



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



NPAQ.ORG.AU

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Front cover images (L to R):

Girraween NP, *Karin Cox*; Acacia; *CanvaNFP*; Natural Bridge, Springbrook NP, *Karin Cox*.

Back cover images (L to R):

Park of the Month, Bunyaville Conservation Park, *NPAQ*; Park of the Month, Glass House Mountains NP, *NPAQ*. All other images are as credited in captions.

Lamington NP, *Maxamilliane Wagner/Dreamstime*.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Another busy and successful year for NPAQ has seen us evolve as an organisation and increase our profile and influence.

Much of this success can be attributed to NPAQ's strong Parks Connect program, which connects youth and families with nature through hands-on events and activities in Protected Areas. Clearly, this strongly aligns with NPAQ's mission and our Protect and Connect motto.

Fortunately, we received a substantial grant from the Queensland government—through the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI)—to design and implement this program

alongside the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), in turn allowing us to expand our staff, resources and reach.

Although the program was a pilot during the 24–25 Financial Year, Parks Connect has built a growing awareness across South East Queensland. We are seeing a broader cohort of the community attending events, particularly the Park of the Month and Junior Ranger programs. We're excited about the potential benefits to both the community and NPAQ.

Chris Thomas, our CEO, has been central to Parks Connect's early success, having designed and managed similar programs in South Australia. His experience and insights have instilled confidence in NPAQ's ability to effectively execute these programs. We appreciate his expertise and commitment to our organisation and its mission, and we look

forward to expanding the program further in the coming years. It is an exciting time for NPAQ, with much potential.

I would like to thank our CEO Chris Thomas and staff: Simone Maynard (Conservation Manager); Sam Dickson and Donna McCosker (Operations Managers); Karin Cox (Marketing & Communications Manager); Alina Crosbie (Parks Connect Program Manager) and Amelia Nikles-Ralph (Parks Connect Social Media and Engagement Officer). Chris, Sam, Donna and Karin also undertook work involved with running NPAQ's day-to-day operations, while providing part-time assistance for Parks Connect. Our staff work well as a team, integrating their various skills and experience.

One of the most positive results has been a major increase in our social media profile, thanks to Karin's and Amelia's combined expertise. Facebook and

Instagram followers have increased over the past year, attracting plenty of interest in our social media posts when benchmarked against other eNGOs of a similar size.

A related trend has been with memberships, which also increased over the 2024-25 financial year and continue to do so.

As usual, we have held or attended a number of successful events, many of which are now a regular part of NPAQ's annual calendar.

Our Annual Dinner featured the Honourable Pat Comben, the former Minister for Environment and Heritage (1989-1992), during which time the National Park Estate expanded considerably and the Regional Ecosystem framework was developed. As usual, a great mix of people attended, both long-term and new members, senior government officials from QPWS, and colleagues from many organisations we partner with. The



President Susanne Cooper takes a moment to connect with the forest at Glass House Mountains NP, July 2025.
NPAQ

feedback I had was that everyone enjoyed Pat's talk and having time to chat with such a range of interesting and like-minded nature-lovers.

Similarly, our Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture was an outstanding success, conducted in the Kedron Room of Brisbane City Hall—the venue where NPAQ held its first meeting in 1930. Distinguished Professor David Lindenmayer flew from Canberra to give the lecture on *The Forest Wars* and the future of logging in our native State Forests, a very topical and urgent issue. David gave an inspiring lecture, and we appreciate him taking the time out of his busy schedule to travel and present. ➡



Annual Dinner 2025, with speaker Pat Comben and longstanding members. NPAQ

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our June Members Meeting due to severe flood warnings across Brisbane. However, the 2024 Xmas Party and Members Meeting was a lively gathering of members, staff and councillors.

NPAQ's advocacy work continues to be a focus. Issues of particular concern have been the soon-to-be-released plan for Queensland's native State Forests; ecotourism in Protected Areas; and, as always, the need for the expansion and better management of our National Parks.

Chris and our team have built a constructive, trusted relationship with senior

executives within DETSI and the QPWS, and with Andrew Powell, the current Minister for the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation. Throughout our regular and productive meetings, an important aim has been to influence better outcomes for the environment.

We could not remain viable as an organisation without the active support of our members, especially those who volunteer to run various committees and activities. A special thanks to those listed here, many of whom have put years of work and commitment into leading NPAQ's activities without any recompense.

