



Update: Meeting 24 April with QPWD, TRAQ, QORF

Attendees: QPWD representatives were Guy Thomas (Manager Tourism and Visitors), Wolf Sievers (Director Terrestrial Parks), Jason Jacobi (District Manager SEQ), Mick Cubis (senior ranger Mapleton) and Ross (not recorded). TRAQ were Don Wallace, Ian Javes and Greg Waite. Kathy Kingsford for QORF.

Agreed: Creation of User Group forum for trail-based events.

Main aims:

- coordinate annual planning for trail-based events;
- involve QPWD management in new event assessments so that issues about policy boundaries are resolved

Membership: open to all organisers, including adventure events

Coordination: Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation

Outstanding: QPWD has declined permits for all new events on walking trails over the past year. At this meeting QPWD agreed shared use of walking trails for large group activities, use of the Great Walks, and use of National Parks were not specifically ruled out by policy. However in practise, events which would be approved in other states and countries are declined in Queensland.

TRAQ's key issues

- QPWD has in effect banned new large group activities from occasional and/or shared use of walking tracks
- Current policies, area management plans and permits assign separate areas for each user group, and refuse permits for occasional shared use of walking tracks
- For large group activities this means no experience of quality trails and forest; events are restricted to maintenance roads which are typically rough, unsigned and without facilities
- Large group activities have many important social benefits; our events include walkers and runners, provide enjoyment, support and safety, as well as publicity for active lives, regional communities and tourism
- There are no new conservation issues; sharing is sensible use of existing trails
- Queensland policies on large group activities are at odds with agencies in the rest of Australia and overseas

TRAQ's specific requests

- Approval of Mapleton fun run/walk, and one trails event per year on new Great Walks
- Support for Trailwalker events in Brisbane Forest Park and Fraser Island Great Walk
- Support for regional trails events, including in national parks
- QPWS sets event limits at reasonable levels (100-400 depending on location)