



Office of the
Director-General

Department of
**National Parks, Recreation,
Sport and Racing**

Our Ref: CTS 00707/14

Ms Emma Campbell
Acting Assistant Secretary
Program Delivery and Assessment Branch
Department of Environment
GPO Box 787
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Campbell

I understand that officers from the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (EHP), participate on an Emergency Grazing Steering Committee (Steering Committee) and are jointly tasked to resolve the future deed variations relating to the National Reserve System (NRS) properties in Queensland.

As part of the Steering Committee deliberations, I understand that EHP, which remains responsible for the gazettal of these properties, has identified existing mining interests (exploration permits and mining leases) as a significant impediment to the declaration of the NRS properties in totality as 'national park'. In response to your request for additional information, I am pleased to advise that I am presently negotiating with my respective Directors-General in EHP and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to resolve a future gazettal plan that accommodates existing interests and a strategy to progress each parcel to the highest possible International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) protected area tenure category, over time. In addition, we will be seeking, at the very least, for a moratorium on future permits being issued over these lands to limit future impediments between now and when they are gazetted. Officers of our departments hope to advise you of the outcome of these negotiations at the next scheduled Steering Committee meeting.

In the meantime, Wairuna station is a 76 500 hectare property and one of the few NRS properties without mining or exploration impediments. At present, the parcel is held as unallocated state land (USL) and it is possible for the State to commence the transition of this parcel to a protected area class under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act). Through conversion to a protected area class (or a combination of classes) the parcel will be able to be managed under legislation by rangers employed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). This cannot be properly achieved under the current *Land Act 1992* (Land Act) designation of USL, as QPWS employees are not afforded administrative delegations under the Land Act.

Level 7
111 George Street Brisbane
PO Box 15187 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone + 61 7 3338 9301
Facsimile + 61 7 3338 9335
Website www.nprsr.qld.gov.au
ABN 11 322 391 452

The current Deed for Wairuna required the State to reserve the land as IUCN Category II national park within two years of its purchase date or by 30 June 2012. As this date has now expired, there is a need to vary the Deed of Agreement to a mutually suitable timeframe. In order to progress negotiations around an amendment in the Deed for this property and the timeframes for progressing its dedication by EHP, I wish to propose an amended gazettal plan that reflects several issues that have transpired since its original purchase.

On 9 August 2013, the Queensland Heritage Council (QHC) resolved to list the Wairuna homestead and cemetery into the Queensland Heritage Register as a 'state heritage place of interest', mainly for the place's role in the development of Australia's beef cattle industry and the creation of the Australian Brahman. Through its listing, the homestead and surrounds are afforded unique protection under Queensland's heritage legislation and in accordance with this listing, NPRSR is now obligated to prepare a heritage agreement in relation to the ongoing management of the assets.

An assessment of the homestead and surrounds has identified significant structural and security issues. While NPRSR intends to address these to the best of its ability to make the site safe, the long-term restoration, maintenance and management of the homestead area is beyond the capacity of QPWS and not an operational priority. Over the last few months since its listing, QPWS has received several enquiries from Traditional Owner groups and other organisations wishing to explore the potential of operating ecotourism and other visitor-related enterprises at the site. These approaches represent an opportunity to enter into a public private partnership or lease arrangement, whereby a third party may occupy the homestead precinct and in doing so, provide essential security and ongoing maintenance of the buildings and structures in partnership with QPWS as the broader land manager.

To facilitate this opportunity, it is important to recognise that any lease needs to provide scope for a viable income and or other enterprise whether that be ecotourism, small scale horticulture or other pastoral activities. These land uses are not all consistent with national park IUCN Category II tenure and accordingly, a lower order protected area tenure for this precinct would provide greater flexibility and options for partners. A regional park tenure (previously conservation park tenure – IUCN Category III, IV and V) is therefore suggested for the homestead precinct and surrounds, with the remainder of the property dedicated as national park.