Their ongoing commitment and passion are inspiring.

Revegetation Group at Jollys Lookout (D'Aguilar Range): Angus McElnea. This program has been going since 1990—more than 35 years!

Activities Committee: Frank Freeman (Chair), Mary Anne Ryan, Len Lowry, Laurelle Lowry, Ian Peacock.

Advocacy Committee: Russell Watkinson (Chair), Simon Cavendish, David Morgans, Alan Chenoweth, Mimi Donna, Graeme Bartrim, Susanne Cooper.

Fundraising Advisor: Alan Watkinson—a professional fundraiser who has given us practical, insightful advice pro bono.

Councillors: Mimi Dona, Clare Birnie, Joanna Osborn, Simon Cavendish, Russell Watkinson, and Graeme Bartrim.

I'm ending this report on a note of excited anticipation for the time ahead. We've achieved so much this past year.

Susanne Cooper
(President)

ADVOCACY REPORT

The Advocacy Committee has been busy again this year. The annual program was updated to ensure the committee focused on priorities, and some policy positions were finalised.

With the election of a new Government and the consequential departmental restructuring, considerable effort has been made to connect with the new minister and his office, and to continue relationships with senior staff in the now combined Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

Policy Development

An NPAC-led Position Statement on Mountain Biking in Australia's Protected Areas and NPAQ's User Pays Policy Position Statements were agreed by Council, with implementation plans developed to put these to best use. The Ecosystem Services Position Statement was also finalised, and an implementation plan is under development.

The NPAC Position Statement on Mountain Biking in Australia's Protected Areas has

already proved useful in helping resist a number of proposals trying to introduce mountain biking into National Parks.

Such policy initiatives help NPAQ forge effective working relationships with DETSI and the minister.

Alliances/Joint Initiatives

The Queensland Tourism and Conservation Alliance (QTCA) continues to work well and has received favourable comment from Minister Powell. A joint statement on Tourism in Public Protected Areas was developed and presented to the Minister, who was receptive to the policy. Such combined positions between ➡



Main Range NP
Tatters/Flickr



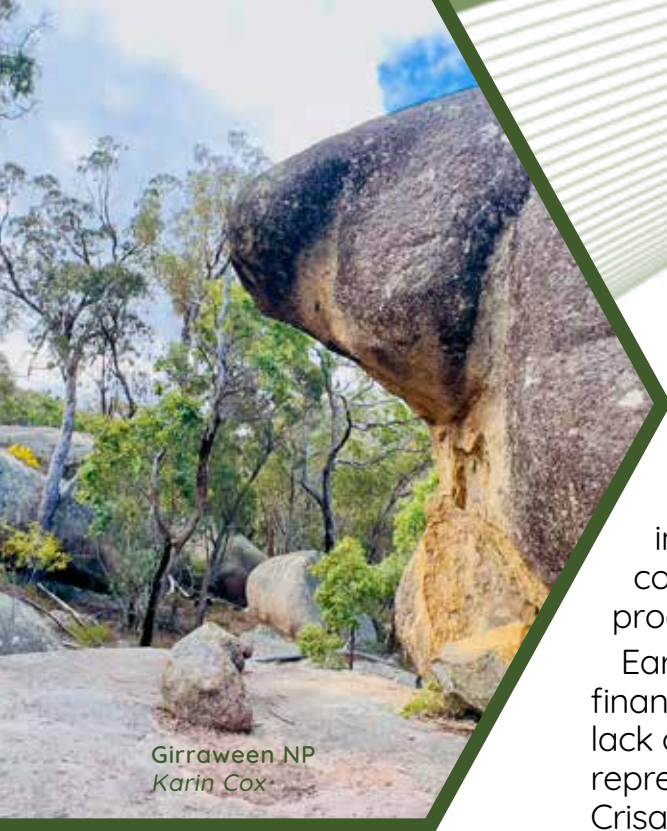
NPAQ helped publish the Position Statement on Mountain Biking in Australia's Protected areas. *Unsplash*

Committee

- Simon Cavendish
- Alan Chenoweth
- Susanne Cooper
- Simone Maynard
- David Morgans
- Chris Thomas
- Russell Watkinson (Chair)



Lamington NP
Karin Cox



Girraween NP
Karin Cox

conservation and tourism sectors have more impact on government than separate approaches. Credit is due to our CEO, Chris Thomas, for helping forge this positive relationship.

