South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2010

October 2010
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Population growth is a major issue for Queensland. The establishment of Growth Management Queensland within the Department of Infrastructure and Planning signifies the Queensland Government's commitment to capitalising on the benefits of growth while ensuring our lifestyle and environment is maintained. This is a major initiative from the Queensland Government's Growth Management Summit in March 2010.

Growth Management Queensland is responsible for the South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031 which balances population growth with the protection of SEQ's lifestyle and environment. The SEQ Regional Plan helps meet community needs for outdoor recreation by protecting over 85 per cent of the land area within SEQ from urban development and specifies principles, policies and programs which support outdoor recreation and recreation trails.

In addition to the SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy, Growth Management Queensland is responsible for:

1. **Queensland Greenspace Strategy** — focusing on securing more community greenspace as land for public recreation across Queensland
2. **SEQ Active Trails Strategy** — focusing on developing a network of high-quality recreation trails in SEQ.

Challenges and opportunities

Balancing growth and change with development and infrastructure provision is a complex challenge for the State Government and the community. It is important that needs for outdoor recreation opportunities and community greenspace are addressed in land use planning.

National, state and regional surveys show consistently higher participation in outdoor recreation than in organised sports. Surveys on participation of SEQ residents in outdoor recreation activities show a significant increase from 84 million activity-events\(^1\) in 1997 to 170 million activity-events in 2001. By 2007, participation dropped to 127 million activity-events. This may have been caused by factors including the introduction of Sunday trading; over-crowding of prime sites at peak times; new technologies that changed recreation preferences; perceptions of safety; increased traffic congestion and fuel costs; reduced site quality; and drought.

One challenge for governments and the community is to return outdoor recreation participation in SEQ at least to the 2001 level while maximising the health, social, environmental and economic benefits.

A second challenge is to form partnerships between the Queensland Government, Local Government, private enterprise and the community. The aim of these partnerships is to provide places for people to participate in their preferred outdoor recreation activities and to manage the places and activities for safety, sustainability and compliance with relevant laws.

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\(^1\) Activity-events are based on the number of SEQ residents participating in a particular outdoor recreation activity multiplied by their average frequency of participation over a year. Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation, Outdoor Recreation Trends in South East Queensland between 1997-2007, Brisbane, 2008. Copies are available from the Department of Communities, www.sportrec.qld.gov.au
Outdoor recreation is usually a secondary use of:
- land used primarily for forestry, farming, nature conservation or transport
- creeks, rivers and lakes used for water supply
- coastal seas used for transport and commercial fishing.

Usually, outdoor recreation activities can be managed to complement these primary uses and to ensure safety, sustainability and compliance with relevant laws.

Activities which require exclusive use of purpose-built facilities (e.g. courts, playing fields, stadiums and racing tracks) are not addressed by this strategy.

People engage in outdoor recreation for many reasons and in many different ways including for personal challenge; to relax; to participate in an outdoor education program or in adventure, nature-based or eco tourism; to compete; to improve health and fitness; and to experience particular places, landscapes or cultures.

Outdoor recreation is very diverse with differences in activities, equipment, motivations, expectations; preferences for landscapes and group size; and providers. Managing this diversity is complex and needs new approaches.

Where does outdoor recreation happen in SEQ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation activities</th>
<th>Public places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bushwalking, rogaining and orienteering</td>
<td>Public parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing and kayaking on rivers and lakes and in the sea</td>
<td>Unformed roads and stock routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>State forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>Navigable estuaries and rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife watching</td>
<td>Beaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse riding—trail riding and endurance events</td>
<td>Private off-road vehicle parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming, scuba diving and surfing in the sea</td>
<td>Coastal waters including Moreton Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-wheel driving</td>
<td>Private rural land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling—road cycling and mountain bike riding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock climbing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gliding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Waterskiing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Benefits of outdoor recreation

**Making Queenslanders Australia’s healthiest people**

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

Outdoor recreation is the preferred form of physical activity for many Queenslanders. Participation in outdoor recreation can help manage obesity and related health issues; improve fitness and strength; reduce stress; develop problem-solving and risk management skills and self-confidence; and build and maintain social relationships. By providing safe, convenient and attractive places for outdoor recreation, the Queensland Government encourages Queenslanders to choose healthy lifestyles. The health, economic, social and environmental benefits from outdoor recreation are strongly interrelated.
Where are we now?

