

30 September 2022

City of Ipswich
PO Box 191
Ipswich QLD 4305

Email – communityengagement@ipswich.qld.gov.au

Dear Madam/Sir,

Submission regarding draft Natural Environment Strategy 2023

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for the outdoor recreation sector in Queensland. We represent outdoor recreation organisations and individuals in Queensland, consisting of a range of outdoor industry stakeholders, including local governments, schools with outdoor education programs, small businesses and commercial operators, activity-focused peak bodies, clubs and community organisations.

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 broadly supports the draft Natural Environment Strategy 2023 that has been released by City of Ipswich. Outdoors Queensland has completed the online survey, and is pleased to have an opportunity to provide more detailed feedback in this written submission.

We welcome the inclusion of various images throughout the draft document showing people engaging in outdoor activities, including bushwalking, mountain biking, outdoor play, climbing and paddling.

Outdoors Queensland supports the stated goal of achieving a protected, connected and resilient natural environment landscape across Ipswich. We welcome the recognition in the draft strategy that the desired outcomes cannot be achieved by council alone, and that partnerships and education will be critical. Outdoors Queensland would be pleased to be involved in this process.

Outdoors Queensland believes that allowing appropriate access for positive outdoor experiences is a crucial method of achieving improved community connections to natural areas. Positive outcomes can be significantly enhanced by providing accessible information in a various ways for visitors to natural areas, whether the outdoor activities are undertaken as part of an organised group with an outdoor leader or independently by members of our communities.

Recreational access can assist in education of people regarding the value of natural areas and the importance of protection of those areas. Rather than being seen as a threat to be managed, we submit that recreational use should be considered an asset to be harnessed to ensure that there is public pressure to ensure that the natural environment is protected now and into the future.

We believe that appropriate access for outdoor recreation activities should be encouraged, rather than discouraged.

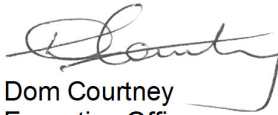


Although the heading used in the draft strategy is "Sustainable nature-based recreation", recreation is described in the draft document as a threat to the natural environment, with multiple negative consequences listed. It is suggested that in the interests of balance, the positive consequences of recreation should also be presented – improved health of communities, enhanced appreciation of natural environment, increased investment in conservation activities and land management practices.

Based on expected demand from the increased population associated with the transition towards urbanisation in the central zone shown in Map 7 of the draft strategy, we suggest that consideration should be given to establishing appropriate recreational trail access in the Western ranges area, where appropriate.

We welcome discussion on any points raised in this submission. Outdoors Queensland understands that this submission may be published by City of Ipswich as part of the consultation process. Outdoors Queensland looks forward to ongoing involvement this process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dom Courtney", is written over a horizontal line.

Dom Courtney
Executive Officer