valuing our skilled workforce

Create and retain a skilled, well equipped and motivated workforce to manage our protected areas, forests and wildlife.

Why is this important?

The QPWS workforce is the most important resource for effective management and presentation of protected areas, forests and wildlife. QPWS activities depend on the skills and commitment of staff, and on the support they are given to perform their tasks. Our people play a vital role in the future of Queensland's natural and cultural heritage.

Rangers are critical to the everyday operations of QPWS. Their knowledge, skills and dedication ensure that conservation work on land and sea is carried out to the highest possible standard. Their actions and achievements are underpinned by a diverse team of specialist staff who contribute in other essential ways to the conservation effort and working with the community. This team includes management planners, policy specialists, biologists, administrative staff, managers, spatial scientists and communicators. The skills, enthusiasm and motivation of all of our people ensure that QPWS is a productive, inspiring and positive place to work.

Over time, the complexity and demands of QPWS work have increased dramatically. A new suite of skills is necessary, with most staff now required to be competent with the latest information and communication technology and systems. However, some aspects of QPWS work have not changed: protected area visitors still like to talk to knowledgeable rangers, and field work remains physically demanding and often isolating.

The future will hold even more challenges. The Queensland protected area system will double in size by 2020. New acquisitions, accountability to the community and government and increasing competition for resources mean that QPWS must be resourceful, innovative and forward thinking. Reliable, durable and fit for purpose equipment that sustains the safety and wellbeing of QPWS staff is essential.

Some parks are located in the most remote areas of Queensland. Meeting the social and welfare needs of

the workforce and their families across a diversity of environments is a significant challenge and one that must deliver contemporary standards and balancing effectiveness with efficiency.

The resources and capability of the workforce must evolve over time. Providing career development opportunities that sustain and transfer corporate and traditional knowledge will be the hallmark of a learning organisation. Fostering dedication, integrity and pride in the QPWS workforce community will help sustain the image of QPWS as an enthusiastic, positive, welcoming and safe workplace of choice.

Over the next decade it will be important for QPWS to lead by example and model the behaviours that are expected by the community. Energy efficiency, minimal impact and a small carbon footprint are some of the changes that will affect the QPWS workforce and the tools used to deliver conservation.

Disasters and other natural events are likely to become more frequent in a future of climate change. Deploying

resources where and when they are most needed will require a workforce that is flexible, responsive and resilient. This workforce may include not only salaried staff, but also volunteers, contractors and partnerships with the private sector.

The safety and wellbeing of this workforce is paramount. A concerted program of safety procedures and consciousness is required by all staff. No workforce member must undertake duties in an unsafe way; everyone, at any level, must feel comfortable to challenge and report unsafe practices.

Maintaining an adaptable QPWS workforce will enable the organisation to remain responsive to the management obligations of protected areas, forests and wildlife.

Maintaining the culture of the workforce, safety, respect for diversity, or better procedures cannot be achieved through policy alone. All staff members from the most senior to new rangers have a responsibility to make their workplace an enthusiastic, positive, welcoming and safe environment.



Michael O'Connor, DERM

▲ An important part of protected area management is equipping staff with the necessary skills and resources to safely conduct activities like planned burns.

What is our approach?

A highly skilled, well-equipped and motivated workforce will manage protected areas and wildlife. Staff health, safety and wellbeing is the primary concern of QPWS workforce management. QPWS will be an organisation where people want to work, and will:

- provide a safe and productive workplace where all staff are respected.
- prevent accidents and avoidable disease affecting staff, visitors, contractors and the public to achieve zero harm.
- value staff as professional, committed and dedicated people, and encourage cooperation and clear reciprocal relationships between staff members and managers.
- develop a workforce with the necessary skills, resources and capability to protect, monitor, restore and present protected areas, forests and wildlife.
- encourage staff at all levels to have a sense of pride and achievement in their work, with high professional standards and excellence in conservation and presentation.



- attract and retain a diverse workforce through a variety of employment programs, flexible work options and other initiatives to attract and retain young people, mature-age employees, Indigenous people and those from a range of backgrounds.
- equip staff with tools and systems that enables them to do their jobs to the very best of their ability.
- lead by example; model contemporary workplace behaviours and embrace new tools and equipment that will reliably deliver energy efficiencies and cost savings.
- identify, build and transfer critical technical knowledge and skills.
- foster an environment that supports innovation, integrity and resourcefulness.
- locate staff to maintain close links with the community and to enable rapid mobilisation in response to current and future demands.
- invest in building leadership and management capability.



