



[anna4qlders.com.au](http://anna4qlders.com.au)

# **That's living: More recreation in our national parks**

**Queensland Election 2012**

17 March 2012

## That's living: more recreation in our parks

With more than 1300 national parks, marine parks, other protected areas, and state forests throughout Queensland, our protected areas play a key role in conserving our unique biodiversity and cultural heritage.

But just as importantly, these areas provide spectacular places for people to experience the great outdoors and reconnect with nature.

Each year, our national parks and protected areas attract around 16 million visitors, and make a major contribution to the Queensland economy, including in remote rural areas. Eight out of ten Queenslanders have visited a park.

That's why I have put a renewed focus on expanding our national park area. I have set a target of protecting 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation within 10 years, and under my government, more than 600,000 hectares of new national park has been created – an area nearly three times the size of the Australian Capital Territory.

But I also want to see more people in our parks. That's why a re-elected Bligh Government will deliver more opportunities to walk, run and recreate in our extraordinary natural environment. We will deliver more short walks and more running tracks, building on the more than 2,000 kilometres of trails already providing recreational opportunities for Queenslanders.

In addition, we commit to a recreational infrastructure package for North Stradbroke Island to help this special place on Brisbane's doorstep transition away from sand mining over the next 10 years. Our plan for Stradbroke is to transition the island community from jobs in mining to jobs in more sustainable industries, like tourism and education.

With just 5% of Brisbane residents at present visiting Stradbroke each year, there are strong opportunities to grow the local economy.



**ANNA BLIGH**  
**PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND**



## What this policy means for our community

A re-elected Bligh Government will make it easier for more Queenslanders to enjoy our pristine protected areas and State Forests, with \$22 million to expand outdoor recreation infrastructure like walking and running tracks, along with new mountain biking trails.

We will also deliver our plan to end mining on North Stradbroke Island and protect this magnificent place for future generations to visit and enjoy. There will be more camp grounds, more walking tracks and more places to swim. We will support local residents to grow a strong and sustainable economy.

### ACTIONS

- Introduce a new **Walk in the Park** initiative, delivering up to 50 new short walks (of less than 5km in distance) in iconic national parks and protected areas. This will revitalise popular parks in key areas for regional tourism and in locations near major populations.
- Introduce a new **Run in the Park** initiative, delivering three mid-distance bush running trails across Queensland for both free running and organised events (of between 10 and 25 km) in State Forests or Conservation Parks.
- Deliver a \$5.3 million **North Stradbroke Island recreation package** to support the transition to National Park, including:
  - \$2 million to construct a network of day walks throughout the island.
  - \$2 million to link Amity and Point Lookout with a new cycle track.
  - \$500,000 towards a new whale watching platform near Point Lookout.
  - Provide Minjerribah Camping Enterprise \$800,000 to support the upgrade of existing campground facilities including outdoor recreation infrastructure

## Our challenges

Studies have found that exercising outside in a natural setting – ‘green’ exercise – is better than exercising indoors.

Just five minutes of exercise in a park, working in a backyard garden, on a nature trail or other green space will benefit mental health.

More people would use our wonderful national parks regularly if they thought our parks were closer and more accessible.

There are many walks already available, offering different difficulty levels and lengths, but more are needed to give Queenslanders further options to get outdoors.

Stradbroke is one of Moreton Bay's jewels in the crown and is the home of a thriving indigenous culture. But in recent times, more than 50% of the island has been inaccessible to the Queensland public due to mining leases.

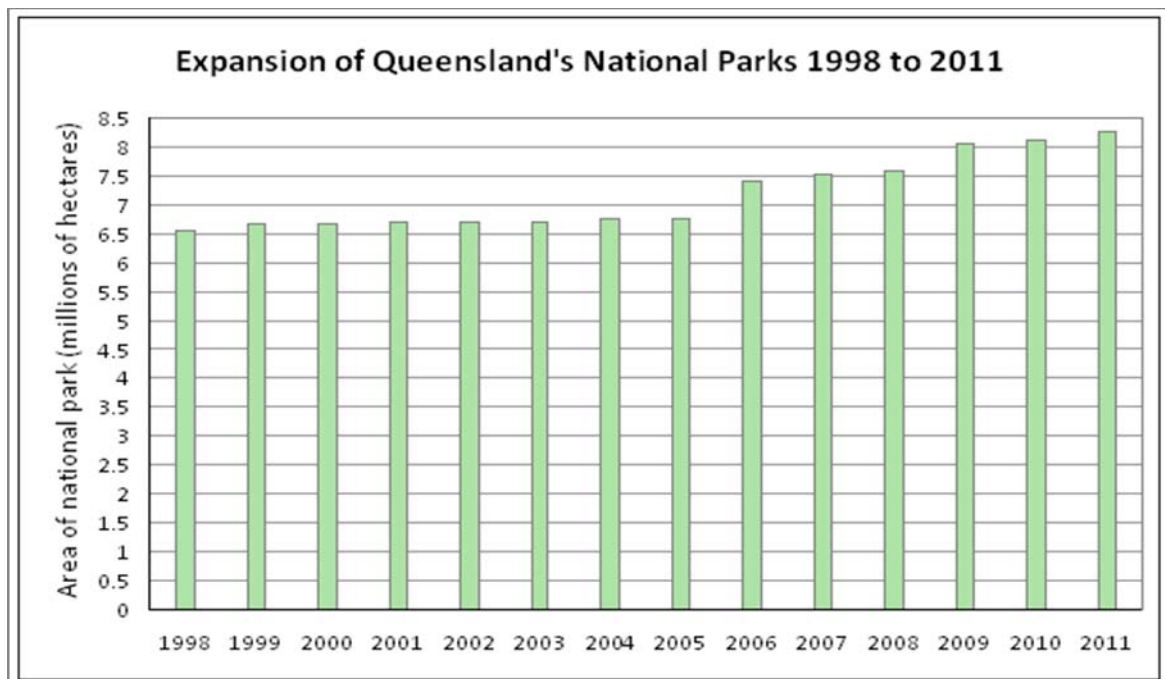
We now have a rare opportunity to phase out mining and protect this special place for the future. We can create more long-term jobs in sustainable industries than there is presently in mining. However, those future tourism jobs are jeopardised if the whole island is mined – there will be nothing left to see.