NPAQ also agreed to join the Protect Beautiful Queensland alliance, advocating for better conservation outcomes.

Issues

The Committee raised some issues with Queensland's Protected Area Strategy (PAS) report card early in the 2024-25 financial year. While the report was an improvement on the previous one, the Committee believes there needs to be a stronger focus on reporting against Progress Indicators.

The Committee continues to advocate for implementation of our Granite Belt initiative, with several continuing works in progress in the region.

Early in the financial year, the lack of conservation representation on the Crisafulli government's new Timber Supply Chain Ministerial Roundtable caused concerns about the Queensland Future Timber Plan (QFTP) being developed without input from environmental groups. The Committee continues to liaise with other conservation groups to make submissions on the draft plan, with a strong determination to achieve an end to logging in native forests.

The Committee also continues to engage with DETSI regarding the Queensland National Park Investment Prioritisation Framework and

application of the Values-based Management Framework (VBMF). It has proven difficult to get a clear picture of priorities, and several management plans are being "rolled over" rather than being reviewed and updated. It is considered important to progress effective, up-to-date management plans that can address issues such as mountain biking and the development of extensive new transmission lines as part of the renewables rollout.

Building Support

Finally, the committee has been working on an "NPAQ Fact Sheet" that seeks to explain NPAQ's role and its achievements in simple terms over the past few years. This document is intended to be used to promote NPAQ to government, prospective partners and sponsors, and to assist with building membership.



Koala
Karin Cox

MARKETING, COMMS & ENGAGEMENT

NPAQ continued to focus on strengthening communications and improving the quality of our publications, website and other avenues of connecting with members, supporters and newcomers during the 2024–25 financial year.

Integrating styles and processes for smooth collaboration with the QPWS on the Parks Connect Program, has seen slight changes in our core messaging and brand look and feel.

We also spent time updating our Mailchimp subscriber lists and templating some communications, which has meant a small decrease in the number of emails sent out but has still seen an overall increase in engagement, which continues to trend above the industry average when benchmarked against other not-for-profits of a similar size.

Protected

Protected magazine was released in three issues: Issue 44: Winter 2024 “Islands”, Issue 45 Spring/Summer 2024 “Barriers”, and

Issue 46 Autumn “Growth”. The redesign and online flipbook format have proved popular. More recipients are now opting to receive a digital version, with fewer than 125 members requesting the print edition.

Connected

Our monthly eBulletin, *Connected*, is distributed via email to more than 2100 subscribers. It includes updates from our CEO, as well as regular reminders about NPAQ and Parks Connect events. NPAQ’s open and click-through rates continue to exceed the industry standard, averaging just over 40% open rate and 3.9% click-through rate.



Social Media

NPAQ’s Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube followers have grown steadily.

Finding the right ratio of Parks Connect to NPAQ posts can make metrics erratic, but on the whole our audience engagement has continued to grow.

The Facebook page has seen a follower growth of 28.3%, with interactions up 192.5% and views up 440.9%. Our Facebook advertising has also successfully helped us attract event attendees.

NPAQ’s Instagram reach increased 278.5%, with content interactions up 100%. LinkedIn followers also increased, with 455 page views and 212 unique visitors from Oct 2024 to June 2025.

Reach has expanded across most platforms, including on YouTube, which had a monthly audience of 38 watchers during the 24–25 FY.

Much of our 2024–2025 social media success is attributable to the catchy reels, videos and memes created by Parks Connect Social Media and Engagement Officer Amelia Nikles-Ralph.

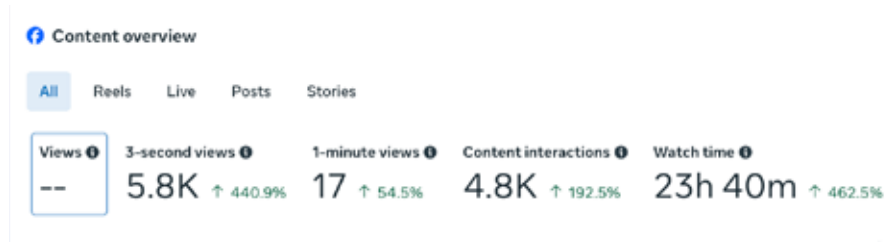
Subscribers

NPAQ ended the year with a total of 2119 Mailchimp subscribers (a firm increase considering that all duplicates were removed during our list clean-up). NPAQ's social media channels have a total of 9724 followers, divided as follows:

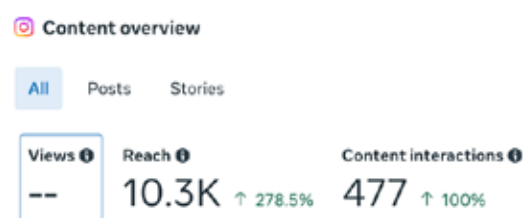
- » Facebook has 7439 followers (an increase of 7.39%)
- » Instagram has 2210 followers (an increase of 24.4%)
- » LinkedIn has 1388 followers (an increase of 35.95%).

Combining the social media and mailing list supporters, the total number of online supporters is 13,156—an increase of 11.49%.

FACEBOOK VIEWS & INTERACTIONS 24-25 FY



INSTAGRAM VIEWS, REACH & INTERACTIONS 24-25 FY



MEMBERSHIP APPEALS

NPAQ's membership increased from 277 to 306 financial members, an increase of 10.5%.

Memberships now renew on the 31 August annually to avoid confusion of renewal due dates.



NPAQ ran two fundraising appeals over the course of the year. The End of Financial Year Appeal for 2024 raised \$1488.67, and the Christmas Appeal raised \$3850.

Life Members

No new life memberships were awarded in the 2024-25 Financial Year.

Speaker Prof. David Lindenmayer (2nd from right), President Susanne Cooper, CEO Chris Thomas, and Friends of Parks Qld staff Jess and Paul at the 2025 Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture. NPAQ



Active members Wendy Bell, Mary Anne Ryan and Laurelle Lowry draw the raffle at NPAQ's Annual Dinner 2025. NPAQ

Presenters of the Ecotourism Seminar in July 2024 with Chris and Susanne. NPAQ



FINANCIAL REPORT

Accompanying this Annual Report is the audited financial report for the past financial year (2024-25).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the NPAQ staff, Council and members for their support and contributions. I look forward to the positive changes we can make as an association over the next financial year.

Thank you,
CLARE BIRNIE,
Treasurer

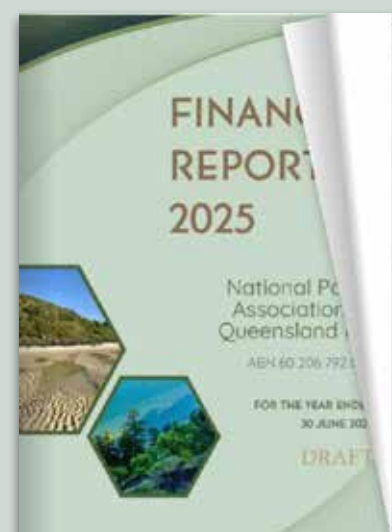
EVENTS

Several NPAQ events were hosted or attended in the 2024-25 financial year:

- » Ecotourism Seminar in July 2024
- » Romeo Lahey Memorial Lecture in April 2025
- » Annual Dinner in June 2025
- » Botanical Bazaar in August 2024
- » Sunshine Coast Environment Expo with Protect Beautiful Queensland in September 2024
- » David Fleay Wildlife Park Open Day in March 2025
- » Sustainable BNE Fair in May 2025
- » Celebrating 50 years of QPWS in June 2025
- » Members' Meetings in August, October (AGM) and December 2024.



TOP to BOTTOM: Botanical Bazaar with Friends of Parks Qld; Sunshine Coast Environment Expo with Protect Beautiful Queensland; David Fleay Wildlife Park Open Day with QPWS.NPAQ



Click on the cover to read the flipbook version.

Committee

- Frank Freeman (Convener/Activity Leader)
- Mary Anne Ryan (Secretary/Activity Leader/Bird Outing Leader)
- Laurelle Lowry (Treasurer/Activity Leader)
- Len Lowry (Equipment Manager/Activity Leader)
- Ian Peacock (Bird Outing Convener/Activity Leader)
- Angus McElnea (Convener: Vegetation Management Group)

ACTIVITY REPORT

Thirty-two activities were completed for the 2024–2025 year. Several other proposed activities were cancelled because of the weather or too few nominees. In total, 203 members, 28 non-members and one child attended the activities. Feedback from participants was very positive, as shown by the number of participants who returned to take part in further activities.

