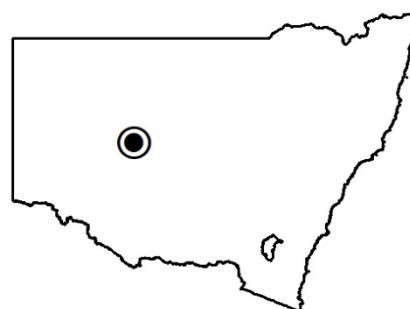




# Statement of Management Intent



## Koonaburra National Park

### 1. Introduction

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) acknowledges that Koonaburra National Park ('the park') is part of the traditional Country of the Ngiyampaa Aboriginal People. The park was established following the acquisition of Koonaburra station, a western lands lease (WLL 1788), described as Lot 4591 in Deposited Plan 767755. The purchase was funded by the NSW Environmental Trust.

This statement of management intent outlines the main values, issues and key management directions for managing Koonaburra National Park (NP). This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the park until a plan of management has been prepared. The NPWS *Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy* states that parks and reserves without a plan of management are to be managed in a manner consistent with the intent of the National Parks and Wildlife Act and other relevant legislation, existing park management policies, and other relevant manuals, procedures and guidelines.

### 2. Management principles

National parks are reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* to identify, protect and conserve areas containing outstanding or representative ecosystems, natural or cultural features or landscapes or phenomena that provide opportunities for public appreciation and inspiration and sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment. Under the Act (section 30 E), national parks are managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem function, protect geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena and maintain natural landscapes
- conserve places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value
- protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations
- promote public appreciation and understanding of the national park's natural and cultural values
- provide for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values

- provide for the sustainable use (including adaptive re-use) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to the conservation of the national park's natural and cultural values
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

### 3. Context

**Reservation details:** Koonaburra National Park was reserved on 8 December 2021.

**Size:** 45,534 hectares.

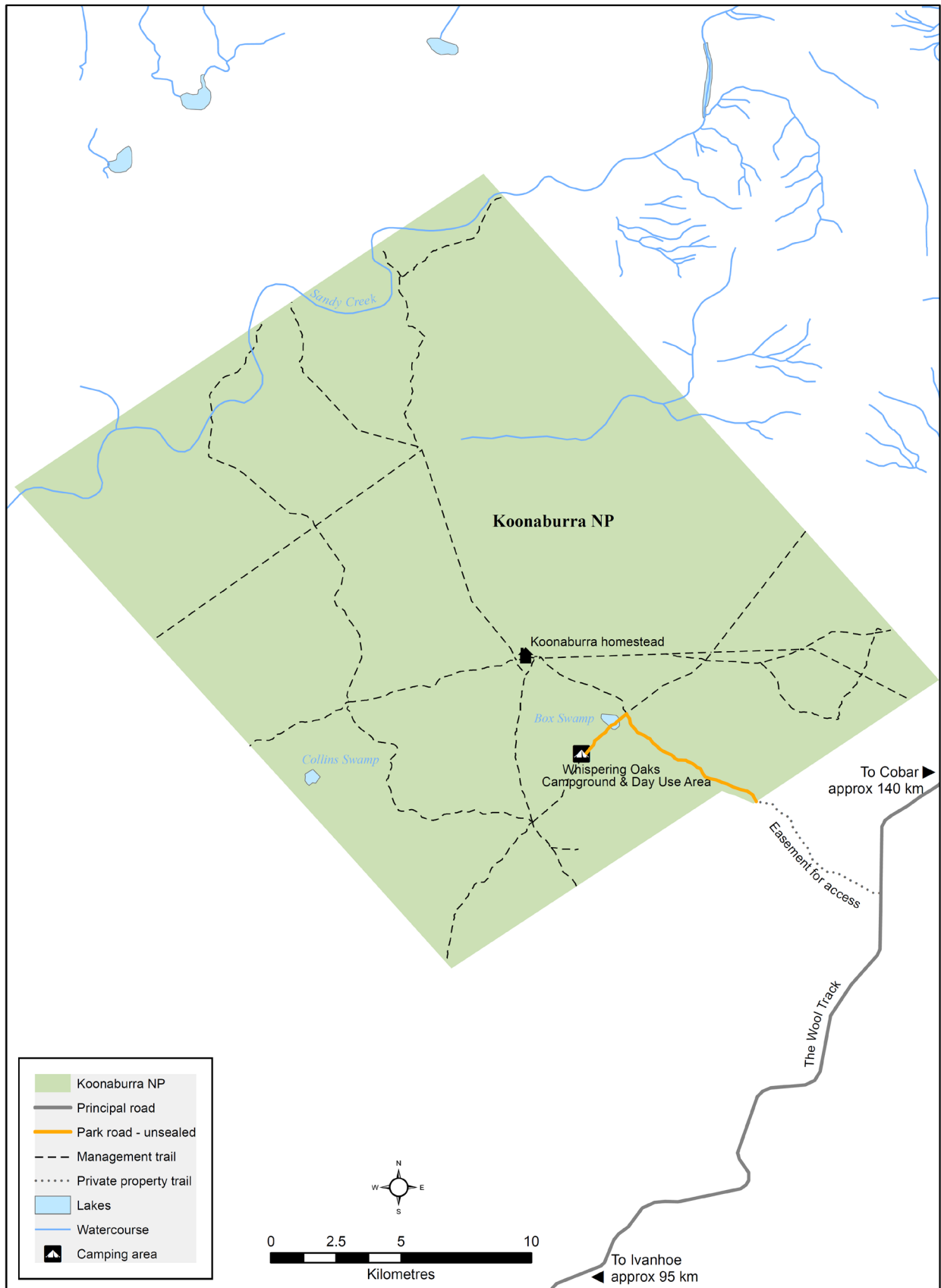
**Background:** Koonaburra National Park is located in the far west of New South Wales on the ecological boundary of the Murray Darling Depression and Cobar Peneplain bioregions. The park is located off The Wool Track (Cobar-Ivanhoe Road), approximately 95 kilometres north-east of Ivanhoe and 140 kilometres south-west of Cobar.

