



Position Statement: Traditional Owners and National Parks

The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of Queensland and this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NPAQ strongly supports a co-stewardship approach with Traditional Owners for the management of Queensland's national parks i.e.: to protect and enhance natural, biodiversity and cultural values. This reinforces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first custodians of the Protected Area Estate, and the importance of their intrinsic connection to ancestral lands and country.

Co-stewardship of national parks recognises the importance of Traditional Owners' involvement in how this land is managed. It brings together traditional Aboriginal knowledge and beliefs and contemporary non-indigenous perspectives on the importance of looking after land and water for future generations. NPAQ supports:

- strong, meaningful partnerships with Traditional Owners;
- respecting Traditional Owner rights and values;
- protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage on the national parks' estate and other protected areas;
- recognising Aboriginal people as keepers of traditional land management expertise; and
- promoting the identity, well-being and health for Traditional Owners, as well as employment opportunities associated with managing protected areas.

**Endorsed by NPAQ Council February 2021
To be reviewed 2024.**