

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

Chief of Staff	OK
Dated / /	
Approved	Not Approved
Further information required	
Minister.....	
Dated / /	

SUBJECT: Future management of the Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is not urgent.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- **note** that no proposals were received in response to the Expression of Interest called in December 2012 for the commercial management of the Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway;
- **note** that three viable options for the future management of the facility have been identified for consideration;
- **endorse** the preferred option that the Walkway be opened free of charge (FOC) and maintained as a routine part of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS)-managed visitor infrastructure;
- **note** that these options have been discussed with the commercial operators of similar attractions in the region and with members of the QPWS North Queensland tourism industry forum, and there is broad agreement for the recommended approach;
- **note** that the preferred option involves cessation of the ‘per customer’ fee to the Traditional Owners, the Mamu people through the Mamu Aboriginal Corporation, and that this will be contentious with that group; and
- **note** that the future development of ancillary tourism services, facilities and/or future commercial management is not prevented by the preferred option.

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

- The Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway (the Walkway) was opened in 2008 following a \$10 million state government investment to demonstrate its commitment to the nature-based tourism industry in North Queensland.
- Since its opening, the Walkway has been managed and marketed by QPWS as a pay for entry visitor attraction. Walkway operation has been delivered through the employment of up to seven temporary staff (administration officers and rangers) and the expenditure of approximately \$0.65 million per year in operating costs. In the past 12-18 months the operating costs have been reviewed and services have been reduced to a minimum, reducing operating costs to approximately \$0.5 million per year.
- A ‘per customer’ fee is paid to the Mamu Aboriginal Corporation under the Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) agreed as part of the commencement and construction of the Walkway.
- Although visitor numbers grew over the first two years of operation there has been a significant decline in visitation and revenue over the past few years.
- This can in part be attributed to the general decline in tourism demand in the region and natural events (cyclones). It is also due to the attraction itself in terms of the lack of development of product (e.g. Café and tours) to support the Walkway, marketing to attract visitors to the Walkway, and a commercial approach to the operation of the Walkway.
- The current ticket price is also widely viewed to not offer ‘value for money’ and it is well known that many visitors arrive at the gate and do not enter the Walkway because it is not regarded as value for money.
- In contrast, other similar attractions (e.g. Paronella Park) in the same region have increased their visitation substantially over the same time period.

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	Name: Jason Jacobi Position: A/ED West Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: DDG, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:	



- In 2012, QPWS investigated options for the future management of the Walkway and concluded that commercial management by the private sector would provide the best option for the attraction to reach its full potential including more effective integration into industry marketing strategies, the application of a more cost effective commercial business model, and the development of additional products such as guided tours and ancillary services such as a café.
- Consultation has occurred with operators of similar tourist attractions and with critical tourism industry stakeholders.
- Feedback indicated that commercial management was the preferred way forward but it was acknowledged that the Walkway may not be attractive to private investors primarily due to the lack of existing ancillary products and services and also given the current economic climate.
- Discussion with the Mamu people indicates a renewed interest in commercial management of the Walkway although it is clear that the capacity of the Traditional Owners is limited and any involvement in the tourism industry would require significant skill development and assistance by the appropriate areas of government.
- In December 2012 an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the commercial management of the Walkway was called. The EOI closed on 8 February 2013.
- No proposals were received in response to the Expression of Interest.
- A number of informal expressions of interest have since been received including:
 - Options around use of the Walkway by existing permitted operators (noting this can be pursued irrespective of the approach to management); and
 - The option for a commercial operator to manage ticket sales and maintain the general ticketing area and associated amenities building, with QPWS being responsible for maintenance of the Walkway infrastructure.

Future management options considered

- Discussions about the options for future management occurred in February 2013 with commercial operators of similar tourist attractions;
- Three viable options have been identified as:
 - 1) Maintain current approach (retain ticket price, continue payment to Mamu Aboriginal Corporation) but with significantly reduced servicing to the facility to reduce the cost to QPWS
 - 2) Let the commercial operation of the ticket office function (retain ticket price, continue payment to Mamu Aboriginal Corporation) and QPWS management of infrastructure but with significantly reduced servicing of the facility to reduce cost to QPWS;
 - 3) Open the Walkway free of charge (FOC), manage as a routine part of QPWS-managed visitor infrastructure and cease payment of fees to the Mamu people.
- Costs and benefits are detailed at **Attachment 1**.
- Option 3 is recommended as it presents the best overall outcome for the management of the Walkway for QPWS integrating it as part of routine maintenance activities and in terms of its offer as a tourism attraction.
- While Option 3 is not the most cost effective for QPWS, industry advice that the FOC entry may attract additional visitors to the region, having flow-on benefits to other attractions in the region and with a longer term view to grow visitation to the attraction creates a more viable proposition for future management.
- Cessation of the fee to the Traditional Owners under Option 3 will be contentious with the Mamu Aboriginal Corporation.
- An additional option exists to excise the land that the Walkway is on, resulting in this area being de-gazetted from the national park, the asset written off by the State, and ownership granted to the Traditional Owners if they are willing.
- This is not considered a viable option given the maintenance, management and liability requirements would far exceed the capacity of the Traditional Owners.

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Payment of fee to the Mamu Aboriginal Corporation

- An ILUA was agreed between the State and the Mamu Aboriginal Corporation for the construction, maintenance and commercial operation of the Walkway.
- This involves the payment of an agreed fee per customer by the State to the Corporation.
- The agreed fee is \$1 per customer and over the past few years amounted to a total annual payment of between \$15,000 and \$35,000, depending on visitor numbers. Based on most recent years the annual payment could be expected to be approximately \$20,000.
- The ILUA states that the fee is for the 'commercial operation' of the Walkway and there is a 'No Warranties' clause determining there is no warranty in relation to the period of time the fee will be paid, the number of customers and the amount of the fee payable.
- Communication with the Mamu people regarding the future arrangements for the Walkway will need to occur at the appropriate time.

Points to note

- Clear advice from local industry is that at current visitation levels the development of ancillary services such as a café is not commercially viable. Visitor numbers would need to increase significantly to support a café and it is anticipated that this would take a number of years under the management of an experienced tourism operator.
- The Walkway contributes to the range of tourism products available south of Cairns and its value to the region will be enhanced significantly if ancillary services and facilities can be developed at some future point when market conditions improve.
- The Indigenous cultural heritage connection with the site remains the major potential "point of difference" for the Walkway as a visitor attraction and the opportunity for the future establishment of services to present and interpret these values should be preserved. The uptake of these future opportunities is dependent on the aspirations and capability of the Mamu people.
- While it will be more difficult to re-introduce a fee for entry if the current ticket price is removed, ancillary services and facilities could be established on a commercial basis at a future point regardless of whether or not the Walkway is FOC.
- *Consultation:* Far North Queensland Tour Operators Association; representatives of the Mamu Aboriginal Corporation; Mr Max Shepherd, Skyrail; Mr Mark Evans, Paronella Park; Mr Ron and Mrs Pam Birkett, Daintree Discovery Centre; Mr Gordon Dixon, Downunder Tours; Mr Rob Giason, Tropical Tourism North Queensland.
- *Key Communication Messages:* There is broad industry support for the preferred option. Cessation of the fee to the Mamu Aboriginal Corporation is likely to be contentious with this group.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Options for future management of the Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway

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Draft Media release

Deadline Friday 17 May 2012	Briefing officer Jane Graham, Marc Dargusch/ Greg Smyth
Media Services contact Andrea Dobbyn	Phone
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Approved Greg Smyth, Anne Greentree	Phone 3330 5273

Have your say on the framework for ecotourism facilities on national parks

A draft implementation framework to govern the development of ecotourism facilities on national parks has been released for comment.

National Parks Minister Steve Dickson released the Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks - Implementation Framework today.

"The implementation framework supports the recent amendments to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* which allow for privately owned facilities to be developed on Queensland's national parks," Mr Dickson said.

"It provides the framework for a robust and transparent process for the assessment and ongoing management of any proposed ecotourism facility.

"The implementation framework includes:

- Six principles that guide the development of ecotourism facilities on national parks;
- Details of how the legislative requirements will be applied to proposals;
- The assessment process and criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals; and
- The leasing arrangements and how the terms and conditions will be applied.

"Criteria for considering any application will include how the proposal meets social, economic and environmental sustainability outcomes.

"The nature and scale will vary from smaller ecotourism facilities like safari tents or tree canopy zip lines to eco-lodges. Proposals will consider the natural values of the national parks in which they are located, and this will be assessed through an environmental impact statement or an environmental risk assessment, depending on the scale and location.

"Queensland has some of the world's most iconic natural attractions and we want ecotourism facilities that showcase and are in keeping with these unique natural environments. We want contemporary and world-leading ecotourism developments.

“Facilities will need to demonstrate sustainable practices in both development and ongoing management and operators will be required to obtain appropriate levels of ecotourism accreditation.

“Facilities will be audited to ensure that lease conditions are met. Bank guarantees or rehabilitation bonds will also be required in case an enterprise fails and new buyer can not be found.

“Ecotourism is a major part of the Queensland Government’s plan to grow tourism, one of the state’s four economic pillars. The Queensland Government wants to encourage investment in potential ecotourism opportunities and is increasing access to national parks and other State-owned land, for the enjoyment of all visitors.

“The Queensland Government will ensure that the inherent conservation and heritage values of national parks are preserved by applying its recently amended legislative provisions and the implementation framework,” Mr Dickson said.

The Framework is open for comment till 5PM EST Tuesday 4 June 2013. Read it at www.nprsr.qld.gov.au or www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au and submit comments to ecofacilities@nprsr.qld.gov.au.

ENDS

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RTI DL Release

**Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
Ministerial BRIEFING NOTE**

DG.....
Dated / /

TO: Minister, National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: 'General Expression of Interest' for Private Ecotourism Investment Opportunities on national parks

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is non-urgent.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- note** the current approach to deliver the 'General Expression of Interest (EOI)' for private ecotourism investment opportunities on national parks.
- note** the key milestones (Attachment 1) that must be achieved to deliver the release of the 'General EOI' as identified in the January–June 2013, Six Month Action Plan (SMAP);
- note** the key constraints and risks associated with the adopted approach to delivering Private Ecotourism Investment Opportunities Initiative (Attachment 2);
- ~~sch3(2)(1)(c) Cabinet matter - Budgetary process~~

BACKGROUND

- Improving access for tourism and recreation to national parks is a key priority of the government.
- Tourism is one of the four economic pillars of the government.
- Ecotourism, and specifically tourism on national parks, are key priorities identified within the tourism, priority of government identified in the LNP tourism policy platform and confirmed at *DestinationQ*, the industry-wide tourism forum held in Cairns in June 2012.
- As outlined in CTS 03653/13, enhanced ecotourism investment both on and off national park is being progressed via the Ecotourism Opportunities Interdepartmental Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) comprised of NPRSR (QPWS), Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTEBS) and Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ). NPRSR is lead for commercial opportunities on national park.
- ~~sch3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet~~
- A 'General Expression of Interest' (EOI) will provide an avenue for industry-initiated opportunities, and will act as the process for operators to propose commercial tourism ventures on national park.
- Based on experience and industry information, private ecotourism investment developments will generally centre around 3 themes:
 - "eco-accommodation" (e.g. development of safari-style tent resorts or private huts on long-distance walking tracks);
 - "eco-attractions" (e.g. development of zip lines and canopy walks); and
 - adaptive re-use of park infrastructure (e.g. redevelopment of lighthouse complexes, shearers sheds).
- The Steering Committee has proposed to include State-owned lands (administered under the *Lands Act 1994*) near or adjacent to national parks in the Private Ecotourism Opportunities Initiative to enable a sensible and flexible approach to facilitate private ecotourism investment.
- In late February 2013, DTEBS and NPRSR officers met with Department of Natural Resources and Mines, State Land and Asset Management (SLAM) Division officers, whom have agreed to be part of the Governments Ecotourism Opportunities Initiative.

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	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	

- Through its “Terms of Reference”, the Steering Committee is responsible for:
 - coordinating both the “Government led” and “Investor led” tendering processes,
 - providing a forum for inter-agency input into the development of the QPWS Private Ecotourism Investment Policy Framework,
 - coordinating the development of the tendering processes, documents and promotional material required for the invitation for an “Investor led” General Expression of Interest (EOI) for “low key” private ecotourism investment opportunities on Queensland’s Protected Areas (or adjacent State owned lands), and
 - work with proponents of suitable proposals to identify and resolve (or mitigate) environmental, tenure, planning, infrastructure and native title issues “investment ready” status before finalising a negotiated lease.

Legislative Amendments and Supporting Policy Framework

sch(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet

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ORIGINAL Release

The ‘General EOI’

- The primary objective of the ‘General EOI’ is to encourage private investors to identify potential sites across Queensland’s Protected Areas with high tourism potential which are suitable for developing new “low key” ecotourism products and/or enhancing existing products.
- In addition to testing the market demand, the ‘General EOI’ will also showcase both the government’s change of policy/ legislation and its support for the Queensland’s Tourism Industry.
- In progressing the General EOI, the Steering Committee has proposed that the tendering process will follow a two stage approach; an initial ‘General Expression of Interest, followed by an invitation to a limited number of preferred proponents to prepare a more detailed Request for Proposal (RFP).
- The first stage will invite interested parties be to submit a short and succinct proposal.
- Through **stage one** of the General EOI, interested parties will be encouraged to develop a concept submission that will:
 - outline an innovative, low key, eco-friendly tourism facility,
 - meet a current or emerging ‘market demand’
 - identify a site that suits the regions tourism brand or ‘destination fit’; and
 - ‘build in’ sustainable solutions to prevent or mitigate environmental issues.
- Proponents will also need to demonstrate their capacity to fund and operate the facility and that the ecotourism business will provide a financial return to the State.
- Comprehensive, ‘development and business master plans’, incorporating detailed site layout plans, engineering drawings and environmental assessments will not be required until the **stage two**,

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invitation for RFP.

- It will not be necessary to have the full conditions and decision criteria drafted for the stage two RFP until the EOI applications are received and assessed as stage two documents will need to be tailored to suit specific projects being invited to progress (e.g. RFP documents for a proposal near Winton may differ to multiple proposals for a 'premium site' such as Fraser Island).
- The General EOI's broader tendering and leasing process may, depending upon response, be resource intensive for the Department, particularly during preliminary assessment and subsequent detailed examination of proposals. This approach is particularly so, given that submissions could be for a wide array of opportunities and identify locations throughout the State.
- There are a large number of factors that have the potential to significantly impact on the government's ability to progress any particular proposal for development as well as impact on the viability of that opportunity.
- These include native title, ownership or Joint Management over the land tenure; legislative requirements (both State and Commonwealth); intrinsic environmental, cultural and landscape values on the site; local and state planning schemes; accessibility of the site (roads and proximity to airports); access to services and utilities; and investment climate.
- Additionally, it is anticipated that proponents who are successful in the second stage, Request for Proposal process, may then need to participate in any statutory public notification/ consultation processes before final Lease negotiations are undertaken with NPRSR.
- A detailed analysis on these key issues and constraints and risk factors is provided in Attachment 2.

Timeframes

- As previously stated the government has announced in the 6MAP, its intention to call a General EOI for private ecotourism opportunities by 21 June 2013.
- There are a number of separate (but interlinked), large bodies of work that will need to be completed to deliver the release of the 'General EOI' by this target date. The timing for completing these bodies of work have been mapped out as key milestones in Attachment 1.
- The Steering Committee has proposed that the EOI will be open for at least three months, to enable sufficient time for interested parties to develop an ecotourism opportunity concept, identify a potential site, research market fit, confirm economic viability and review any obvious potential development constraints.
- There needs to be a realistic expectation that only a limited number of concept proposals received will be subsequently invited to progress to the RFP stage. Only those with the greatest chance of economic success and the likelihood of progressing through the various development approval processes should be recommended.
- Depending on interest, it is anticipated some (2-5) concepts/ locations may be reasonably advanced through the RFP stage by mid 2014.
- The current and emerging (tourism) investment climate will largely dictate the level of market interest in these opportunities and the 'General EOI', noting current information suggesting financing for tourism investment is difficult to obtain.

Responsibilities

- The majority of responsibilities and actions under this initiative will rest with NPRSR and DTESB.
- All ecotourism investment opportunities (on and off park) will be released in a single State-wide EOI and this process will be run by NPRSR with support from DTESB, NRM and TEQ.
- NPRSR are responsible for delivering the legislative amendments and the supporting policy framework through the Commercial and Visitor Services and the Strategy and Policy branches.
- DTESB have been tasked with leading the Working Group that will prepare the 'General EOI' documentation.
- NPRSR will have primary responsibility for ecotourism leases on national parks and other NPRSR managed land.

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- DTESB will have primary responsible for facilitating the progression any off-park (*Lands Act 1994* lands) opportunities with the support of NRM and TEQ. Where there is a direct relationship between these opportunities and management of a national park, QPWS will work closely with DTESB to provide advice as required.
- DTESB are responsible for related DestinationQ actions and have taken the lead role in progress the Obi Obi Gorge Zip-Line Project (Government Led Initiative).

sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament

- *Key Communication Messages:* The ecotourism lease proposal has drawn significant opposition from conservation stakeholders. It is proposed that Corporate Communications will assist the Steering Committee to prepare a communications strategy including development of key messages (both benefits and protective measures), ministerial statements, as well as web and paper based advertising material prior to the release of the General EOI.
- *Election Commitment:*
Does this relate to an election commitment? Yes, the government priority to improve access to national parks for ecotourism.
- *Five Point Action Plan for Queensland:*
 - Does this deliver on growing a four pillar economy? Yes, tourism is one of the four economic pillars.

MINISTER’S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Key Milestones for the General EOI for Ecotourism Opportunities
- Attachment 2 - Key Issues and Constraints and risk factors associated with tendering on national parks

RTI DL Release

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DestinationQ – Ministerial Briefing Folder

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ISSUE 1: Overview of tourism operations in national parks, marine parks and other QPWS managed areas SUMMARY PAPER

Background

- There are a wide range of tourism activities that take place in Queensland's national parks.
- Historically, the most popular activities in our parks are based around guided tours, island resorts and boat trips.
- More recently there have been new tourism developments which although they appear high profile, generally have lower visitor numbers, including whale watching, camping tours, diving, and multi-day walks.
- While tourism operations occur across the State, there are 7 high profile tourism park regions (refer Attachment 1).
- Tourism operations are regulated under *Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NCA)*, *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 (RAM)*, *Marine Parks Act 2004 (MPA)* and associated Regulations.
- There are three main types of authorities: Commercial Activity Permits, Commercial Activity Agreements, and Marine Parks Permission (Tourism Program).
- Since early 2000s QPWS has worked closely with industry to improve the range and quality of tourism products in parks and provide certainty for the tourism sector.
- There were two broad initiatives undertaken to address industry aspirations – "Tourism in Protected Areas" (Refer Attachment 2) and more recently the "Private Investment in Eco-accommodation" (Refer Attachment 3).

Current Issues

- There are a number of critical contemporary issues of concern in the management and enhancement of tourism operations on national parks:
 - Latency or unused capacity which inhibits innovation and the development of diverse product
 - Declining tourism demand and difficult financial environment resulting in a lack of operator investment in existing product
 - How/if to release commercial capacity in this environment
 - Tourism park planning
 - Strategy to replace Ecotourism Plan/Qld Tourism Strategy

Additional Attachments

- Attachment 1: Map of key tourism areas
- Attachment 2: History of Tourism in Protected Areas
- Attachment 3: History of Private Investment in Eco-accommodation

History of “Tourism in Protected Areas” (TIPA)

<i>Late 1990's</i>	A number of key industry tour operators raised concerns with government about prohibitive nature of operations on national park
<i>Early 2000's</i>	Industry and government working group formed and issues/options paper released March 2003 – <i>Tourism Management in Queensland Protected Areas – A new way forward in managing tourism in protected areas (TIPA)</i>
<i>Mid 2000's</i>	Commercial Activity Agreements introduced into legislation Collaborative site planning (Sustainable Visitor Capacity) – Fraser Island, Natural Bridge TIPA principles further developed including capacity-based pricing as a mechanism to address latency Eco-accommodation/private investment issue on hold
<i>Late 2000's</i>	TIPA stalled as no agreement could be reached on capacity-based pricing In late 2008 outcomes of TIPA were re-confirmed with industry and a 'Use it or Lose it' (latency management) policy agreed and NOT capacity-based pricing. TIPA released May 2011 with industry support from Qld Tourism Industry Council, Australian Marine Park Tourism Operations and other industry players
<i>Late 2011</i>	Completed implementation of TIPA at Natural Bridge
<i>Now</i>	Commenced implementation of TIPA at Fraser Island, Whitsunday islands and Moreton Island

History of Eco-accommodation/private investment

- 2006-08* Roundtable convened of conservation, tourism and indigenous stakeholders – no agreement reach on how to progress
- Late 2009* Previous Government announced 7 sites for detailed investigation into opportunity for private investment in eco-accommodation
- 2010, 2011* EOI's issued for sites – very limited interest and no outcomes
- TRC consultancy led by Tourism Division to develop a set of recommendations to progress private investment in Queensland national parks

RTI DL Release

Overview

- The outstanding natural values of our national parks and marine parks are a major driver for tourism in Queensland. International visitors in particular rate Queensland's natural features as the major attraction for visiting.
- In 2010 Queensland national parks attracted nearly 4 million visitors (1M international visitors, 1.4M daytrip and 1.4M domestic visitors) contributing an estimated \$9.9B to the Australian economy.
- The tourism industry has faced a difficult financial environment following the GFC, strong AUD and significant international and domestic natural events.
- Forecasts of continuing global financial instability, especially in Japan, US and EU, will continue to limit international visitor numbers.
- China is now our fastest growing and most valuable inbound tourism market
- Australia tops the travel preferences of Chinese urban elite target audience.
- Queensland experienced an overall drop of -3% from inbound tourism and continued to see soft domestic holiday visitation.
- There was an overall increase of 3% in tourism expenditure, however, these gains were attributed to an increase in business travel and visiting family and friends markets and the gains were not experienced in the local tourism sector. Business tourism experience an 8% increase overall in Brisbane, southern Great Barrier Reef and Tropical North Queensland, mostly due to the resources industry boom.
- Globally, visitation to protected areas in developed countries is declining, this is linked to increased wealth and a competing range of recreational opportunities available to the visitor.

Visitation to Queensland Protected Areas:

- The recent Newspoll Survey of domestic visitation to Queensland national parks indicates 58M visits to both national parks (26M) and marine parks (32M) with 80% adults and 20% children.
- Domestic visitation to national parks has remained relatively stable over the past decade.
- Domestic visitation to marine parks has increased and is supported by increased boat registrations in Queensland.
- In national parks walking (54%) is still the most popular activity, with sightseeing the second most popular activity followed by natural and cultural appreciation, camping, picnic and BBQ and swimming.
- Camping is still a major attraction on the Fraser Coast with over 50% of the State's camping occurring in the Great Sandy National Park.
- In marine parks fishing (34%) was the most popular activity followed by swimming, then snorkel and scuba, sight seeing and sailing or boating.

Current Issues

- Declines in the key source markets including backpacker, US, UK, European & especially Japanese market (-19%) impacted on visitation in most regions across the State.
- The Gold Coast in particular continues to be affected by the reduction in Japanese holiday markets (-29%), however Chinese holiday makers increased by 14% making them the largest source market for holiday visitors.
- Reduction in travel from the lucrative European youth (under 30) market negatively impacted on areas reliant on backpackers such as Whitsundays, Fraser Coast and Tropical North Queensland.
- The adventure/adrenaline market is also identified as one of the fastest growing tourism segments worldwide and has implications for future park management of competitive events.

