

Surveying the boundaries of Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park in remote North-Western Queensland

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Key words: Access to land; Cadastre; Land management

SUMMARY

Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park is an oasis in the outback of remote North-Western Queensland covering over 281,500 ha of land. Boodjamulla (rainbow serpent country) is the spiritual heart of the indigenous Waanyi people's land. The park features spectacular gorge country, sandstone ranges, open woodlands and spinifex communities, and World Heritage fossils. The iconic gorge fed by freshwater springs from the limestone plateau to the west and the Riversleigh World Heritage Site, one of the top fossil deposits in the world dating back 15-25 million years, are part of the National Park.

The land contained within the National Park is available State land that is claimable land under Schedule 2 of the Queensland Aboriginal Land Regulation 2011. The Queensland Government Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing, and Regional and Rural Development (the department) land tenure dealing includes Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park and the surrounding nine resources reserves, totalling over 377,500 ha of land, proposed to become either National Park (Aboriginal land) or Aboriginal Freehold under the Queensland Aboriginal Land Act 1991. This is an Act providing for the grant, and the claim and grant, of land as Aboriginal land, and for other purposes.

Ownership of the land will be transferred to the Waanyi Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (Waanyi Prescribed Body Corporate) for the Waanyi People. The Waanyi people (through a Prescribed Body Corporate) will lease the Aboriginal land, in perpetuity, to the State to manage under the Nature Conservation Act 1992, which is the first lease back arrangement that has been successfully negotiated on national park land in Queensland. The land is being delivered in three tranches. The first tranche, consisting of the gorge and the southern section of the national park was finalised on 23 June 2023. The second tranche is proposed to be finalised and the title deeds handed

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over by September 2025 and the third tranche to follow shortly afterwards.

Surveying provides accuracy and certainty of the land which is fundamental to the issue of freehold title in Queensland as well as certainty to the rights, responsibilities and restrictions associated with the land. The survey of this land and the preparation of the survey plans for the issue of freehold tenure under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 provided many challenges. The project has been a significant undertaking for the department's Surveying Services team, led from the Cairns office, over the past three years.

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