



To the Planning Manager
Management and Operations | QPWS and Partnerships
Department of Environment and Science
PO Box 15187
City East Qld 4002

cc: Hon Leanne Linard - Minister for the Environment

The National Parks Association of Queensland (NPAQ) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Management Plan and Visitor Strategy for Nerang National Park and Conservation Park.

Overwhelmingly, NPAQ supports the direction and management approach set out in the consultation documents, which seek to strike a fairer and more sustainable balance between conservation and community use.

NPAQ appreciates that the proposal to decommission unauthorised mountain bike trails in the western part of Nerang National Park (referred to as Zone 2) will be a significant undertaking and strongly contested by existing mountain bike riders. The rationale for this appears well researched and clearly presented in the documentation.

NPAQ does not support any unauthorised trails in protected areas, regardless of their utility and/or community appeal. Unauthorised trails are a major threat to conservation and the orderly community use of protected areas and must be attended to as a priority.

NPAQ does, however, support orderly and sustainable community use of national parks, including the use of mountain bikes on existing roads, fire tracks and shared use trails. In principle, NPAQ would recommend against the creation of purpose-specific mountain bike trails in protected areas, given that only 8.3% of Queensland is currently set aside in protected areas. Dedicated mountain bike trails are better promulgated on land where conservation is not necessarily the priority, such as on local government or private land.

NPAQ acknowledges that the Nerang National Park and Conservation Park were gazetted in 2007 to 2009 following the South East Queensland Forests Agreement transfer of Nerang and Clagiraba State Forests. As such, NPAQ would support special consideration being given to legacy trails and/or activities in those parks that were lawfully in place at the time of transfer. This could be effected, for example, by the declaration of a special management area¹ over the eastern part of Nerang National Park (referred to as Zones 3, 4 and 5). This would be a preferable outcome to the proposed partial change in tenure to Conservation Park.

¹ See Section 17 (1A) of the Nature Conservation Act 1992

With the expected transfer of further state forests into the protected area estate over coming years, the final management plan and visitor strategy for Nerang National Park and Conservation Park could set a precedent, which is why NPAQ would encourage careful consideration of all consultation feedback received.

We understand that the Department has attempted to strike a balance by retaining a network of sanctioned trails in Nerang National Park and flagging areas for future trail development in the draft plans. New trails must be constructed with ecological and cultural considerations in mind. We respect mountain biking as a legitimate recreation activity, therefore acknowledge the retention of 32 kms of legal trails to satisfy the cohort who use them.

We thank the Department of Environment and Science for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Management Plan and Visitor Strategy for Nerang National Park and Conservation Park and we look forward to working with you in finalising these documents.

Please contact me on ceo@npaq.org.au or 0427 024 549 should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Thomas', with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

Chris Thomas
NPAQ Chief Executive Officer

19 September 2023