DestinationQ – Issues Briefing

- Increasing popularity in voluntourism provides opportunities for QPWS to develop partnerships with the tourism industry.
- An emerging trend for luxury soft adventure or 'glamping' is in demand - from the top-end to mid-range traveller.
- Increasing consumer movement towards 'Green' travel and ecotourism, with sustainability becoming a considered factor in travel plans.
- The majority of our interstate visitors are from NSW and Victoria.
- The ageing Australian population represents an opportunity to engage the baby boomers market as the new 'grey nomads'.
- In domestic tourism, a key trend is the underrepresentation of young Queenslanders (Gen Y 1982-1995) visiting parks.

Additional Attachments

1. QPWS Community Survey – Newpoll Interim Report May 2012

RTI DL Release

Background

- Tourism in Protected Areas (TIPA) provides a new management framework for managing tour operations at a number of high demand tourism sites on national park: Natural Bridge (Springbrook NP); Fraser Island; Whitsunday islands; Cooloola; Moreton Island; Daintree; Cape York (subject to Indigenous Management Agreements).
- TIPA had its origins in the late 1990s when a number of peak tourism operators expressed concern to government about the restrictive nature of management of tourism operations on national parks.
- TIPA was released in May 2011 and has been developed in close consultation with industry and has support of Qld Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) and the Australian Marine Park Tourism Association (AMPTO).
- TIPA has a number of key benefits for tour operators, including: increasing tenure from three years to 15 years; enabling transferability of agreements; fostering quality operations through eco-accreditation; maximising availability of tourism opportunities at sites through managing latent (unused) capacity; and targeted compliance.
- TIPA does not address private investment in tourism infrastructure on national parks (Refer Issue 4)

Current issues

- TIPA is being implemented in a staged approach:
 - Natural Bridge – completed December 2011
 - Fraser Island – currently underway
 - Whitsundays – currently underway
 - Moreton Island – currently underway
 - Daintree – 2013
 - Cooloola – 2013
 - Cape York – 2013 (as appropriate)
- All operators at Natural Bridge have successfully transitioned from permits to agreements and TIPA is completed at this site.
- Fraser Island tour operators have been contacted and some have written to the Minister seeking to stop the latency provisions which remove unused capacity from tour operators.
- Managing latency is critical in (1) achieving sustainable use; and (2) maximising tourism use of sites by ensuring that operators are not holding unused capacity.
- A number of options to manage latency were identified by the working group and capacity-based pricing was the preferred approach.
- This has been trialled in a number of areas and industry feedback is that it is not a commercially sustainable model. Capacity-based pricing would not guarantee that sites were managed at sustainable levels.
- With this in mind the latency management model was agreed and also agreed that tour operator fees would remain based on actual use.
- Not all tour operators will agree with the latency management model in that there is a perception that (1) the permit conveys some property right; and (2) any capacity released to the market may bring new entrants to the market and threatens their operations.

Suggested response

- Ecotourism is widely recognised as one of Queensland's strongest competitive advantages.
- National parks and marine parks are the basis of this important tourism market.
- This government will ensure that we look carefully at the management and regulation to support tourism on national parks.

DestinationQ – Issues Briefing

- Arrangements need to be efficient for operators and importantly, need to ensure that all use is sustainable.
- This government is committed to fostering quality tour operations and to providing a business-focussed environment that allows for innovation and diversification of product.
- Tourism in Protected Areas ticks the boxes in providing this framework and it has significant industry support, and we are going to ensure that it is implemented in a timely way.
- My department has already been in contact with Fraser Island operators and I am seeking full cooperation from operators to have these arrangements completed by October 2012.
- To ensure certainty of operations all areas will be completed by end 2013, and Whitsunday and Moreton Island will be finished by the end of 2012.

Key issues papers

- A. Key issues addressed through TIPA
- B. Timeline for key events relating to TIPA
- C. Latency management
- D. Eco-accreditation

Other attachments

1. Executive summary TIPA working group report
2. Tourism in Protected Areas Information Booklet
3. Fact Sheet: Eco-accreditation
4. Fact Sheet: Transferring from a Commercial Activity Permit to a Commercial Activity Agreement

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Latency

The application of the latency management as part of TIPA was anticipated to be the contentious issue for individual operators. Some Fraser Island operators have written correspondence to the Minister on this topic and seeking for a stop to latency management.

Accreditation – some commercial tour operators have raised concerns regarding the cost of obtaining eco-accreditation. Accreditation is an industry wide initiative and aligned with national objectives. For further information, refer to the Eco-accreditation key issues paper 2 (D).

ISSUE 3: Overview of Tourism on Protected Areas
ISSUE 3(A): Key issues addressed through TIP A

Issue	Historical approach	Approach provided through TIP A	Outcome achieved
Collaborative site planning	Not used	Commenced in 2005 for Fraser Island and at Natural Bridge. Exhaustive process identifying sustainable visitor capacities for sites (SVC), developed in consultation with industry	Identification of visitor capacities for high demand tourism sites in order to determine the capacity level that is environmentally sustainable
Length of permit tenure	Permit System - 3 year permits	Commercial Activity Agreements - 15 year agreements	Providing security for long term investment
Trading of capacity	Permit System - Non-transferable	Commercial Activity Agreements - Transferable	Enabling the operator to sell their business
Fees	Permit System - Regulated and does not allow for in-kind contribution	Commercial Activity Agreements - Provide the ability to negotiate conditions around payment of fees	Allows flexibility for operations enabling in-kind contribution to conservation management in lieu of cash fees
Latency/ capacity access allocation	Capacity-based pricing - imposing a set capacity limit that operators paid for regardless of how much capacity they used	'Use it or lose it' policy combined with a fee based on actual use	Reduces financial burden on operators, particularly when demand is low. Ensures that latency is not held by operators and allows for highest level of use.
Performance standards	Not required as a part of the permit system	Commercial Activity Agreements will require the use of accreditation	The quality of operations and level of service is recognised as a key issue for the tourism industry in being able to attract visitors and a number of strategies. Including mandatory accreditation seeks to address this issue.
Compliance	Standard approach as part of QPWS compliance activities	Feedback received from State-wide Tourism Industry Forum on key priorities to target. Staged compliance program pilot trialled in Daintree and Fraser – Stage 1 completed Oct 2011, Stage 2 underway	Consistent approach to compliance for operators – including activities ranging from education through to enforcement

ISSUE 3: Overview of Tourism on Protected Areas
ISSUE 3(B): Timeline for key events relating to TIPA

Background

1990s	Peak ecotourism operators expressed their concern to government about the prohibitive nature of tourism management on national parks.
2003	A working group made up of Queensland Government and industry representatives releases an issues and options paper (refer attachment A)
	'Tourism in Protected Areas' (TIPA) was developed as a package of policy and management reforms for tourism operations for key high demand tourism sites on national park
2005	Collaborative site planning commenced on Fraser Island and at Natural Bridge. This process identified sustainable visitor capacities for sites (SVC) and these were developed in consultation with industry. Reports are available on the website.
2006	Relevant legislation was amended to provide for Commercial Activity Agreements to authorise operators instead of permits.
2009	State-wide Tourism Industry Forum agrees to the current 'use it or lose it' policy being combined with a fee based on actual use which is agreed to by the Queensland Government.
May 2011	TIPA was released and widely communicated through information sessions in all key tourism regional centres and through publications (attachments F,G & H) sent to all permitted operators.
December 2011	All Natural Bridge operators successfully transitioned to Commercial Activity Agreements and latency applied.
June 2012	Contact made with Fraser Island operators regarding the transition to Commercial Activity Agreements and proposed capacity arrangements.

ISSUE 3: Tourism in Protected Areas
ISSUE 3(C): Latency Management – “use it or lose it”

Background

- Historically, authorised site allocation granted under relevant authorities has been on a first-come-first-served basis.
- This practice has resulted in situations where the amount of authorised site allocation for commercial tour operators is approaching, or has exceeded, sustainable levels.
- In a large number of cases actual use by operators is well under the authorised site allocation, resulting in high levels of latency.
- Capacity-based pricing was the original option proposed to address latency.
- The capacity-based pricing model has been implemented in a number of agreements; however feedback from the tourism industry indicated that it was not commercially viable.
- As a strategy to manage sites at sustainable level, capacity-based pricing did not guarantee that this outcome would be achieved.
- Latency management is effectively adopting a “use it or lose it” approach.

Issues / Risks

- Ongoing high levels of latency are a concern to QPWS because if activated or utilised following an upturn in the market, the increased use could exceed sustainable visitor capacity compromising visitor facilities and the visitor’s experience.
- High levels of latency restricts the ability of QPWS to grant authorised site allocation inhibiting new market entrants, new innovative product and growth in existing products.
- Some commercial tour operators may be unwilling to voluntarily relinquish latency based on the following assumptions about authorised site allocation:
 - It is a form of property right
 - It is an enduring right beyond the term of the relevant permit/agreement
 - It may add to the value of a business, including the value to a potential buyer
 - It is a tradeable commodity that may be subleased to another party.
- Some operators are concerned that this loss of capacity means that they may no longer have the opportunity to sub-contract capacity to other operators.

Suggested Response

- This government is committed to fostering quality tour operations and to providing a business-focussed environment that allows for innovation and diversification of product.
- Tourism in Protected Areas ticks the boxes in providing this framework and it has significant industry support, and we are going to ensure that it is implemented in a timely way.
- Managing sites at sustainable levels and allowing for tourism product diversification is important to the development of a quality and innovative tourism industry.

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There is anecdotal evidence that some tourism operators may have underreported the number of passengers they take on tour. This is fraudulent activity and a number of recent investigations have been prosecuted. Latency management is based on historical use and therefore if under-reporting has occurred, will impact their allocation under TIPA.

Background

- Accreditation is important in fostering best practice operations.
- Quality is one of the key areas of concern for the Queensland tourism industry and it is an initiative being driven at a national level through accreditation programs.
- The Commonwealth developed a National Tourism Accreditation Framework (NTAF) which is a key initiative for the improvement in the quality of Australia's tourism product. Licensed accreditation schemes will benefit from being associated with a nationally and internationally recognised TQUAL brand.
- Ecotourism Australia's ECO Certification program is the largest eco-accreditation provider in Australia and is the only program that has applied and been endorsed by QPWS.
- All tour operators in TIPA locations will need to be accredited under the *Ecotourism* or *Advanced Ecotourism* level of ECO Certification within 18 months of signing their Commercial Activity Agreement. This is widely regarded as very generous.
- Other jurisdictions require accreditation through various means:
 - **NSW** - 10 year extended permits are available through NSW National Parks for tour operators certified at the *Advanced Ecotourism* level of ECO Certification.
 - **NT** - Tourism NT and Territory Discoveries will only provide support operators who are certified through one of the approved accreditation programs from 1 July 2010 including all levels of ECO Certification.
 - **SA** – an additional 2 years (on top of normal 3 year permits) will be offered to tour operators that hold the *Ecotourism* or *Advanced Ecotourism* level of ECO Certification.
 - **VIC** – a 10 year permit is available to tour operators who hold the *Ecotourism* or *Advanced Ecotourism* levels of ECO Certification.
 - **WA** – The WA tourism accreditation policy states that tourism businesses must be certified in order to gain marketing benefits through Tourism WA. Operators running products at the Ningaloo Reef and the Kimberley must hold ECO Certification.
 - **GBRMPA** - offers 15 year permits to those operators who have products certified at the *Ecotourism* or *Advanced Ecotourism* levels of ECO Certification.
- Many of the tour operators affected by TIPA already hold ECO Certification; however a number of tourism operators will need to apply.
- Accreditation incurs an upfront application fee and an ongoing annual fee (refer below).
- Ecotourism Australia offer significant assistance in the form of phone help and provision of templates for all documentation.

Issues / Risks

- A small number of operators have voiced concern over accreditation. On the whole there is substantial industry support for this initiative.

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Certification Application Fees		
The fees below are based on the turnover of your business and the table below details the cost for each level		
Gross Turnover	ECO, ROC and Climate Action Certification	
	Once-only Application Fee	Ongoing Annual Fee*
< \$250,000	\$345	\$410
\$250,001 - \$1,000,000	\$395	\$605
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	\$495	\$845
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	\$595	\$1,005
> \$10,000,000	\$795	\$1,115
EcoGuide Certification	Once-only Assessment fee	Ongoing Annual fee*
	\$130	\$99

*Annual fees are due once certification has been granted and then each year on your certification anniversary. Certification annual fees include business membership to Ecotourism Australia. The above prices are for applications via the Ecotourism Australia online certification application system. A \$75 workbook fee is applicable to all workbook applications.

RTI DL Release

Background

- Encouraging private investment in ecotourism development in or near national parks aims to capitalise on the nature-based tourism market, promote environmentally sustainable development practices and create economic benefits at a local, regional and State level.
- This type of investment typically includes ecotourism accommodation development or other tourism infrastructure development on land either in or adjacent to national parks.
- Private investment in tourism infrastructure was a key issue identified by the tourism industry in the late 1990's. It is separate to *Tourism in Protected Areas* (Refer Issue Paper 3).
- Between 2006 and 2008 a series of industry roundtable discussions were progressed to look at new approaches for ecotourism development in Queensland. The roundtable was comprised of representatives from tourism, conservation, and Indigenous sectors and no consensus was reached.
- In late 2009, the Queensland nature-based tourism opportunities program was announced, with seven sites in or near protected areas identified for further investigation to scope their opportunity for private investment.
- Through an Expression of Interest process, investor feedback indicated that the current investment model does not provide for adequate certainty or commercially attractive terms.
- Other States (refer Attachment 1) have also developed a range of ecotourism investment models that attempt to meet the needs of private investors and ensure the delivery of benefits from the tourism, conservation and economic perspectives.
- In response, a consultancy project was commissioned by the Tourism Division of State Government to undertake an assessment of current ecotourism investment models and develop a new approach for Queensland.
- This draft report, 'Queensland Ecotourism Investment Model' was finalised in May 2012 by consultancy firm TRC Tourism (Attachment 2) but has not been publicly released.

Current Issues

- A new overarching Queensland ecotourism investment model is required in order to address the critical factors for success in attracting successful ecotourism development.
- Identifying appropriate land tenure arrangements and the potential impact of native title rights will be a key issue for attracting private investment.
- Developing flexible investment terms and conditions that provide certainty for investors and contribute to a viable operating model is a critical factor.
- Identifying the appropriate level of government support for new investment opportunities is also required.
- Some legislative and policy change is required to address these key issues.
- Feedback on the government's approach to future private investment attraction for ecotourism development may be sought from industry.

Key Issue Papers

- A. Land Tenure and Native Title
- B. Investment Terms and Conditions
- C. Government Support for Investors

Additional Attachments

1. Other State approaches to ecotourism investment.
2. Queensland Ecotourism Investment Model - Report Summary.

ISSUE 4: Private investment in/near national park
ISSUE 4(A): Land Tenure and Native Title

Background

- Queensland legislation currently restricts private investment in tourism infrastructure on national parks.
- Investor feedback suggests that there if opportunities in Queensland are to be attractive, there is a need to address key issues surrounding the commercial viability of the current investment model.
- Determining the most appropriate tenure arrangements for tourism infrastructure development from the State perspective is also a critical issue.
- Feedback from expert industry investors and the experience of other States indicates that the current 15 year Commercial Activity Agreements on national parks are unlikely to be commercially viable.
- A term of at least 30 years and authority given under a lease has been identified as a basis for commercial viability and certainty for investment.
- This is currently not allowable on national parks tenure under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* but is allowable on other tenures including conservation park.
- Legislative provisions to enable ecotourism opportunities on national parks are important as many of Queensland's prime ecotourism attractions are located within national parks.
- Legislative options to enable ecotourism opportunities across protected area tenures are being reviewed.

Issues / Risks

- Changes to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* are required to enable commercially attractive terms to be offered for private investment on national park.
- **Feedback on the government's position on future tenure arrangements for ecotourism development may be sought.**

Suggested Response

- The government recognises the need for appropriate tenure arrangements to enable ecotourism development in or near protected areas.
- A review of options to enable legislation across different tenures is currently underway.
- This approach will focus on utilising the flexibility of tenures under the current legislation.

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Native Title

- Revocation of sections of national park and re-gazettal as another tenure and the subsequent issuing of an authority over that site will trigger native title, resulting in the possible requirement for an Indigenous Land Use Agreement to be developed.
- However precedent from the Wick Case suggests that if the purpose of a reservation (gazetted pre-1994) is changed without cancelling the gazettal than native title will not be triggered.
- This would require a change in the legislation to allow a mechanism for re-gazetting the reservation of national park to conservation park.

Legislative and Policy Changes

- TRC Report recommends:
 - Enabling legislation across tenure for ecotourism opportunities.
 - Varying the Projects of State Significance guidelines to allow for smaller but significant developments to proceed.
 - Reviewing zoning adjacent to parks to allow for ecotourism opportunities.
 - Reviewing national park management plans to allow for commercial development precincts.

ISSUE 4: Private investment in/near national park
ISSUE 4(B): Investment Terms and Conditions

Background

- Currently in Queensland the following investment terms and conditions are in effect for ecotourism development:
 - 15 year Commercial Activity Agreements for investments on national park with a possible extension of 15 years.
 - 15 years leases for investments off park.
 - Annual fee of 7% of gross revenue payable to the State.
 - Accommodation development on park must be low impact and semi-permanent, built by investors (including costs associated with essential infrastructure)
 - Infrastructure is owned by the State.
- To date there have been no successful investment as part of the Queensland nature-based tourism opportunities program.
- Investor feedback notes that the current investment terms and conditions are not commercially viable.

Issues / Risks

- Industry feedback suggests there is a lack of certainty and commercial viability for investment in ecotourism development in Queensland.
- This is due to a number of factors including:
 - Length of tenure is too short to allow for commercial certainty
 - Annual return to the State must be flexible in payment arrangements and could include in-kind conservation or management contributions in-lieu of fees; and a sliding scale of fees recognising the higher capital investment in the early years of development
 - State ownership of assets reduces viability if tenure length is not suitable
 - Restrictions on permanent infrastructure and facilities reduces long term viability
 - High upfront costs associated with approvals and essential infrastructure
- **Feedback on the government's position on creating a commercially viable investment environment for ecotourism development may be sought.**

Suggested Response

- The government acknowledges the feedback on critical success factors for creating a commercially viable investment environment for ecotourism development.
- A report has been prepared by an expert tourism consultancy which includes a review of assessment of current ecotourism investment models and provides recommendation on a new approach for Queensland.
- The government is currently reviewing the report recommendations and is committed to developing a more flexible approach to development terms and conditions for potential investors.
- This new approach may include reviewing tenure periods, agreement types, permitted development types and financial terms.

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- TRC Report recommends:
 - Adopting the use of leases for private investment as opposed to Commercial Activity Agreements
 - Lease terms matched to level of investment, risk profile and Return on Investment.
 - Financial terms at a maximum of 7% annual gross revenue
 - Allowing for sustainable permanent infrastructure development

ISSUE 4: Private investment in/near national park
ISSUE 4(C): Government support for investors

Background

- Government support for attracting and supporting private investment in or near national park is required.
- Under the nature-based tourism opportunities program, the State's involvement in attracting investment was focused on the site assessment phase including: identification of potential sites in or near protected areas; assessment of sites using expert industry consultants to develop an investment prospectus; facilitating an Expression of Interest process to securing investor interest prior to proceeding with a Request for Proposal process.
- Under the nature-based tourism opportunities program, the State's role in supporting private investment was limited:
 - a grants program was available to proponents as part of the detailed concept stage and this was limited to \$50,000 maximum per proponent.
 - no commitments were made for the provision of essential infrastructure - investors were required to meet the costs associated with essential infrastructure for development. This is a significant issue given many ecotourism sites are by nature remote and may have limited service infrastructure, for example roads, waste, sewerage.

Issues / Risks

- Investor feedback suggests that:
 - the site selection process needs to ensure that the commercial perspective is considered and have external expert advice on tourism potential.
 - investors are more likely to prefer to select their own sites or have flexibility of choice within a broad precinct.
 - support for development of essential infrastructure, particularly in rural or remote areas is necessary to allow for a commercially viable venture.
- **Feedback on the government's position on supporting ecotourism development may be sought.**

Suggested Response

- The government recognises that there are a range of factors that need to be properly considered if Queensland is to be an attractive investment for ecotourism proponents.
- Given many ecotourism sites are by nature remote they may not have essential infrastructure necessary for their effective operation.
- The government is currently considering all factors necessary to make Queensland attractive to private investors in ecotourism and one of these is how to address the issue of essential services provision in cases where this would influence the commercial viability of a site.

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- TRC Report recommends:
 - Engagement of industry in identification of sites
 - Limited government investment in site assessment prior to securing investor interest
 - Any investment in support infrastructure should be consistent with the scale of development and likely benefits
 - Where necessary, provision of competitive grants to support development in specific destinations e.g. business development / feasibility assessment grants

Background

- Commercial tourism is regulated on QPWS-managed areas by:
 - the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* for most national parks, for example Daintree National Park.
 - the *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006* for declared Recreation Areas of which there are six in the State: Fraser Island, Cooloola, Inskip Peninsula, Green Island, Moreton Island, Bribie Island and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island).
 - the *Forestry Act 1959* for State Forests, for example Amamoor State Forest.
 - the *Marine Parks Act 2004* for State Marine Parks, for example Moreton Bay Marine Park and Great Sandy Marine Park.
- Tour operators are authorised to operate on QPWS-managed areas under Commercial Activity Permits and/or Commercial Activity Agreements.
- Permits may be up to 3 years in duration and are not transferable.
- Agreements may be up to 15 years in duration and are transferable (saleable).
- No fees are payable to the State under Marine Park Permissions except for Whale Watching and some specified vessel-based activities. However, in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, where tourism is authorised jointly by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and QPWS, an Environmental Management Charge (EMC) is levied on each visitor, and this is collected and paid to GBRMPA by operators.
- Fees for permits and agreements generally include:
 - An application fee, payable on application only;
 - A permit fees, which is determined by the duration of the permit eg. 3 months or a year;
 - Daily passenger fees, based on actual use and paid in arrears;
 - Camping fees (where applicable).
- Statutory fees are detailed in schedules under each regulation, and they are summarised in Attachment 1.
- Agreements allow for flexibility in fees and can be negotiated with the operator, paid in case or in-kind, for example in lieu of management services (cleaning park facilities).
- Under *Tourism in Protected Areas*, tour operator fees are consistent with (equate to) regulated fees.
- Tour operators pay concessional fees when their clients are eligible 'educational' groups, for example schools.
- Tour operators do not pay Vehicle Access Permit fees in Recreation Areas.
- Many other states have a 'Park Pass' fee for independent travellers, that is those that do not use a tour operator. Queensland does not have a 'park pass'.
- Independent Travellers pay camping fees, which is the same in all areas, and when visiting a Recreation Area pay a vehicle access fee in addition.

Current Issues

- Some Fraser Island operators are aggrieved by the higher Daily Passenger fees which apply to their operation and are more than double what operators pay in other areas.
- While fees are not based on cost recovery, the higher fee for Fraser Island recognises the higher management costs for this area.
- Fraser Island operators sought equity in these fees from the previous government and this was not supported.
- This remains a contentious issue in light of the Fraser Coast region suffering larger declines in visitation than other areas of the State.

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Key Issue Papers

N/A

Additional Attachments

1. QPWS Tour operator fees 2012-2013.

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- Operators lodge a 'Returns of Operations' which is the record of passenger numbers they have taken on their tours and this forms the basis for the payment of Daily Passenger fees.
- Compliance activities by QPWS have investigated significant *under reporting* passenger numbers by some operators.
- This results in a significant loss of revenue to the State, and amounts to fraudulent activity by the operator.
- A number of enforcement activities have taken place over the past few years and legal proceedings have been pursued resulting in effective prosecution.
- Industry supports effective compliance as it serves to support operators who are meeting their obligations and conducting quality operations.
- There is anecdotal evidence that some operators in *Tourism in Protected Areas* sites have been under reporting passenger returns and this may be a reason why there are pockets of discontent about the move to address latency.