The park is in a remote location isolated from other parks reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The closest large parks are Paroo-Darling National Park, approximately 50 kilometres north-west of the park, and Yathong Nature Reserve, about 50 kilometres south-east of the park. Other smaller parks nearby include Paddington Nature Reserve and Kajuligah Nature Reserve.

The park is located within the administrative areas of the Wangaaypuwan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Western Local Land Services and the Cobar local government area.

### 4. Values

- Koonaburra National Park is part of a rich Aboriginal cultural landscape. The park and surrounding lands are likely to have extremely high Aboriginal heritage conservation values. Aboriginal occupation and use of what is now the park is likely to have been widespread, and a range of items of potential Aboriginal heritage value have been observed, including grinding plates, core-stones and flints, a hearth and scar trees. Further archaeological and cultural heritage surveys are likely to identify more Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, places and artefacts across the park.
- The park is located on the ecological boundary of the Murray Darling Depression and Cobar Peneplain bioregions. Approximately 90% of the park is within the Murray Darling Depression Bioregion. Both bioregions are underrepresented in the national park estate.
- The park covers an extensive area of sandplain and dunefield country, including a complex pattern of east-west dunes and drainage sinks, with millions of gilgais or water depressions, also called crab or melon holes, that provide an important source of water for animals and plants. Gilgais enabled Aboriginal people to move through areas where there was no permanent water.
- Intermittently flowing water enters the park from higher altitudes beyond the north-eastern boundary, channelling into numerous depressions across the park, including Collins Swamp, which in wet periods supports an abundance of bird life, including black swans, stilts and pelicans. In the north of the park, water makes its way across the landscape, from east to west, via Sandy Creek.