For too long much of the beauty of Stradbroke has been locked away from Queenslanders in mining leases. The Bligh Government wants to give Stradbroke back to Queenslanders.

## Our achievements

National parks and other protected areas play an important role in protecting areas of high biodiversity and rare or at-risk species and ecosystems. That is why in 2008 the government **committed to increasing land held in national parks to 12.9 million hectares by 2020.**

National parks have increased significantly over the last decade, including over 600,000 hectares of new National Park in the last four years alone.



Source: Department of Environment and Resource Management, December 2011.

Over the past decade the Queensland Government has worked closely with local communities, councils and developers to create new recreation areas and trails so Queenslanders can make the most of our great outdoors.

We are delivering the \$16.5 million Great Walks of Queensland initiative over 10 years to create a world-class system of walking tracks throughout Queensland's protected areas, including four of our five magnificent World Heritage Areas.

Six of the Great Walks were opened as part of the first \$10 million funding round in locations such as Fraser Island, Gold Coast Hinterland, Mackay Highlands, Sunshine Coast Hinterland, Wet Tropics and Whitsunday. The recent \$6.5 million program saw four more Great Walks constructed and opened in Carnarvan, Whitsunday, Cooloola and the Conondale Ranges.

These Great Walks offer a range of experiences from short easy strolls to half and full-day walks as well as overnight adventures. Having a mix of experiences encourages people of all ages and abilities to explore and experience our wonderful protected areas.

Connecting people with nature and the outdoors brings enormous economic benefits to our state. National parks are one of Queensland's biggest tourist attractions, hosting more than 16 million visits in 2009. Outdoor recreation on our beaches and in the outback contributes significantly to Queensland's identity and culture and diversifies our regional economies. That is why in 2008 the government **committed to create a register for the land for public recreation and increase the baseline (300,000 hectares) by 50 per cent by 2020.**

The government is also **investing \$8.8 million over five years from 2008 to develop three new regional recreation trails** as part of a regional network of trails for SEQ. To be completed by 2012, these trails will provide opportunities for residents and visitors to explore and experience some of SEQ's most scenic landscapes. The government created the **Mt Joyce recreation area park**, a haven for mountain bikers, and invested in **Wyaralong Dam**. The Wyaralong motor bike recreational facility adjacent to Wyaralong Dam is to be jointly managed by local governments to provide a regional recreational facility, taking pressure off crowded coastal locations.

In 2011, the Bligh Government committed to phasing out all mining on **North Stradbroke Island** by 2025 with a vision to ensure this Queensland icon and favourite getaway for thousands of families has a more sustainable future for generations to come. \$28.6 million is already allocated over 5 years from 2010/2011 to implement the vision.

In 2011, an Economic Transition Taskforce was established to lead and coordinate development of the island's long-term sustainable economic future strategy. A draft Economic Transition Strategy was released for public consultation in December 2011.

In the last 12 months alone, the Bligh Government has:

- **Protected 50 per cent of North Stradbroke Island as national park.** In addition, two native title determinations by consent have been finalised between the government and the traditional owners, the Quandamooka Peoples, over the majority of North Stradbroke Island and a number of smaller islands in parts of Moreton Bay. We are also committed to employing 12 rangers to manage the park, 6 of whom will be indigenous.