ISSUE 6: Streamlined permit system for sustainable tourism and recreational enjoyment of Queensland's public land
SUMMARY PAPER

Background

- Tourism and recreation permits can be roughly categorised as:
 - **Camping and vehicle access permits** – high volume (~250,000 per year), generally simple booking process (see Issues Paper 7).
 - **Other tourism and recreation authorities** – Higher risk, higher impact activities with multiple stakeholders and require more detailed consideration.
- Each year, QPWS processes approximately 350 Commercial Activity Permits, 20 Commercial Activity Agreements, 400 Group Activity Permits, 60 Marine tourism programs, and 300 Joint Marine Tourism programs with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).
- Government commitments include a state-wide streamlined permit system for sustainable tourism and recreational enjoyment of Queensland's public land, and improved conservation outcomes and better access for both tourists and all Queenslanders. Red tape reduction commitments also apply.
- Assessment and approval of these permits by QPWS is undertaken in the context of multiple legislation, joint management arrangements and Native Title obligations, multiple systems that have very poor governance and no ability for effective reporting, information and financial management. This is recognised as a significant exposure for QPWS.
- Tour operators and recreational users have advocated for improvements to policies and procedures to make permits easier to obtain and for decisions to be faster and more consistent across regional boundaries.

Current Issues / Risks

- Creating a streamlined permit system will require a number of actions, including:
 - Regulatory reform to the types of permits and the processes required for permits;
 - An online system to effect proper governance, information management and site management, along with a streamlined approval process for permittees (Issue Paper A); and
 - Enhanced online customer interface with a long term view that transactions are completed electronically.
- A range of actions (Issue Paper B) are already underway to create a streamlined permit system including:
 - Issuing invoices for permits and agreements rather than the current complex arrangements where operators pay on daily returns. This will improve efficiencies for operators and QPWS and will bring processes in line with contemporary financial management procedures.
 - Issuing one agreement for tour operators who operate on multiple tenures, for example on national park and state forest. Legislation currently requires that a separate agreement be issued under each legislation. This means less paperwork for operators and QPWS.
 - Substituting Group Activity Permits for simplified bookings.
 - Simplifying concessions process for school education permits.

DestinationQ – Issues Briefing

Suggested Response

- Queensland's national parks, marine parks and forests are some of our State's most magnificent assets.
- Ensuring that all Queenslanders and other visitors benefit from these areas is a firm commitment of this government.
- It is clear that these unique areas have many of the 'natural' attractions that visitors come from all around the world to see and this government wants to ensure that we foster quality ecotourism, one of Queensland's competitive advantages.
- Reducing red tape, creating a streamlined permit system and creating opportunities to access these areas are important initiatives in fulfilling this objective.
- Some actions will take a bit longer and will require careful consideration, for example key regulatory reform.
- The government is committed to reducing the number of permits required to access national parks.
- There are some commonsense improvements that are already underway including making it easier for school groups to visit national parks; having one agreement instead of multiple for operators who conduct their tours on national park, state forest and other protected areas; and importantly revamping our invoicing requirements to reduce the complexity for both tour operators and QPWS.

Key Issue Papers

- A. Online Permit System
- B. Streamlined permit actions – early improvements

RTI DL Release

TOPIC 6: Streamlined permit system for sustainable tourism and recreational enjoyment of Queensland's public land

KEY ISSUE 6(A): Online permit system

Background

- In relation to commercial and recreational permits, contemporary business practice includes:
 - Provision of quality information to applicants both online and in-person
 - One point of customer contact/account management
 - Capacity to report and analyse performance, processes and costs trends for continual improvement to timeliness, quality and consistency
 - Online access, permit status tracking, financial transactions and customer relationship management
- Historical changes to departmental structures and operating environments have resulted in a permits management regime that is problematic in terms of financial and other records management, decision-making consistency and standard operating procedures.
- There are multiple customer entry points including online, phone, email, mail, and in person at regional help desks.
- QPWS currently uses multiple 'boutique' record keeping and permit management arrangements ranging from large scale databases to excel spreadsheets, managed in various locations across the State.

Issues / Risks

- It is clear a basic requirement is to consolidate, as much as possible, into a coordinated system that will enable effective governance of authorities and permits to ensure sustainable tourism use of the estate, and also provide streamlined service for tour operators (and other permittees).
- A two-staged investigation has been completed and QPWS have identified a preferred solution in a system used by the State Lands Authorities Management unit within State Government.
- The funding of this option is currently being considered by QPWS.
- A streamlined permit system will not be a short-term initiative, rather it will be delivered in a staged approach over a number of years (depending on funding) and is comprised of a number of arms including regulatory reform, online system capability and enhanced customer experience.
- The project will be staged to start delivering benefits to customers at the earliest possible opportunity, but some components such as online transactions will also be dependent on external developments such as web franchise and one-stop-shop work.

Suggested Response

- Refer Summary Page

TOPIC 6: Streamlined permit system for sustainable tourism and recreational enjoyment of Queensland's public land

KEY ISSUE 6(B): Streamlined permit actions – early improvements

Background

- In addition to a range of identified reforms that will support overall effectiveness in managing permits, QPWS is also closely examining administrative processes and regulation around tourism and recreation permit types, including Commercial Activity Permits and Group Activity Permits.

Issues / Risks

- Streamlining procedures and amending legislation is considered a non-frontline service and, while these initiatives are expected to improve service for customers and result in staffing efficiencies, resourcing of this program is dependent on availability of skilled staff.
- The Minister for National Parks, Sport, Recreation and Racing has written to the Premier outlining several key red-tape reduction and procedures streamlining initiatives that will be completed by end-July 2012.
- Key initiatives are outlined below.

1. Revamping invoice requirements for Commercial Activity Permits and Agreements

- Current legislation requires over 600 tour operators operating on QPWS-managed lands (under short term non-transferable 'Permits' and long term transferable 'Agreements') to provide their fees and returns at the end of each month. Due to these cumbersome and non-standard legislative requirements, the Department is currently unable to operate as a standard creditor and issue an invoice for payment of fees. This is viewed by commercial operators as excessively complicated and non-standard financial practice.

2. Aggregating multiple Commercial Activity Agreements

- The Department is responsible for managing longer term, transferrable Commercial Activity Agreements with nearly 90 major operators across protected areas, state forests, recreation areas and marine parks.
- Where activities cross multiple tenures, current legislation requires a separate agreement for each tenure.
- This means that at least ten of our major tour operators require two or even three separate agreements to cover the whole operation.
- Regulations will be amended so that a single agreement can be issued under multiple pieces of legislation. This clarification will significantly reduce the red tape burden on particularly the larger tour operators, as well as reducing administrative workload in the department.
- This initiative will be subject to Regulatory Assessment Statement Processes and Executive Council Timetables but is hoped to be completed by end-July 2012.

3. Substituting Group Activity Permits for simplified bookings

- The QPWS issues up to 500 permits per year to authorise medium to large sized groups on protected areas (military groups, schools, large camping parties, recreational user groups).
- Most of these have little to no environmental risk in comparison to normal camping and recreational use of the QPWS-managed estate, but are subject to unnecessary paperwork and procedures.
- Regulatory reform and policies will be revised to allow most of these group activities to be managed via simplified bookings and notifications, and using the online camping system.
- It is expected there will be an 80% reduction in number of permits issued per year and this will cut unnecessary paperwork for applicants and reduce processing time for QPWS staff.
- This initiative is underway. A simple booking/notification process has been developed and is being trialled in the south-east region (through 4WD Qld clubs).

4. Simplifying concessions process for school education permits

- Currently over 350 schools have educational tours, excursions and camping visits to national parks and recreation areas each year, and both the schools and the tour operators that sometimes manage the trips are eligible to receive fees concessions on presentation of a letter from the Director-General, Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) approving the specific activity.
- The letter is standard practice, however, creates an unnecessary layer of administration, given the fact that all schools are eligible for the concession if the activity is approved.
- A minor amendment to internal policies will allow all Queensland State and non-State schools or their relevant tour operator to automatically receive the concession, via a single letter from the Director-General NPRSR to the Department of Education, Training and Employment.
- These amendments are underway and a new process will be completed by end-July, providing a significant reduction in paperwork for tour operators and schools.

RTI DL Release

Background

- The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has operated an online camping booking system since 2002.
- This system was introduced to better manage increasing visitor demand for camping and provide certainty for campers that they had a site when they arrived.
- The system allows park managers to set and manage camping area visitor capacities and alerts intending campers if a camping area is full or inaccessible.
- The booking system provides QPWS with camper contact details and occupancy numbers for a given camping area. This allows QPWS to advise campers of situations where their camping may be affected or the campground closed, for example in severe weather events, cyclones and other natural disasters.
- These details are also used in situations where campers need to be evacuated.
- Advance bookings prevent overcrowding, which can negatively impact the enjoyment of visitors as well as to the environment.
- QPWS is currently redeveloping the online booking system to enhance visitor's online experience and open the online camping permitting channel up to specialist visitors like Schools, Groups and Commercial Tour Operators.

Current Issues

- Self-registration camping is currently available at some sites around the State. QPWS is currently removing self-registration as an option for all campgrounds.
- There has been a range of concern about removing self-registration in that it is perceived that it will reduce flexibility to change plans when on a driving holiday to Cape York for example, and that internet service can be unreliable in some remote areas.
- QPWS will be maintaining a number of channels to book camping permits – online, through a locally-based agent and by telephone through Smart Service Queensland.
- In addition, QPWS is currently trialling touch screens in Cape York as an additional booking channel.

Key Issue Papers

- A. Self-registration vs. online permitting
- B. Lack of flexibility to change plans and online access

Additional Attachments

- n/a

ISSUE 7: Online camping permitting
ISSUE 7(A): Self-registration vs online permitting

Background

- QPWS have been gradually replacing the self-registration permitting method with online permitting.
- Self-registration permitting is when visitors wishing to camp at a camping area register themselves on arrival.
- Each camping area that allows self-registration has a self-registration hut. Visitors complete the information on the self-registration envelopes provided and put the required fees (or nominate their credit card details) in the envelope, seal it and place it into the locked box at the self-registration hut.
- Visitors are familiar with self-registration as a number of other states, which have lower camping demand, still use this permitting method. It offers more flexibility with arrival dates and stay extensions. Some clients do not like using the internet or using their credit card.
- The online permitting system provides visitors with the ability to pre-book and select specific sites prior to arrival, detailed QPWS camping information (including advance notification of access issues and closures), pre-payment and payment receipts.

Comparison of approximate administration costs:

Booking method	Administration cost (per permit)
Online	\$15 – phone issued \$2 – external counter agent \$1 – online permits
Self-registration	\$10 - \$20 (varies depending on location)

Issues / Risks

- The management of camping permits online offers a range of benefits to QPWS and visitors, including:
 - Better management of site capacities and numbers resulting in data collection and certainty for campers that they have a campsite on arrival.
 - Fees collected can amount to several thousands of dollars in peak times. On-line management provides a clear audit trail and no onsite cash handling.
 - Financial audit and compliance is more effective online.
 - Streamlined permit processing for visitors.
 - Reduced administration for QPWS in processing camping permits.
 - Ability to notify campers of emergency situations like cyclones, wild fires, flooding and provide up front notifications if an area is unavailable due to closures (weather/access) or fully booked.
- The online system has some recognised limitations including internet service is limited in some remote areas.
- There are approximately 370 camping areas that can now be booked online.
- There are approximately 100 camping areas which still use self-registration, including 40 that can be booked with online or via self-registration. These are generally the less popular or more remote parks.

DestinationQ – Issues Briefing

- Bookings can be made via the internet, by telephoning Smart Service Queensland (both 24 hours a day/7days a week) or by visiting one of more than 50 over-the-counter facilities (the majority open 7 days a week).

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- Self-registration is costly to administer for QPWS.
- Rangers are required to travel out to each self-registration hut to collect permit envelopes (this creates personal and financial accountability risks) and send them to regional offices for processing.
- QPWS staff have to count monies, process credit card payments (manually), receipt payments and produce banking summaries.
- This method is also an honesty system which is often abused by campers (payments made in bottle caps, rocks, paper and fake credit cards).

RTI DL Release

ISSUE 7: Online camping permitting
ISSUE 7(B) Lack of flexibility to change plans and online access

Background

- A large number of National Parks and State Forests are located in remote areas with limited mobile phone and internet coverage required for online camping bookings.
- The above accessibility issues requires campers to plan and book their trips in advance. Unforeseen circumstances experienced by visitors (weather, transport issues, work related commitments) can result in the need for last minute cancellations or changes to permits. Campers may wish to shorten or lengthen their stay once on site and these changes can be difficult where on-line access is difficult, or there is resistance to use the technology.
- The current cancellation and refund policy allows visitors to change plans or cancel without penalty.

Issues / Risks

- System improvements currently underway to the online camping booking system will streamline the booking process for visitors.
- Mobile and network coverage in remote areas is constantly improving.
- A range of booking options remains available to book camping permits.
- Bookings can be made via the internet, by telephoning Smart Service Queensland or by visiting one of more than 50 over-the-counter agent facilities.

RTI DL Release

Overview

- Commercial capacity to conduct tourism operations on national parks is authorised under Commercial Activity Permits and Commercial Activity Agreements.
- In the early years tourism opportunities on park have been issued on a 'first-in-first-served' basis. A tour operator would apply for a permit and it would generally be issued.
- As demand for tourism access to national parks increased in the 1990s, the way that tourism opportunities were allocated came under criticism by industry for lacking regard to the 'value' of the opportunity and therefore the price operators were willing to pay; the quality of the operator; and the numbers of people permitted to visit the site which could potentially detract from the visitor experience and impact the environment.
- These concerns formed the basis of 'Tourism in Protected Areas' (Issue Paper 3).
- Under TIPPA, commercial capacity would be made available through an Expression of Interest process whereby operators would address a range of criteria including price and quality of operations.
- A range of tourism opportunities have been made available through this process including whale watching, diving and commercial camping, and has been a well accepted process.

Current Issues

- Given that tourism demand has historically been high, where there has been an identified tourism opportunity, for example whale watching, there has been an assumption that the opportunities would as a matter of course be made available to the market.
- The key concern for QPWS has been the potential environmental impacts of the activity, and this has been determined through assessment processes.
- Declining tourism demand in more recent years has meant that the decision to release opportunities to the market is of critical concern to industry.
- Tour operators are experiencing financial stress, and a significant number of operators and associated businesses (for example, cafes) have closed shop.
- Legislation does not require QPWS to consider commercial factors in the decision as to whether to issue capacity or not, but it is clear that a viable and quality ecotourism industry is in the interests of the State.
- While TIPPA provides security of tenure and promotes quality operations, it does not address the issue of how to decide when to release tourism opportunities to the market.
- A number of discussions have occurred with industry about this.
- Factors to consider when deciding to release opportunities include: tourism planning reveals product gaps; significant interest is expressed to QPWS in new tourism opportunities; the impact of releasing opportunities on the viability of existing operators.
- It is also recommended that the industry itself provide advice on whether to release tourism opportunities. This is a similar approach to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority which takes advice from its Tourism and Recreation Reef Advisory Committee on whether to release new opportunities.
- With this in mind, it is proposed to establish a new Ministerial Advisory Forum for national parks tourism which would have responsibility for advising the Minister on releasing opportunities to the market.
- The Ministerial Advisory Forum is yet to be approved by the Minister and has not been announced publicly (Refer Attachment 1).

Attachments

1. Proposed Ministerial Tourism Advisory Forum - Draft Terms of Reference

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Ministerial Advisory Forum for national parks tourism

- This is yet to be approved.
- The Ministerial Advisory Forum will act as a key consultation body for the Minister on matters to do with tourism on national parks.
- Forum members will provide recommendations on strategic tourism infrastructure investment on national parks; legislative reform; and the release of tourism opportunities to the market.
- Membership will comprise an expert panel of up to ten tourism industry representatives plus the Minister and Director-General DNPRSR.

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**Proposed Ministerial Tourism Advisory Forum
Draft Terms of Reference**

1. Purpose

The Ministerial Tourism Advisory Forum (MTAF) will act as a key consultation body for the Minister on matters regarding tourism on national parks.

Forum members will provide recommendations on strategic tourism infrastructure investment on national parks; legislative reform; and the release of tourism opportunities to the market. This will include advice on the timing and type of commercial opportunities.

2. Membership

Members are appointed to the Forum for their individual expertise and/or experience in the tourism industry, and may also be nominated as a representative of a particular group, sector or association. Membership will comprise an expert panel of up to ten tourism industry representatives, plus the Minister (Chairperson) and Director General NPRSR.

Membership appointment / nomination:

- 40% of members will be appointed directly by the Minister.
- 60% of members will be nominated by their industry sector.
- Ministerial appointments will be for a period of 2 years.
- Industry sector nominations will be a 12 month period, with an option for a further 12 month renewal.
- members are eligible for reappointment.

Key organisations / groups represented:

- Marine-based tourism.
- Terrestrial-based national park tourism.
- Eco-accommodation expert.
- Local government.
- Queensland Tourism Industry Council.
- Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators.

3. Members' responsibilities

- Utilise their organisations' and own expertise to address issues raised during meetings.
- Participate fully and meaningfully in discussions.
- Provide advice to QPWS on relevant tourism related matters.
- Seek industry views on relevant matters and advise QPWS.
- Assist with the consistent application of QPWS policy.
- Report back to their representative organisations following each meeting (commercial tour operators excepted).
- Attend all meetings.

4. Timeframe

The Forum will meet three times per year with one of those meetings to be held in a regional area. In addition, members may be asked to participate in other forums or provide comments on relevant tourism issues from time-to-time.

Background

- Management planning is a legislative requirement under sections 111-125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act).
- Visitor use and tourism/recreation opportunities are considered in the development of the plan.
- Over the past few years, QPWS has proactively consulted with the tourism industry on management plans through targeted meetings, in addition to the two rounds of open public consultation.
- QPWS has invested significant work in ensuring management plans properly consider tourism issues by: Defining visitor zones and settings that clearly identify the visitor experience, facilities and activities that the park will provide; and using layman's language as much as possible to make it easier for industry to understand the impact of the plan on tourism operations.
- Visitor zones range from 'natural' areas to 'developed' areas to cater for a diverse range of opportunities for visitors.
- The range of recreational and tourism opportunities to be provided is assessed on a park by park basis but also in a regional context. It is often the case that all recreational opportunities cannot be provided in one park but can be accommodated within a region.
- For example Noosa National Park cannot provide remote or natural type settings but those are available in the Western Catchment of Cooloola, not far from Noosa National Park.
- The Hinchinbrook Area caters for multiple settings including developed areas such as the Cape Richards resort through to one of Australia's most important wilderness experiences on the Thorsborne Trail.

Current Issues

- There are a number of management plans in preparation for protected areas that are important destinations within north Queensland including the Hinchinbrook Island area, Atherton Tablelands protected areas and state forests, Cape Tribulation and Bloomfield River areas.
- QPWS is consulting with a wide range of groups including the QPWS Statewide Tourism Industry Forum and the Northern Tourism Industry Forum.
- The Hinchinbrook Island and Marine Management Plan has been a highly contentious plan with the local community and there is an expectation from the tourism industry that enhanced commercial tourism opportunities will be provided particularly on the Thorsborne Trail, an internationally recognised multi-day walk.

Suggested Response

- The government is committed to ensuring that our public lands are available for all Queenslanders to enjoy and derive benefit from, and this is particularly so for the tourism industry, a key pillar of the Queensland economy.
- National parks and marine parks are one of Queensland's competitive advantages for tourism and it is important that these magnificent areas are properly protected and also provide access that allows Queenslanders and other visitors to appreciate and experience them.
- Given that management plans are the statutory instrument that provide for the future planning arrangements for these areas, this government will ensure that tourism and recreation opportunities are properly considered and catered for as part of these plans.

DestinationQ – Issues Briefing

Key Issue Papers

- A. Management planning process
- B. Hinchinbrook Area Island and Marine Management Plan
- C. Black Mountain, Daintree, Ngalba Bulal National Parks and Bloomfield River Conservation Park Management Plan

Additional Attachments

- n/a

RTI DL Release

ISSUE 9: Park Management Planning and Tourism
ISSUE 9(A): Management planning process

Background

- The management planning process is a legislative requirement under sections 111-125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act).
- Management planning for marine parks and recreation areas is also undertaken under the *Marine Parks Act 2004* and *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006* respectively.
- The Act outlines the requirements for consultation during the management planning process. These requirements include:
 - Seeking public submissions before the management plan commences.
 - Submissions need to be taken into account during the planning process by the Minister (or Delegate).
 - The community is invited to comment on the draft management plan.
 - Community input must be considered by the Minister (or Delegate) before a final management plan is prepared, and
 - Governor in Council approval is required for the final plan.
- Management plans specify outcomes (consistent with management principles for the class of protected area), for the protection, presentation, and use of the area; and the policies, guidelines and actions required to achieve those outcomes.
- Management plans provide the most appropriate framework for guiding park management in relation to protection of conservation values, provision of appropriate access for recreation and tourism, and they are also an important tool for establishing good relationships with tourism and recreational users, neighbours regarding cooperative pest and fire management and the general public.
- Given that management plans require Governor in Council approval, there is adequate opportunity for the Government to scrutinise proposals and ensure they conform to Government policy.

Issues/Risks

- All submissions must be considered by the Minister (or delegate) before progressing to the next stage.

Suggested Response

- N/A

ISSUE 9: Park Management Planning and Tourism
ISSUE 9(B): Hinchinbrook Area Island and Marine Management Plan

Background

- The Hinchinbrook area is a magnificent part of Queensland with iconic national and marine parks and is part of the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas.
- The **draft** Hinchinbrook Area Island and Marine Management Plan was released for public consultation in July 2011 and it generated considerable interest, particularly with locals in the Ingham, Cardwell and Mission Beach area.
- Six hundred and fifty-three submissions were received during the four month consultation period on the draft plan, and QPWS held over 15 meetings with interested stakeholders during the consultation period which closed on 9 December 2011.
- The draft plan attracted criticism from some groups as it was perceived to propose restrictions on fishing and opportunities for tourism and recreation.
- A submission analysis has been prepared and a proposal to finalise this planning process will be prepared for Ministerial approval.
- The final management plan will replace the existing national park plans for the islands and fulfil a high court government commitment to prepare a marine management plan.
- A high court challenge in relation to the Port Hinchinbrook development resulted in an Australian Government (with the agreement of the Queensland Government) commitment in court to prepare management plans to address the flow on effects of the development. The current plan will address this commitment.

Issues/Risks

- The submissions received on the draft plan cover a wide range of issues. Controversial issues raised by the local community include: dredging and erosion control; Dunk Island Spit; fishing; voluntary vessel transit lanes, route and vessels speeds; coconut palms; public infrastructure (e.g. communication towers, navigation aids); Thorsborne Trail on Hinchinbrook Island; aquaculture; motorised water sports, personal watercraft, hovercraft and high-speed vessels.
- The Member for Hinchinbrook, Mr Cripps MP, has stated his concerns over the current draft plan saying that it would restrict the recovery and growth of the local tourism industry and restrict access for recreational activities by locals and visitors.
- The Thorsborne Trail is regarded by many as possibly the most iconic multi-day walk in Queensland and the current plan does not allow for commercial guided tours on the trail.
- Guided tours offers a unique tourism development opportunity for this area and it is proposed that this be included in the plan.
- Tourism industry may also have an expectation that a commercial guided tour product be supported by tented or cabin accommodation along the walk to make it a more attractive and commercially viable option.
- It is anticipated that this proposal will be highly contentious with the conservation sector.

