

MEDIA RELEASE – 28/02/19

National Parks are ALP's latest asset sale!

North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) has concerns that the ALP is quietly initiating asset sales yet again despite a voter backlash during Anna Bligh's time as Premier in 2009. This time it is Queensland's National Parks that are being carved into with the offer of 60 year leases to commercial interests.

"A lease of this length within National Parks is as good as being sold-off. When in Opposition, both ALP and LNP are on the public record saying that leasing public assets is as good as selling them off. I am shocked that the Queensland Government would consider leasing some of the most fragile and special places in our entire state," said NQCC's Campaigns Manager, Tarquin Moon.

"We look to the Queensland Government to protect our National Parks in the interests of current and future generations. We don't expect them to bow down to industry pressure to change the very definition of National Parks," she said.

"We have seen examples in other jurisdictions where state governments lower the bar for commercial interests to operate within National Parks. It does two things, it ruins the wilderness experience for visitors who value nature and it leads to increased damage to the environment."

"The ultimate example is where visitor numbers start out being limited in some National Parks based on ecological resilience and end up being increased to accommodate commercial interests' profitability," said Tarquin Moon.

The Queensland Tourism Minister, Kate Jones refers to the 'Tasmanian experience' in a bid to increase Queensland's ecotourism opportunities however it is threatening the natural values that visitors are seeking. Tasmania's Cradle Mountain (Cradle Mt - Lake St Clair National Park) has experienced rapid growth in visitor numbers to the point that tourism operators are concerned it will be 'loved to death.' The brand of the Tasmanian experience is one of isolation, uniqueness and rugged wilderness that is being replaced by hectic congestion that is a huge concern for Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service.

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NQCC is the voice for the environment in North Queensland, campaigning as the peak non-government environmental organisation in our region since 1974. We protect the environment through advocacy and education, promote the values of the natural environment, and engage with policy and planning processes to advocate ecologically sustainable development. Our region covers the coast from Cardwell in the north, south to Bowen and west to the Northern Territory

Further Information

In October last year, the Minister for Innovation and Tourism Industry Development (DITID) Kate Jones in partnership with Environment Minister Leeanne Enoch released an Expressions of Interest (EOI) process on Hinchinbrook Island NP (Thorsborne Trail), Whitsunday Island NP (Whitsunday Island Trail) and Great Sandy NP (Cooloola Great Walk). The EOI gives proponents opportunity to develop and operate eco-accommodation and tour guidance within the boundaries of these 3 NPs. The Government is prepared to provide the successful proponent with state-owned NP land for accommodation; exclusive ground leases for a term of up to 60 years (30 years plus one up to 30 years) to operate accommodation; assistance during the approval process; a “one-government” approach to comply with other government requirements; and a contribution of up to \$5 million for eco-accommodation built along the Whitsunday Island Trail.

[Minister Kate Jones' comments about Queensland modelling commercialisation within National Parks of the Tasmanian experience https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-27/queensland-national-parks-could-be-leased-for-eco-tourism/10423998](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-27/queensland-national-parks-could-be-leased-for-eco-tourism/10423998)

[Tasmania's Cradle Mountain being loved to Death article](#)

[ALP while in Opposition in 2014 and LNP while in Opposition – media story about their position that leases the same as selling off that asset](#)