

Stock route network management strategy 2021–2025



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Background

The *Stock Route Management Act 2002* (the Act) requires a strategy to be developed and reviewed every five years to direct and coordinate the management of the stock route network. Further information on the Act is provided in Attachment 2.

The Act provides for six provisions that may be included in the strategy:

1. Recognise the network's multiple uses with the main use being for travelling stock
2. Preserve land corridor connections to ensure the integrity and viability of the network
3. Manage natural resources on the network in a sustainable way
4. Maintain and improve travelling stock facilities on the network
5. Resolve competing and conflicting interests in relation to the network's use
6. Seek community input into the management of the network.

Queensland's stock route network (the network) comprises interconnected roadways and reserves used for moving stock on foot. It covers about 72,000 km and 48 local government areas.

The network is important to the pastoral industry for moving stock on foot and grazing stock. It is valued for its areas of natural, recreational and tourism features and important cultural heritage values, including Indigenous cultural heritage. The network is also utilised by utility and transport services. For these reasons, the Queensland Government recognises the importance of retaining and having a well-managed network.

This strategy is the result of stakeholder and community feedback received from the consultation paper released in April 2019 titled '*Review of Stock Route Management Regulation 2003 and Queensland Stock Route Network Management Strategy 2014-19*' and workshops and meetings held with stakeholders.

The strategy's structure is an overarching vision statement outlining the agreed purpose for the strategy. This is followed by a few cascading steps to outline the actions required to achieve the vision. The steps consist of goal statements which outline the key focus areas; followed by objective statements which provide further detail to achieve the goal. Under each objective statement, there are several actions.

Consultation

The consultation paper *Review of Stock Route Management Regulation 2003 and Queensland Stock Route Network Management Strategy 2014-19* was released for public submissions from 8 April to 10 May 2019. Feedback from this paper informed four facilitated workshops with key stakeholders to develop this strategy.

Key stakeholders included:

- State government departments and agencies with legislation that impacts on the management of the network:
 - Department of Resources
 - Department of Transport and Main Roads
 - Department of Environment and Science
 - Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
 - Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
 - Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
- Local governments and their representative organisation the Local government Association of Queensland as on ground managers of the network.
- Industry representatives:
 - AgForce
 - Drovers
- Natural resource management groups
- Conservation organisation

Implementation

The success of this strategy will rely on state and local governments working together to implement the actions. Collaborative actions include:

- The Department of Resources (Resources) will undertake a coordination role in the first year of the strategy to assist agencies to implement the actions.
- The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) will coordinate local governments through the establishment of a Local Government Working Group (LGWG) to support implementation of the strategy.
- A Stock Route Management Working Group (SRMWG) comprised of key stakeholders will have an advisory role and support the implementation of the actions identified in the strategy (refer to action 2.3.5).

Human rights obligations, as outlined in the *Human Rights Act 2019*, will be considered and addressed during the strategy implementation.

Strategic direction

Vision

The network is managed for the responsible use for travelling stock while supporting the inherent natural and cultural values on the network.

Goals, objectives, and actions

The action plan is comprised of two tables. The first table contains actions that can be implemented within the life of this strategy and the agency whose core business aligns with the action. The second table comprises actions that are aspirational or do not align with an agency's core business that have been identified to be implemented if the opportunity arises.

Table 1 – Actions identified for consideration by agencies

Goal	Objective	Actions	Responsibility
Goal 1: There is a common understanding of the purpose, extent attributes and values of the network to enable its effective management and use	Objective 1.1:	1.1.1	Resources
	The extent and attributes of the declared stock routes are identified and mapped	1.1.2	Resources
		1.1.3	DES
		1.1.4	DAF / Resources

Goal	Objective	Actions	Responsibility
		1.1.5 Include the following statement on publicly available stock route maps: <i>Stock route means a road or route ordinarily used for travelling stock or declared under a regulation to be a stock route</i>	Resources
	Objective 1.2: A viable network is maintained with no significant loss of the existing network	1.2.1 Where resources allow, local government planning instruments (e.g., local government planning schemes) to continue to consider potential impacts on stock routes	Local governments / DSDILGP
		1.2.2 Update the policy <i>Land Dealings affecting the Stock Route Network</i> to provide guidance on issuing permits to occupy on the primary network and to enable leaseholders to understand the requirements for stock routes.	Resources
		1.2.3 Communicate guidance on how to manage thickened and high value vegetation while maintaining stock route connectivity.	Resources
Goal 2: There is accountable administration and use of the network	Objective 2.1: Roles and responsibilities are known, understood, and communicated	2.1.1 Resources will maintain its current website with information on the administration of the network	Resources
		2.1.2 Resources will provide operational advice to local governments.	Resources
		2.1.3 Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and documented to address biosecurity and animal welfare matters.	DAF
		2.1.4 Develop a Code of Conduct for users of the network	LGWG, Resources
	Objective 2.2 Resource allocation is reasonable and	2.2.1 Develop a policy to ensure resource allocation for maintenance of infrastructure to support travelling stock, aligns with stock route categories ¹ .	LGWG, Resources