Day Activities

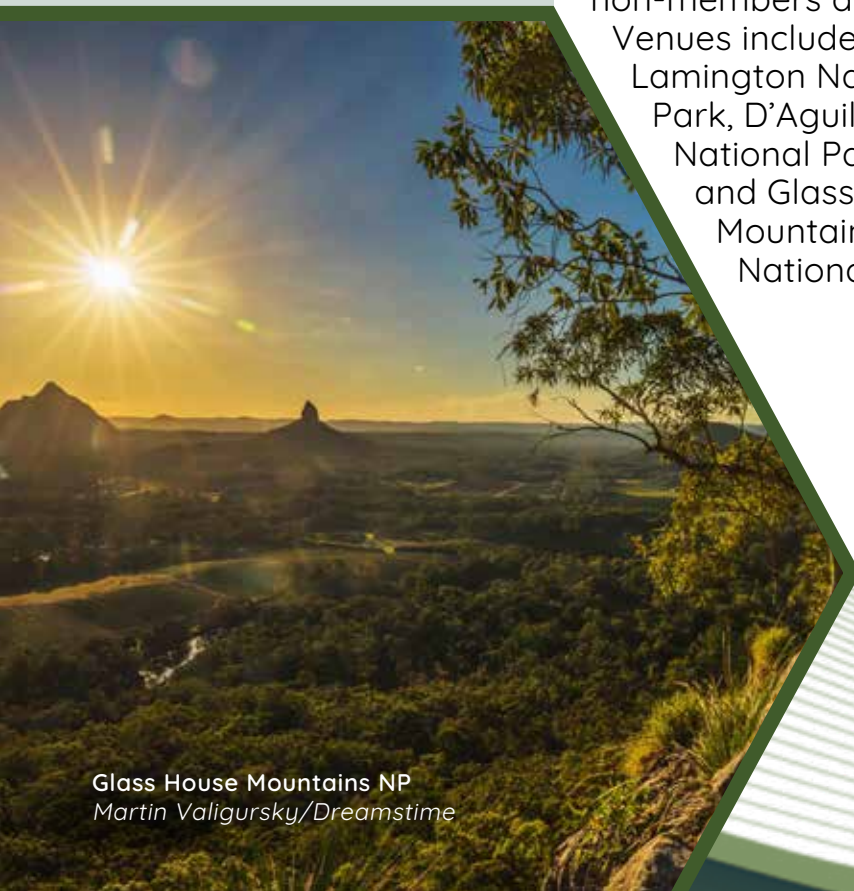
Seven Day Walks went ahead as planned, of which several were in National Parks. Twenty-seven members and ten non-members attended. Venues included Lamington National Park, D'Aguilar National Park and Glass House Mountains National Park.

Two bike rides were held during the year. The first was along the sealed Caboolture–Woodford Rail Trail, while the second covered the Northern Rivers Rail Trail from Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek.

Social Activities

Three social activities were held during the year. The first was a combined camp with members of Narrabri Bushwalk Club at Storm King Dam, Stanthorpe. The days were spent exploring Girraween National Park, followed by a combined Happy Hour each evening.

The next social gathering at Teralba Park, including a short walk along Kedron Brook, brought old friends and new together to begin 2025. Finally, eight members attended a week-long camp at Armidale, exploring gorges and waterfalls in the area. Unfortunately, rain curtailed some of the activities planned for this camp.



Glass House Mountains NP
Martin Valigursky/Dreamstime

Bird Activities

Ten activities were held at a variety of locations around Brisbane, with more than ninety attendees, proving to be the most popular type of activity offered.

Birds seen or heard are counted, and the totals entered onto the eBird website. eBird is an international register run by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, in keeping with the citizen science objective of the group..

Revegetation Activities

Ten re-vegetation activities were held around Jollys Lookout in D'Aguilar National Park. The objective is to rid the area of exotic weeds, such as lantana, and plant native species to revegetate the area. Fifty-nine volunteers attended during the year.

Finances

During the financial year, these Activities raised \$1133.00 with minimal expenses of only \$100.15 for snacks

for the social walk. Aside from the cost of their First Aid renewal, Activity Leaders tend to absorb the expense of pre-outings, communication and travel to the activity locations. They are happy to do so to encourage people to enjoy the great outdoors and to help others appreciate the beauty of our National Parks.