- A range of regional ecosystems (or Mitchell Landscapes as a surrogate) are present in the park, including Ivanhoe-Nangara Dunes, Ivanhoe-Nangara Sandplains, Nymagee Downs, Nangara Linear Dunes, Belarabon Range, Barnato Incised Streams, Barnato Wide Valleys, Barnato Downs and Nymagee Isolated Bedrock Hills. At the time of reservation, Barnato Incised Streams, Belarabon Range and Nymagee Isolated Bedrock Hills were not represented in other parks reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.
- The park contains a complex mosaic of vegetation communities including:
  - open woodland dominated by poplar box (*Eucalyptus populnea*)
  - riparian community along Sandy Creek and major inflows dominated by poplar box
  - open woodland dominated by white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*)
  - mallee woodland (*E. socialis*, *E. dumosa*) with spinifex and/or grassy/shrubby understory
  - Acacia shrubland (*A. melvillei* - yarran, *A. aneura* – mulga)
  - grassland
  - other dominant species included: gum coolibah (*E. intertexta*), belah (*Casuarina cristata*), warrior Bush (*Apophyllum anomalum*), western rosewood (*Alectryon oleifolius*), wilga (*Geijera parviflora*), native orange (*Capparis mitchellii*), and needlewood (*Hakea leucoptera*).
- Mallee woodland has considerable environmental value for native biodiversity given much of this community has been cleared across central and western New South Wales.
- The park protects 2 threatened ecological communities – *Acacia melvillei* shrubland in the Riverina. Murray–Darling Depression bioregions is patchily distributed across much of the south of the park. Sandhill pine woodland in the Riverina, Murray–Darling Depression and NSW South Western slopes bioregions occurs across much of the north of the park. Both are poorly reserved outside of the park. Both require targeted survey to confirm the precise areas of the park they occur in.
- The park provides potential habitat for at least 6 threatened plants and 24 threatened animals, including pink cockatoo, malleefowl, fat-tailed dunnart and kultarr. Three active mallee fowl nests are known from the park.
- Nest remnants of the greater stick-nest rat, presumed extinct in New South Wales, have been found in the park. The park may provide habitat for this species if a source population is successfully established within the feral-free predator area at Yathong Nature Reserve.
- The park includes a range of infrastructure associated with the former pastoral station, including Koonaburra homestead, which is in good condition and is likely to be of heritage value. Other buildings include a woolshed, leading hand quarters and shearers quarters. Other infrastructure associated with the former pastoral use includes shearing sheds, machinery sheds, yards, fences, water points such as bores and dams, roads and tracks, and 3 airstrips.
- The park provides opportunities for well-prepared and self-reliant visitors. Whispering Oaks campground and day use area have been developed in the park's south. A range of other visitor facilities may be provided such as walking tracks, tourist drives and bird watching facilities.

## 5. Issues

- The Ngemba, Ngiyampaa, Wangaaypuwan and Wayilwan Native Title determination application – NC2012/001 – covers the lands of the park.
- The Ngemba, Ngiyampaa, Wangaaypuwan and Wayilwan Native Title claimants and Wangaaypuwan Local Aboriginal Land Council currently represent the interests of Aboriginal people in this Country. In July 2021, naming consultation commenced, however, a resolution on a recommended name is yet to be reached. The name 'Koonaburra' has been assigned to the park as an interim measure. Once a consensus is reached on a recommended name, NPWS may seek endorsement for the new name from the Geographical Names Board and, pursuant to section 30A(2) of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, publish a notice in the NSW Government Gazette to formerly change the name of the park.
- An easement for access has been secured to ensure legal access to the park across private property from The Wool Track. The easement provides for access for NPWS staff, contractors and park visitors.
- The property is considered to be in good condition. When assessed in March 2021, it had excellent ground cover and no evidence of overgrazing. The property was lightly stocked by the previous owners in 2010 and then destocked in 2017. The former owners also undertook regular rangeland goat harvests every 2 weeks since 2017. Ongoing feral animal control, including for goats, pigs and wild dogs, will be required to maintain low levels of pest animals and to limit their impact on park values.
- Regeneration of degraded native vegetation provides an opportunity to store carbon and improve biodiversity. As part of the NSW Net Zero Plan, the *Koonaburra Human-Induced Regeneration Project*, has been registered with the Clean Energy Regulator. The project aims to encourage natural regeneration of native vegetation and sequestration of atmospheric carbon by reducing the impacts of feral animals. This project is expected to boost investment in carbon and conservation works on the park.
- Weeds are thought to be largely localised within the park. However, ongoing effort will be required to ensure the impact of weeds on park values remains low.
- There is limited information about the natural and cultural values present given the relatively recent property acquisition. Additional investigations and surveys would add to the knowledge base for the park and better assist park managers in protecting values and addressing threats to those values.
- Some of the infrastructure associated with the park's former pastoral use, including Koonaburra homestead and the woolshed, may be of historical significance.
- Since the park is relatively isolated from existing NPWS offices and depots, adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure, such as the homestead or other quarters, for staff accommodation or a local office would support a regular management presence in the park. Other outbuildings may be used to store materials, vehicles and equipment for park management. These uses will only be permitted if they are consistent with heritage assessments.
- Some of the pastoral infrastructure may be retained to provide park visitors with a visible, tangible link to the former use of the property.

- Asbestos may be present at some existing buildings or ruins sites and require ongoing monitoring or removal to manage health and safety risks. There is also a former rubbish tip that may require clean up and rehabilitation to prevent contamination of adjacent ground.