Suggested Response

- The government is committed to ensuring that our public lands are available for all Queenslanders to enjoy and derive benefit from, and this is particularly so for the tourism industry, a key pillar of the Queensland economy.
- National parks and marine parks are one of Queensland's competitive advantages for tourism and it is important that these magnificent areas are properly protected and also provide access that allows Queenslanders and other visitors to appreciate and experience them.
- I recognise that Hinchinbrook Island and the Thorsborne Trail provide significant tourism opportunity for the local area and for the State and this government will ensure that the management plan will properly consider these aspirations.

ISSUE 9: Park Management Planning and Tourism
ISSUE 9(C): Black Mountain, Daintree, Ngalba Bulal National Parks and Bloomfield River Conservation Park Management Plan

Background

- The intent to prepare a plan for these areas was publicly released for comment in late 2010 and a draft plan has been developed.
- The analyses of submissions are to be considered by the Minister (or Delegate) before a draft plan can be released for comment.

Issues / Risks

- It is anticipated that the implementation of the latency policy under *Tourism in Protected Areas* will be the key contentious issue (refer to Issues Briefing 3 – overview of Tourism in Protected Areas). QPWS is working collaboratively with the QPWS Northern Tourism Industry Forum and the Sustainable Alliance to ensure this initiative supports existing operators.
- If there is capacity for new tourism opportunities in this area, QPWS will take advice from industry about the release of these opportunities.
- The Draft Management Plan will be reviewed in relation to public access to the parks in light of the Government's stated policies prior to it being submitted for approval for release.

Suggested Response

- All comments are to be considered on the draft plan by the Minister before the final plan is developed.

RTI/DL Release

ISSUE 10: Park tourism planning (collaborative site planning)
SUMMARY PAPER

Background

- In the late 1990's tourism industry identified the lack of tourism planning as a key issue inhibiting the growth of tourism on national parks and other protected areas.
- This was one of the issues identified in the 2003 *Tourism in Protected Areas* working group report released in 2003 citing that it was essential that tourism be considered in future planning for use at sites.
- The 'Sustainable Visitor Capacity' methodology was developed in response to this and implemented as pilots at Fraser Island and Natural Bridge (Springbrook NP).
- Both pilots were reviewed and a number of key improvements identified including: working group to be comprised of tourism and QPWS; QPWS to engage with other stakeholders as part of consultation; the strategic vision for tourism for the area to be the primary consideration of the working group; and that the planning process be consolidated to be completed within a reasonable timeframe, for example 6 months as opposed to the two years of Fraser Island.
- The revised process (Attachment 1) is currently being implemented at Moreton Island and the draft Park Tourism Strategy is in final stages of development.
- The revised process seeks to identify product gaps and strategies to increase the quality of existing products with a view to strengthening the area as a destination.

Current Issues

- There is concern amongst Moreton Island tour operators and tour operators elsewhere that additional capacity will be released to market and this will threaten their already struggling businesses.
- *Tourism in Protected Areas* stated that capacity that becomes available **may** be released to the market.

Additional Attachments

1. Collaborative Site Planning – key stages

Suggested Response

- My government supports the collaborative site planning process.

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It is proposed to form a new Ministerial Tourism Advisory Forum for Park Tourism – yet to be approved.

It is anticipated that this group will advise the Minister on the release of tourism opportunities to the market. This will also include advice on the timing and type of tourism opportunities.

Opportunities identified through the Moreton Island collaborative site planning process would be referred to this Ministerial Tourism Advisory Forum initially.

Background

- Since the early 2000s Fraser Island has been a very popular destination for international backpackers.
- With a view to providing low-cost product in response to this demand, many 4WD hire companies worked with backpacker accommodation houses to organise backpackers into groups and hire 4WD vehicles.
- The hire companies would provide camping and vehicle permits, camping equipment and often food and alcohol.
- This was a concern to permitted tour operators as the 4WD hire companies were not being charged tour operator fees as the legislation did not capture the activity as a commercial activity.
- This also meant that the hire operations were unmanaged in that numbers were not restricted and backpackers were able to visit sites and use campgrounds without any limitations.
- There were a range of environmental concerns associated with the unmanaged use; safety concerns to do with lack of sand-driving experience and driver behaviour; and regular conflicts with other users, for example family groups using the same campgrounds.
- A key recommendation of the collaborative site planning (sustainable visitor capacity) process on Fraser Island in 2005 was that the 4WD hire operations be regulated as tour operators which would mean that the activity would be managed and the same fees paid.
- In 2007, QPWS formed a partnership with Fraser Coast Tourism and the Fraser Coast 4WD Hire Association to cooperatively transition operators to managed arrangements.
- At the same time there were increasing vehicle accidents in this user group.
- A number of fatalities as a result of vehicle safety, driver behaviour and competency in this industry segment resulted in a Coronial enquiry in May of 2009.
- A range of recommendations specifically targeting the backpacking sector and tag-along tours were made by the Coroner, particularly in relation to vehicle standards, the responsibility of Transport and Main Roads.
- In 2009 the Minister for Transport announced a range of measures to address safety issues in the 4WD hire industry to Fraser Island, including limiting passenger numbers and seating configurations for 4WD hire operators. The changes were implemented in a staged approach and completed by 31 December 2010.
- In January 2010 QPWS effected regulation that required 4WD hire operators to conduct their tours in tag-along arrangement with a driver-guide for supervision and other requirements to minimise environmental impacts.
- Agreements were issued for a 2-3 year period on the basis that QPWS would identify actual use and allocate individual capacities on completion of this period.
- QPWS and the Fraser Coast 4WD Hire Association have continued to work collaboratively on safety issues and the development of tag-along supervised tours.

Current Issues

- The life of the agreements is due to expire and QPWS is currently reviewing all use of operators to identify improvements and capacities to issue under new agreements, within sustainable limits.
- QPWS has contacted all operators, the Fraser Coast 4WD Hire Association and Fraser Coast Tourism with a view to cooperatively identifying improved arrangements.
- As part of TIPA, QPWS has introduced a targeted compliance program on Fraser Island and tag-along tours are a part of this program.

DestinationQ – Issues Briefing

- A key issue for the Fraser Coast tourism industry is that recent market changes in the backpacker industry have realised a surge in demand for tag-along tours to Fraser Island from Rainbow Beach and a significant decrease in demand through Hervey Bay.

Additional Attachments

1. Sunday Mail Article 23 April 2011
-

RTI DL Release

Overview

- Tourism associated with the Great Barrier Reef (including state marine and national parks) contributes approximately \$5B to the Queensland and Australian economies.
- QPWS plays a significant role in supporting this tourism industry through the active management of the marine and national parks.
- A significant amount of visitor infrastructure has been developed by QPWS to support the industry.
- Key infrastructure includes a network of over 100 public moorings, hundreds of day- use areas and camping grounds, and over 127km of walking track.
- In addition, the activities of over 300 commercial tour operators are administrated through joint permitting arrangements with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

Current Issues

- **Superyachts** - visits to the Great Barrier Reef from this sector are seen as an emerging and important growth industry to Queensland.
- **Island resort leases** – many island resorts share boundaries with island national parks and in a number of instances these resorts have part or their entire infrastructure on the adjoining national park estate.

Key Issue Papers

- A. Superyachts
- B. Island resort leases

Additional Attachments

- Nil

Suggested response

- Refer to issue papers

Background

- The superyacht industry is an emerging industry identified in the *Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2008-13* as having enormous growth potential and capacity to stimulate significant economic and regional development benefits for Queensland.
- Commonwealth and State marine park regulations and permitting requirements are perceived to unnecessarily constrain the locations to which superyachts (vessels larger than 35m) can operate, particularly in the Whitsundays.
- The industry believes these restrictions are having a negative impact upon Queensland's reputation as a superyacht destination inhibiting industry growth.
- In 2008, an unpermitted superyacht commercial operator (Seafaris) was prohibited from landing at Tongue Point visitor site in the Whitsunday Islands National Park on the basis that a Commercial Activity Permit could not be issued within the short notice.
- As a result of this situation, QPWS amended permitting conditions to eliminate the likelihood of this incident occurring again.
- The outstanding concern for the superyacht industry is restrictions imposed on vessels greater than 35 meters not being able to enter the waters within 1500 meters of the Whitsunday Islands, excluding resort locations.
- This restriction is Commonwealth statute (Whitsunday Plan of Management) and designed to protect the accessibility and scenic amenity of the waters adjoining popular visitor destinations (e.g. Whitehaven Beach).
- In recent times, QPWS has taken steps to accommodate superyacht style operations in the GBR including;
 - 7 day notice for commercial permit access to all of the GBR's popular island visitor sites.
 - issuing 3yr permit to all known regular commercial superyachts operating in the GBR to access the popular locations in the Whitsundays (e.g. Tongue Point and Whitehaven Beach).
 - Working with GBRMPA to provide dedicated superyacht webpages which assist in itinerary development and promote superyacht opportunities in the GBR.

Issues / Risks

- Any further streamlining of marine park permitting processes or regulatory amendment will require the lead of GBRMPA due to the jurisdictional overlap and existing joint management arrangements (Commonwealth and State).

Suggested Response

- The Queensland Government recognises the superyacht industry as an important and emerging sector of the Queensland's tourism industry and QPWS has been working closely with GBRMPA to ensure both international and regional superyachts operating in the Great Barrier Reef can provide rewarding experiences for their guests.
- QPWS has worked with GBRMPA to streamline access to permits for superyachts to island visitor sites and also developed itineraries for vessels visiting these sites.
- These permit streamlining initiatives will not only have benefits for the fledging superyacht industry but all tourism operators accessing Queensland's protected area estate.

Background

- Island resorts along the Queensland coast are encountering difficult operating conditions, primarily due to a number of macro industry issues (strong AUD, cheap international flights, competition with cruise ships) and a number of significant local extreme weather events, for example Cyclone Yasi.
- This difficult operating environment has seen the permanent or temporary closure of a number of prominent island resorts throughout the Great Barrier Reef.
- Notable over the past 3 years has been the temporary or permanent closure of resorts on Brampton, Lindeman, Long, Dunk, South Molle and Keppel islands.
- In addition, the few island resort sales which have occurred in recent years occurred below replacement value and at perceived 'firesale' prices, for example Dunk, Brampton and Lindeman Islands.
- Island resort operators individually or through peak association bodies (Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO)) have pursued financial relief from government charges and fees associated with island resort operations.
- Most notable of these fees are those associated with Lands Act leases.
- Beyond these Land Act leases, a number of resorts have supporting services infrastructure on the adjoining national park estate.
- This infrastructure is either managed under a *Nature Conservation Act 1992* authority or 30 year Land Act special lease.
- A number of these Land Act special leases (issued in the 1980's) have or are due to expire in the near future.
- Resorts which have either a Land Act special lease or a NCA authority to operate and maintain ancillary resort infrastructure on the national park estate include Heron, South Molle, Hook, Wilson, Long, Lindeman, Lizard and Brampton Islands.
- The ancillary infrastructure is diverse and can include; wastewater treatment plants, waste disposal areas, communication, power and water lines, and access infrastructure (jetties, airstrips, roads, tramways).

Current Issues

- Most of the ancillary resort infrastructure on national park is historic and not consistent with the management principles for national park.
- This means that mechanisms to provide for its continued use under the NCA can be constrained. Most notable of this infrastructure is a resort golf course on Lindeman Island National Park and a rail system on Brampton Island National Park.
- Acknowledging expiry of these leases, QPWS is currently negotiating a number of new or replacement NCA authorities with resort operators.
- Central to these negotiations is an endeavour to reduce the 'authority footprint' and where possible, remove the infrastructure from the protected area.
- This strategy aids in reducing the resort operator's fees and assists in removing obsolete infrastructure from the national park estate.
- Where the infrastructure is essential for the resort's operation and no viable alternative exists, provision is being made for its continued use through an NCA authority.
- However, where the historic use is non-conforming (with the national park tenure) provision for its continuation is required under a management plan.
- The recent and accelerated development of statutory protected area management plans for the island national parks is providing the scope to resolve the infrastructures' legitimacy and ensuring certainty for resort operators.

DestinationQ – Issues Briefing

- Generally, the NCA authorities are for a term of 10-30 years with any associated fees (usually less than Land Act lease fees) being reinvested into surrounding national park infrastructure (e.g. walking tracks, roads, picnic areas).
- In many instances island national park infrastructure is solely utilised by the adjoining resort and its guests.
- To date, OPWS has been able to successfully provide for the continued use of historic island resort infrastructure on the national park estate.

Suggested Response

- The government is committed to providing certainty to tourism operators to foster quality operations.
- Properly authorising all tourism infrastructure on national parks is an identified priority and a range of options are currently being considered and this will include authorising tourism infrastructure like island resorts.

RTI DL Release

Background

- The Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway was constructed by the State Government for \$10 million and opened in 2008.
- The original intention was to outsource to the private sector the construction and operation of the attraction. This was offered to the market via an Expression of Interest but was not successful.
- To date the walkway has been managed by QPWS as a commercial nature-based tourist attraction in collaboration with the Mamu Aboriginal people/traditional owners.

Current Issues

- The walkway is operating at a significant loss compounded by continuing difficulties facing the entire Tropical North Queensland tourism industry.
- It was originally envisaged that the Mamu People would develop indigenous tourism product and visitor facility on the land adjoining the walkway, but this has not eventuated.
- Under an Indigenous Land Use Agreement the Mamu traditional owners receive \$1.00 per customer admitted to the walkway.
- QPWS has previously marketed the walkway both in domestic and international markets and in cooperation with the Regional Tourism Organisation and tour operators who are permitted to conduct tours on the walkway.
- The walkway is located 2 hours from any major centre and this acts as a limitation to tourism markets, particularly in light of no supporting services at the facility (cafeteria, other product).
- Current budget constraints has meant that marketing is now limited.
- A roadside billboard has been funded for Mamu and this has recently not been renewed.
- QPWS is currently investigating future management options (refer Key Issue paper A).
- Regardless of the option pursued, it is recommended that capacity building arrangements for Mamu traditional owners be explored through relevant state government agencies to enable Mamu to become principal managers.

Key Issue Papers

- A. Current costs and future management options

Additional Attachments

- N/A

ISSUE 13: Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway
ISSUE 13(A): Current costs and future management options

Background

- The walkway operates on a commercial basis with a fee for entry. Current fees are set at \$20 per adult and \$50 per family.
- Visitor numbers are recorded as follows:
 - 2010/11 financial year: 25432 visitors; and
 - 2011/12 financial year: 13157 visitors (up to and including March 2012).
- QPWS employs eight temporary staff (four administration officers and four rangers) to manage the operation and this is the minimum required to operate a 7-day-a-week, 364-day-a-year roster.
- Under an Indigenous Land Use Agreement the Mamu traditional owners receive \$1.00 per customer admitted to the MRCW.

Issues / Risks

- Entry ticket sales have yielded:
 - \$419,000 (2008/09)
 - \$568,000 (2009/10)
 - \$378,000 (2010/11)
 - \$222,000 (2011/12 financial year to date).
- Operating costs are approximately \$650,000 per financial year.
- Visitor numbers grew in the attraction's first two years of operation, and it was anticipated that they would reach 40,000 per annum; however this has not been achieved.
- Visitation over the past two years has declined due to a number of factors affecting the entire tourism industry across Far North Queensland, including: the global financial crisis; the 2011 floods; Tropical Cyclone Yasi and the high AUD.
- Staffing arrangements at the walkway are temporary until 30 December 2012. The short term nature of this arrangement has meant that it is difficult to retain staff.
- A proposal to engage the Mamu traditional owners in the future management of the facility remains uncertain despite receiving support from the former Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.
- The commercial viability of the walkway is also constrained because facilities required to complete it as a tourist attraction such as cafeteria, retail, visitor centre have remain unfunded.

Suggested Response

- The government recognises that the Mamu Canopy Walkway has significant potential for development both in infrastructure, for example a cafeteria, and supporting tourism product, for example guided tours.
- A number of options are currently being investigated and I anticipate that further discussions will be held with local industry and the Mamu people about the future management arrangements for this attractions.

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Option 1 - *Explore private sector partnership options and maintain current resourcing and management by QPWS for the next three years while partnership options are developed.*

This option will provide the certainty needed for ongoing management but will also pursue future management arrangements that seek to adopt a commercial management model with a view to limiting the financial impost on the State.

Option 2 - *Discontinue the fee for entry and open the facility up to the public.*

While this is a legitimate option it will still require financial investment from the State in maintenance and staffing. It has not been determined how the tourism industry would view this option but it is anticipated that operators of similar attractions (Skyrail, Daintree Discovery Centre) would see it as unfair competition with their product.

- Undertaking this strategy would limit the commercial capacity building for the Mamu traditional owners and be highly controversial. It is also likely to attract considerable negative publicity from the traditional owners and be considered as a retraction on established obligations. Furthermore it may not be within the spirit of the agreement with the Mamu Traditional Owners.
- It should be noted however that if the facility is open and FOC (Free of Charge) then there would be no ‘customers’ (paying visitors), therefore QPWS would not be required to provide the \$1.00 per customer.
- Free entry will not provide QPWS complete relief from operational obligations on site including track inspection and maintenance, cleaning toilets and transporting elderly/infirm visitors on small electric buggy’s which has become a firm expectation from Commercial Activity Permit (CAP) holders.
- A minimum of 2 Ranger staff would still be required to maintain a 7 day roster such that a Ranger is on site every day to attend to these duties. To achieve this at least 4 positions would be needed to cover 7 days of operation and training, leave and other incidental arrangements.
- The Walkway was never designed to be operated without staff on site and as such requires operational attention every day to ensure it is safe and presentable.

Overview

- The QPWS land acquisition program over many years has resulted in the purchase of not only areas of outstanding natural values, but also the built infrastructure associated with the area's previous use.
- This infrastructure includes homesteads, woolsheds, other farm buildings, lighthouses, cottages, mining camps and workshops.
- QPWS has been successful in the past in achieving re-use of some assets, notably Double Island Point Lighthouse, Cape Capricorn Lighthouse, Bustard Head Lighthouse and Dilli Village on Fraser Island.
- The "adaptive re-use" of assets is a potential tourism opportunity and also has the potential to offset QPWS management and maintenance costs associated with the assets.
- A preliminary investigation has identified the adaptive re-use of QPWS assets as having potential to offer either community benefit or commercial return via a tourism venture, for example the Kinaba Visitor Centre in the Noosa area, old forestry barracks in the D'Aguilar Range behind Brisbane, Lighthouse complexes on Fraser and Moreton Island and Mt Mobil Homestead in the Chesterton Ranges northwest of Mitchell.
- A full audit of all QPWS-managed estate is likely to identify more built assets that offer opportunity for either community benefit or commercial tourism investment.

Current Issues

- Adaptive re-use of such assets generally requires significant investment before they can be turned to public use for either commercial or community purposes.
- To be attractive for tourism purposes, assets generally need to be in prime locations and offer unique experiences.

Key Issue Papers

- A. State Investment in Adaptive Re-Use

Background

- There are many built assets on the QPWS estate, however those acquired as part of a conservation driven acquisition, often have characteristics that can make adaptive re-use difficult. Issues can include:
 - they are often in remote locations
 - access can be difficult and often weather dependant
 - basic services such as power, water, and sewerage can be non-existent or old and non-compliant
 - facilities were built to standards appropriate to an earlier era and are often non-compliant with current legislative requirements
 - when located on national park Commercial Activity Agreements are currently the only authority able to be used and these authorities do not offer tenure sufficient to attract investment
 - previous uses can have implications such as asbestos and contaminated land
- QPWS experience in managing the adaptive reuse of its assets indicate that any proposed opportunities for private investment need to be made as 'investor ready' as possible to increase the attractiveness and remove barriers.
- This is an approach adopted by other States, particularly NSW, and would involve investment by the State in environmental assessment, surveys, native title and other tenure resolution. Some sites may also require significant investment in access and services where they are currently not provided or adequate.

Issues / Risks

- In cases where QPWS has offered these assets for private or community ventures, practice has been to pass these costs on, which only becomes achievable where there is a real prospect of a significant commercial return or where government grant money can be accessed.
- Feasibility assessment and some actions to progress to market will require additional funding.

Suggested Response

- There are a range of assets on national park estate that may offer potential re-use opportunity for tourism purposes, for example lighthouse precincts and shearers sheds being used for eco-accommodation.
- The Government is committed to investigating all options to progress the ecotourism market in Queensland.

Overview

- Mossman Gorge is located in Daintree National Park, approximately 80 kilometres north of Cairns and a few kilometres from the townships of Mossman and Mossman Gorge Aboriginal Community.
- Significant visitor facilities in Mossman Gorge consist of an access road (gazetted road), a car park (road reserve), a small day-use area (national park), 215 metres of elevated boardwalk, approx. 3 kilometres of walking track configured into two circuit walks, and a suspension bridge over a tributary of the Mossman River (national park).
- The Rex Creek suspension bridge is temporarily closed pending an engineer's report. This closure has meant the Rainforest circuit walking track is inaccessible to visitors; a park alert has been issued on the website advising visitors of the temporary closure.
- Construction of the new \$20m Mossman Gorge Centre (the Centre) began in 2010 on land purchased by the Indigenous Land Corporation adjacent to the Mossman Gorge Aboriginal Community and two kilometres from Mossman Gorge (Daintree National Park).
- The Centre opened for business on 20 June 2012, but is yet to be officially opened.
- This "disadvantaged community's" welfare project is fully funded by the Federal Government and supported by the Queensland Government and the Cairns Regional Council.
- The project involves significant permanent changes for visitor access to nearby Mossman Gorge (Daintree National Park) and also involves new fees for a shuttle bus operated by the Centre.
- There are currently 36 commercial tour operators that carry 70,000 passengers per year to Mossman Gorge.
- A steering group comprised of community, tourism, government and indigenous representatives has overseen the development of arrangements at this centre, including the new fee for the shuttle bus.
- Far North Qld Tour Operators Association was represented on the steering group.

Current Issues

- The Centre will provide 40 new local Indigenous jobs immediately and up to 70 new jobs in the peak tourism season. It will also provide a training facility for up to 40 Indigenous students each year in hospitality and tourism and provide residential hostel accommodation for 20 students.
- The Centre will also provide office space and workshop space for Mossman based QPWS staff.
- Visitors will also have the option of free access if they choose to walk or cycle into Mossman Gorge.
- The full adult retail price for the shuttle bus has been confirmed at \$4.80. Concession, children and family prices are available.
- Shuttle buses will run at a minimum of every 15 minutes between 8.00am and 6pm between the Centre and Mossman Gorge car park.
- There appears to be mixed views amongst operators about the fee.

Key Issue Papers

Nil

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
DIRECTOR-GENERAL BRIEFING NOTE

Approved	Not Approved	Noted
Further information required		
DG.....	[Signature]	
Dated	29/11/12	

TO: Director-General, National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Communications strategy for release of Expression of Interest (EOI) for Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway.

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required as soon as possible to ensure the EOI release is properly communicated to all key stakeholders on **1 December 2012** (EOI scheduled release date).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Director-General:

- approve** the communications strategy for the EOI release (Attachment 1);
- sign** the letters to key stakeholders advising them of the release of the EOI (Attachments 2 - 11);
- sign** the letter to Mullen Bun Goon Pty Ltd (Attachment 12);
- approve** the marketing statement (Attachment 13);
- approve** the media release (Attachment 14);
- approve** the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) website text (Attachment 15); and
- note** that the advertisement for the Cairns Post newspaper has been booked for publication for Saturday December 1 2012. (Attachment 16). Text previously endorsed.

