



South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2009



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Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland

Protecting our lifestyle and environment

Making Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people

The Queensland Government has five ambitions for the future of this state.

Strong: We want to create a diverse economy powered by bright ideas

Green: We want to protect our lifestyle and environment

Smart: We want to deliver world-class education and training

Healthy: We want to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people

Fair: We want to support a safe and caring community

Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland establishes targets for environment and lifestyle, economy, education and skills, health and community. The Green ambition makes a commitment to achieve a state-wide target to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation by 2020.

Outdoor recreation is recognised in the Q2 'Green' targets, one part of which is to protect 50 per cent more land for public recreation — which includes outdoor recreation — across Queensland by 2020.

Q2's land for public recreation initiatives include protecting public greenspace through regional planning processes, providing recreation facilities to help Queenslanders experience our great outdoors and developing a state-wide inventory of land for public recreation.

In addition to supporting the **Green** target, the Strategy is also intended to complement and contribute to other Towards Q2 visions and targets in particular **Healthy** – make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people.

South East Queensland (SEQ) has a mix of landscapes, seascapes and subtropical climate which invite people into the 'outdoors' to recreate. It's no surprise that most SEQ residents and many visitors to the region participate in some form of outdoor recreation spending more than \$1 billion a year.

Outdoor recreation is a matter for land use policy, planning and management and a recognised economic activity. It also provides social, health, educational and tourism benefits and contributes significantly to the region's identity, culture and economy.

Surfing, camping, bushwalking, picnicking and fishing are just some of the many outdoor recreation activities that provide a healthy outdoors lifestyle for SEQ's residents and attract many tourists.

Challenges

The population of SEQ is expected to increase from 2.8 million in 2006 to 4.4 million in 2031. This is an increase of 1.6 million people or almost 60% more than the 2006 population. This population growth will increase the pressure on the use of our open space and greenspace network in SEQ.

Queensland Government, local governments and the community need to work in partnership to provide people the right sorts of places to participate in their preferred outdoor recreation activities.

In the face of these growth pressures, we need to take protect land for nature conservation and public recreation. We also need to manage land used for outdoor recreation to minimise impacts on important landscape values for safety and sustainability and to ensure compliance with relevant laws.

Vision for outdoor recreation in Queensland

Outdoor recreation for residents and tourists in Queensland's renowned landscapes and seascapes is diverse, high quality, safe and sustainable.

What is the South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Strategy?

The *SEQ Outdoor recreation strategy* focuses on continued coordination between the many state agencies, local governments, private businesses and community sector organisations which provide outdoor recreation activities, places and support services.

The companion-*Queensland Greenspace strategy* will focus on the expansion of land for public recreation where public accessibility and use are the priority.

The *SEQ outdoor recreation strategy* combined with the *Queensland Greenspace strategy* will help deliver the *Q2* targets for a diverse economy, protect our lifestyle and to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people. In combination, these strategies will help to secure and develop new places for outdoor recreation and better manage existing places.

Implementation of this Strategy will ensure the long-term quality, diversity, safety and sustainability of outdoor recreation opportunities to meet the needs of residents and visitors to the region into the future.

Actions in this strategy are aimed to achieve opportunities for outdoor recreation, outdoor education and adventure-counselling programs, adventure and nature-based tourism and volunteer participation.

Benefits of outdoor recreation

Queenslanders enjoy good health and an enviable quality of life. We're living longer, but this is under threat. Poor diet, inactive lifestyles and rising obesity are predicted to cause a 55 per cent increase in the Type 2 diabetes disease burden in Queensland over the next 10 years. Many other illnesses can be prevented by eating better and exercising more.

Outdoor recreation is already a high proportion of all physical activity. Participation in outdoor recreation helps manage health issues arising from obesity. Health benefits include improving our wellbeing, fitness and strength and reducing stress. The Queensland Government recognises its responsibility to encourage Queenslanders to make healthy lifestyle choices including to participate more in outdoor recreation.

Outdoor recreation by residents and visitors to SEQ also contributes to the region's economy by purchase of equipment, guides, food, transport and accommodation. This supports the regional economy and creates jobs — often in rural areas with limited economic development opportunities.

The health, social, economic and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

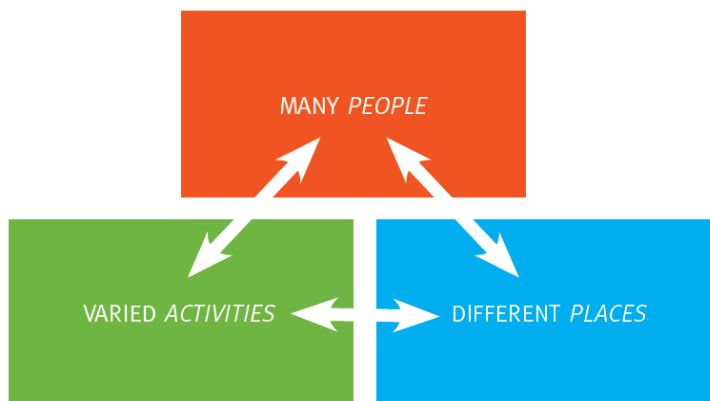
Impacts of outdoor recreation open space

Most of the state government-owned greenspace in SEQ is set aside for nature conservation (i.e. national parks), timber production (i.e. state plantation forests) or water catchments for the major dams.

Many local governments have purchased bushland near urban areas using 'green' or 'environmental' levies. Some forms of outdoor recreation are compatible with the primary purpose for which these areas were secured, but some activities can cause unacceptable impacts.

