

Operational policy

Visitor Management

Approval to take a live animal into a protected area

Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of Environment and Science. Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.

Purpose

Under the *Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) Regulation 2017* (PAM Regulation), written approval from the chief executive is generally required for a person to take a live animal into a protected area or keep a live animal in a protected area.

Background

Animals brought into protected areas can cause a range of impacts and issues, including:

- soil erosion and biophysical impacts due to browsing and trampling of vegetation and soils;
- spread of weed seeds by their becoming attached to the animal, or spread in manure and fodder;
- introduction of additional nutrients, disease and pathogens to water and land;
- behavioural impacts on native animals;
- predation of, or competition with, native animals;
- introduction of genetic material to native animal populations;
- adverse effects on amenity and conflicts with other park user groups;
- increased management costs to service specialised animal-based forms of recreation; and
- increased safety risks.

Written approval from the chief executive

Section 131(1) of the PAM Regulation states that a person requires the chief executive's written approval to bring a live animal into, or keep a live animal in, a protected area. However, section 131(2) specifies circumstances when such written approval is not required, which are:

- where a permit to graze, muster, or travel stock on a protected area has been issued;
- if the animal is a fish or mud crab lawfully taken in the area or adjacent area, or an invertebrate animal lawfully taken in the area or adjacent area for use as bait for fishing;
- where horse riding is permitted under a regulatory notice and the horse is brought into the park in accordance with the notice; or
- where bringing a dog into the park is permitted under a regulatory notice and the dog is brought into the park in accordance with the notice; or

- where an animal brought into, or kept in, a special wildlife reserve under the management program for the reserve.

Determination

The chief executive may also give approval to bring a live animal into a protected area, or keep a live animal in a protected area, in certain other circumstances, as set out below.

1. The chief executive may give written approval to bring a live animal into, or keep a live animal in, a national park:
 - where the animal is essential to assist a person who suffers from an illness or impairment. In such circumstances, evidence of the illness or impairment must be provided by a relevant medical practitioner (refer to *Operational Policy – Certified Support Dogs and Assistance animals in QPWS managed areas*);
 - where the Bicentennial National Trail (BNT) crosses a national park, meaning horse riders need to traverse the national park while using the BNT; and/or
 - in exceptional circumstances, such as search and rescue or police operations where the animal is needed to assist.
2. The chief executive may give written approval to bring a live animal into, or keep a live animal in, a regional park if all of the following apply:
 - the use is consistent with the management intent;
 - the animal is kept under the applicant's control at all times;
 - the impacts on the natural and cultural resources of the area are acceptable and can be adequately managed;
 - the proposed use is not likely to create an unsafe or unhealthy environment for park visitors or QPWS staff; and
 - the use is unlikely to interfere with other visitors, authorised users, or QPWS management activities.
3. The chief executive may give specific 'one-off' approvals to bring a live animal into a protected area where circumstances warrant and potential impacts are minimal. Such approval must be given specific consideration by the chief executive and may not be delegated.

Reference material

Operational policy – Domestic animals kept by staff in protected areas

Operational policy – Certified Support Dogs and Assistance animals in QPWS managed areas

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Human Rights Act 2019 compatibility

The department is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the [Human Rights Act 2019](#), the department has an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and, when making a decision, to give proper consideration to human rights. When acting or making a decision under this policy, officers must comply with that obligation (refer to [Comply with Human Rights Act](#)).

Disclaimer

While this document has been prepared with care, it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Department of Environment and Science should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

Approved by

Ben Klaassen

Signature

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Date

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