

MEDIA RELEASE - 3 June 2013

**Newman government misses the point about National Parks**

The primary reason for National Parks is nature conservation. A secondary spinoff is nature-based tourism. However the Newman government seems to think that this is the only reason for National Parks, and that Parks with low visitor numbers are not worth keeping.

In response to a recent media statement by National Parks Minister Steve Dickson, Capricorn Conservation Council coordinator, Michael McCabe said, “The measure of success of a National Park is not the number of visitors to that park.”

“National Parks exist to protect and conserve examples of *all* our natural ecosystems, which include western areas as well as the more ‘popular’ Parks nearer the coast.”

“Only 5% of Queensland is protected in National Parks and they are the *only* areas where the natural environment comes first, as opposed to the vast majority of the state which is grazed. For example, numerous scientific studies have concluded that native animals are seriously depleted on pastoral land compared with conservation land.”

“The integrity of National Parks is threatened on a number of fronts.”

“Firstly the government is already pushing to ‘open up’ National Parks to allow private tourism facilities on public land.”

“Secondly selected Parks<sup>1</sup> are to be grazed by drought affected cattle, breaking a previous promise not to graze National Parks. There is no indication of how this grazing is to be monitored and controlled.”

“Thirdly, despite the protestations of Steve Dickson, CCC has grave fears about the future of the more recently acquired Parks in the north-west. The proposed scientific review of the National Park estate is certain to be an excuse for returning these Parks to grazing.”

“We fear the Newman government is bowing to the traditional National Party view that National Parks should not exist because everywhere should be available for grazing or other exploitative uses.”

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. Mazeppa National Park – Central Queensland: <http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/mazeppa/>

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