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

- NPRSR has identified that there is opportunity for commercial management and operation of the Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway, located in Wooroonooran National Park near Innisfail in Tropical North Queensland. In addition, it has been identified that the walkway tourism product would be strengthened by the development of additional product, services and infrastructure.
- This opportunity will be released to the market via an open EOI process.
- NPRSR Minister Steve Dickson has requested the EOI be released on 1 December 2012
- A communications strategy (Attachment 1) has been developed to support the release of the EOI to ensure consistent messages are delivered to key stakeholders in a consistent and timely fashion.
- As per the communications strategy, letters to key stakeholders (Attachments 2 – 11) will be posted Friday 30 November 2012. The letter to Mullen Bun Goon Pty Ltd (Attachment 12) will be emailed.
- The marketing statement (Attachment 13) will accompany the letters and email.
- A media release (Attachment 14) has been developed to promote the positive messages associated with the release of the EOI.
- NPRSR website content (refer to Attachment 15) will be published to coincide with the publication of the Cairns Post newspaper advertisement (attachment 16).

Consultation:

- Andrea Dobbyn, Senior Media Officer, Media Services, Corporate Communications, assisted in the development of the media release.
- Joanne Schmitter from the Mamu owned company Mullen Bun Goon Ltd, which owns the freehold land adjacent to the Walkway, was contacted by a DNPRSR officer on 22/11/12 to discuss the possibility of inviting a Mamu person to act as an advisor to the EOI Evaluation Panel if there is no proposal lodged by Mamu people in response to the EOI. Ms Schmitter indicated that:

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Commercial and Recreation Development (CRD) Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 28 Nov 2012	Endorsed by Name: Dennis Devine Position: A/Manager CRD Tel No: 4222 5207	Endorsed by Name: Neil Cambourn Position: Acting Executive Director, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Clive Cook, Acting Deputy Director-General, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:
	Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Name: Position: Tel No:	



- as an outcome of a meeting with the Director General and others in September 2012, she was expecting further discussion in regard to the calling of an EOI and the possibility that Mamu people would be supported to have the management rights granted to them;
- The Mamu people may lodge a proposal either independently or in partnership with a commercial operator;
- A condition of the EOI should be that proponents are willing to work with Traditional Owners;
- There is an opportunity for a successful proponent to lease the adjacent freehold land held by Mullen Bun Goon for further infrastructure development associated with the Walkway;
- If they are not involved in any EOI bid, Mullen Bun Goon would be happy to provide a representative to advise the Evaluation Panel.
- The letter to Mullen Bun Goon (Attachment 12) encourages Mamu people to develop an EOI proposal; acknowledges that the preparedness of a proponent to work with the Traditional owners will be considered during the evaluation process; acknowledges their willingness to explore opportunities for associated development on the freehold land; and advises that Mullen Bun Goon representation advice to the Evaluation Panel will be determined pending their intentions for an EOI bid.
- Ms Schmider has specifically requested the letter be emailed rather than posted.

Election Commitment:

- The ecotourism opportunities project will achieve commitments made by the government to allow greater access to the State's national parks to benefit ecotourism.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Communications strategy
- Attachment 2 - 11 Letters to key stakeholders
- Attachment 12 - Letter to Mullen Bun Goon Pty Ltd
- Attachment 13 - Marketing statement
- Attachment 14 - Media release
- Attachment 15 - NPRSR website text
- Attachment 16 – Approved Cairns Post newspaper advertisement

RTI/DL Release

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Commercial and Recreation Development (CRD) Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 28 Nov 2012	Endorsed by Name: Dennis Devine Position: A/Manager CRD Tel No: 4222 5207	Endorsed by Name: Neil Cambourn Position: Acting Executive Director, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Clive Cook, Acting Deputy Director-General, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:
	Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Name: Position: Tel No:	



Minister's Office File Ref:	
Department File Ref:	CTS 00261/13

Briefing Note

The Honourable Jann Stuckey MP

Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games

Action required: For Noting.

Action required by: Routine. To progress the government's commitment to ecotourism.

SUBJECT: Queensland Ecotourism Investment Opportunities

Summary of key objectives

To inform you of current status and next steps for the following ecotourism commitments under the government's six month action plan January – June 2013 and from the *DestinationQ* Forum:

- Amendments to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, and subsequent release of a General Expression of Interest for sustainable ecotourism development initiatives in protected areas;
- New Queensland Ecotourism Investment Opportunities scoping proposal (see **Attachment 1**) and investigation of potential projects;
- sch3(2)(1)(a);Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet
- Actions to be led by the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB) under the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan.

Key issues

Amendments to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*

1. The former Queensland Government's approach to potential investment into ecotourism development opportunities resulted in no successful outcomes, due to a commercially unattractive investment model and constraints of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA).
2. The Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, 2012 (the Bill) gives effect to policy reforms to overcome various impediments. The Bill was introduced and referred to the Health and Community Services Committee (HCSC) on 13 November 2012. Following public consultation resulting in 75 submissions, the HCSC held a public hearing on 16 January 2013.
3. While the Queensland Tourism Industry Council and Ecotourism Australia spoke in strong support of the Bill, mainstream media highlighted criticisms of the Bill from conservationists. 17 January 2013 examples of newspaper articles are at **Attachment 2**.

4. sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament the privileges of Parliament

5.

General Expression of Interest for sustainable ecotourism development in protected areas

6. A key action under the Queensland Government's six month action plan January to June 2013 is to "release an Expression of Interest (EOI) calling for sustainable ecotourism development initiatives in protected areas".

Minister's Office File Ref:	
Department File Ref:	CTS 00261/13

7. The date for commencement of amendments to the NCA by proclamation also determines the date for release of the General EOI to potential investors, because proposals cannot be submitted for consideration until the policy framework for doing so is publicly available.
8. DTESB has raised with DNPRSR the need to ensure development of the policy framework is completed and amendments commenced by proclamation in a timely fashion, to avoid delays that would prevent release of the EOI before June 2013 in accordance with the government's six month action plan.

Queensland Ecotourism Investment Opportunities (QEIO) scoping proposal (Attachment 1) and investigation of potential projects

9. Delivery of ecotourism outcomes is one of the key actions from the 2012 *DestinationQ* Forum, and would potentially include a tender process inviting proposals from private investors for ecotourism infrastructure at government selected and investor nominated sites.
 10. An Inter-Agency Ecotourism Commercial Opportunities Working Group (Working Group) of senior officers from Tourism Division, DTESB, DNPRSR and Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ), has been established to investigate and progress investment opportunities subject to sites being close to 'investor-ready'.
 11. The QEIO scoping proposal has been jointly developed by DTESB, DNPRSR and TEQ, to broadly inform analysis and prioritisation of potential ecotourism investment projects.
 12. Delivery of the QEIO involves identification, assessment, preparation and release of 'investor-ready' opportunities for ecotourism development in and adjacent to protected areas including national parks.
 13. The Working Group has identified the following categories to be investigated for potential investment:
 - Category A: General EOI: A general EOI to seek investors' interest in ecotourism development opportunities (see paragraphs 6-8 above);
 - Category B: Potential early opportunities: the Working Group will investigate specific sites and evaluate their suitability for ecotourism development, examples being MaMu Canopy Walk (EOI being progressed) and Obi Obi Zipline;
 - Category C: Opportunities for investigation: Other sites in or adjacent to iconic locations may be identified and investigated in relation to viability and potential release to the market, in the medium to longer term under the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan (for example Jonah Bay in the Whitsundays); and
 - Category D: Private sector led opportunities: potential ecotourism investment opportunities, on privately owned freehold land, are being promoted domestically and internationally by the Tourism Investment Attraction Unit, Tourism Division, DTESB.
- Examples include sch4p4(7)(1)(c) Business/commercial/professional/financial affairs

sch3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet

Minister's Office File Ref:	
Department File Ref:	CTS 00261/13

sch3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet

Actions led by DTESB under the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan

16. The draft three-year Queensland Ecotourism Plan (the Plan) has been finalised by DNPRSR and is scheduled to be released for public consultation in early 2013.
17. Five actions under the draft Plan will be led by Tourism Division, DTESB in partnership with DNPRSR and TEQ, and other government and industry stakeholders. These actions are:
- i. Establish partnerships across government and industry to facilitate investment into new and enhanced ecotourism products and experiences;
 - ii. Foster industry events that prioritise ecotourism product development and innovation;
 - iii. Identify and establish the feasibility of three iconic investment opportunities to showcase Queensland as a world leader in ecotourism development;
 - iv. Partner with Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning to ensure tourism is recognised as a State Interest in the State Planning Policy and is reflected in land use planning at all levels of the planning regime; and
 - v. Develop best practice ecotourism development planning guidelines to assist state and local government, professional planners and potential investors to more effectively manage development of new and enhanced ecotourism projects.
18. In addition to actions under the Plan, Tourism Division, DTESB is developing an Ecotourism Investment Brochure and Fact Sheets in English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean.

Implications

19. Delivery of ecotourism investment opportunities supports:
- the commitment under the Queensland Government's six month action plan January to June 2013 to "release an EOI calling for sustainable ecotourism development initiatives in protected areas";
 - DTESB actions arising from the 2012 *DestinationQ* Forum to encourage investment in tourism products and grow ecotourism, with flow-on economic benefits to tourism supply-chains; and
 - ecotourism development outcomes under the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan.

Background

20. The Queensland Government is committed to restoring Queensland to its rightful status of Australia's number one tourism destination. Delivery of this outcome includes a commitment to take ecotourism forward through:
- Recognition that Queensland's national parks and protected areas have a substantial role to play in the delivery of high quality and high yield ecotourism; and
 - Promoting ecologically responsible and sustainable development practices.

Right to information

21. I am of the view that the contents or attachments contained in this brief **are not suitable** for publication.

Minister's Office File Ref:	
Department File Ref:	CTS 00261/13

Recommendation

22. That the Minister notes information provided in this brief in relation to:

- Amendments to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, and subsequent release of a General Expression of Interest for sustainable ecotourism development initiatives in protected areas;
- New Queensland Ecotourism Investment Opportunities scoping proposal and investigation of potential projects;
- sch 3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet
- Actions to be led by DTESB under the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan.

NOTED / ENDORSED

NOTED / ENDORSED

Chief of Staff

JANN STUCKEY MP
Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games

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Minister's comments

RTI/DL Release

Minister's Office File Ref:	
Department File Ref:	CTS 00261/13

Action Officer: Divu Halanaik Project Manager	Endorsed by: Susan Jensen Director	Endorsed by: Neal Muller General Manager	Endorsed by: Paul Martyn Deputy Director-General	Endorsed by: Richard Eden DG
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Date: / /	Date: / /	Date: / /	Date: / /	Date: / /

RTI DL Release

**Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
DIRECTOR-GENERAL BRIEFING NOTE**

Approved Not Approved Noted Further information required
DG.....
Dated / /

**TO: Director-General, National Parks, Recreation,
Sport and Racing**

SUBJECT: Ecotourism investment opportunities on national parks

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required by **XXX** to allow project milestones to be achieved.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Director-General:

- **endorse** the Ecotourism Opportunities Working Group terms of reference (Attachment 1)
- **note** that commercial opportunities will fall within three themes; eco-accommodation, attractions and adaptive re-use of park infrastructure.
- **endorse** a two-stage approach, with an EOI followed by a select tender of targeted key opportunities
- **endorse** the proposal that a portfolio of opportunities are developed by QPWS in conjunction with TQ and the Tourism Division to represent the key targets
- **endorse** development of a select tender procurement plan for release of ecotourism opportunities

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

- An Ecotourism Opportunities Working Group will be established with membership from QPWS, the Tourism Division, Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business (DTMSB), and Tourism Queensland (TQ).
- The working group will identify and release ecotourism investment opportunities on and off park.
- Based on experience and industry information opportunities for ecotourism development will generally centre around 3 themes:
 - eco-accommodation (eg. safari-style tents)
 - attractions (eg. zip lines), and
 - adaptive re-use of park infrastructure (eg. lighthouses).
- Opportunities will be on or adjacent to national parks. If adjacent to park, there must be some connection with the national park to be included with this process.

Release of opportunities

- Two approaches are currently being proposed; an initial open EOI for general ecotourism products and attractions, followed by a select/targeted tender at some later stage for identified key opportunities.
- Preliminary informal advice from TQ and DTMSB indicates a lack of support for a general EOI process; on the basis that failure to proactively provide certainty around site constraints leads to commercial uncertainty and lack of investor attraction.
- An open EOI would be designed to capture a broad range of opportunities covering the 3 theme areas above and will be progressed in the coming months.
- The longer-term select tender process will result in a smaller number of ecotourism opportunities being progressed.
- These opportunities would be identified in a portfolio to be developed by QPWS in collaboration with TQ and DTMSB
- Any open EOI will be resource intensive particularly during preliminary assessment and subsequent detailed examination of proposals, given these could be for a wide array of opportunities throughout the State. Any select tender process will require significant up-front resourcing due to the need to identify a range of constraints and factors affecting investor readiness. Both processes will involve subsequent detailed assessments and governance requirements.

Author Name: Guy Thomas Position: Manager TVM Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 20 August 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director TVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Jason Jacobi Position: A/ Exec Director CSP Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Clive Cook Tel No: 3330-5270 Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	

- The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's (EHP) Corporate Procurement Team has recommended that a procurement plan be prepared in the early stages of the project to support a select tender process &/or an EOI.

Constraints and risk factors

- A number of factors have been identified that will significantly impact on the government's ability to offer any particular site for ecotourism development and the viability of that offering. These include land tenure, legislative environment, native title, planning schemes, provision of access and utilities and investment climate.
- While any initial offering can be couched in terms of these constraints an array of issues will inevitably result when needing to formalise arrangements to realise an opportunity.
- Matters of investor-readiness have long been recognised as of primary importance to the suitability and economic viability for any investment opportunity and a careful assessment of sites will be required in this regard.
- Conflicting views exist as to what extent government should resolve &/or resource site readiness factors. While acknowledged that there is a direct correlation between commercial attractiveness of a site and the extent of site readiness, this will not necessarily guarantee investor interest. Indeed, significant resources could be allocated to site preparation without gaining any subsequent commercial development interest; making initial site selection, based on demonstrated market demand factors, critical.
- Some issues such as native title dealings can take considerable periods of time and are resource intensive to determine. Drawing on experiences from the WA Nature Bank program it took on average 3 years to progress sites to a suitable level of investor readiness. These were proactively identified in a strategic approach to develop a network of just 6 quality ecotourism opportunities at key national park locations around the State and are being rolled out in a phased manner to maximise investor interest and commercial prospects.

Timeframes

- The government has announced an intention to offer commercial opportunities through an Expression of Interest process by late 2012.
- Any such release must be undertaken with a realistic expectation that only concept proposals could be considered, with subsequent second-stage proposals required to deliver a tangible outcome.
- Depending on interest, it is anticipated 3 ideas may be reasonably well advanced by late 2013.
- As a longer term strategy, targeted key site opportunities that may incorporate a significant level of site readiness, are expected to become available by 2014.
- The current economic climate will largely dictate the level of market interest in these opportunities, with current information suggesting financing for tourism investment is difficult to obtain.

Responsibilities

- Responsibilities for actions under this initiative will rest with both DNRSR and DTMESB.
 - It is intended that all ecotourism investment opportunities (on and off park) will be released to the market in a coordinated approach.
 - This process will be run by QPWS with support from DTMESB.
 - DTMESB are lead agency for all government tourism issues and have been tasked with coordinating tourism outcomes across all agencies.
 - DTMESB are responsible for related Destination Q actions. In order to deliver this action they may run a complementary process for release of tourism opportunities however where related to national parks this will be done in conjunction with QPWS.
 - QPWS will have primary responsibility for progressing ecotourism opportunities on national parks and other QPWS-managed land.
 - DTMSB will be responsible for progressing any off-park (non-QPWS managed land) opportunities. Where there is a direct relationship between these opportunities and

Author Name: Guy Thomas Position: Manager TVM Tel No: 3330 5273 Date:20 August 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director TVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Jason Jacobi Position: A/ Exec Director CSP Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Clive Cook Tel No: 3330-5270 Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	



management of the park, QPWS will work closely with DTMSB to provide advice as required

- **Legislation:**

section 3(2)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet

- **Consultation:**

David Morgans, TQ and Neal Muller, DTMSB have endorsed the ToR for the Working Group. They support a targeted approach to the release of opportunities for private investment following resolution of various site-readiness factors.

EHP Corporate Procurement has provided advice on offering opportunities to the market through a select tender process.

- **Election Commitment:**

The ecotourism opportunities project will achieve commitments made by the government to allow greater access to the State's national parks to benefit ecotourism.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS1) Ecotourism Opportunities Working Group Terms of Reference

RTI DL Release

Author Name: Guy Thomas Position: Manager TVM Tel No: 3330 5273 Date:20 August 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director TVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Jason Jacobi Position: A/ Exec Director CSP Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Clive Cook Tel No: 3330-5270 Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	

CTS No. [CTS No.]

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Obi Obi Zipline Canopy Tour, Kondalilla National Park, Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

Chief of Staff	OK
Dated / /	
Approved	Not Approved
Further information required	
Minister.....	
Dated / /	

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required by 22 March 2013 to allow progression of the initiative to achieved milestones associated with the January – June 2013, Six Month Action Plan (SMAP).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- note that the proposed Obi Obi Zipline tourism attraction site (Sunshine Coast Hinterland), is being prepared for a select tender process under the 'Commercial Ecotourism Opportunities Initiative';
- note that the Ecotourism Initiatives Inter-Departmental Steering Committee is overseeing the project implementation;
- note that the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB) is leading the Obi Obi Zipline Project;
- note that DTESB and the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) met with the sites Native Title holders (the Jinibara People) to obtain their 'in principle' endorsement of the project;
- note that DTESB is engaging contractors to undertake a preliminary site analysis and develop a Commercial Site Prospectus; and

~~sch3(7) Information subject to legal professional privilege to legal professional privilege~~

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BACKGROUND

- Improving access for tourism and recreation to national parks is a key priority of the government.
- As outlined in CTS 03653/13 (see Attachment 1), private ecotourism investment opportunities on national parks is being progressed via the Ecotourism Initiative Interdepartmental Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) comprised of NPRSR, DTESB and Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ).

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~~sch3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet~~

- This project is being delivered in parallel to the General Expression of Interest (EOI) which encourages investors to identify sites suitable for ecotourism development opportunities (See Attachment 2 CTS 04642/13).

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- The project has strong potential to benefit the Sunshine Coast's tourism industry and the regional economy, however there are complex challenges to overcome before it becomes 'market-ready'.
- DTESB has prepared a separate brief for the Honourable Jan Stuckey MP, the Minister Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and Commonwealth Games

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Author Name: Greg Smyth Position: Project Officer CRD Tel No: 3330 5245 Date: 19 March 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director CVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: Exec Director TS Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Tel No: Date:
	Name: Todd Kelly Position: Director LPS Tel No: 3330 5213	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: 3330 5270 Tel No:	

File Ref:

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KEY ISSUES

sch3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet

Project Management Committee

- The Obi Obi Project Management committee includes representatives of NPRSR, DTESB, TEQ, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Sunshine Coast Regional Council, SEQ Water and Sunshine Coast Destination Limited.
- The Project Management committee is responsible for undertaking work required to bring the site and concept to a 'market-ready' status before offering the opportunity through a two stage, open commercial tender process.
- On 15 January 2013 the Obi Obi Project Management Committee met at Montville. Given both its 'trial nature' and the cross jurisdictional planning and approval issues, the Committee unanimously recommended that DTESB lead the project.

Engagement of SEQ Water

- SEQ Water were not initially involved on the Project Management Committee.
- A walking trail and car park at the base of the proposed Zipline Site is located on SEQ Water land that is leased to NPRSR.
- Therefore as the land owner, SEQ Water have subsequently been engaged and have agreed to participate in the project.

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Native Title and ILUA requirements

- The Federal Court's determination on 20 November 2012 recognises Jinibara People's native title rights over the proposed Obi Obi Zipline site as well as the broader Kondalilla National Park. Negotiating an indigenous land use agreement (ILUA) (or some other form of native title rights settlement agreement) for the project with the Jinibara People is therefore required to enable the project to proceed.
- On 26 February 2013 representatives of the Jinibara People gave in principle support for the project, subject to, the findings of a cultural heritage study; agreement on management strategies; and the development of a successful cultural heritage agreement that will inform an ILUA for the project.
- Negotiation of an ILUA requires specialist professional expertise, and to this end DTESB has sought to procure an appropriately experienced professional contractor.
- In addition, DTESB is obtaining an approximate cost estimate from the Jinibara People representatives in relation to their involvement in the cultural heritage study, management strategies and cultural heritage agreement.
- DTESB and NPRSR intend to prepare a detailed brief on ILUA resourcing requirements as soon as preliminary cost estimates have been collated.

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Environmental and Planning Considerations

- As part of making the site 'market ready', the Project Management Committee have identified the need to undertake a preliminary site analysis to assess any potential environmental, planning and development approval constraints (including any issues that might trigger the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC)) which might delay or prohibit the proposed opportunity.

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	Name: Todd Kelly Position: Director LPS Tel No: 3330 5213	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: 3330 5270 Tel No:	

File Ref:

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- To inform this analysis, NPRSR has undertaken a desktop assessment of the proposed sites environmental and cultural heritage values.
- DTEBS have begun a procurement process to engage a professional contractor to undertake the preliminary site analysis.

Commercial Site Prospectus

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- To assist potential investors, DTEBS together with NPRSR and other stakeholders will also prepare a commercial site prospectus.
- DTEBS has engaged EC3 Global, an experienced professional contractor to undertake this work.

Next Steps

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- DTEBS in partnership with DNPRSR and TEQ will progress the Zipline project to bring it close to 'market -ready' prior to releasing an expression of interest to private investors. Timing for this expression of interest will depend on satisfactory progress on matters raised above.

- *Right to information:* The contents or attachments contained in this brief **are not suitable for publication.**

sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament

- Key Communication Messages: The ecotourism lease proposal has drawn significant opposition from conservation stakeholders. It is proposed that DTEBS and NPRSR Corporate Communications will assist the Steering Committee to prepare a communications strategy including development of key messages (both benefits and protective measures), ministerial statements, as well as web and paper based advertising material that will be need prior to the release of the Obi Obi Zipline EOI.
Election Commitment: Does this relate to an election commitment? Yes, the government priority to improve access to national parks for ecotourism.
- Five Point Action Plan for Queensland: Does this deliver on growing a four pillar economy? Yes, tourism is one of the four economic pillars.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - CTS 03653/13 Progressing commercial opportunities on national parks
- Attachment 2 - CTS 04642/13 General Expression of Interest' for Private Ecotourism Investment Opportunities on national parks

RTI DL Release

Author Name: Greg Smyth Position: Project Officer CRD Tel No: 3330 5245 Date: 19 March 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director CVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: Exec Director TS Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Tel No: Date:
	Name: Todd Kelly Position: Director LPS Tel No: 3330 5213	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: 3330 5270 Tel No:	

File Ref:

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CTS No. 11751/12

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: **Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport
 and Racing**

Chief of Staff	OK
Dated	5/12/12
Approved	Not Approved
Further information required	
Minister	INTA
Dated	

SUBJECT: **Fraser Coast Tourism - Restriction of development opportunities**

TIMEFRAME

- This brief is not urgent.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- sign the response letters to Mr Ted Sorenson and [redacted] (Attachment 1 & 2);
- note that Ms Anne Greentree, Director, Commercial and Visitor Access, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and Mr Ross Belcher, Area Manager, Fraser Coast, QPWS, are meeting regularly with Fraser Coast Tourism to discuss issues relating to ecotourism development opportunities;
- note the response to issues raised by Fraser Coast Tourism in the Key Issues section below; and
- note that Tourism in Protected Areas (TIPA) will address a number of the issues raised by Fraser Coast Tourism.