Although the many benefits of outdoor recreation are substantial, all outdoor recreation activities, even so-called "passive" and "nature-based" activities, can damage the places where these activities occur. In turn, this reduces the quality of experiences for future visitors and increases management costs. Recovery from most impacts takes much longer than it takes to cause the impacts.

Without careful management of outdoor recreation activities and places supported by users who are committed to minimising their impacts, loss of high quality sites and experiences is inevitable. Unless management of the open space on which outdoor recreation occurs both participation in outdoor recreation and site quality will decline.



Definition of outdoor recreation

For the *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy*, outdoor recreation means: *recreation or sport activities undertaken in natural, rural and urban open space without significantly changing those places.*

Table 1: Some outdoor recreation activities

Bushwalking	Motor-boating
Camping	Picnicking
Canoeing and kayaking	Sailing
Climbing, abseiling similar activities	Trail bike (off-road motorcycle) riding
Cycling - road cycling and mountain bike riding	Scuba diving and snorkelling
Fishing, hunting and gathering	Swimming in the sea, rivers and lakes
Fossicking	Surfing
Gliding, paragliding, parachuting and similar activities	Waterskiing
Four-wheel driving	Whitewater rafting
Horse riding—trail and endurance rides	Wildlife watching (e.g. birdwatching) and other forms of nature study/appreciation

People engage in outdoor recreation for many reasons including relaxation, rejuvenation, recreation, education, tourism, health and fitness.

What is not outdoor recreation?

Many sport and recreation activities, e.g. tennis, cricket, bowls, speedway and football, need specially designed and built facilities. These types of facility-dependent sports are not covered by the *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy*. Likewise, walking and cycling for commuting are not addressed in this strategy.

Places for outdoor recreation in SEQ

About 20% (about 500,000ha) of the land area of SEQ is available to the public for outdoor recreation. Most of the open space (land and water) which is currently available for outdoor recreation is owned or managed by state agencies, state-owned corporations or local governments.

Places for outdoor recreation in SEQ include:

- over 3,000 km of recreation trails
- local council bushland
- public reserves
- unformed roads and stock routes
- state plantation forests
- national, conservation and marine parks
- declared recreation areas
- estuaries and navigable rivers
- fish habitat areas
- beaches
- major dams and surrounding lands

Land that is used for outdoor recreation have many other values and uses, including forestry, scenic amenity, fisheries production, cultural heritage, nature conservation, quarrying, mining, water catchment, tourism and flood mitigation. In most greenspace areas in SEQ, outdoor recreation is recognised as a legitimate and important, but secondary, land use.

Where outdoor recreation is a secondary use of open space, activities and places will be managed to protect primary uses and other important values and to ensure activities are lawful, safe and sustainable.

National parks and conservation parks in SEQ provide opportunities for outdoor recreation. They also protect significant landscapes, cultural sites and water catchments; and provide opportunities for nature-based tourism.

It must be remembered however that national parks and conservation parks are primarily managed to preserve their natural condition and to protect cultural resources.

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Implementing the SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy

The purpose of the *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy* is to "...coordinate outdoor recreation services within the region." (Policy 3.7.2, *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031*).

The following actions support the vision for Q2 – Towards 2020 and help to achieve the intended outcomes. These actions are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. They will also be used to help implement the *SEQ Greenspace Strategy*.

The Strategy has five components:

1. Remove access barriers and provide more land for outdoor recreation
2. Manage resources and outdoor recreation-related conflicts
3. Provide more support facilities for outdoor recreation
4. Develop decision support systems for better policy, planning, management and marketing
5. Leadership and coordination

The 10 priority actions are:

1. develop *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Implementation Guidelines* to assist local governments to plan and develop sustainable management of outdoor recreation infrastructure and activities.
2. provide advice to local governments on how to address outdoor recreation in planning schemes, community plans and other planning instruments
3. ensure detailed consideration of outdoor recreation in management plans for state lands
4. develop new, and improve current, mechanisms for co-ordinating outdoor recreation policy, planning and management
5. develop and use statutory instruments to protect and manage multi-tenure areas for outdoor recreation
6. manage an annual program of non-infrastructure projects to foster community involvement in planning, developing, managing and monitoring outdoor recreation places and activities
7. develop and implement strategies to increase participation in outdoor recreation
8. finalise a system for naming and describing outdoor recreation activities
9. develop options to assist private landholders to provide public outdoor recreation opportunities and encourage more private landholders to provide outdoor recreation infrastructure
10. develop capability to analyse existing spatial and statistical relationships between outdoor recreation supply and demand and to predict future changes in these relationships

The **Department of Infrastructure and Planning** is responsible for overall coordination of Strategy implementation, for coordinating land use planning for outdoor recreation and for actions to remove unnecessary access barriers, provide more land for outdoor recreation and provide more regional greenspace with the necessary support facilities for outdoor recreation.

The **Department of Communities** is responsible for development of partnerships, facilitating actions to reduce conflicts, promoting participation, facilitating priority research, increasing community involvement, coordinating marketing and developing guidelines.

Other state agencies, local governments, private enterprise and the community sector will continue with their core business and, where appropriate, participate in collaborative initiatives.

State funding

This Strategy is linked to the State budget and other funding processes but is not a funding mechanism in its own right. The Strategy will be updated regularly as planning activities are finalised and funding is secured. The State budget process is the principal mechanism for identifying, prioritising and delivering the *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy*. The Queensland Government is committed to sound fiscal management and responsible borrowings.

Regular reviews

The *SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy* will be reviewed every five years, or as required. The reviews will inform the five-yearly formal reviews of the SEQ Regional Plan.



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