## 6. Key management directions

- Manage fire in accordance with the park fire management strategy.
- Provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to access Country, and to maintain, renew or develop cultural practices and associations.
- Provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to be involved in park management, including collecting and managing information about cultural sites and values and protecting and interpreting cultural sites.
- Support the non-commercial cultural use of wild resources by the Aboriginal community, such as collection of medicinal plants and bush tucker, subject to NPWS policies and licences as appropriate.
- Facilitate surveys, monitoring and assessment of natural and cultural values to improve knowledge and understanding of the park and better inform park management. This may include undertaking targeted activities for protecting and monitoring threatened species and communities and threatening processes such as high frequency fire and competition and habitat degradation by feral goats.
- Conduct feral animal control and weed control in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures to reduce and maintain feral animal and weed densities at a level that ensures, to the greatest extent practicable, no significant ecological impact. Work will be undertaken in cooperation with park neighbours where practicable and will complement the Western Local Land Services Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan and Western Local Land Services Strategic Weed Management Plan.
- Undertake ecological restoration and vegetation rehabilitation works as required by the Clean Energy Regulator and as part of the carbon sequestration focussed *Koonaburra Human-Induced Regeneration Project*. Replace boundary fencing as necessary to form an effective barrier to incursion by goats and pigs and undertake feral animal control within the park to reduce grazing pressure and allow for regeneration of native vegetation.
- Implement and undertake other environmental repair and threat management programs, to ensure health and safety, protect the environment or maintain existing assets (e.g., erosion control measures), as necessary and in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures.
- Provide visitor facilities to ensure safe access and sustainable visitor use and enjoyment opportunities. Facilities currently provided for visitors include a campground and picnic area. Other facilities that may be provided for visitors include walking tracks, tourist drives and bird-watching facilities.
- Close roads and trails not required for park management or public visitation. Retain existing park roads and management trails, and if required, construct new park roads and management trails consistent with the reserve fire management strategy and the Cobar Bush Fire Management Committee Fire Access and Fire Trail Plan. Maintain

roads and trails to the standards identified in those documents. Temporarily close park roads and manage trails during and after wet conditions.

- Additional park roads or management trails may only be constructed in emergencies or with the approval of the Branch Director.
- Adaptively reuse existing infrastructure for park management purposes such as staff accommodation, office space or for storage of vehicles, equipment and materials, where this is consistent with any heritage assessment.
- A new storage facility, additional water tanks and connections will be constructed at Koonaburra homestead to facilitate ongoing accommodation of NPWS staff. Additional structures may only be established if they are essential for public or staff health and safety, for controlling pollution or otherwise with the approval of the Branch Director.
- Decommission water infrastructure such as bores and dams that are not required for park management or public visitation.
- Review other existing infrastructure, such as woolsheds, yards and fencing to determine if any are required for park management or are suitable for public visitation, including interpretation.
- Decommission the former pastoral infrastructure that is not required for park management or public visitation, provided this is consistent with the conservation of its heritage value and any heritage conservation assessment. An approved conservation assessment or plan is required to, disturb, remove, destroy or otherwise interfere with heritage items. An environmental impact assessment may also be required.
- Stabilise or remove derelict structures, infrastructure and facilities (e.g., former tip site) as appropriate, and in accordance with any heritage value and, where relevant, an approved heritage conservation assessment or plan.
- Non-intrusive works may be undertaken where necessary to protect cultural heritage items from further deterioration, to ensure the safety of visitors or wildlife.
- Prepare a plan of management to set out the ongoing management objectives for the park. The plan of management is a statutory document under the National Parks and Wildlife Act which will be available for public comment. NPWS will also encourage the community to contribute to the ongoing conservation of the park by promoting and raising public awareness of its special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of this park or this statement, contact the NPWS Dubbo Office on (02) 6841 7100 or at [npws.centralwest@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:npws.centralwest@environment.nsw.gov.au)

## **More information**

[Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy](#)

[Fire Management Strategies](#)

[National Parks and Wildlife Act \(No 80\) 1974](#)

[National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 section 30E](#)

[National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 section 30A\(2\)](#)

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**Disclaimer:** This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the park prior to the development of a plan of management. Any statements made in this publication are made in good faith and do not render the Department of Planning and Environment liable for any loss or damage. Provisions in the final plan of management may vary from those identified in this document as a result of new information and community consultation. The map in this statement is intended to show the park's location and basic features only and is not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within the park.

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