



## Media statement

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# Queensland missing out on new national parks due to chronic underfunding

Five Queensland conservation groups have identified 175 properties with very high biodiversity value that could have been bought and protected since 2015, but were not, because the Queensland government has not budgeted for new national park acquisitions to service its 2015 promise to greatly expand parks and other protected areas.

The *'Lost Opportunities for new national parks in Queensland'* report recommends ambitious strategic expansion of the national park system to save our unique wildlife, while also boosting the State's nature tourism economy.

"We were initially excited that the Palaszczuk Government announced its vision of building a world-leading protected area network in 2015, but five years on, the resources simply haven't been committed to make this vision a reality," said Graeme Bartrim, President at National Parks Association of Queensland.

Funding for the purchase of land for new national parks has instead been dramatically cut by 70 per cent, from nearly \$20 million per year over the period 2012-15 to less than \$6 million per year subsequently.

"Investing in new national parks will deliver vital protection for Queensland's native wildlife and deliver important benefits for regional communities and the State economy," said Mr Bartrim.

"To save the wildlife and beautiful places that Queenslanders love and that draw high spending visitors from all over the world, the State government must put real money behind its promises and greatly increase funding for new national parks," said Dr Martin Taylor, conservation scientist with WWF who ran the analysis of properties.

The report points to the need for more national parks and their benefits to Queensland's wildlife and economy. New national parks will support Queensland's rich and diverse wildlife, strengthen Queensland's tourism industry, and progress state and national protected area promises.

Additional investment is critical to protect habitat through active land management, including tackling destructive fire, noxious weeds and feral animals.

The report calls for \$55 million a year to be allocated by the Queensland Government for acquisition of land for new national parks, as well as a \$56 million a year boost to ensure the expanded park system is well-resourced and managed.

The report was produced by WWF, National Parks Association of Queensland, The Wilderness Society, Queensland Conservation Council and the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland.

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