The Queensland Government is already delivering new outdoor recreation opportunities in SEQ. Recent achievements include:

- 100 kilometres of the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail opened with another 50 kilometres to be completed by July 2012
- the 28 kilometre Maroochy River Trail on the Sunshine Coast
- development of a regional outdoor recreation precinct around the Wyaralong Dam to include:
  - 745 hectare Wyaralong Trail Bike Park—in partnership with Local Governments
  - facilities for camping and canoeing
  - 24 kilometres of the Boonah to Ipswich Trail
  - 25 kilometres of mountain bike tracks in the Mount Joyce Escape Mountain Bike Park
  - more than 40 kilometres of multi-use (walking, mountain biking and horse riding) recreation trails
- completion of four new Great Walks in SEQ’s national parks
  - Gold Coast Hinterland (54 kilometres)
  - Conondale Range (56 kilometres)
  - Sunshine Coast Hinterland (58 kilometres)
  - Cooloola (102 kilometres)
- dedication of the 61 750 hectare Cooloola Recreation Area from Noosa North Shore to Rainbow Beach—managed by the Department of Environment and Resource Management in partnership with Gympie and Sunshine Coast Regional Councils
- 11 new recreational boating infrastructure projects completed in SEQ—boat ramps, pontoons and floating walkways
- completion of the Harry Atkinson Reef east of St Helena Island and approval for two new artificial reefs in Moreton Bay for recreational fishers and scuba divers
- vision for North Stradbroke Island—by the end of 2027, all sand mining leases will have expired and more than 80 per cent of the island will be national park with opportunities for outdoor recreation activities such as camping, four-wheel driving, beach fishing, picnicking, bushwalking, cycling and surfing
- release of a draft Queensland Greenspace Strategy in March 2010 with the final strategy expected in 2011.

Map 1 outlines existing regional community greenspace within SEQ.
Map 1: Existing regional community greenspace network
Implementing the SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy—priority actions

The SEQ Outdoor Recreation Strategy identifies eight priority actions for implementation to better coordinate and build on the Queensland Government’s achievements to date. These actions will also enable formal establishment and recognition of partnerships with Local Governments, industry organisations and the community to increase participation in, and opportunities for, outdoor recreation in the region.

1. Develop an implementation plan to guide planning, development and management of outdoor recreation activities, places and infrastructure in SEQ.
   The implementation plan will detail coordination arrangements; infrastructure priorities and development plans; outdoor recreation-related services; research priorities; opportunities for volunteer involvement; and mechanisms for community engagement.

2. Coordinate outdoor recreation policy, development and management through Queensland’s planning system—community plans, planning schemes, policies in the SEQ Regional Plan and management plans for public land.

3. Develop and implement mechanisms to protect and manage multi-tenure areas for outdoor recreation—such as dedication of new recreation areas under the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006.
   For example, the recently dedicated 61,750 hectare Cooloola Recreation Area covers national park, various State and Local Government properties, roads and esplanades (both state land), and beaches down to the low water mark.

4. Prioritise outdoor recreation opportunities and community green space in management plans for state lands.
   For example, implement a management plan for Glen Rock Regional Park which ensures outdoor recreation is diverse, safe and sustainable while achieving priority nature conservation, catchment management, and scenic amenity and landscape heritage outcomes.

5. In conjunction with the Queensland Greenspace Strategy, develop options to assist private landholders to provide outdoor recreation opportunities.
   For example, the Department of Communities already has information about the development and management of trail bike riding facilities on private land available online.

6. In conjunction with the Queensland Greenspace Strategy, develop a public recreation land register and map the regional community greenspace network.
   This information will be used to create a website for community groups, tourists and Queensland residents to access information about the outdoor recreation opportunities in their region, town or city.

7. Manage a program of projects which foster community involvement in planning, developing, managing and monitoring outdoor recreation places and activities such as the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Ambassadors.

8. Develop a system for consistent naming of outdoor recreation activities and describing the places needed for each activity.
   This system will accommodate changing technologies and emerging activities. For example, since the 1990s, mountain bike riding has branched into many different styles including Downhill Cross-Country, Trials, Mountain Cross, Free Riding and Dirt Jumping. Although these are collectively known as mountain bike riding, each requires a different combination of place, technique and bicycle design.
   Likewise, surfing is a collective term for related, but clearly different activities, including body surfing; boogie board riding, surfboard riding, surf ski riding, wave ski riding and surf kayaking paddling.
   The outdoor recreation naming system will be used by State agencies, Local Governments, researchers and private enterprise to help meet people’s preferences for activities and places and to manage emerging activities for safety and sustainability.

Image courtesy of Michael Marston.