



114 Boundary Street
Railway Estate, Townsville
Qld, 4810
PO Box 364, Townsville
Ph: 61 07 47716226
office@nqcc.org.au
www.nqcc.org.au
ABN: 55 903 033 286

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MEDIA RELEASE

THE FUTURE OF NATIONAL PARKS

North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) today expressed concern about the future of Queensland's National Parks within the new portfolio of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing.

"We fear that National Parks, a mere 5% of Queensland and designed to protect the natural and often threatened values of some of the most beautiful and treasured areas of our State, will be damaged if open to extensive recreational and sporting activities.

"Pre-election, Campbell Newman said that he wanted to open National Parks 'to everybody' – including for horse-riding and tourism.

We are concerned that that would allow for, for example, quad and other motor bikes, 4WDs and other animals, such as dogs. "Quite apart from the environmental damage that would occur, imagine walking through Magnetic Island National Park or Paluma National Park or any of the National Parks around Townsville and north Queensland, and hearing bike engines and dogs barking – or dodging vehicles while walking on wilderness tracks.

"The whole point of National Parks is to preserve the natural values for current and future generations; the introduction of vehicles and animals (including horses) would inevitably involve more tracks, and thus more erosion, new and greater spread of weeds and a loss of the soul-rejuvenating qualities of the peace and solitude that comes from being quietly in 'wild' places.

"We ask the new Minister, Steve Dickson, to ensure that Queensland's National Parks are managed for their primary purpose of conservation, with recreation focused around protecting conservation values."

Further information: Wendy Tubman, Coordinator, 0415 176761