Thanks

Sincere thanks to the leaders who organised these activities, giving generously of their knowledge, time and resources to raise awareness of National Parks and outdoor activities. In turn, Activity Leaders appreciate the attendance and support of a range of participants, making the leaders feel their efforts are valued.

Unfortunately, the number of leaders is declining as they age and start to find the task more onerous. Younger members are encouraged to become Activity Leaders so that a strong activities program will continue well into the future.



Osprey,
Sandy Camp
Wetlands
Karin Cox



Revegetation
Group,
D'Aguilar NP
Susanne Cooper



Nature Journaling
to thank volunteers.
NPAQ

PARKS CONNECT PROGRAMS



Junior Rangers learn how to be passionate park protectors at David Fleay Wildlife Park. NPAQ/Parks Connect

Junior Rangers set wildlife cameras at Walkabout Creek Discovery Centre. NPAQ/Parks Connect



In September 2024, we received \$200,000 in grant-funding from the then Department of the Environment, Science and Innovation (now DETSI) to establish the Parks Connect Program and five subprograms in collaboration with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. With the aim of drawing together community, conservationists, Park Rangers and nature-lovers to celebrate protected areas, the first subprograms—the Junior Ranger and Cadet Ranger programs—began from March 2025.

Junior Rangers

Beginning with school holiday events hosted from QPWS Gateway Visitor Centres at Walkabout Creek Discovery Centre (Enoggera) and David Fleay Wildlife Park (Gold Coast). The Junior Ranger program

for kids aged 8–12 ramped up from June 2024 to facilitate “Roaming” Junior Rangers learning on park as part of Park of the Month from July. Six Junior Ranger events were held in the 2024–2025 FY. A suite of volunteers were also recruited and inducted to help Parks Connect Activity Leaders ensure seamless, engaging events.

Cadet Rangers

The Cadet Ranger program teaches hands-on real-world skills to teens aged 13–18. Acting as a first step on the path to becoming a Park Ranger, the program is hosted from QPWS Gateway Visitor Centres and from within select National Parks. Six Cadet Ranger events were held in the 2024–2025 FY.

Park of the Month

During May and June, the Parks Connect team spent much time planning the roll out of the Park of the Month program. The first event was held in July at Beerburum Trailhead in Glass House Mountains National Park.



Songwoman Maroochy—an Elder, Songwoman and Law-woman of the Turrbal People—welcomed attendees to Park of the Month at Bunyaville Conservation Park. Karin Cox

Volunteer Rangers

During the 24–25 FY, the Parks Connect team called for expressions of interest for Volunteer Rangers and began the vetting and induction process.

Volunteer Rangers will be deployed to select protected areas to aid visitor experience and free up Ranger time. Our inducted Volunteer Rangers also helped with several Junior and Cadet Ranger events and Park of the Month Open Days. Deployment is planned for the next financial year and a new volunteer management system is being developed to fast-track deployment.

Campground Hosts

Parks Connect Campground Hosts are "friendly faces in wild places". They act as helpful hosts and interpretative guides and also ensure amenities are clean and campgrounds are well-maintained.

Applicants submitted expressions of interest from June 2025, which are being vetted for inductions and deployment in the next financial year.

Campground Hosts are sure to improve visitor experience in some of Queensland's busiest National Park campgrounds over peak visitation periods.



Cadet Rangers learn how to "Find the Tracks" at an event at David Fleay Wildlife Park in June 2025.
NPAQ/Parks Connect

Recruitment began for Volunteer Ranger and Campground Host programs.
NPAQ/Parks Connect

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME TO HELP RANGERS

SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE & HELP VISITORS ENJOY AND CARE FOR OUR PARKS.

EMAIL admin@npaqa.org.au for more

PARKS CONNECT

Blue Card (or ability to get one) required.

CAMP FOR FREE AS A CAMPGROUND HOST

WELCOME & ASSIST CAMPERS IN QLD NATIONAL PARKS.

TO FIND OUT HOW EMAIL admin@npaqa.org.au

PARKS CONNECT

Blue Card (or ability to get one) required.