An analysis of regional park boundary options has been prepared using existing fencing and practical management boundary features such as roads (enclosed). Three options have been considered. Option 3 is considered the most viable and practical for long-term management of the property both by QPWS and a potential third party. This option is equivalent to approximately 6774 hectares or less than 10% of Wairuna. Option 1 would deliver a smaller area, however this does not provide a practical management boundary and is considered to be unlikely to offer a viable management area for a third party. Option 2 comprises the relatively small developed area of the Heritage Place and would only be practical and viable to a third party with specific and exclusive interest in the Heritage Place. Hence this would significantly limit third party options.

If this option is acceptable to the Federal Department of Environment, it is my intention to work closely with EHP on a gazettal process which secures Wairuna under these two protected area tenure categories. NPRSR will then call for expressions of interest from suitably qualified and credible organisations to operate a viable business over the regional park under a Section 34 Authority or lease arrangement. Key requirements of the lease would be to maintain public use and enjoyment of the park, to provide on-site presence and security to the homestead and basic repairs and maintenance of the heritage precinct and ongoing natural resource management to the lease area. QPWS will continue to deliver park management to the remainder of the property in accordance with the Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Plan that has been prepared for Wairuna.

Recent changes to the Act advanced through the Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 create the provision to issue ecotourism leases over national parks. While this could be considered for the immediate homestead site and surrounds, it is unlikely to provide sufficient economic return to generate any interest or meaningful viability.

On behalf of NPRSR and EHP, I therefore seek to renegotiate the terms of the funding deed to allow for a 6774 hectares part of the Wairuna property to be converted to regional park tenure. Once we have the Federal Department of Environment's endorsement to proceed on this basis, I will then seek agreement from EHP to progress the dedication at the earliest possible opportunity.

Should your officers have any further questions, please have them contact Mr Jason Jacobi, Executive Director, Regional Operations West, QPWS on telephone (07) 3330 5272 or via email jason.jacobi@nprsr.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