BACKGROUND/ KEY ISSUES

- The General Manager Fraser Coast Tourism wrote to Mr Ted Sorenson MP outlining key tourism development opportunities for the Fraser Coast region which they believe have been restricted by government departments.
- Each of the issues outlined has considerable history.

Bay to Bay Yacht Race

Background

- The two day Bay to Bay event is undertaken in May each year attracting up to 300 people and 200 vessels.
- The event starts from the Tin Can Bay marina and finishes at the Urangan marina. Vessels have historically spent the night anchored off Garry's Anchorage on the south-west side of Fraser Island.
- QPWS have supported the event and associated land-based activities have been authorised under a Group Activity Permit.
- A marine park permit for the event is not required, as the activity is considered to have limited impact under the *Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006*.
- The Fraser Island Sustainable Visitor Capacity Report identifies that Garry's Anchorage is suitable for one-off events such as the Bay to Bay Yacht Race provided infrastructure is upgraded or supplied by the event organiser.
- Garry's Anchorage is a semi-remote location, several hours from QPWS operational bases, with difficult road access.

Issues

- Due to the numbers of participants and the lack of toilet facilities at Garry's Anchorage, event organisers are required to provide a suitable number four portable toilets for the activity.
- Event organisers are unhappy with the requirement to provide portable toilets, however this is a consistent approach with other major events on protected areas including the 48 hour Oxfam Trail-walker event in the D'Aguilar National Park.

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: PPO, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 5486 9960 Date: 10 Dec 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED, Technical Services, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: ADG, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5270	

~~Recommendations~~

- ~~QPWS will authorise the activity at Garry's Anchorage if requested and will continue assisting with transport of portable toilets, pending availability of the Island's QPWS truck, and if there is suitable road access. It is recommended that this service be provided on a cost recovery basis.~~

Air Fraser Island

Background

- In response to increasing demand for aircraft access on and over Fraser Island, and the increasing diversity of aircraft types operating in the area, QPWS has prepared a Draft Great Sandy Region Aircraft Management Strategy.
- In July 2005, QPWS conducted a risk assessment on aircraft beach landings at various locations on Fraser Island. The risk assessment was peer reviewed by Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) Aerodrome Operations Support and Australasian Pacific Aviation Resource Services Aviation Safety.
- Recommendations of the review are reflected in the commercial activity agreement between Air Fraser and QPWS. This includes a requirement that a responsible person must be present on the ground to select and mark a suitable landing area, direct traffic, and to communicate with the pilot.

Issues

- In early 2012 QPWS received complaints of non-compliance by Air Fraser Island (AFI) including landing and taking off without the required 'responsible person' managing operations on the ground.
- On 13 January 2012, AFI and QPWS met to discuss a proposed review of their agreement. AFI requested the commercial activity agreement be amended to remove:
 - the requirement for a responsible person on-ground to manage landings and take-offs; and
 - the requirement for an annual safety audit to be conducted.
- Subsequent to a series of meetings / discussions between QPWS, AFI and CASA, it has been agreed by all parties that:
 - AFI shall develop proposed changes to its operations manual;
 - CASA shall conduct an assessment of AFI's submission to determine if proposed changes are safe and feasible. CASA have informed QPWS that this assessment is likely to involve a multi-disciplinary team (e.g. aerodrome inspector, engineer), field observations and consideration of the existing risk assessments; and
 - CASA review will inform any new conditions of the QPWS-issued Commercial Activity Agreement.

Recommendation

- Once CASA review is complete, QPWS will review the AFI's Commercial Activity Agreement.

Pelican Bank and helicopter charter operations

Background

- Pelican Bank is a popular recreational and commercial boating destination located between Hervey Bay and Fraser Island in the Great Sandy Marine Park.
- Commercial tours by helicopter require a Commercial Activity Permit (CAP) in a marine park.
- When the marine park was gazetted non-compliant activities were identified and letters were sent to relevant commercial operators.
- Pelican Bank is a Designated Shorebird Roosting and Feeding Area within the *Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006*. The name Pelican Bank was derived from the sand bank being a prominent breeding site for pelicans.
- Section 47(2) of the Zoning Plan restricts activity in these areas to the effect that a person must not:
 - land, or take off in, an aircraft through a group of feeding or roosting shorebirds; or
 - cause excessive disturbance to shorebirds or their habitat.

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: PPO, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 5486 9960 Date: 10 Dec 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED, Technical Services, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: ADG, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5270	

Issues

- The proposal for commercial helicopter tours to land on Pelican Bank is contrary to objectives of the Designated Shorebird Roosting and Feeding Area and is inconsistent with the Zoning Plan.

Recommendations

- That consideration be given to allocating resources to finalise the Draft Great Sandy Region Aircraft Management Strategy to identify suitable aircraft tourism opportunities, safety, conservation, visitor experience, strategic direction, and management of existing and potential aircraft operations.

Tasman Venture/Remote Fraser Island tour

Background

- Tasman Venture Pty Ltd holds a CAP to access Moon Point and Wathumba (south bank) on Fraser Island, including kayaking access to Coongul Creek, Meereenyoor Creek, and Wathumba Creek.
- Tasman Venture Pty Ltd does not hold a permit to access Sandy Cape; it accesses this site by sub-contracting from another permitted operator.
- Tasman Venture Pty Ltd has indicated their interest in increasing access at existing permitted sites and gaining access to new sites, specifically the western beaches of Fraser Island which are zoned as either remote or semi-remote under the Great Sandy Region Management Plan.
- The zones provide for a diverse range of visitor experiences aligned with the natural conditions, access and desired future state.
- 'Remote' indicates that the area will have non-motorised use, no facilities with limited evidence of previous human activity; and 'semi-remote' indicates motorised access, some facilities, and infrequent contact with other visitors.

Issues

- There is interest from a number of tour operators to access the western beaches of Fraser Island.
- The Fraser Island Sustainable Visitor Capacity Report, which was developed in consultation with tourism industry representatives, identifies Bowarrady and Awinya as low key visitor destinations with a desired commercial capacity and group size of only eight persons. Tasman Venture indicates that they would like a capacity of 40 to 60 persons per site.
- Latent capacity is a significant issue for Fraser Island permits and allocation of new tourism permits is subject to the implementation of TIPA which is an action from DestinationQ.

Recommendations

- Continue to manage the western beaches of Fraser Island as remote and semi-remote low key tourism and recreation destinations to provide a diverse range of visitor experiences.
- Implement TIPA recommendations on Fraser Island to address the latent permit capacity issue.

Tourism in Protected Areas (TIPA) initiatives

Background

- The TIPA program incorporates six key objectives to achieve a contemporary business approach for tour operators and sustainable and quality nature-based tourism on national parks.
- The initiative was developed in partnership with the tourism sector and the current policy framework has been endorsed by the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, Tourism Queensland and other key tourism industry representatives.
- Implementation of TIPA at Fraser Island is being guided by a sustainable visitor capacity report.

Issues

- Managing latency is critical to achieving sustainable use and making available full capacity at sites.
- Fraser Island operators specifically raised latency management as a key issue at DestinationQ. As a result the government committed to 'fine-tune TIPA in relation to capacity, latency, process and administration'.

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: PPO, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 5486 9960 Date: 10 Dec 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED, Technical Services, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: ADG, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5270	

- Meetings have been held with operators in key TIPA areas and a refined model is currently being finalised based on feedback.
- The Fraser Island operators are organised in an informal group called the 'Fraser Island Sustainable Tourism Alliance' (FISTA) and they have been tasked to advise QPWS on their recommended approach to managing latency. This was due by the end of October 2012 and QPWS has recently been advised that it is expected to be communicated in early December 2012.
- The Director-General requested that both tag-along operators and tour operators provide a coordinated response, however Fraser Coast Tourism have since advised that this is unlikely as the two groups are unlikely to agree.

Recommendations

- QPWS will continue to work closely with all operators to achieve a resolution.

Tag-a-long permit capacity

Background

- Conducting a tourist service for backpackers in four-wheel-drive hire vehicles as part of a multi-day tour to the Fraser Island Recreation Management Area was declared a prescribed commercial activity on 31 January 2010, requiring operators to hold a commercial activity agreement, and undertake the activity as a tag-a-long tour arrangement.
- When tag-along tours commenced most operations were carried through Hervey Bay. Market forces over the past two years have resulted in a substantial shift of majority of backpacker tours now coming through Rainbow Beach.
- This is completely independent on regulation of tag-along tours by QPWS.
- This market shift has had a significant economic impact on operators based in Hervey Bay and Fraser Coast Tourism has requested that QPWS specify the origin of tours to support Hervey Bay.

Issues

- Capacity allocations for tag-along tours are being resolved as part of TIPA.

Recommendations

- Origin of tours is an issue driven by market forces and should not be regulated by QPWS.

Whale encounters point of difference – Viewing platforms

Background

- The Marine Parks (Great Sandy) Zoning Plan 2006 section 55(1)(b) states that "a person must not, without permission, do any of the following in the whale management area":
 - a) enter the water closer than 300 metres to a whale; and
 - b) if the person is in the water in the area – move any closer than 300m to a whale.
- The *Conservation Plan for the Management of Whales and Dolphins in Queensland 1997-2001* section 6(3) states that "a person must not, without a reasonable excuse, enter water closer than 300 metres to a whale or 100 metres to a dolphin".
- The Conservation Plan is a responsibility of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. The Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin watching 2005 allow for people operating under an authorisation to deliberately swim or dive in the vicinity of a whale or dolphin.

Issues

- A collective of Hervey Bay whale watching operators have put forward the suggestion that they should be able to offer clients the experience of being underwater with whales whilst constrained by a viewing platform on their vessels.
- Commercial activity agreements issued to whale operators in Great Sandy Marine Park currently do not provide any authorisations to enter the water closer than 300m to a whale.
- The proposal to allow passengers to access viewing platforms and place their face/head in the water would be deemed as entering the water and a breach of conditions of their agreements.
- Whale operators have previously been issued warnings about letting passengers "enter the water" from viewing platforms.

Recommendations

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: PPO, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 5486 9960 Date: 10 Dec 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED, Technical Services, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: ADG, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5270	

- Commercial activity agreements could be amended to allow passengers to enter the water within 300 metres of a whale as long as they primarily remain on the vessel at all times (or similar), which would not be viewed as contradicting the Zoning Plan.

Whale encounters point of difference – Fraser Island beach experience

Background

- In 2005–06, a stakeholder working group was established to assess the sustainable visitor capacities (SVC) of key sites on Fraser Island. The Fraser Island Sustainable Visitor Capacity Report is the outcome of this study and informs implementation of TIPA.
- The SVC Report identifies that low-key ecotourism opportunities would be appropriate in some areas of the western beaches of Fraser Island.
- Release of these opportunities is subject to TIPA.
- Pelican Bank is a popular recreational boating destination, and habitat for roosting and feeding shorebirds, and was prescribed as a Designated Shorebird Roosting and Feeding Area during the implementation of the Great Sandy Marine Park in September 2006 (see previous section for more information on Pelican Bank).

Issues

- The number of passengers that many of the large whale watching vessels carry is well over the sustainable visitor capacities and the low-key settings associated with the western beaches of Fraser Island.
- New tourism opportunities in this area would be considered in light of Designated Shorebird Roosting and Feeding Area objective.

Recommendations

- Continue to manage the western beaches of Fraser Island as remote and semi-remote low key tourism and recreation destinations to provide a diverse range of visitor experiences of Fraser Island.
- Continue implementation of TIPA as a priority.
- Once TIPA is implemented, favourably consider tour operator access to Pelican Bank provided appropriate shorebird protection conditions are imposed.

Fraser Coast Camel Safaris

Background

- The Fraser Coast Regional Council is primarily responsible for managing camel activities on Hervey Bay beaches.
- As the location is also within the Great Sandy Marine Park, a QPWS permit is also required.
- QPWS has previously issued a permit for camel tour activities consistent with the location and activities permitted by the council.

Issues

- There is an issue to do with housing of the camels that requires coordinated consideration by QPWS and the council to meet a number of competing priorities.

Recommendations

- The issue of a marine park permit for any camel activity on Hervey Bay beaches is contingent on council approvals.
- Ross Belcher, Area Manager Fraser Coast, is currently pursuing discussions with the council.

MINISTER’S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Response to Mr Ted Sorenson MP
- Attachment 2 – Response to sch4p3(3) Prejudice

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: PPO, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 5486 9960 Date: 10 Dec 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 07 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED, Technical Services, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: ADG, QPWS Tel No: 07 3330 5270	

**Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL DEPUTATION BRIEFING NOTE**

11.30am, Friday 3rd May 2013
Peter Rodgers, Andrew Grant, Jan Watts and Michael Donnelly
(Sunshine Coast Destination Ltd's Destination Advisory Panel)

Chief of Staff	OK
Dated / /	
Approved Not Approved Noted Further information required	
Minister.....	
Dated / /	

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Presentation of Submission on 'Growing our Nature Based Tourism Industry' from the Destination Advisory Panel, Sunshine Coast Destination Limited (SCDL)

BACKGROUND

- This meeting was called to enable SCDL to present a paper outlining the industry's recommendations to grow nature based tourism.
- The idea of a paper came from discussions held with Minister Dickson at DestinationQ in June 2012 in Cairns.
- *Consultation:*
 - Peter Rogers (then Vice President, Hinterland Tourism Sunshine Coast (HTSC)) at DestinationQ 2012 spoke with Minister Dickson about costs incurred by tourism operators.
 - Peter Rogers and Angus Richard (then President of HTSC) met with Minister Dickson in August 2012 and were invited to identify issues associated with the accessibility of National Parks and advancing Nature Tourism experiences on the Sunshine Coast.
- *Election Commitment:* The government priority is to improve access to national parks for ecotourism. The recommendations in the paper align with the Destination Blueprint 2012-2015.
- *Five Point Action Plan for Queensland:* This project has strong ties to growing a four pillar economy by strengthening the Queensland tourism industry.

CURRENT ISSUES

- The submission covers topics including:
 - Access impediments to National Parks.
 - Maintenance and development of nature tourism experiences and infrastructure.
 - Overlooked or unheeded planning that underpins the development of essential nature tourism experiences including tracks and trails development.
- A select subcommittee (the Destination Advisory Panel) under SCDL comprising tourism and outdoor education industry professionals and advisors have taken reference from extensive tourism research carried out between 2007 and 2013.
- The paper supports Industry and Government working together, the inclusion of tourism in planning, the encouragement of new eco-tourism product and the removal of red tape for tourism operators.
- This meeting provides the opportunity to strengthen ties with industry and to involve stakeholders. An outcome of this meeting should be to link the Destination Advisory Panel with the planning section of QPWS Sunshine Fraser Coast Region (SFC Region).
- Some specific notes in reply to Section 4 – Topics and recommendations for consideration:
 - **4.1 Permits:**
 - i) The operational policy entitled 'Fee concessions for educational group excursions, tours and camps on QPWS managed areas' was reviewed earlier this year with a view to streamlining and reducing red tape.

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager, Commercial and Recreational Development Tel No: scdp3(3) Prejudice Date: 30 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Paul Sharpe Position: A/Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5238	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Acting Executive Director, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:
		Name: Clive Cook Position: Acting Deputy Director- General, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5318	

ii) Essentially the updated policy removes the need for educational institutions to apply for a discounted camping rate.

- 4.2 Sizes of groups using National Parks:
 - i) QPWS encourages SCDL to talk to SFC Region on specifics.
 - ii) Capacities are set on a site by site basis and are primarily based on the management plan zoning coupled with site and facility constraints.
 - iii) SFC Region has recently made changes to the Hinterland Great Walk campsite limits to better accommodate education groups.
- 4.3 Accommodation and camp sites:
 - i) QPWS encourages SCDL to talk to SFC Region on specifics.
 - ii) QPWS regularly liaise with SEQ Water and can facilitate communication between all three parties. There are decided benefits in cross tenure planning.
- 4.4 Signage, adequate parking and interpretation:
 - i) Glass House Mountains – Tibrogargan: There is a current request for capital works funding for the upgrade of the circuit track.
 - ii) Glass House Mountains – Ngungun:
 - (1) There is a current capital works project underway. Completion by end of this financial year. Total approved project funding is \$216,000 ex GST.
 - (2) The project includes major upgrades to the walking track and interpretive signage.
 - (3) The car park isn't included in the capital projects scope although modifications are planned to the car park layout as part of normal operational management.
 - iii) Mapleton Falls:
 - (1) SCDL ideas are worth considering. QPWS encourages SCDL to talk to SFC Region on specifics.
 - (2) QPWS currently has no secured funding for site development.
 - (3) There are geo-technical issues relating to the lookout site.
- 4.5 Access and usage: QPWS encourages SCDL to talk to SFC Region on specifics.
- 4.6 Existing tack management and information/funding: QPWS encourages SCDL to talk through detailed scenarios.
- 4.7 Mary Valley tracks and trail strategy: QPWS support whole of landscape approaches to recreational management and are keen to be part of the planning strategy.
- The Obi Obi zipline proposal has strong potential to benefit the Sunshine Coast's tourism industry and the regional economy.
 - A number of possible zipline routes have been proposed with the 'world-class' route traversing Kondalilla National Park.
 - sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament
 - There are a range of other issues that require resolution for this project to progress including negotiation of an ILUA with the Jinibara people; resolution of issues with SEQ Water; and environmental and planning considerations.
 - The Obi Obi Project Management committee includes representatives of DNPRSR, DTESB, TEQ, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Sunshine Coat Regional Council, SEQ Water and Sunshine Coast Destination Limited.
 - The Project Management committee is undertaking detailed investigations with a view to proving its commercial viability and preparing it for potential offer to the market through a two stage, open commercial tender process.

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager, Commercial and Recreational Development Tel No: sch4p3(3) Breju Date: 30 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Paul Sharpe Position: A/Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5238	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Acting Executive Director, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5273 Name: Clive Cook Position: Acting Deputy Director- General, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:
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MINISTER'S COMMENTS

RTI DL Release

<p>Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager, Commercial and Recreational Development Tel No: sch4p3(3) Prejud Date: 30 April 2013</p>	<p>Endorsed by Name: Paul Sharpe Position: A/Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5238</p>	<p>Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Acting Executive Director, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5273</p> <hr/> <p>Name: Clive Cook Position: Acting Deputy Director- General, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5318</p>	<p>Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:</p>
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Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Interim policy position – Tourism in Protected Areas (TIPA)

TIMEFRAME

- Urgent

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- **note** that current policy and procedure for managing commercial capacity at TIPA locations (pre-TIPA roll out) is in direct conflict with stated government commitments to cut red tape and grow the tourism industry as one of the four pillars of the economy.
- **note** that since the declaration of 7 TIPA locations across the State in May 2011 there have been a range of inconsistent approaches to the issue of new capacity, amendments/renewals of current permits and the transfer of permits.
- **note** that the government is still considering the review of TIPA as part of a commitment to industry made during the 2012 DestinationQ Forum.
- **note** that an 'interim policy position' for TIPA locations is being developed by QPWS to allow alignment with stated government commitments prior to a staged release of TIPA;
- **note** that this 'interim policy position' will provide a strong base for a consistent and equitable approach (prior to the staged release of TIPA) to managing commercial capacity whilst ensuring Sustainable Visitor Capacities (SVCs) at sites are not exceeded. Commercial capacity will not be granted where SVCs are under threat.

BACKGROUND

- TIPA is a management framework for tour operators conducting guided tours in seven popular national parks across Queensland: Springbrook National Park, Fraser Island, Whitsunday islands, Daintree, Cooloola, Moreton Island and Cape York.
- TIPA was developed collaboratively with industry over ten years and was released in May 2011 with the support of key industry associations including the Queensland Tourism Industry Council.
- Operators conducting tours in Springbrook National Park transitioned successfully to TIPA arrangements in December 2011.
- At the DestinationQ industry forum aimed at growing tourism, one of the four pillars of the economy, Fraser Island operators expressed concern that latency and capacity allocation proposals under TIPA needed to be reviewed.
- The Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) has responsibility for action to 'fine-tune TIPA in relation to capacity, latency, process and administration, including incentivising eco-accreditation', and that this action was required by end December 2012
- This review has been completed via meetings and formal written feedback on a final proposed model.
- There is widespread support for ten of the twelve principles, but no uniform industry view on subcontracting or the model to allocate capacity within sustainable levels and remove latency.
- The Minister's Office requested that the proposed Tourism in Protected Areas model be released for wider industry consultation in conjunction with the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan.

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager, Commercial & Recreation Development Unit Tel No: sch4p3(3) Prejudi Date: 6 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/ED CSP Tel No: 3330 5273 Name: Paul Sharpe Position: A/Director CVS Tel No: 3330 5238	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No:3330 5318 Name: Position: Tel No:	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:
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- The Queensland Ecotourism Plan (draft for consultation) and the proposed Tourism in Protected Areas model are yet to be released for consultation. The release is currently with Minister Dickson for approval.

KEY ISSUES

- The original policy documents relating to TIPA did not allow for significant delay between formal declaration of TIPA locations and the application of the TIPA policy across these locations. The following documents are attached:
 - Operational policy: Commercial tour operations – Managing prescribed commercial activities in ‘Tourism in Protected Areas’ (TIPA) locations (Approved 11 August 2011).
 - Operational policy: Commercial tour operations – Latency management in QPWS managed areas (Approved 11 August 2011).
 - Draft Operational policy: Commercial activities – sale of business and transfer of authorities (permits and agreements).
- The six remaining TIPA sites are currently in a ‘holding pattern’ due to the call for a review of TIPA by Fraser Island operators at the DestinationQ Forum in Cairns 2012.
- This ‘holding pattern’ is hurting the commercial tourism industry in multiple ways as:
 - Applications for new capacity are refused.
 - Minor amendments to current Commercial Activity Permits (CAPs) relating to sites, activities, and/or capacities are refused.
 - The sale/transfers of CAPs are severely constrained.
 - At some TIPA locations CAPs are only being renewed for a maximum of 1 year.
- A considerable amount of ministerial correspondence has been received relating to government inaction in dealing actively with requests for commercial capacity at TIPA sites and/or delays in ‘fine tuning TIPA’. Recent examples include:
 - CTS05247/13: Letter (8 February 2013) to Minister from Daniel Gschwind, Chief Executive of QTIC. QTIC was an industry support partner in the release of TIPA in May of 2011.
 - Premier contentious issue brief prepared on TIPA for the Hervey Bay Community Cabinet 24-25th February – meetings held with Fraser Coast Tourism, Robyn Burgess (Tasman Adventure),
 - CTS05465/13: Email (25 February 2013) to QPWS Permit team (CC to DG NPRSR) from Glenn Wiggins (Surf and Sand Safaris that provide guided tours in Cooloola). This email was a request (for the second year in a row) for this current operator to grow his business by including camping experiences.
 - CTS04852/13: Letter (11 March 2013) to DG NPRSR from ‘The group’ – partial representatives of the ‘guided’ tour operators on Fraser Island.
 - CTS05921/13: Email (25 March 2013) to Director Commercial and Visitor Services from David Robertson, President of Fraser Coast 4WD Hire Association.
- Five Point Action Plan for Queensland: Tourism is one of four economic pillars of the Queensland Government. Fraser Island, Moreton Island, the Whitsunday islands, the Daintree, Cooloola, and Cape York are iconic tourism destinations..

