



4th September 2025

Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation
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Submission to A Fresh Start for Private Protected Areas

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for the outdoor sector in Queensland.

We represent outdoor organisations and individuals in Queensland, consisting of a range of outdoor industry stakeholders, covering the five broad pillars of outdoor activities:

- outdoor recreation,
- outdoor education,
- outdoor health,
- nature-based tourism, and
- associated support services.

The mission of Outdoors Queensland is to ensure that all people have opportunities to create connections with Queensland's outdoors. Our vision is to create a world where the outdoors is a vital part of every healthy life - a healthy world comes from a balanced life, incorporating outdoor activities for all people.

As the industry peak body for the outdoor sector, we have a strong focus on building capacity and capability of outdoor people and outdoor organisations to help all people make connections with Queensland's outdoors.

We believe that the Queensland Government strategies and high-level plans should encourage more Queenslanders to engage in outdoor activities and connect with Queensland's outdoors. This will mean that Queenslanders become healthier at a population-level, Queensland's economy would be healthier through avoided health costs and direct economic benefits (tourism and education), and Queensland's outdoor sector will continue to grow.

Outdoors Queensland is pleased to provide feedback on the *A Fresh Start for Private Protected Areas* discussion paper that has been released for public consultation.

Across Queensland, people engage in outdoor activities on both public and private land. By encouraging outdoor opportunities related to ecotourism, recreation, education and health, Queensland's landholders will be provided more opportunities to generate diverse income streams.



Outdoors Queensland welcomes the statement from Minister Powell in the Foreword to on the *A Fresh Start for Private Protected Areas* discussion paper about working together to grow Queensland's protected areas and conserve Queensland's incredible landscapes and biodiversity.

Queensland's private protected areas present a currently untapped opportunity where tourism, outdoor activities and conservation can drive economic growth. By encouraging outdoor activities on private protected land, landholders could generate additional income streams and some demand on public protected areas could be alleviated.

Outdoors Queensland is a member of the Protect Beautiful Queensland alliance, and we support the Protect Beautiful Queensland [submission](#) to this process:

Queensland's private protected area program is a key part of a holistic approach to conservation. Nature refuges provide vital links to national parks and an avenue for protecting landscapes under-represented in our conservation estate. By addressing the points below, the state government can ensure the program sets a high benchmark for supporting landholders to care for nature.

- Protect landholders' legacy by keeping nature refuge agreements permanent, so once a refuge is declared it remains protected forever.
- Bring more landholders on board by developing new ways to reward participation — like ongoing stewardship payments or rate relief for those managing very large refuges (over 5,000 hectares).
- Boost on-the-ground support by creating 13 new staff positions, including a dedicated role to help landholders apply for a special wildlife reserve on their property.
- Tackle threats head-on by increasing funding to programs like NatureAssist and the Nature Refuge Landholder Grants scheme, so landholders can better manage fire, feral animals and invasive weeds.

Outdoors Queensland is pleased to note that tourism, recreational activities and health and wellbeing are included on page 5 of the *A Fresh Start for Private Protected Areas* discussion paper. We submit that outdoor and environmental education should also be included as another important role played by protected areas across Queensland.

Outdoors Queensland notes that the Queensland Government has recently released *Destination 2045: Delivering Queensland's Tourism Future*, which includes the following initiatives and activities relating to ecotourism:

- Initiative 1.1 - Streamline and simplify processes to facilitate and accelerate ecotourism growth in protected areas
- Initiative 1.2 – Enable one single permission for tourism operations on protected areas to streamline the permitting process for businesses.
- Initiative 1.7 – Work with First Nations peoples to support culture and Country and create access to valued tourism experiences.
- Initiative 1.9 – Boost agritourism with more farm stays and experiences,



helping farmers diversify and improve on-farm profitability.

Outdoors Queensland supports these initiatives and the associated activities. We believe that there is an ideal opportunity to piggy-back on the actions in Destination 2045 by ensuring that the actions described apply equally to outdoor recreation, outdoor education and nature-based health, as they do to ecotourism, and ensuring that these initiatives apply to private protected areas, as well as public protected areas.

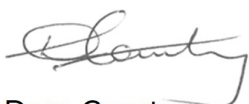
Outdoors Queensland suggests that there is a need for research into current levels and likely future demands of outdoor activities occurring across Queensland. Outdoor Recreation Demand Studies were conducted between 1997 and 2007 as a joint initiative of Queensland Government agencies. Copies of the Demand Study Reports are available on the Outdoors Queensland [website](#).

We submit that the Queensland Government should revive the Outdoor Recreation Demand Study and invest in research into outdoor activities across the breadth of the Queensland protected areas, including private protected areas. This would provide a detailed stocktake of the current level of all different activities alongside clear pictures of demand as the population increases and tourism numbers grow. Outdoors Queensland would be pleased to be involved in this important research.

Outdoors Queensland looks forward to further involvement in this important process. We would be pleased to provide additional detail regarding elements of this submission. We understand that this submission may be published as part of the consultation process.

Outdoors Queensland looks forward to contributing to the implementation of the strategy. If you have any queries, please contact Executive Officer, Dom Courtney, on 0419 976 800 or eo@outdoorsqueensland.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



Dom Courtney
Executive Officer / Company Secretary