49-Sch4 - Signature

John Glaister
Director-General

18/3/14

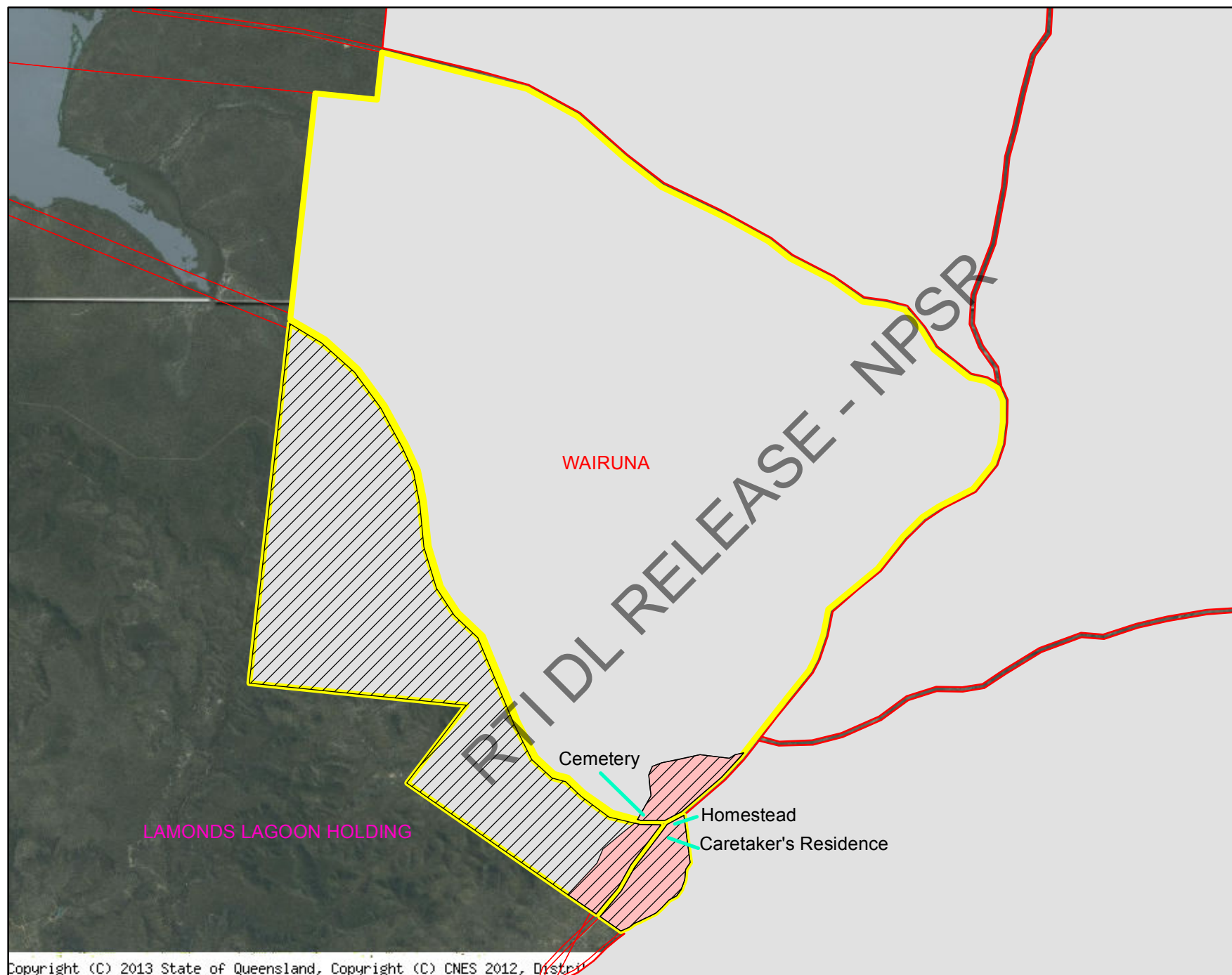
Encl

cc **Mr Jon Black**
Director-General
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
GPO Box 2454
BRISBANE QLD 4001

RTI DL RELEASE - NPRSR

Wairuna Options

-  Option 1 - 1,498 ha
-  Option 2 - 201 ha
-  Option 3 - 6,774 ha



© The State of Queensland (Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) 2009.

Source:
Department of National Parks, Recreation Sport and Racing data sets.
SDRN road data ©MapInfo Australia Pty Ltd 2009 ©Public Sector Mapping Authority Australia Pty Ltd 2009.

Projections
Geographic
Datum GDA94.

ACCURACY STATEMENT
Due to varying sources of data, spatial locations may not coincide when overlaid.

DISCLAIMER
This map is compiled from information supplied to the Department of National Parks, Recreation Sport and Racing. Whilst all care is taken in the preparation of this map, neither NPSR nor its officers or staff accept any responsibility for any loss or damage which may result from inaccuracy or omission in the map from the use of the information contained therein.

While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of SDRN data, MapInfo Australia Pty Ltd, Public Sector Mapping Authority Australia Pty Ltd and/or the State of Queensland makes no representations or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness or suitability for any particular purpose and disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages (including indirect or consequential damage) and costs which you might incur as a result of the data being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason.

Copyright (C) 2013 State of Queensland, Copyright (C) CNES 2012, Distribution

0 14-141 2 4
Kilometres





Australian Government
Department of the Environment

Ref: 14/001855

Mr John Glaister
Director General
Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sports and Racing
PO Box 15187
City East QLD 4002

Dear Mr Glaister

Thank you for your letter of 18 March 2014 regarding options for the gazettal and ongoing management of the Wairuna National Reserve System (NRS) property in Queensland. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Department of the Environment (the Department) has considered the options proposed by the Queensland Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sports and Racing (QDNPRSR) and agrees in principle to your preferred option for an amended gazettal plan, consistent with the following arrangements:

- as outlined, the majority of the Wairuna property (68 693 hectares) is gazetted as a National Park under the *Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Nature Conservation Act)* and managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) in perpetuity as International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category II.
- the homestead area of 6774 hectares, containing a heritage listed homestead and cemetery, will be gazetted as Regional Park under the *Nature Conservation Act*. Under the revised classification a range of commercial and recreational activities will be eligible to be undertaken in the homestead area, however, mining will be excluded. We understand that this area will be managed as IUCN Category VI (protected area with sustainable use of natural resources).
- any income generated for the Queensland Government by the lease arrangements with a third party provider for the homestead area is used solely for the purpose of biodiversity and heritage conservation and management of Wairuna and NRS properties managed by the Queensland Government.
- QPWS will maintain overarching responsibility under Queensland legislation and the Funding Deed as the land manager for the entire Wairuna holding.