MINISTER’S COMMENTS

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager, Commercial & Recreation Development Unit Tel No: sch4p3(3) Prejudic Date: 6 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/ED CSP Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No:3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:
	Name: Paul Sharpe Position: A/Director CVS Tel No: 3330 5238	Name: Position: Tel No:	

ATTACHMENTS

- Operational policy: Commercial tour operations – Managing prescribed commercial activities in ‘Tourism in Protected Areas’ (TIPA) locations.
- Operational policy: Commercial tour operations – Latency management in QPWS managed areas.
- Draft Operational policy: Commercial activities – sale of business and transfer of authorities (permits and agreements).

RTI DL Release

Author Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager, Commercial & Recreation Development Unit Tel No: sch4p3(3) Prejudic Date: 6 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/ED CSP Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3330 5270 Date:
	Name: Paul Sharpe Position: A/Director CVS Tel No: 3330 5238	Name: Position: Tel No:	

CTS No. 02030/13

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
ACTING MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Acting Minister for National Parks,
Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Sponsorship of the 2013 Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference (approval pending sponsorship assessment)

Chief of Staff	OK
Dated / /	
Approved	Not Approved
Further information required	
Acting Minister.....	
Dated / /	

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required as soon as possible to ensure a timely response to the Global Eco Tourism Conference Secretariat.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Acting Minister:

- note** the letter and background information sent to Minister Dickson by Ms Kym Cheatham, former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ecotourism Australia (EA), in January 2013 regarding a proposal for Queensland to host the 2013 Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference (Global Eco) (**Attachment 1**)
- note** senior representatives from the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB), Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) and the Department of National Parks, Sport, Recreation and Racing (NPRSR) have agreed in-principle to investigate support for cross-Department sponsorship reflecting the government's priority on ecotourism
- note** that as per the whole-of-government sponsorship guidelines, NPRSR will seek to further progress the sponsorship proposal through the formal, mandatory sponsorship assessment process
- approve** the letter to Mr Rod Hillman, recently appointed CEO of EA, advising him the proposal to jointly host Global Eco in Queensland in 2013 is being considered (**Attachment 2**).

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

Background information on Global Eco

- Global Eco 2013 is the 20th annual conference for EA and is a leading sustainable tourism conference in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Global Eco brings together leading organisations and individuals from across the world to examine best practice in sustainable tourism, tourism in protected areas and ecotourism in the nature-based tourism sector.
- The conference, historically, has attracted delegates from the Asia-Pacific region and all states of Australia, and is generally in the range of 200-400 people.
- It is proposed that the conference would be held in October-November 2013 and the exact location would be determined after an Expression of Interest (EOI) process amongst all Queensland Regional Tourism Organisations.

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 5 March 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/Deputy Director General Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 7 March 2013	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Position: Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date: <i>10/1/13</i>
	Name: Clive Cook Position: Executive Director Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Name: Position: Tel No:	



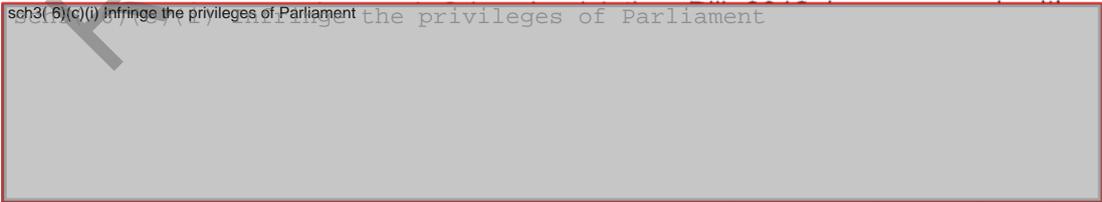
Previous support for Global Eco

- In 2010, the Queensland Government provided \$105,000 to EA to support the Global Eco Conference held in Noosa from 25-28 October 2010, which was attended by 275 delegates. This comprised \$30,000 from the former Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation; \$50,000 from the former Department of Environment and Resource Management; and \$25,000 from the former Tourism Queensland.
- In 2012, the Queensland Government provided \$115,000 to EA to support the 2012 Global Eco Conference held in Cairns from 15-17 October 2012, which was attended by 150 delegates. This comprised \$100,000 from the former Events Queensland and \$15,000 from DTESB.

Invitation to host Global Eco in 2013

- EA has written to Minister Dickson seeking a joint sponsorship of Global Eco 2013 with the Honourable Jann Stuckey MP, Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (**Attachment 1**).
- EA is seeking \$120,000 (excluding GST) in financial support from the Queensland Government to support the conference.
- The conference would provide an opportunity to highlight delivery of major initiatives to advance ecotourism in Queensland (refer below), and inform ecotourism industry representatives that Queensland is highly supportive of proponents seeking ecotourism investment opportunities in Queensland.

DestinationQ initiatives being progressed

- Encouraging new ecotourism products to showcase Queensland's natural advantage is one of the objectives of the partnership agreement between industry and government established at the inaugural *DestinationQ* forum held in Cairns on 25-26 June 2012. Actions and initiatives from the forum are being progressed under the *DestinationQ Blueprint*. *DestinationQ* initiatives include:
 - Developing a new Queensland Ecotourism Plan (the Plan).
 - A new Queensland Ecotourism Plan is being developed by NPRSR in collaboration with DTESB and TEQ, and is expected to be finalised well in advance of the conference.
 - The conference could be used as a platform to promote the Plan which outlines the key actions to be implemented by the Queensland Government to take ecotourism forward and increase recognition of Queensland as a leading global ecotourism destination.
 - Reviewing the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NCA).
 - sch3(6)(c)(i) infringe the privileges of Parliament
 - 
 - A General EOI seeking private investment proposals for ecotourism projects in and near protected areas will be released as soon as possible following commencement of the amendments to the NCA.
 - The conference will provide an opportunity for the Queensland Government to send a clear message to the tourism industry that it is open to innovative ideas that will grow Queensland's reputation as a global leader in nature-based tourism.

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 5 March 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/Deputy Director General Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 7 March 2013	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Position: Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date:
	Name: Clive Cook Position: Executive Director Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Name: Position: Tel No:	

- Showcasing the amendments to the NCA and outcomes of the EOI at the conference will demonstrate the government is committed to supporting private investment in ecotourism opportunities on state owned land including national parks.

Strengthening relationships with EA

- EA has appointed its new CEO, Mr Rod Hillman, who is well known in the ecotourism industry. Sponsorship of the conference will provide an opportunity to strengthen the existing relationship between EA and DTESB, TEQ, and NPRSR.

Benefits to the Queensland Government and tourism industry

- DTESB, NPRSR and TEQ will collectively benefit from this sponsorship, including:
 - Showcasing of the new direction established under the DestinationQ Blueprint, including a commitment to take ecotourism forward through creation of a constructive and forward looking policy environment.
 - Highlighting the government's intention to create an investment friendly environment and support for responsible ecotourism development opportunities in and adjacent to protected areas confirms that Queensland is open for business.
 - Inclusion of the following themes in the 2013 conference agenda:
 - new opportunities for investment in ecotourism in and near protected areas
 - investment in the development of key ecotourism opportunities
 - reducing red tape for ecotourism through a new State Planning Policy that includes tourism as a state interest for the first time in Queensland.
 - Promotional benefits and media attention to increase awareness of the Queensland Government actively promoting ecotourism growth and development.
- The tourism industry will potentially receive regional economic benefits through delegate spending on accommodation, food and transport, with flow-on economic benefits to tourism supply chains.

Specific NPRSR benefits

- EA has advised that specific host sponsorship benefits to NPRSR can be developed in negotiation, but are likely to include:
 - one full complementary conference registration per \$10,000 of cash sponsorship support
 - one invitation to networking functions for each complementary conference registration;
 - recognition as Global Eco Destination Host and Principal Partner in all communication materials
 - one keynote address at the Global Eco Conference
 - sponsorship attribution including website; two full page advertisements in the delegate handbook; one display booth/space and signage at the conference venue
 - welcome speech in the opening ceremony
 - opportunity to present a maximum of three papers in the concurrent program of the conference
 - opportunity for policy/product launch
 - two inserts in delegate satchel.

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 5 March 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/Deputy Director General Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 7 March 2013	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Position: Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date:
	Name: Clive Cook Position: Executive Director Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Name: Position: Tel No:	

Costs

- If it is demonstrated sponsorship of Global Eco 2013 meets the whole-of-government sponsorship criteria, it is proposed that formal approval subsequently be sought for \$105,000 (shared between three departments) as a more reasonable level of sponsorship. NPRSR share of the sponsorship would amount to \$35,000 (excluding GST).
- It is anticipated that approximately 0.25 of an AO5 level position would be required for the 3 months leading up to the conference to support event preparation and liaison.
- Attendance of a senior QPWS officer at Conference Management Committee planning sessions to maximise NPRSR's investment in the sponsorship arrangement.
- *Key Communication Messages:* The conference will provide a good opportunity to communicate key directions in the management of tourism in Queensland's national parks. The joint hosting by NPRSR, DTESB and TEQ would demonstrate the new level of cooperation between these agencies and be viewed positively by the tourism industry.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Letter to Minister Dickson by Kym Cheatham, former CEO of Ecotourism Australia.
- Attachment 2: Letter to Mr Rod Hillman, current CEO of Ecotourism Australia.

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 5 March 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/Deputy Director General Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 7 March 2013	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Position: Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date:
	Name: Clive Cook Position: Executive Director Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Name: Position: Tel No:	

CTS No. 09856/13

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Chief of Staff	OK
Dated	16/05/2013
Approved	Not Approved
Further information required	
Minister	[Signature]
Dated	29/5/13

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Ecotourism Facilities Implementation Framework

TIMEFRAME

- Noting of this briefing note is required by 8 May 2013 in preparation for briefing by the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) anticipated for 10 May 2013.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- note that the Ecotourism Facilities Implementation Framework is a dependency for delivery of the Expression of Interest (EOI) for sustainable ecotourism developments on protected areas;
- note that the January-June Six Month Action Plan requires release of the EOI by 30 June 2013;
- note the key milestones and dates to deliver the EOI (**Attachment 1**);
- note the key principles and policy issues that the Implementation Framework will address (**Attachment 2**); and
- note that NPRSR will provide a detailed briefing on these issues.

BACKGROUND

- As per CTS 03653/13 (awaiting signoff in the Ministers office), ecotourism opportunities on national parks are being progressed via the Ecotourism Initiatives Interdepartmental Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) and through both government and industry initiated strategies.
- In December 2012 the *Nature Conservation and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012* (the Bill) was introduced to Parliament and included provisions to allow for private investment in ecotourism facilities on national parks.
- The Bill was referred to the Health and Community Services Parliamentary Committee (the Parliamentary Committee) for review.

sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament the privileges of Parliament

- On 18 April 2013, the Queensland Parliament passed the Bill's legislative amendments to the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA).

Supporting Policy Framework

- The sections relating to the authorisation of ecotourism facilities within the NCA are to take effect on proclamation.

sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament the privileges of Parliament

Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager, Commercial & Recreation Development Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 2 May 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/Executive Director Tel No: 3330 5318 Date:	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 6 May 2013	Recommended Name: John Glaister Position: DG, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date: [Signature] 6/5/13
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Key deliverables and consultation

- NPRSR is required to release an 'Expression of Interest calling for sustainable ecotourism development initiatives in protected areas' by 30 June 2013. This is detailed in CTS 04642/13 (currently being progressed).
- The Ecotourism Facilities Implementation Framework is a dependency for this deliverable. sch3(6)
 but was delayed a month to allow for the Minister's leave of absence.
- Additionally, following the passage of the Bill, the Minister's office has confirmed NPRSR will allow for a two week period for public consultation and this will occur through the Queensland Government's 'Get Involved' webpage.
- NPRSR and the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB) Corporate Communications are jointly developing a Communications Plan. The Premier's office has advised that they are to be included in developing key messages. NPRSR and Anna Hilton met with Aaron Wakeley from the Premier's office on 27 March 2013 regarding this.
- Early consultation will occur with key tourism stakeholders through the National Park Tourism Reference Group on 8 May 2013. Membership is subject to confidentiality requirements.
- Should any additional delays or unforeseen impediments occur this may compromise delivery of the EOI by the required date.

Ecotourism facilities – principles and key policy issues

- **Attachment 2** outlines the draft guiding principles and policy issues proposed to be included in the Ecotourism Facilities Implementation Framework.
- A separate document is being prepared that will provide sustainability principles and guidance for applicants to inform both the EOI and the more detailed Request for Proposal stage.
- This will be subject to a detailed briefing by NPRSR.
- *Legislation:* The Bill was passed by Parliament on 18 April 2013. The provisions will commence by proclamation.
- *Key Communication Messages:* The ecotourism lease proposal has drawn significant opposition from conservation stakeholders. A communications plan is being jointly developed by NPRSR and DTESB Corporate Communications.
- *Election Commitment:* Does this relate to an election commitment? Yes, improving access to national parks for ecotourism.
- *Five Point Action Plan for Queensland:* Does this deliver on growing a four pillar economy? Yes, tourism is one of the four economic pillars.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Key deliverables and milestones

Attachment 2 - Ecotourism Facilities Implementation Framework – draft principles and policy

Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager, Commercial & Recreation Development Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 2 May 2013	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/Executive Director Tel No: 3330 5318 Date:	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 6 May 2013	Recommended Name: John Glaister Position: DG, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date:
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URGENT

CTS No. 05726/13

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Commercial tourism opportunities on national park – Government initiated sites

sch4p3(3) Prejudice the protee

Chief of Staff OK

Dated 5/2/13

Approved Not Approved Noted
Further information required

Minister

Dated 20/5/13

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required by 2 May 2013 to enable the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) to procure the services of a contractor and expend allocated funds by 30 June 2013.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- Note** that CTS 03653/13 details the approach to progressing commercial tourism opportunities on national park and seeks approval to secure the services of a suitably qualified organisation to identify premium sites and to develop a portfolio of sites to take opportunities to market.
- Note** that funding has been allocated for this contract from the Parks and Forests Fund.
- Note** that two opportunities (refer **Attachments 1 and 2**) have been identified for ecotourism facility development and pending investigations currently underway may be early opportunities to offer to market as 'government initiated' opportunities.
- Note** that it is likely that there will be tenure issues (for example native title, access) associated with all opportunities, and that this may require significant investment by either the proponent and/or government to progress the development.

BACKGROUND

- Referring CTS 03653/13 that details the approach to progressing commercial tourism on national parks.

sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament the privileges of Parliament

RTI/DL/REDACTED

- Over many years industry has proposed a range of ideas for ecotourism developments on national park, many of which have not been possible under the previous legislation. Subsequently Queensland has lagged well behind other states and international destinations in offering opportunities of this type in iconic locations.

RTI/DL/REDACTED

- There are potentially a small number of highly attractive locations for this style of development in Queensland that would be attractive to a small number of proponents due to the scale of investment.

Author Name: Greg Smyth Position: Principal Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5245 Date: 22 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager Tel No: 3330 5245	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/Executive Director Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: <i>Bilkoos</i> Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DG Tel No: 3338 9307 Date: 30/4/13
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	

- Government may want to consider sites separate from the General EOI for progression to market as specific opportunities in themselves. This may be due to:
 - known commercial interests in the site
 - the 'premium' nature of the site (for example due to its location or features)
 - potential to maximise benefits to the State by treating as a 'premium' opportunity
 - increased opportunity to market opportunities to national and international investors
 - ability to address key tenure-related issues (for example native title, EPBC) to increase attractiveness to proponents.
- This requires a process to identify sites and assess their tourism potential to verify their attractiveness for investment.
- A number of sites have already been identified on the basis of known commercial interest and/or tourism potential. NPRSR, the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTEBS) and Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) are working in partnership to progress detailed investigations into these opportunities. (Refer 'Early Opportunities' below).
- The identification of sites and assessment of tourism potential and commercial attractiveness requires a particular set of expertise and there are a number of providers in the market who have required skills in:
 - assessing sites/concepts in terms of their tourism potential and commercial viability/risk
 - defining the investment proposition to the market
 - accessing credible national and international investor markets
 - developing a prospectus and marketing opportunities
 - managing the process to deliver desired results.
- CTS 03653/13 seeks approval to secure the services of a suitably qualified organisation to assist NPRSR to identify and develop premium investment opportunities, site prospectus and strategy to offer opportunities to market.
- An allocation (\$80 000) from the Parks and Forests Fund has been allocated for this work and advice from agencies who have undertaken similar work indicate that this will be sufficient.
- It is proposed that the investigation and identification of high-end ecotourism opportunities be completed before any public announcements.

Early opportunities for potential progress to market

- Sites already identified as having existing commercial interest and/or tourism potential include:
 - *Mamu Rainforest Canopy Walkway*. The commercial management of the walkway has already been offered to market via an EOI and is the subject of a separate brief currently progressing for approval.
 - *Zip-line in Obi Obi Gorge* (Sunshine Coast hinterland) which includes proposed development on private land, Kondalilla National Park and potentially has implications for SEQ Water (refer **Attachment 1**).
 - *Green Mountains campground*, Lamington National Park (refer **Attachment 2**).
- The zipline proposal and Green Mountains campground have a substantial amount of concept proposal and investigation undertaken over previous years. They have been hindered by the lack of appropriate tenure for investment.
- sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament
- These projects are progressing in partnership with DTEBS and TEQ as part of the whole of government approach to ecotourism initiatives.
- *Legislation*: The provision for ecotourism facilities in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* was passed by Parliament on 18 April 2013.

Author Name: Greg Smyth Position: Principal Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5245 Date: 22 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager Tel No: 3330 5245 <hr/> Name: Position: Tel No:	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/Executive Director Tel No: 3330 5318 <hr/> Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DG Tel No: 3338 9307 Date:
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- *Key Communication Messages:* The ecotourism lease proposal has drawn significant opposition from conservation stakeholders and it is proposed that the investigation and identification of high-end ecotourism opportunities be completed before any public announcements.
- *Election Commitment:* Improve access to national parks for ecotourism.
- *Five Point Action Plan for Queensland:* Tourism is an economic pillar.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Zipline in Obi Obi Gorge, Kondalilla National Park

Attachment 2 – Green Mountains campground

RTI DL Release

Author Name: Greg Smyth Position: Principal Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5245 Date: 22 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Marc Dargusch Position: A/Manager Tel No: 3330 5245	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/Executive Director Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DG Tel No: 3338 9307 Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	

sch4p3(3) Prejudice the protection

Chief of Staff [Redacted] OK

Date: 20 / 5 / 2013

Approved Noted
Further information required

Minister: [Signature]

Dated 20 / 5 / 13.

**Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE**

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Progressing commercial opportunities on national parks

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required by **3 May 2013** to enable procurement processes to progress as a priority as they align with Government priorities to improve access to national parks for ecotourism.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- approve** the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) to procure the services of a suitably qualified organisation to develop a site prospectus of 'iconic' high-end ecotourism investment opportunities on national park and other protected areas and
- note** that the release of the 'General Expression of Interest' for sustainable ecotourism opportunities on national park is an action in the 2013 January-June Six Month Action Plan.

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

- Queensland's national parks, marine parks and other natural attractions are widely regarded as the State's strongest advantage in the competitive domestic and international tourism market. Research conducted by Tourism Australia verifies that 'nature' is the primary motivator for international visitors when deciding to come to Australia.
- Improving access for tourism and recreation to national parks is a key priority of the Government and was confirmed with industry on June 2013 in Cairns at DestinationQ.
- The DestinationQ Partnership Agreement (PA), signed by the Honourable Campbell Newman MP, Premier, and Queensland Tourism Industry Council lists a number of priorities for NPRSR, including:
 - reviewing the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act) to benefit ecotourism
 - reducing red-tape for ecotourism operators on national parks
 - developing a new Queensland Ecotourism Plan
 - 'fine-tuning' Tourism In Protected Areas (TIPA) with respect to latency, administration and process, and incentivising eco-accreditation.
- In addition, a key objective identified in the Partnership Agreement is to encourage new commercial tourism opportunities on national parks.
- An allocation of \$80,000 from the Parks and Forests Fund has been approved for this work.
- Advice from agencies who have undertaken similar work indicate that this will be sufficient.

Progress to date on PA actions

- The review of the Act is on track and will deliver key benefits for ecotourism, including:
 - ecotourism leases to provide tenure and certainty to attract investors
 - a better balance in the 'object of the Act' between conservation and public enjoyment, through recreation and tourism
 - streamlining permits for ecotourism operators.
- A number of policy and regulatory reforms have been completed to reduce red-tape for ecotourism operators.
- sch3(2)(1)(b) Cabinet matter - Would reveal consideration of Cabinet/prejudice confidentiality consideration of Cabinet/prejudice confidentiality
- The action to 'fine-tune TIPA' has progressed via consultation with operators in key TIPA areas and a final model has been proposed for consideration. CTS No 19667/12 (**Attachment 1**) details the proposed model and this is currently with the Minister for consideration.

<p>Author: Anne Greentree Name: Position: Director, CVS A/ Executive Director, Tech Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 10 April 2013</p>	<p>Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 26 April 2013</p>	<p>Recommended: <u>[Signature]</u> Name: Ben Klaassen A/Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3338 9307 Date: <u>30/4/13</u></p>
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Progressing commercial opportunities on national parks

- Ecotourism investment both on and off national park is being progressed via an interdepartmental working group comprised of NPRSR, Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games and Tourism and Events Queensland. NPRSR is lead for commercial opportunities on national park.

sch3(2)(1)(b) Cabinet matter - Would reveal consideration of Cabinet/prejudice confidentiality

RTI DL Release

Author: Anne Greentree Name: Position: Director, CVS A/ Executive Director, Tech Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 10 April 2013	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 26 April 2013	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen A/Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3338 9307 Date:
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- *Legislation:* The provision for ecotourism leases in the Act is scheduled to be debated in the March sitting of Parliament.
- *Key Communication Messages:* The ecotourism lease proposal has drawn significant opposition from conservation stakeholders and it is proposed that the investigation and identification of high-end ecotourism opportunities be completed before any public announcements. It is proposed that these opportunities would be released to the market generally once investigations are completed.
- *Election Commitment:* Does this relate to an election commitment? Yes, the Government's commitment to improve access to national parks for ecotourism.
- *Five Point Action Plan for Queensland:*
 - Does this deliver on growing a four pillar economy? Yes, tourism is one of the four economic pillars.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - CTS 19667/12

RTI DL Release

<p>Author: Anne Greentree Name: Position: Director, CVS A/ Executive Director, Tech Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 10 April 2013</p>	<p>Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 26 April 2013</p>	<p>Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen A/Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3338 9307 Date:</p>
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Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Queensland Ecotourism Plan

Chief of Staff	sch4p3(3)	OK
Dated	21/9/12	
Approved	Not Approved	Noted
Further information required		
Minister	29/9/2012	
Dated	1/1	

TIMEFRAME

- Noting of this briefing note is not urgent.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- note** that work has commenced on the Queensland Ecotourism Plan; and
- note** the project plan governing the development of the Plan (**Attachment 1**).

