

Operational policy

Corporate Management

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service operational policy program

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

Background

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) operational policy is made available via a range of standard documents, including operational policies, procedural guides, technical manuals, information sheets, checklists and application forms.

Policy documents are primarily used to provide information and advice to QPWS officers and the public regarding the day-to-day operations and decision making of QPWS. Using policies in this way promotes transparent, consistent and integrated decision-making and helps to ensure that legislative obligations are met.

Policy

General arrangements

Standard operational policy document types include operational policies, procedural guides, guidelines, technical manuals, information sheets, checklists and application forms. All are policy documents and all will be approved, stored, reviewed, published and reported on in the same way.

The Policy and Legislation Unit (PLU) manages the QPWS operational policy program, and is responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining the systems and standards for QPWS policy document development, approval, consultation, publication, storage and reporting;
- Training and supporting QPWS staff in the use of those systems and standards;
- Maintenance of the QPWS policy pages in RangerBase;
- Representing QPWS in departmental and inter-departmental policy development and standards negotiations;
- Producing periodic reports on the status of the policy program.

Each QPWS branch is responsible for a component of the operational policy program, including the development, review, approval, publication and record keeping of operational policy documents.

Policy matters that affect multiple areas of responsibility or do not clearly fall within the business area of any particular branch will be allocated to a responsible work area by the DDG, QPWS.

Policy needs are usually identified by the QPWS branch responsible for the area of policy or as a result of a request for assistance from other QPWS officers. From time to time, urgent policy development may be requested by the Minister, Director General, Deputy Director-General or Executive Director.

Templates

Policy documents are drafted using the appropriate standard template available on ITP Policy Register. Standard templates exist for operational policies, procedural guides, information sheets, application forms, checklists, guidelines and technical manuals. The document type used reflects the type of information being communicated and the intended audience for the information.

Consultation

The standard period for internal consulting on policy documents that are new or under review is 4 weeks. Shorter periods may be appropriate where a policy document is required urgently, is unlikely to be contentious and does not involve external stakeholders.

Consultation with government departments and other stake holders is often required to develop accurate and effective operational policy. The relevant Director is generally responsible for determining if and how external stakeholders will be consulted on an officer to officer level. Formal or public consultation requires a higher level of approval (see below).

Approval and review

All QPWS policy documents must be approved by the DDG, QPWS.

Once approved, all policy documents must be reviewed within a set timeframe and resubmitted to the DDG for approval. Currently, this is once every 5 years unless another timeframe is endorsed at the time of approval by the DDG, QPWS.

Minor amendments to policy documents may be approved by the responsible director. Minor amendments are changes to an approved policy document that do not change the meaning or content of the policy, such as updating document templates and making corrections to references and phone numbers. A minor amendment approved by a director does not affect the review timeframe.

As a general rule, the QPWS Executive Leadership Team (made up of the DDG QPWS and Executive Directors) must be briefed regarding:

- all proposals for new or substantially revised policy,
- all proposals including public consultation
- distribution of draft policies within QPWS for consultation, and
- consideration of final QPWS policies recommended for approval by the DDG, QPWS.

Document management – naming, storage, publication and record keeping

The document management system includes a combination of individual document management and thematic groupings. Thematically grouped policy documents allow for simplified, flexible and consistent document naming, storage, publication and reporting.

Thematic groups are developed by PLU in conjunction with the affected business units to reflect the business undertaken in the division. These groupings can be modified to suit operational needs.

All QPWS policy documents are public records and as such are publically available. While the intended audience and method of publication may vary, there are no internal only or secret policy documents.

All approved policy documents must be:

- published to ITP Policy Register (this is the primary publication location for all QPWS approved policy documents), the RangerBase Policy Pages, and the Departmental internet page (unless exempted);

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- stored electronically in the QPWS policy management systems in both MSWord and PDF (via Adobe Professional) by PLU;
- stored in hard copy on the internal filing system;
- recorded in the QPWS policy master list.

For further information on the naming, storage, recording or publication of approved policy documents, refer to the QPWS Policy Pages on RangerBase or email ParksPolicy@npsr.qld.gov.au for assistance.

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 National Parks, Sport and Racing should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

Approved By

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Signature

29/09/2013

Date

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