



Minister for the Environment and Tourism
Minister for Science and Innovation

Our Ref: CTS 19872/24
Your Ref:A1345156

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9 December 2024

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Parliamentary Petition No. 4090-24 concerning the commercialisation of Queensland's national parks, tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 10 September 2024 and the interim response tabled by the former Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation on 10 October 2024.

On 1 November 2024, I was appointed as the Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation. Under Standing Order 125(6)(b), I now provide this letter as the final response to the Petition.

The Government is committed to grow Queensland's protected areas, embed conservation through education and experience by enabling sustainable access to Queensland's natural wonders, and will provide all stakeholders certainty on decisions that assess environmental impacts.

Nature-based visitation and ecotourism plays a crucial role in Queensland's economy, supporting conservation, visitor attraction, creating jobs, and providing important associated health benefits. The Government is dedicated to balancing conservation with appropriate economic development, ensuring natural landscapes are preserved for future generations. Cultural tourism and First Nations tourism also flourishes when our heritage sites are protected from harm.

By merging the tourism and environment departments, this Government will enhance ecotourism management, facilitate more effective policies and approval processes, attract responsible investors and foster innovative sustainable tourism practices and outcomes.

The Government is creating a long-term vision for tourism in Queensland, delivering a new 20-year Tourism Plan in partnership with industry that will leverage current and future growth opportunities. A new Tourism Cabinet Committee will also open the untapped potential of Queensland's ecotourism sector, unlocking applications faster with a focus on progressing ecotourism projects through Ministerial support and coordination while maintaining the Government commitment to the ongoing protection of Queensland's national parks.

The Government will ensure that responsible and ecologically sustainable ecotourism within Queensland's national parks will be progressed in accordance with section 35 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and is consistent with and guided by the Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks – Implementation Framework and the Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks – Best Practice Development Guidelines.

The model also ensures that ecotourism facilities authorised under leases under the Nature Conservation Act must provide benefit back to the protected area they are operating within (through both in-kind and monetary returns); provide a bond to the State commensurate with the infrastructure provided; and any infrastructure built reverts to the State once the lease expires or should the lease be terminated. Ecotourism facilities must also meet other relevant local, State and Commonwealth development and environmental approvals.

Please be assured the Government recognises the important natural and cultural values of Queensland's national parks and will ensure the protection of these values is fundamental to the nature-based visitation and ecotourism outcomes to be achieved.

I trust this information has been of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Powell', followed by a period.

Andrew Powell MP
Minister for the Environment and Tourism
Minister for Science and Innovation