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

- The development of a new Queensland Ecotourism Plan is a key action from the recent DestinationQ working forum.
- The Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) is lead for the Plan and has convened an interdepartmental working group to develop the Plan. The working group is comprised of representatives from the following departments:
 - National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing;
 - Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games; and
 - Tourism Queensland
- The Ecotourism Plan will provide a new vision for ecotourism in Queensland, facilitate commercial access to parks and address opportunities to cut red tape and reduce costs for business, with the aim of:
 - Regaining Queensland's status as Australia's number 1 ecotourism destination;
 - Increasing visitation to Queensland's parks;
 - Improving the economic contribution and perceived value of Queensland's parks; and
 - Providing for a more diverse and robust ecotourism industry.
- Key milestones for the development of the Plan include:
 - Draft plan released for consultation - 29 October 2012;
 - Consideration of Cabinet/prejudice
- Consultation: will be through the following channels:
 - Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC);
 - Ecotourism Australia (EA);
 - Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs); and
 - National Parks Tourism Working Group *individual key stakeholders*
- Key Communication Message: A key deliverable from DestinationQ to support the Queensland ecotourism industry.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Ecotourism Plan 2013-2018 - Project Plan

Author Name: Kristie Gray Position: Senior Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5226 Date: 17/08/2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, TVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date: <i>John Glaister 29/9/12</i>
	Name: Jason Jacobi Position: A/ED CSP Tel No: 3330 5318	Name: Position: Tel No:	

CTS No. 10773/13

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

Chief of Staff	OK
Date	21/05/2013
Not Approved	Noted
Information required	
Minister	[Signature]
Dated	20/5/13

SUBJECT: Ecotourism Facilities Implementation Framework - draft for consultation

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required **as soon as possible** to allow for public release of the *Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks - Implementation Framework (draft for consultation)* on 21 May 2013.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- approve** the *Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks - Implementation Framework (draft for consultation)* (draft Implementation Framework) for release for consultation on 21 May 2013 (**Attachment 1**)
- sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament the privileges of Parliament
- note** that Dr John Glaister, Director-General, NPRSR, will send letters to Traditional Owner organisations that have Indigenous Management Agreements with NPRSR to inform them of the economic opportunities associated with this initiative and invite feedback on the draft Implementation Framework (**Attachment 2**).

BACKGROUND

- The January-June Six Month Action Plan (SMAP) requires NPRSR to release an 'Expression of Interest calling for sustainable ecotourism development initiatives in protected areas' by 30 June 2013 (refer CTS 04642/13).
- The draft Implementation Framework is a dependency for this SMAP deliverable. The release of the framework and the General EOI is subject to very tight timeframes.
- Further background information is contained in CTS 09856/13 (**Attachment 3**).

KEY ISSUES

- The draft Implementation Framework is scheduled to be released for public consultation on 21 May 2013 and will be open for comment for two weeks through the NPRSR and Queensland Government 'Get Involved' websites.
- sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament the privileges of Parliament
- A number of national parks that may offer significant ecotourism opportunities are subject to Indigenous Management Agreements (IMAs) with Traditional Owners.
- The Director-General will send letters to the Traditional Owner organisations that have IMAs with NPRSR to inform them of the potential opportunities EcoTourism presents. The letters will also advise them that any proposals would be subject to IMA conditions and invite their comment on the draft Implementation Framework.
- Traditional Owners will include Cape York Traditional Owner Land Trusts that are the landholders of national park, and Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation with ownership of Naree Budjong Djara (North Stradbroke Island) National Park.

Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/Executive Director Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 14 May 2013	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 15 May 2013	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DDG Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 15 May 2013	Recommended Name: John Glaister Position: DG, NPRSR Tel No: 3338 9307 Date: [Signature] 16/5
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sch3(6)(c)(i) Infringe the privileges of Parliament

- *Key Communication Messages:* The ecotourism facilities on national parks initiative has drawn significant opposition from conservation stakeholders. A communications plan is being jointly developed by NPRSR and DTESB Corporate Communications.
- *Election Commitment:* Does this relate to an election commitment? Yes, improving access to national parks for ecotourism.
- *Five Point Action Plan for Queensland:* Does this deliver on growing a four pillar economy? Yes, tourism is one of the four economic pillars.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks - Implementation Framework - draft for consultation

Attachment 2 - Draft letter to Land Trusts for Cape York and Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation

Attachment 3 - CTS 09856/13

RTI DL Release

Name: Anne Greentree Position: A/Executive Director Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 14 May 2013	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 15 May 2013	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DDG Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 15 May 2013	Recommended Name: John Glaister Position: DG, NPRSR Tel No: 3338 9307 Date:
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CTS No. 18639-12

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Chief of Staff	OK
Dated / /	
Approved	Not Approved
Further information required	
Minister.....	
Dated / /	

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan – release of draft for consultation

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required by 14 December 2012 to allow release of draft for consultation by 21 December 2012.

RECOMMENDATION

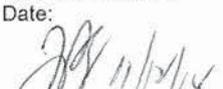
It is recommended that the Minister:

- approve the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan (the draft Plan) included at (Attachment 1);
- approve that the draft Plan be released for consultation before Christmas;
- note that the draft Plan is a DestinationQ action for which the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) is responsible;
- note that the draft Plan has been developed in consultation with Tourism Queensland (TQ), Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs (DATSIMA), and the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB); and
- note that Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) and Ecotourism Australia have provided early feedback and have indicated their support.

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

The Government's Tourism Policy Platform

- The 'Can do LNP Tourism Strategy' provides direction on key policy positions for ecotourism and tourism more generally.
- This Strategy notes that there have been two previous Queensland Ecotourism Plans with the most recent Plan expiring in 2008. Key aspects of this policy in relation to ecotourism include:
 - that one of Queensland's greatest competitive advantages on a global scale is its ecotourism and nature-based tourism sector;
 - that national parks and protected areas have a substantial role to play in delivering high quality, high yield ecotourism;
 - that holiday making and tourist activity can be managed in a way that improves the environmental integrity of natural settings, while at the same time educating and enriching participants;
 - ecotourism provides a stimulus for localised and regional economies; and
 - ecologically responsible and sustainable practice will be the governing premise in Queensland's journey forward with ecotourism.

Author Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial & Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 6 December 2012	Endorsed by Name: Neil Cambourn Position: A/ED Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date: 
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	



- Tourism is one of the Four Pillars of the Queensland economy and the Strategy notes a number of specific actions relevant to the development of the Ecotourism Plan including:
 - delivery of a 20 year Strategic Plan for tourism in Queensland, including a 2020 growth target of \$30 billion;
 - improving decision making and government support for tourism;
 - facilitating new infrastructure and investment;
 - improving tourism skills and career pathways;
 - developing and market tourism in Queensland (DestinationQ);
 - focusing on new events for Queensland;
 - supporting the tourism industry with research; and
 - removing unnecessary and job destroying red tape.

DestinationQ

- The importance of ecotourism in Queensland is demonstrate to the extent that it was one of six key themes of the industry-wide DestinationQ working forum held in Cairns in June 2012.
- The DestinationQ Partnership Agreement details actions agreed for delivery between government and the QTIC, the peak industry association.
- An objective of the DestinationQ Partnership Agreement is to *encourage new ecotourism products to showcase Queensland's natural advantage and remove red tape for tourism operators.*
- An action in the DestinationQ Partnership Agreement for which NPRSR has responsibility is – *Begin developing a new Queensland ecotourism plan and review the Nature Conservation Act to enable greater access to Queensland's 12 million hectares of national parks and 72,000km2 of marine parks, benefitting ecotourism. The plan will also address opportunities to cut red tape and reduce costs for business.*

Content of the Plan

- The draft Plan has been informed by these key policy platforms and commitments and particularly focuses on actions that: reduce red tape; enable ecotourism product innovation and diversification; facilitate investment in ecotourism product; and importantly improve ecotourism opportunities in, and access to national parks.
- Key objectives of the draft Plan are to facilitate the development of ecotourism experiences, increase visitation and visitor expenditure and promote regional dispersal of visitors.
- The Plan details five strategic priorities:
 1. Foster thriving operators.
 2. Facilitate product development and innovation.
 3. Deliver world class experiences.
 4. Raise the profile of Queensland's ecotourism experiences.
 5. Embrace a partnership approach.
- The five strategic priorities are then delivered through a suite of actions, detailed in the Three Year Action Plan.
- The details of the Plan align with, but do not forecast, reforms proposed in the review of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* currently underway.

Actions for NPRSR

- Actions detailed in the Three Year Action Plan have adopted a similar approach to the DestinationQ Partnership Agreement in that they have been allocated to lead agencies and support agencies, with a timeframe for delivery established. Agency involvement and timeframes have been part of the consultation.

Author Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial & Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 6 December 2012	Endorsed by Name: Neil Cambourn Position: A/ED Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	

- Actions for delivery by NPRSR are detailed in (**Attachment 2**) and are aligned with existing commitments or are being delivered as part of other priorities.
- NPRSR is also supporting a number of other actions for which other agencies have the lead.

Release of the draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan for consultation

- s.78B(2) Disclosure log disclosure log
- At the recent QTIC industry forum held prior to the Queensland Tourism Awards, a number of participants expressed interest in seeing the draft Plan released.
- *Consultation:* Tourism Queensland, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, Queensland Tourism Industry Council, Ecotourism Australia
- *Legislation:* Aligns with reforms proposed as part of the review of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.
- *Key Communication Messages:* The draft Plan should be released via proactive media statements.
- *Election Commitment:* This is an action from DestinationQ.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Draft Queensland Ecotourism Plan
Attachment 2 – NPRSR actions and timeframes

RTI DL Release

Author Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial & Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 6 December 2012	Endorsed by Name: Neil Cambourn Position: A/ED Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Endorsed by Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	Recommended: Name: Dr John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	

CTS No. [CTS No.] 17155/12.

sch4p3(3) Preju

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Chief of Staff	OK
Dated	13/11/12
Approved	Not Approved
Further information required	Noted
Minister	[Signature]
Dated	14/11/12

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Queensland nature-based tourism opportunities – factors affecting success of implementation.

TIMEFRAME

- Noting of this briefing note is urgent and required by **Monday 12 November 2012** as requested by the Minister's office.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- note** the background information regarding the former government's Queensland nature-based tourism opportunities initiative, which involved detailed investigations into seven sites for possible eco-accommodation.
- note** that of the seven sites, three were offered to market via Expression of Interest (EOI) with no proponents taking up any of these opportunities.
- note** the concerns raised by proponents during the EOI indicating why these opportunities were not successful.
- note** identities of companies who submitted Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the demonstration sites are Commercial-in-Confidence.

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

Project background

- On 25 November 2009 the then government announced seven demonstration sites on and near national parks as opportunities for private investment in low impact ecotourism accommodation, subject to further detailed investigation into tenure, planning and commercial analysis.
- The tourism opportunity was confined to eco-accommodation similar to 'safari-tent' style. Development on national parks was constrained to semi-permanent.
- The seven sites were subject to detailed investigations in a staged approach and released to the market via EOI if investigations indicated commercial viability and no significant constraints around issues to do with tenure, access and services and native title for example that would serve to restrict the viability of the opportunity

Progress of seven sites

- Ninny Rise, Freehold owned by QPWS, Mission Beach
 - Advertised for EOI 30 April 2010 with 4 applications received and 2 shortlisted.
 - Both shortlisted applicants withdrew from the process citing commercial viability reasons and inability to secure finance.
- Green Mountains, QPWS campground, Lamington National Park
 - Two applicants submitted EOIs, however both applications indicated they required terms that were outside the terms of offer, including permanent infrastructure.
- Cowan South, Moreton Island National Park
 - Detailed investigations by the contractor to 'prove' the opportunity revealed significant site and environmental constraints, that would impact the commercial viability of the opportunity.
 - This opportunity was withdrawn from the process.

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 12 November 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Neil Cambourn Position: Acting Executive Director, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Name: Clive Cook Position: Acting Deputy Director-General, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date: 12/11
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- Mount Mee, D'Aguilar National Park (Recovery)
 - Advertised for Expressions of Interest December 2010.
 - No submissions received.
- Eurong, Unallocated State Land, Fraser Island
 - Detailed site prospectus work completed and extensive discussions with the Local Council who support the opportunity and had also completed significant planning for the same site.
 - Eurong area requires investment in waste and other services impacting the viability for a private proponent.
- Jonah Bay, adjacent to part of Dryander National Park
 - Detailed investigations were conducted into Jonah Bay by the government and also by Tourism Whitsundays. This is still viewed as offering significant tourism potential but requires investment in access and services to make it attractive commercially.
- Wallaman Falls, Girringun National Park
 - Initial investigations into the Wallaman Falls sites indicated that access, services and seasonality would impact the commercial viability of this site and the site was not progressed to market.

Issues which affected success of the initiative

Global economic factors and others

- Risk-averse global financial lending environment due to slow recovery from 2008/9 financial crisis.
- High exchange rate for the AUD impacting discretionary spending – increased travel outside Australia, decline in international tourists.
- Natural disaster – oil spills, cyclones, recent flooding, swine flu, bird flu, etc impacting negatively on tourism industry.

Issues cited as significant constraints by interested proponents

- **Land not 'investor ready'.** The sites required proponents to progress a range of development and other tenure approvals. The time and cost associated with securing these approvals acts as a significant deterrent to investors. These approvals can include:
 - Planning and zoning at both a state and local level.
 - Most Appropriate Use (MAU) assessment – statutory requirement for all Unallocated State Land.
 - Native Title that can require an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) which can be a time consuming and costly process.
 - Provision of utilities in remote sites – ie water, electricity, vehicle access.
- **15 years lease terms were the maximum terms on offer and consistent feedback from proponents was that this would not allow for adequate return on investment.**
- **Lack of security of tenure.** Commercial Activity Agreements are the only authority able to authorise the developments and they offer no 'exclusivity' and no security of tenure. Proponents indicated that lease arrangements were the preferred authority.
- **Minimum return to the State of 7% of annual gross revenue.** Although this was regarded as industry standard, feedback from proponents was that the terms should allow flexibility to cater for greater capital investment in the early years and possible in-kind contribution to the national park that the eco-accommodation was located within.
- **State ownership of assets on national park.** The terms of offer required that any infrastructure built on national parks was retained in State ownership and this acted as a disincentive.
- **Semi-permanent nature of development** – all infrastructures on national park were restricted to semi-permanent as the legislation restricts major earth works. This constrained the type and cost of developments.

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 12 November 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Neil Cambourn Position: Acting Executive Director, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Name: Clive Cook Position: Acting Deputy Director-General, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date:
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- *Election Commitment:* Does this relate to an election commitment? Yes, to improve access to national parks for ecotourism.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – List of applicants for previous eco-accommodation EOIs

MINISTER’S COMMENTS

RTI DL Release

Author Name: Jane Graham Position: A/Senior Project Officer Tel No: 3330 5242 Date: 12 November 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director, Commercial and Visitor Services Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Neil Cambourn Position: Acting Executive Director, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date:
		Name: Clive Cook Position: Acting Deputy Director-General, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270	



Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
DIRECTOR-GENERAL BRIEFING NOTE

Approved Further information required	Not Approved	Noted
DG.....		
Dated / /		

TO: **Director-General, National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing**

SUBJECT: **Ecotourism investment opportunities on national parks**

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required by **XXXX 2012** to allow project milestones to be achieved.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Director-General:

- **endorse** the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Ecotourism Opportunities Working Group (Attachment **X**).
- **note** that the Tourism and Visitor Services Branch, QPWS intend to develop a select tender procurement plan for the release of ecotourism opportunities on and adjacent to national parks.
- **note** the tentative timeframes for the project (Attachment **X**).
- **note** the implications of Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business (DTMSB) running a complementary EOI process for tourism opportunities outside national parks.

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

- An Ecotourism Opportunities Working Group will be established with membership from QPWS, the Tourism Division, Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business (DTMSB), and Tourism Queensland (TQ).
- The working group will identify and release ecotourism investment opportunities on and off park.
- Based on experience and industry information opportunities for ecotourism development will generally centre around 3 themes:
 - eco-accommodation (eg. safari-style tents)
 - attractions (eg. zip lines), and
 - adaptive re-use of park infrastructure (eg. lighthouses).
- Opportunities will be on or adjacent to national parks. If adjacent to park, there must be some connection with the national park.

Release of opportunities

- Two approaches are proposed; an initial open EOI for general ecotourism products and attractions, followed by a select/targeted tender at some later stage for identified key opportunities
- The open EOI will be designed to capture a broad range of opportunities covering the 3 theme areas above and will be progressed in the coming months.
- A select tender process will follow with a smaller number of ecotourism opportunities being progressed. These will be strategically identified and located around the State.
- The open EOI will be resource intensive particularly during preliminary assessment and subsequent detailed examination of proposals, given these could be for a wide array of opportunities throughout the State. A select tender process will require significant up-front resourcing due to the need to identify a range of constraints and factors affecting investor readiness. Both processes will involve subsequent detailed assessments and governance requirements.
- Where the product offering is known and a limited number of developers are available the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's (EHP) Corporate Procurement Team has recommended offering opportunities to the market through a select tender process instead of an open Expression of Interest process.

Responsibilities

Author Name: Guy Thomas Position: Manager TVM Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 20 August 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director TVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: Director CSP Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Annie Moody Tel No: Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	



- Responsibilities for actions under this initiative will rest with both DNRSR and DTMESB.
 - It is intended that all ecotourism investment opportunities (on and off park) will be released to the market in a coordinated approach.
 - This process will be run by QPWS with assistance from DTMESB.
 - DTMESB are lead agency for all government tourism issues and have been tasked with coordinating tourism outcomes across all agencies.
 - QPWS will have primary responsibility for progressing ecotourism opportunities on national parks and other QPWS-managed land.
 - DTMSB will be responsible for progressing any opportunities on non-QPWS managed land. Where there is a direct relationship between these opportunities and management of the park, QPWS will work closely with DTMSB to provide advice as required

Timeframes

- It is planned to advertise an Expression of Interest process by late 2012 and, depending on investor interest, have 3 reasonably well advanced ideas by end late 2013.

Constraints and risk factors

- A number of factors have been identified that will significantly impact on the government's ability to offer any particular site for ecotourism development and the viability of that offering. These include land tenure, legislative environment, native title, planning schemes, provision of access and utilities and investment climate.
- While any initial offering can be couched in terms of these constraints an array of issues will inevitably result when needing to formalise arrangements to realise an opportunity.
- Matters of investor-readiness have long been recognised as of primary importance to the suitability and economic viability for any investment opportunity and a careful assessment of sites will be required in this regard.
- Conflicting views exist as to what extent government should resolve &/or resource site readiness factors. While acknowledged that there is a direct correlation between commercial attractiveness of a site and the extent of site readiness, this will not necessarily guarantee enhanced investment interest. Indeed, significant resources could be allocated to site preparation without gaining any subsequent commercial development interest; making initial site selection, based on demonstrated market demand factors, critical.
- Some issues such as native title dealings can take considerable periods of time and are resource intensive to determine. Drawing on experiences from the WA Nature Bank program it took on average 3 years to progress sites to a suitable level of investor readiness. However these were proactively identified in a strategic approach to develop a network of just 6 quality ecotourism opportunities at key national park locations around the State.
- Industry has advised that the economic climate for tourism investment has been poor for several years. Financing for tourism investment is tight and investors are risk-averse so real interest may be quite low in the foreseeable future.
- There are different target markets relevant to any proposed QPWS offerings and it is envisaged that future opportunities released for select tender will target higher-end markets.

ser3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet

- **Consultation:**
David Morgans, TQ and Neal Muller, DTMSB have endorsed the ToR and proposed approach to the release of opportunities for private investment.
- **Election Commitment:**
The ecotourism opportunities project will achieve commitments made by the government to allow greater access to the State's national parks to benefit ecotourism.

Author Name: Guy Thomas Position: Manager TVM Tel No: 3330 5273 Date: 20 August 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director TVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: Director CSP Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Annie Moody Tel No: Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS1) Ecotourism Opportunities Working Group Terms of Reference

RTI DL Release

Author Name: Guy Thomas Position: Manager TVM Tel No: 3330 5273 Date:20 August 2012	Endorsed by Name: Anne Greentree Position: Director TVS Tel No: 3330 5273	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: Director CSP Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: Annie Moody Tel No: Date:
	Name: Position: Tel No:	Name: Position: Tel No:	



CTS No. 02800/13

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
DIRECTOR-GENERAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Director-General, National Parks, Recreation,
Sport and Racing

Approved	Not Approved	Noted
Further information required		
DG.....	<i>John Glavin</i>	
Dated	<i>22/2/13</i>	

SUBJECT: Protected Area Values Assessment – Review Process

TIMEFRAME

- Approval of this briefing note is required as soon as possible to progress key actions relating to the protected area review process.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Director-General:

- **note** the outcomes and agreed actions arising from the joint Ministerial meeting held on 12 February 2013 regarding the protected area values assessment; and
- **sign** the attached letter to Mr Andrew Chesterman, Director-General, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) to confirm agreed actions and seek assistance in undertaking the required data analysis for the protected area review (**Attachment 1**).

BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

• sch3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet

[Redacted]

- Minister Powell also noted a series of related issues that should be addressed at the meeting and invited the Honourable Glenn Elmes, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier to attend.

[Redacted]

Author Name: Kate Valley Position: Principal Policy Officer Tel No: 3033 0753 Date: 14 February 2013	Endorsed by Name: Liz Young Position: Director, Policy Tel No: 3033 0750	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 20 February 2013	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DDG, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 20 February 2013
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- Following the recent machinery-of-government changes, capacity for this data analysis rests with the Ecosystems Outcomes group within EHP.
- Officer level discussions with EHP have indicated support for the provision of this assistance; however senior endorsement is yet to be sought.
- In order to progress the protected area review process, a letter to Mr Chesterman, Director-General, EHP has been drafted which confirms the key outcomes and actions required as a result of the Ministerial briefing (**Attachment 1**).

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 – Letter to Mr Andrew Chesterman, Director-General, EHP

RTI DL Release

Author Name: Kate Valley Position: Principal Policy Officer Tel No: 3033 0753 Date: 14 February 2013	Endorsed by Name: Liz Young Position: Director, Policy Tel No: 3033 0750	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318 Date: 20 February 2013	Recommended: Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DDG, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5270 Date: 20 February 2013
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Chief of Staff	OK
Dated / /	
Approved	Not Approved
Further information required	
Minister.....	
Dated / /	

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

SUBJECT: Review of lands gazetted or acquired and pending gazettal as national park since 2002.

TIMEFRAME

sch3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- **note** the actions undertaken to review the values of lands gazetted, or acquired and pending gazettal, as national park since 2002;
- **note** the need for assistance from staff in the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP) to complete the review; and
- **sign** the attached letter to Minister Powell that indicates the proposed methodology for the review and that the review will include acquisitions made under the current funding arrangements with the Australian Government on Cape York Peninsula. The letter also asks for assistance in undertaking the required data analysis (**Attachment 1**).

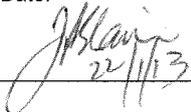
BACKGROUND/KEY ISSUES

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted] (**Attachment 2**).
- [Redacted] (**Attachment 3**).
- [Redacted]
- A map indicating the scope of lands to be included in the assessment of protected area values is attached (**Attachment 4**).
- To fully implement the review, assistance will be required from EHP Ecosystems Outcome staff to complete the data analysis.
- A separate briefing note is being prepared in regard to areas acquired in partnership with the Commonwealth Government as part of the Natural Reserve System program.
- A further briefing note is being prepared for areas of Cape York Peninsula.
- The following officers from the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing will be available to assist in providing presentations to the Ministers:
 - Dr Liz Young, Director, Policy, Office of the Director-General
 - Mr Jason Jacobi, Acting Executive Director, Regional Operations West, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS)
 - Dr Fiona Leverington, Manager, Protected Area Strategy, QPWS.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Letter for approval to Minister Powell MP
- Attachment 2 - [Redacted]
- Attachment 3 - sch3(2)(1)(a) Cabinet matter - For consideration by Cabinet - For consideration by Cabinet
- Attachment 4 - Map indicating areas to be assessed during the protected area values review

Author Name: Chris Mitchell Position: Principle Conservation Officer, Operational Support Tel No: 3330 5164 Date: 17 December 2012	Endorsed by Name: Guy Thomas Position: A/Director Operational Support Tel No: 33305247	Endorsed by Name: Clive Cook Position: ED, Technical Services Tel No: 3330 5318	Recommended: Name: John Glaister Director-General, NPRSR Tel No: 3224 6126 Date: 
	Name: Jason Jacobi Position: A/ED West, QPWS Tel No: 3330 5272	Name: Ben Klaassen Position: A/DDG QPWS Tel No: 19 December 2012	