- Allocated \$10.5 million over four years to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to assist in the management of Queensland's growing national park estate—which has taken the total number of rangers to over 800 for the first time.
- Released the final Biodiversity Strategy for Queensland, to be supported by \$3.9 million over three years as part of the ClimateQ Climate Change Corridors for Biodiversity initiative. The allocation will fund community action to build healthy, connected ecosystems for threatened and iconic species, such as cassowaries, in response to the threats of climate change.
- Released the Parks 4 People website, providing a comprehensive, interactive map of greenspace across Queensland from local parks through to national parks, how to get there and links to see the manager of the land.
- Released a new ten year blueprint for protected areas and wildlife, Naturally Queensland 2020.
- Invested \$2.3 million toward the development, marketing and operations of the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail and Boonah to Ipswich Trail.
- Release the Queensland Greenspace Strategy, one of the key outcomes of the Queensland Growth Management Summit to enhance Queensland's liveability and lifestyle.
- Launched the Queensland Greenspace Strategy 2011-2020 and the new Parks 4 People website, which helps Queenslanders find outdoor recreation areas in their neighbourhood.

## Anna Bligh's plan for more recreation in our parks

### 1. Walk in the Park – 50 new short walks near major cities and towns

A re-elected Bligh Government will introduce a new Walk in the Park initiative to revitalise popular National Parks and protected areas in locations near major cities and towns. This will provide more opportunities for more Queenslanders to get active in our iconic protected areas.

Under this initiative, \$14 million will be provided to develop 50 short walks less than 5km in distance in iconic protected areas and forests in the following areas:

- Brisbane parks including the Moreton Bay Islands
- Cairns and the Wet Tropics including the Daintree – one of the first will be Barron Gorge National Park
- Parks around Townsville
- Parks in the Mackay and Whitsundays region
- Capricorn Coast
- Wide Bay /Burnett region
- Fraser Island and Cooloola
- Sunshine Coast and Hinterland
- Gold Coast and Hinterland – among the first will be extending the Tallebudgera walk near David Fleay's Wildlife Park, and Pine Ridge Conservation Park, near the Broadwater

More recreation in our national parks

- Darling Downs including Girraween and Bunya Mountains National Parks.

Walk in the Park funding will cover infrastructure upgrades such as walking track upgrades, interpretive facilities and amenities, tourist roads, visitor brochure and information development, and directional signage.

#### **ACTION**

- Introduce a new **Walk in the Park** initiative, delivering up to 50 new short walks (of less than 5km in distance) in iconic national parks and protected areas. This will revitalise popular parks in key areas for regional tourism and in locations near major populations.

## **2. Run in the Park – establishing three new running trails**

A re-elected Bligh Government will provide \$3 million to establish a new Run in the Park initiative, which will deliver three mid distance bush running trails for both free running and organised events between 10 and 25 km in State Forests and Conservation Parks.

These three new bush running trails will be located on the Gold Coast, north of Brisbane, and in the Far North near Cairns.

This funding will support the cost of design, planning and construction including facilities, signage and maps.

#### **ACTION**

- Introduce a new **Run in the Park** initiative, delivering three mid-distance bush running trails across Queensland for both free running and organised events (of between 10 and 25 km) in State Forests or Conservation Parks.

## **3. Invest in tourism infrastructure and education and training on North Stradbroke Island**

With the phase out of all sand mining by 2025, the North Stradbroke Island community will need to look beyond mining as a key economic driver and transition towards more sustainable economic practises. Sustainable tourism has been identified as one of the most viable options for contributing to long term sustainable economic growth on the island.

Tourism already plays an important role in the island's economy contributing over \$25 million per year in direct value and supporting over 200 full time jobs. With a phase-out of mining and the

declaration of 80 per cent of the island as national park tourism opportunities to expand the tourism economy will significantly increase.

A re-elected Bligh Government will deliver a \$5.3 million North Stradbroke Island recreation package to support the transition to National Park, including:

- \$2 million to construct a network of day walks throughout the island.
- \$2 million to link Amity and Point Lookout with a new cycle track.
- \$500,000 towards a new whale watching platform near Point Lookout.
- Provide Minjerribah Camping Enterprise \$800,000 to support the upgrade of existing campground facilities including outdoor recreation infrastructure

#### **ACTION**

- Deliver a \$5.3 million **North Stradbroke Island recreation package** to support the transition to National Park, including:
  - \$2 million to construct a network of day walks throughout the island.
  - \$2 million to link Amity and Point Lookout with a new cycle track.
  - \$500,000 towards a new whale watching platform near Point Lookout.
  - Provide Minjerribah Camping Enterprise \$800,000 to support the upgrade of existing campground facilities including outdoor recreation infrastructure



## **For further information:**

For further information about this or any other of Anna Bligh's policies:

[www.anna4qlders.com.au](http://www.anna4qlders.com.au)

[info@qld.alp.org.au](mailto:info@qld.alp.org.au)

[www.twitter.com/TheQldPremier](https://www.twitter.com/TheQldPremier)

[www.youtube.com/PremierAnnaBligh](https://www.youtube.com/PremierAnnaBligh)

[www.facebook.com/Premier.Anna.Bligh](https://www.facebook.com/Premier.Anna.Bligh)