



6 May 2021

The Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk
Premier, Minister for Trade
By email: thepremier@premiers.qld.gov.au

CC: Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister Grace, Minister de Brenni

This budget, please increase funding for expansion and management of Queensland's protected areas

Dear Premier,

The Queensland Conservation Council, The Wilderness Society, Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council, The Pew Charitable Trust, Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, the Sunshine Coast Environment Council, Protect the Bush Alliance, National Parks Association of Queensland, Cairns and Far North Environment Centre, North Queensland Conservation Council, Mackay Conservation Group, Gecko Environment Council and the Capricorn Conservation Council would like to congratulate the government on navigating the current health and economic circumstances faced throughout Queensland and recommend further strategic investment to generate jobs and economic opportunity in line with existing policy commitments.

We seek your support as Premier and in your role on the Cabinet Budget Review Committee in supporting the ongoing funding of the Cape York Tenure Resolution Program and increased funding for effective delivery of the Protected Area Strategy.

Under the Cape York Tenure Resolution Program successive Queensland governments have delivered significant parcels of land back to Traditional Owners and declared some of the largest and most important national parks in Queensland. While the program formally began under Premier Beattie, its genesis began under Premier Goss, with significant hand backs delivered by Premiers Beattie, Bligh, Newman and Palaszczuk.

Unfortunately, it appears that the 21/22 financial year will be the first time the program has not been funded to acquire property in its near twenty year history.

Tourism, carbon abatement, philanthropic funding, fee for service enterprises and other opportunities have all directly stemmed from land ownership under the Cape York Tenure Resolution Program. Land access and ownership provide Indigenous Australian's with a competitive advantage in economic opportunity from their own customary land.

An independent consultant's report identified ongoing government priorities and unresolved regions on Cape York and recommended \$50 million over four years to fulfil the original objectives of the program. A summary of this report is attached.¹

Across the state, national parks and protected areas bring great prosperity to Queenslanders. For example visitor spending associated with national parks is estimated at \$3.711 billion. This includes all spending within a tourism region by people who visited a national park while in that region. This contributed a total of \$2.743 billion Gross State Product (GSP) and generated up to 24,190 jobs across Queensland.²

Spending generated by tourists who stated that national parks were very important to visiting a tourism region is estimated at \$2.640 billion and contributed a total of \$1.978 billion to the State's GSP. This in turn generated up to 2,725 jobs throughout Queensland.³

National parks are the foundation of the State's recovering tourism industry. They benefit the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders⁴ and provide further valuable co-benefits across the multiple portfolios of First Nations partnerships, regional development, agriculture, water and natural resources.

As we rebuild Queensland's economy, both national parks and private protected areas from Cape York to the New South Wales border have a critical role to play in delivering much needed employment, economic, health and environmental co-benefits.

Please find below a breakdown of proposed funding for the Cape York Tenure Resolution Program and delivery of the Protected Area Strategy.

¹ Leverington A. 2021 *Returning country to Traditional Owners on Cape York Peninsula*. Independent report commissioned by QCC.

² Driml S, Brown R, Silva CM, 2020. Estimating the Value of National Parks to the Queensland Economy. School of Economics Discussion Papers Series 636. School of Economics, The University of Queensland.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Buckley et al. 2019. Economic value of protected areas via visitor mental health, *Nature Communications* **10** article number 5005 (2019).

Proposed additional* annual investments required to meet existing policy commitments

Item	2021/22 \$m	2022/23 \$m	2023/24 \$m	2024/25 \$m
Cape York Tenure Resolution acquisitions	10	10	10	10
Cape York Tenure Resolution operational	0	2.5	2.5	2.5
National park expansion**	55	55	55	55
National park management	56	56	56	56
Private protected areas expansion and management	24	24	24	24

* additional investment on current levels

** with matching increments in funding for QPWS to manage increased areas as needed.

Kind regards,



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Queensland Conservation Council
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Sheena Gillman
Protect the Bush Alliance



Sophia Walter
Queensland Manager
The Pew Charitable Trusts



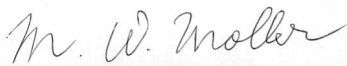
Laura Hahn
Conservation Principle
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Dr Anita Cosgraove
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Crystal Falknau
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Mike Moller
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