QPWS values

Our highest priority is the **conservation** of Queensland's natural and cultural treasures for all, forever.

Together with Traditional Owners and other landholders, we are committed to environmental **stewardship** on behalf of all Queenslanders.

We regard meaningful **engagement** with our community as vital to the future of Queensland's wildlife, land and sea.

We believe our environment is enriched and strengthened by **diversity** of culture, people, ideas, nature and landscapes.

Being genuine, practical, grounded and acting with **integrity** is in our nature.

We value **effectiveness** founded on science, ingenuity and evidence-based decisions.



What we will do: priorities for 2020



11.1 Ensure that staff health and safety remains a primary workforce concern.

- a) Implement the *Working safe, Working well* Strategy, including the goal of Zero Harm.
- b) Continue to develop a staff culture at all levels where safety and well-being of self, colleagues and the public is of primary concern.
- c) Regularly review and improve the quality, standards and use of uniform and personal protective equipment to ensure that staff are well presented, comfortable and safe at all times.

Targets

- Accidents and injuries in the workplace continue to decline; by 2012 there is a 10 per cent reduction in lost time (work days lost) per year¹⁹.

11.2 Recruit and retain a diverse and effective workforce, and make QPWS a desirable organisation for which to work.

- a) Promote contemporary attitudes, behaviours and innovative ideas that make QPWS workplaces welcoming and friendly to all staff and visitors.
- b) Explore and implement new incentives for attracting and retaining staff across the state, including in remote areas.
- c) Support employment programs to attract and retain young people.
- d) Implement flexible work options to attract and retain mature-age workers and people with family responsibilities.
- e) Work cooperatively and in collaboration with union representatives to ensure that the needs of employees are met in the development, design and implementation of current and new workplace policies.

¹⁹ Safer and healthier workplaces, 2007–2012, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations

11.3 Build good communication and encourage clear reciprocal relationships between all staff.

- a) Implement regular performance feedback meetings and professional and personal development plan reviews to ensure that all workforce members are well informed of their progress and organisational priorities.
- b) Ensure staff have access to contemporary communication tools that enable them to communicate readily, particularly where safety is concerned.

Target

- By 2013, 100 per cent of staff have an achievement and development agreement in place.

11.4 Offer quality training opportunities, professional development and career paths.

- a) Actively engage staff in training and develop an annual training program that responds to core skill gaps and organisational priorities.
- b) Assist staff with career planning and identify development opportunities or mentoring arrangements that provide personal and professional development.
- c) Create and support opportunities for staff to work with leading experts and researchers to build capacity, skills and knowledge in protected area and wildlife management.
- d) Train staff in facilitation, communication, and conflict resolution, to equip them to better engage with and respond to community expectations and remain accountable for their actions.
- e) Train staff in how to make good decisions through targeted delegation and legislative training programs.
- f) Support staff attendance at meetings, conferences, exchanges, field work and workshops where appropriate.
- g) Explore opportunities for staff exchanges and job rotation nationally and internationally to provide skill-sharing and professional development opportunities.



11.5 Encourage development of management and leadership abilities.

- a) Actively support and target emerging leaders to undertake leadership development programs and training courses.
- b) Deliver an annual statewide workshop comprising a cross section of staff to discuss emerging issues and contemporary responses or actions and to share leadership development.

11.6 Ensure staff accommodation, responsibilities and welfare procedures meet acceptable standards.

- a) Establish clear and practical policies and procedures in relation to issues concerning staff welfare and responsibilities. Fully consult staff and union representatives in the formulation of these policies.
- b) Meet agreed standards set in the Government Employee Housing Maintenance Management Framework for staff accommodation in all locations where accommodation is provided. QPWS will ensure housing is safe, appropriate and well maintained.

11.7 Manage contracts responsibly.

- a) Continue to delegate and engage with contractors, local communities and protected area neighbours to undertake selected management activities where appropriate.
- b) Undertake quality control of any contracting arrangements to reflect the importance of maintaining management standards.

11.8 Maintain well-equipped and fit for purpose equipment and systems.

- a) Regularly review and adapt workplace policies, procedures and systems to ensure that they meet current standards and support effective service delivery.