

QUEENSLAND'S GREAT OUTDOORS

Estimated 2016 annual figures



70 MILLION

Number of times Queensland residents participated in nature-based outdoor recreation



231 MILLION

Hours of outdoor recreation participation by Queensland residents



50%

Walking, running and cycling accounted for around 50% of total outdoor recreation by residents aged 15 and over in Queensland



660 THOUSAND

Number of times Queensland school children participated in nature-based outdoor activity



\$3.6 BILLION

Estimated spending on outdoor recreation in Queensland



33,500 FTE

Full-time equivalent jobs attributable to outdoor recreation in Queensland



\$1.9 BILLION

Estimated direct gross value added attributable to outdoor recreation in Queensland



\$380 BILLION

Lifetime avoided healthcare costs from outdoor activity in Queensland



Source: Queensland's nature-based outdoor economy - Key estimates and recommendations (A Marsden Jacob Report 2018)

Outdoors
QUEENSLAND

Outdoor Recreation Policy for the 2020 Queensland State Election

September 2020



Image courtesy Mountain Bike Australia

Outdoor activities deliver significant benefits to Queensland: due to our State's great outdoors, thousands of Queenslanders are employed and millions of Queenslanders are healthier.

- Places and Spaces:
 - Outdoors Queensland calls for spaces for outdoor activities to be identified, secured and managed to integrate with other values and other uses
- Policy:
 - Outdoors Queensland calls for the development and implementation of government policies that enhance the delivery of outdoor opportunities and experiences throughout Queensland, including recognition of the public health value of outdoor activity
- Providers:
 - Outdoors Queensland calls for investment in capacity building for outdoor providers, targeted at enhancing quality delivery of outdoor activity
- Promotion:
 - Outdoors Queensland calls for increased investment in promotion of opportunities for people to participate in outdoor activities and outdoor environments.



Photographer: Lachlan Gardiner (Visioning the Outdoors Film & Photo Comp)

A Vision for Queensland Outdoor Recreation Policy

Outdoor experiences contribute to healthier, more productive communities.

Outdoor recreation spaces and activities provide quality of life and positive engagement within our communities. Outdoor recreation spaces and experiences connect people to place, self and others.

Queenslanders value experiences in the outdoors and we act to protect the legacy of participation in outdoor recreation, outdoor sports, outdoor/environmental education, health and lifestyle improvement, adventure therapy, and nature-based tourism for our current and future populations.

Why does Queensland need consistent outdoor recreation policy?

A comprehensive, integrated and collaborative policy approach to the outdoor sector is required to maximise the health, environmental, social and economic benefits for Queensland.

Population-wide, sustainable improvements in health and wellbeing requires partnerships between government and sectors not currently embedded within the health system. Outdoor recreation organisations, businesses and clubs, alongside sport and fitness organisations, are obvious vehicles for government to partner with to achieve outcomes for communities.

Policy affecting the outdoors must:

- Encourage and promote participation through provision of green and aquatic infrastructure,
- Recognise outdoor recreation benefits through research, social awareness and education campaigns,
- Engage community buy in for outdoor recreation through positive media reports relating to outdoor recreation, outdoor sports, outdoor and environmental education, health and lifestyle improvement, adventure therapy, and nature-based tourism,
- Provide events and opportunities for individuals (including children), groups, families and clubs to participate the diverse outdoor activities and environments that Queensland offers, and
- Review existing and historic practices and policies that reduce opportunities for legitimate outdoor recreation activities (including “hard to locate” activities such as off-road motorcycling).

Outdoor activity must be taken into account in all discussions regarding physical activity and health. Outdoor activity is essential, and outdoor experiences must be accessible and approachable for the entire population.

Cohesive outdoor policy will create the following outcomes for government:

- provide desirable opportunities for people to live healthily;
- encourage people to understand and honour their environments;
- draw visitation and migration to regional areas;
- meet the needs and wants of the population for outdoor recreation resources now and into the future; and
- understand where and how outdoor recreation is compatible with other resource uses such as management for wildlife and biodiversity, watersheds, timber harvesting, historic preservation and indigenous cultural needs.

