

23 August 2021

Stock Routes Review
Land Policy, Department of Resources
PO BOX 15216
City East Qld 4002

lpconsult@resources.qld.gov.au

Dear Madam/Sir,

Submission regarding the Stock Routes Discussion Paper: Proposed amendments to the Stock Route Management Regulation 2003 and associated legislation

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for the outdoor sectors in Queensland. We represent and advocate on behalf of outdoor organisations and individuals in Queensland.

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.

Outdoors Queensland appreciates the work that has been done by the Department of Resources in the preparation of the ***Stock Routes Discussion Paper - Proposed amendments to the Stock Route Management Regulation 2003 and associated legislation*** (the Discussion Paper), and we appreciate the opportunity to provide input to this process.

Outdoors Queensland is pleased to note that the Discussion Paper acknowledges that "While their primary use is as a resource for travelling stock, the roads and reserves also have environmental, recreational and cultural significance."

Queensland's stock route network is comprised of approximately 72,000 kilometres of roads, making it one of the largest trail networks in Australia. The recreational value of Queensland's stock route network should not be underestimated. This network, with its connections to reserves for camping presents significant value to Queensland in a variety of different ways, including the following:

- Provision of places to be active outdoors improves health and wellbeing of Queenslanders, improving the physical, social and mental health of individuals, families and communities, and reducing burdens on the health system,
- Opportunities to capitalise on tourism benefits in rural and regional areas of Queensland, particularly as Queenslanders (and Australians) are holidaying locally due to the ongoing uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Opportunities to increase understanding of Indigenous and post-Colonial history and culture of large parts of Queensland, and



- Economic benefits associated with tourism opportunities and avoided health treatment costs.

We note that in section 3.5.2 of the Discussion Paper, figures are provided relating to the assessment of the extent to which different users benefit from using the stock route network, compared to the grazing industry through travel and agistment on the network. The figures provided from that assessment are

- 79% of the value goes to the community based on environmental, cultural and recreational benefits, and
- 21% of the value goes to the grazing industry (pastoral industry and to a smaller extent, beekeepers) by providing for stock travel and agistment.

Outdoors Queensland supports the conclusion that the grazing industry should not be responsible for more than the proposed 21% of the administration and maintenance costs through the payment of fees to use the network. This means that the community (though its government agencies) assumes 79% of the administration and maintenance costs as a community obligation.

The Discussion Paper provides graphs and figures regarding number of stock and permits, but there is no information provided regarding non-grazing activities on the stock route network.

For this significant community asset to be properly appreciated, it needs to be properly valued. Outdoors Queensland calls for research and measurement to be undertaken to better understand the 79% of the value of the Queensland stock route network that is comprised by environmental, cultural and recreational benefits. We believe that research needs to be done and published regarding the number of people using the stock route network for recreation, types of activities undertaken, average length of time per visit, and average spend per visit.

If the community is paying 79% of the administration and maintenance costs associated with the stock route network, then it is important that the entire community appreciates the environmental, cultural and recreational benefits offered by the stock route network, and the benefits of that investment are readily apparent to all.

We note that under the *Stock route network management strategy 2021-2025*, the goal regarding “a common understanding of the purpose, extent, attributes and values of the network to enable its effective management and use” (Goal 1 in Table 2) and associated objectives and actions are considered only as aspirational or to be implemented if opportunity arises. Outdoors Queensland submits that if 79% of the value goes to the community, and the community is meeting 79% of the costs of administration/maintenance, then this goal and its associated objectives and actions should be promoted to Table 1 of the *Stock route network management strategy 2021-2025* to ensure that the community fully understands the purpose, extent, attributes and values of the stock route network.

Outdoors Queensland supports the proposed improvements to the Act outlined in the Discussion Paper. We believe that processes should be simplified for local governments and the actions identified (5.1.1 to 5.1.5) would contribute to simplification. Outdoors Queensland strongly supports the requirement for local governments to consult with relevant state agencies when developing stock route management plans, however this should not only be in situations where the stock route is co-located on or adjacent to state-controlled roads and

protected areas. In recognition of the recreational value of the stock route network, we suggest that Sport and Recreation should be included as one of the government agencies to be consulted by local government in developing/reviewing stock route management plans.

We note that Section 4 of the Discussion Paper deals with proposed amendments to the Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017 to charge the same fee for travelling stock on the protected areas estate as proposed for stock routes. Outdoors Queensland appreciates that the intention is to provide more consistency, however we query whether it is appropriate to charge the same fee for stock on the protected area estate as for stock on roads or other areas of declared stock route network.

Outdoors Queensland would defer to position of the Department of Environment and Science (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service) on this point, however we suggest that it may be appropriate to charge higher fees to travel stock through protected area estate. That could act as a possible deterrent from moving stock through protected areas and may offset the increased administrative burden involved in issuing permits to travel stock through protected area estate.

We welcome further discussion on any points raised in this submission, which are summarised in the table in Appendix A below. Outdoors Queensland understands that this submission may be published by the Queensland government as part of the community consultation process.

Please contact Executive Officer, Dom Courtney via eo@outdoorsqueensland.com.au with any queries regarding this submission.

Yours sincerely



Dom Courtney
Executive Officer

Appendix A – Submission Summary

Statement	Suggested Action
Undertake research to better understand the value of the Queensland stock route network comprised by recreational users	Conduct and publish research regarding number of people using the stock route network for recreation, types of activities undertaken, average length of time per visit, and average spend per visit
Enhance the common understanding of the purpose, extent, attributes and values of the network to enable its effective management and use	<i>Stock route network management strategy 2021-2025:</i> promote the goal regarding “a common understanding of the purpose, extent, attributes and values of the network to enable its effective management and use” and associated objectives and actions from Table 2 to Table 1 of the strategy to ensure this goal, objectives and actions are prioritised
That Sport and Recreation should be included as a state government agency to be consulted by local government authorities when developing/reviewing stock route management plans	<i>Stock Route Management Act 2002</i> - Sport and Recreation to be included as one of the government agencies to be consulted by local government in developing/reviewing stock route management plans
Query whether it is appropriate to charge the same fee for stock on the protected area estate as for stock on roads or other areas of declared stock route network	Consider charging higher fees to travel stock on the protected area estate compared to fee to travel stock on roads or other areas of declared stock route network