The Department accepts there are benefits for the Wairuna NRS property resulting from our agreement to the proposal in regards to the ability of the QPWS to more effectively manage the heritage assets, security, access and safety.

Subject to your consideration of these proposed arrangements, I have asked officers from the Department to be available to work through the details as soon as possible with QDNPRSR and the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. It will be important to formalise the revised gazettal and management arrangements through a Deed of Variation for Wairuna. To facilitate the progression of the Deed of Variation as

quickly as possible, we are seeking further information on indicative timeframes for the gazettal process under the *Nature Conservation Act*, the management objectives under a regional park classification, and the statutory mechanism that would be used to give effect to a lease arrangement.

The Department is principally concerned with achieving the best conservation outcome for the Wairuna property and maximum return on the Commonwealth's investment in the NRS as a key mechanism for protecting biodiversity. We are pleased to see the proposed arrangements will contribute to this outcome.

Should your officers have any questions about the proposed arrangements, please have them contact Mr Neil Bensley, Director, Queensland on telephone (07) 3037 4740 or via email Neil.Bensley@environment.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

49-Sch4 - Signature

Emma Campbell
Acting Assistant Secretary
Program Delivery and Assessment Branch
Biodiversity Conservation Division
24 June 2014

RTI DL RELEASE - NPSR



Queensland
Government

Office of the
Director-General

Department of
**National Parks, Recreation,
Sport and Racing**

Our Ref: CTS 15699/14
Your Ref: 14/001855

Ms Emma Campbell
Acting Assistant Secretary
Program Delivery and Assessment Branch
Department of the Environment
GPO Box 787
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Campbell

Thank you for your letter of 24 June 2014 concerning the future management of the Wairuna National Reserve System (NRS) property.

The Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (NPRSR) accepts the proposed arrangements that have been outlined in your letter of 24 June 2014. I understand that the Federal Department of the Environment will now work with NPRSR and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to prepare a Deed of Variation. Your support for our proposed amended gazettal plan is appreciated.

As per your specific request for further information I can advise NPRSR is committed to expediting the tenure conversion of this property, subject to our joint agreement. However, it should be noted that the Wairuna NRS property is part of the State's tenure review process that is currently being submitted for Cabinet approval. Formal Cabinet consideration will occur in the near future. Subject to approval, it is intended that gazettal will take place no later than 31 December 2014.

Management principles for a regional park are outlined in section 21 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act):

- a) conserve and present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values
- b) ensure the area is maintained, to the greatest possible extent, in its natural condition
- c) provide for the controlled use of the area's cultural and natural resources
- d) provide opportunities for enjoyment and appreciation of the area and for recreational and commercial activities in the area.

Level 7
111 George Street Brisbane
PO Box 15187 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone + 61 7 3338 9301
Facsimile + 61 7 3338 9335
Website www.nprsr.qld.gov.au
ABN 11 322 391 452

Please be assured that the felling of timber for a commercial purpose must not be conducted in a regional park. Mining activities on a regional park can only occur within an authorised Resource Use Area. However, no such activity will be authorised on Wairuna as it has been declared a restricted area for mining tenements, ensuring no further mining permits are granted over the property.

The Act is the statutory mechanism that is used to give effect to a lease arrangement on a regional park. Following the gazettal process, NPRSR intends to approach interested parties to submit Expressions of Interest for the maintenance of the homestead complex and land management within the Regional park area. NPRSR will continue to work closely and consult with your agency on these arrangements as they progress.

Should your officers have any further queries, please have them contact Mr James Newman, Regional Director, Northern Region, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service on telephone (07) 4222 5310 or via email james.newman@nprsr.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

49-Sch4 - Signature

John Glaister
Director-General

11/7/14

cc: **Mr Jon Black**
Director-General
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
GPO Box 2454
BRISBANE QLD 4001

RTI DL RELEASE - NPRSR