NPAQ PEOPLE



CEO Chris Thomas tries out the Parks Connect "selfie frame" at the inaugural Park of the Month. NPAQ/Parks Connect

staff

Additional funding in 2024–25 enabled NPAQ to increase staffing levels. As at 30 June 2025, NPAQ had a full-time CEO (Chris Thomas) and five part-time staff: Donna McCosker & Sam Dickson (Operations Manager); Karin Cox (Marketing & Communications Manager); Alina Crosbie (Parks Connect Program Manager); and Amelia Nikles-Ralph (Parks Connect Social Media and Engagement Officer).

COUNCIL	POSITION
Susanne Cooper	President
Vacant	Vice President
Clare Birnie	Treasurer
Joanna Osborn	Secretary
Simon Cavendish	Councillor
Rodrigo Diaz	Councillor (resigned 19/10/2024)
Russell Watkinson	Councillor
Mimi Dona	Councillor (appointed 19/10/2024)
Graeme Bartrim	Councillor (appointed 28/10/2024)
Vacant	Councillor
Vacant	Councillor
STAFF	POSITION
Chris Thomas	Chief Executive Officer
Glenys Wilkinson	Contract Accountant
Simone Maynard (departed May 2025)	Conservation Manager
Samantha Dickson (departed Sept 2024, returned Apr 2025)	Operations Manager
Alina Crosbie (Aug 2024 – Oct 2024)	Operations Manager (backfill)
Donna McCosker (commenced Oct 2024)	Operations Manager
Karin Cox	Marketing & Communications Manager
Alina Crosbie (commenced Jan 2025)	Parks Connect Program Manager
Amelia Nikles-Ralph (commenced Jan 25)	Parks Connect Social Media & Engagement Officer
CHAIRS	POSITION
Frank Freeman	Activities
Russell Watkinson	Advocacy

Donors

Sue Akeroyd, John Barkla, Monique Bond, Sarah Bradley, Kim Brownsey, Donald & Wilma Carlson, Shannon Claridge, Christine & Keith Cordwell, Ann Dawson, Noel Dawson, Mark Dwyer, Perry Finn, Russell Gardner, Zigrid Georges, Carly Gooch, James Goodman, Linda Groom, Tony Groom, James Hansen, Bernadette Hayes, Clint & Heather Howitt, Elizabeth Jarvis, Veronika Jones, Mary Kelly, Peter Kennedy, Adam Kilvert, Darren Kindleysides, Vaughan Kippers, Andrew Lahey, Athol Lester, Satomi Logothetis, Catherine London, Helen Lucas, Jan Misfeld, Eberhard Moll, Joyce & Robert Newell, Andrew Noble, Stuart Olver, Yvonne Parsons, Kerrianne Peacan, Tomislav Petr, Richard Riles, Gabriel Romaguera, Karin & Koert Rozenveld, Ken Sampson, Lesley Sampson, Judy Somerville, Alison Street, Ian Tedder, Glenn Tozer, Jankees van der Have, Sharne Vogt, Demi-Rose Walter, Ross Webster, Lorna Williams

Volunteers

Our volunteers generously contribute thousands of hours in activity leading, conservation management, technical or professional support, library and archive organisation, governance or strategic support, advocacy, event support, or on Committee or Council roles.

- Clare Birnie
- Geraldine Buchanan
- Simon Cavendish
- Alan Chenoweth
- Susanne Cooper
- Rod Diaz
- Frank Freeman
- Laurelle Lowry
- Len Lowry
- Angus McElnea
- David Morgans
- Joanna Osborn
- Ian Peacock
- Mary Anne Ryan
- Russell Watkinson

We are also grateful for the ongoing assistance from our Parks Connect volunteer Activity Leaders for Junior and Cadet Rangers, our Volunteer Rangers and Park of the Month Volunteers, and our volunteer Campground Hosts.



2025 Annual Dinner, NPAQ



Frank, Susanne and Donna at Sustainable BNE Fair. NPAQ

Vale

NPAQ was saddened to hear of the passing of Edsel Ward, Ross Clelland and Joyce Yvonne Markwell this financial year. We send our condolences to their friends and family.



NPAQ

ABN 60 206 792 095

Unit 9/36 Finchley St,
Milton QLD

Phone: (07) 3367 0878

Email: admin@npaqa.org.au



npaqa.org.au



FINANCIAL REPORT 2025

National Parks
Association of
Queensland Inc

ABN 60 206 792 095

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
30 JUNE 2025