Outdoor activities engage people in interactions with the natural and 'outside' environments. Outdoor recreation policies must recognise this interaction and strive to create access for participation while minimising damage to the environment and educating participants of their role as stewards for the environment. Sustainable participation is the goal.

Guiding Principles

Community Benefit - Outdoor activities provide positive benefits to our communities by contributing to wellbeing, quality of life and connected communities. Benefits include personal, physical, mental and emotional health; environmental awareness; regional economic benefits; and the opportunity to provide satisfying experiences for tourists and visitors.

Interconnection - Communities are stronger from being connected through greenways and waterways that act as corridors for outdoor recreation. These corridors connect the Queensland landscape by linking urban to peri urban, rural to wilderness. Outdoor experiences enhance connections to cultural heritage - indigenous cultural heritage and non-indigenous cultural heritage.

Stewardship - Outdoor participants are stewards of the environment in which they engage. There is a need to improve the environmental quality of our open spaces, and provide outdoor pursuits in relevant settings. It is acknowledged that not all outdoor activities should occur in all places, at all points in time. However, there needs to be available spaces for legitimate outdoor activities close to the homes of Queenslanders.

Validity - Outdoor recreation activities are recognised and valued as valid, legitimate and beneficial forms of physical activity. Outdoor recreation spaces need appropriate access, infrastructure and planning.

Future Needs - A diversity of lands and waters should be acquired/preserved to meet current and future outdoor recreation needs of the communities of Queensland. The outdoors must be valued for the opportunity to recreate, learn, heal, recuperate, challenge, adventure and interact with family and friends. Meeting future needs means responding now to the demands of tomorrow, and ensuring there are spaces and places available for outdoor recreation purposes, whether that be national parks, marine parks, rivers, major dams, local government parks, beaches, Queensland territorial waters or private lands.

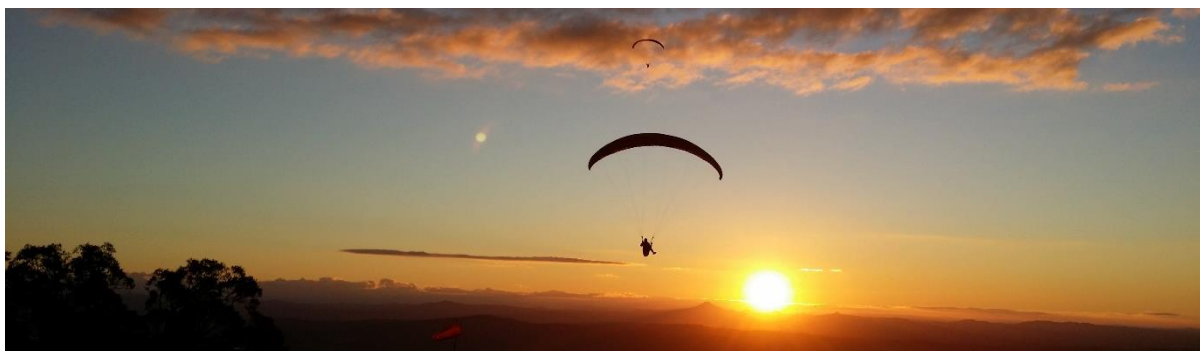
Actions

Outdoors Queensland calls on all political parties to:

1. Provide broad ranging opportunities for all people to freely participate in diverse, legitimate outdoor recreation activities;
2. Provide active support through promotion and funding for not for profit clubs and associations in their delivery of positive and inclusive outdoor recreation programs and recruitments - including support for Outdoors Queensland as the peak body for the outdoor sector in Queensland and support for Outdoors Queensland's Nature Play QLD project in its mission to make nature play a normal part of childhood in Queensland;
3. Formally connect the active industry (including outdoor recreation) with the health sector to focus on physical activity, obesity, chronic disease prevention and mental health benefits.
4. Consider separating funding programs for recreation from funding programs for sporting purposes, rather than the traditional model of having combined recreation and sport funding programs, due to the inherent difficulty in comparing relative merits of projects that address quite different needs.
5. Sufficiently resource QPWS to effectively manage the Protected Area Estate (PAE) and to provide support and encouragement for outdoor recreation/education/therapy in these environments. This includes (for example):
 - a. recruiting sufficient on-ground staff;
 - b. provision of well designed and developed trails for multiple activity purposes;
 - c. development of camping sites that can accommodate school and other larger scale groups;
 - d. expanding the PAE to ensure areas of significance are not lost to the community;
 - e. addressing the ongoing maintenance requirements of the PAE;
6. Support government and non-government land and water managers to provide spaces for outdoor recreation activities that cater for actual and latent demand;
7. Commit resources to the development of a comprehensive understanding of the current and potential economic, social, environmental and personal benefits of diverse outdoor recreation activities (and the implications if these experiences are lost from the Queensland lifestyle);
8. Commit resources to improving the understanding of the current and potential social, personal and environmental benefits of effective outdoor education in the P-12 school system, including the benefits of building resilience, good risk management behaviours, learning outcomes, interpersonal skills, judgement, communication and self-reliance;
9. Manage outdoor recreation access, programs, promotion and incentives in a holistic and coordinated manner. This includes engaging with the outdoor recreation/education sector and ensuring whole of government communication to guide planning, coordination, resourcing and delivery. Outdoor recreation policy and planning needs to receive attention at a high level and involve effective inter-departmental coordination;
10. Invest in partnerships that build the capacity of outdoor operators, including with Outdoors Queensland, Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance, the VET and higher education system to ensure relevant, accessible, sustainable training assists develop informed and capable outdoor recreation and outdoor education leaders and programmes;

11. Formally connect the active industry (including outdoor recreation) with the health sector by:
 - a. Aligning Health and Wellbeing Queensland with the Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance through a partnership in an Activate Good Health Passport which focusses on physical activity, obesity and chronic disease prevention and mental health,
 - b. Health and Wellbeing Queensland establishing, through Active Queenslanders Industry Alliance, a free State-wide community-based network information and referral service for physical activity options that people can access in the communities (across fitness, sport, active/community recreation), and
 - c. Recognising that physical activity can contribute to the economic recovery of Queensland through \$18 Billion economic benefit to the Queensland economy, including an annual \$1 Billion saving to Queensland's health budget.
12. Enable interstate and regional cooperation for State and Local outdoor recreation projects to multiply the public benefits, and prioritise the development and promotion of significant recreational trail projects;
13. Implement a program of advice and incentives to private land holders to provide outdoor recreation opportunities on their properties. Many private landholders already allow people on their properties for outdoor recreation purposes and the private sector takes pressure off our national parks and public lands. Advice needs to be given on development approval processes, risk management and liability insurance to help private landholders to manage outdoor recreation on their land; and programs developed and implemented to help subsidise liability insurance;
14. Support and enable local government authorities to:
 - a. conduct inventories and evaluate their outdoor recreation resources and opportunities,
 - b. purchase land for outdoor recreation purposes,
 - c. determine local and regional trend data regarding population, recreation, transportation, health etc as it relates to outdoor recreation needs and liveable communities,
 - d. plan for outdoor recreation use and development of resources, and
 - e. rehabilitate and construct new facilities and support services to meet outdoor recreation requirements.

Outdoors Queensland recognises that being outdoors is good for people. The outdoors is great for well-being and can speed up healing. Nature can calm us down and increase creativity and productivity. Outdoor experiences connect people to their true selves, to others and to the natural environment. - Outdoors Queensland Strategic Plan: 2020-2022



Photographer: Dom Colvile (Visioning the Outdoors Film & Photo Comp)

Note: This document draws on past policy position statements produced by QORF, and is not likely to present anything new in our understanding of outdoor recreation/education benefits for those within the outdoor sector. We have drawn from policies and research that is well established both in Australia and internationally. There are Irish, New Zealand, Norwegian, USA, UK and Canadian national policies that prioritise outdoor recreation participation as part of the culture and health of their countries. As we have done previously, we specifically reference Siehl, G. (2008), "The Policy Path to the Great Outdoors: A History of the Outdoor Recreation Review Commissions" (USA, Resources for the Future) and the City of Fort Collins Parks and Recreation Policy Plan (2008) in the development of this document.