Goal	Objective	Actions	Responsibility
	appropriate to maintain a viable stock route	2.2.2 Seek to maintain an appropriate level of capital works funding to maintain necessary travelling stock facilities on the network.	Resources
		2.2.3 Seek to increase the percentage of permit fees retained by local governments to 100% for the purpose of maintaining the network.	Resources
	Objective 2.3: Effective processes are used to administer and manage the stock route network	2.3.1 Develop a Local Government Stock Route Management Plan template for local governments to use to simplify and support consistent and effective management of stock routes by local governments.	LGWG, Resources
		2.3.2 Effective and transparent policies and processes are developed to provide information in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensuring stock are fit to travel prior to using the stock route and moving between adjacent local government areas b) slow travel – with an emphasis that slow travel is only appropriate for cattle that have become sick while on the network c) biosecurity risk awareness for travel permits – for both local governments and drovers d) undertaking of compliance actions regarding permit conditions and illegal use e) communicating when necessary with landholders when stock is travelling adjacent to their land. 	Relevant government department in partnership with LGWG: a) DAF b) Resources c) DAF
		2.3.3 Develop a set of decision-making guidelines for agistment and travel permits in relation to:	LGWG in partnership with relevant government department:

Goal	Objective	Actions	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) determining 'sufficient' pasture (i.e., biomass, quality of feed, maximum distances without sufficient feed) b) ability of stock to travel 10km/day e.g., cattle should be 'fit to travel' before they are given a permit c) issuing agistment permits on primary routes d) providing consistent assessment and permit decisions including during drought or other emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) DAF b) DAF c) Resources
		2.3.4 The Resources compliance plan considers unauthorised activities (e.g., grazing and fencing) occurring on the network where identified.	Resources
		2.3.5 Form a cross stakeholder Stock Route Management Working Group to provide advice on developing guidelines and policies to prevent duplication of effort and to encourage greater consistency across Local Government Area boundaries.	Resources
		2.3.6 Review the effectiveness and implementation of administration and management practices as part of the review and remaking of this strategy.	LGAQ, Resources, DAF, DTMR, DES
	Objective 2.4: Local governments are supported to administer and manage the network.	2.4.1 Develop a package of training and guidelines for rural land officers in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) pasture assessment management, fuel/fire risk evaluation b) SRMS c) interpreting stock route legislation d) preparing permit conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) DAF b) Resources c) Resources/LGAQ d) LGWG

Goal	Objective	Actions	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) stock health assessments f) managing slow moving stock g) stock circling the network h) safety to public travellers i) biosecurity and animal welfare requirements j) road signage/traffic management k) implementing the policy 'Land Dealings affecting the Stock Route Network' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) DAF f) Resources/DAF g) Resources/LGWG h) DTMR/LGAQ i) DAF j) DTMR/LGAQ k) Resources
		2.4.2 Continue to conduct regular meetings between Resources, stock route officers and local government stock route officers.	Resources/local governments
Goal 3: Facilities, infrastructure, and systems support and improve administration and use of the network within a resource constrained environment	Objective 3.1: Stock route water facilities are managed based on the category and usage of the stock route	3.1.1 Local government stock route management plans detail the management and maintenance of water infrastructure over the life of the plan with reference to action 2.2.1.	Local governments and LGWG
	Objective 3.2: Maintain an effective Stock Route Management System	3.2.1 Review SRMS with the view to identifying enhancements required to maintain its operational effectiveness	Resources
Goal 4:	Objective 4.1: Grazing activities are managed to ensure	4.1.1 A consistent, fit for purpose pasture assessment tool is identified and/or developed in collaboration with local	DAF

Goal	Objective	Actions	Responsibility
Natural resources on the network are sustainably managed	pasture for travelling stock, and to sustain long-term use of the network	governments to ensure consistent decision making and prevention of overgrazing across all local governments.	
	Objective 4.2: Environmental values are known and managed	4.2.1 Identify the environmental values impacted by grazing activities and stock movement and develop appropriate management actions for local governments to consider when developing stock route management plans and permit conditions.	DES, DAF, local governments for management actions
		4.2.2 Communicate DAF guidelines for managing pest plants and animals on stock routes to all users of the stock route network.	DAF
		4.2.3 Develop a policy or guideline to outline requirements and conditions for stock travel on routes that traverse through or adjacent to protected areas. Requirements to include consideration of greater biosecurity measures, not allowing agistment or slow travel and herd management in unfenced areas. The guideline to include contacts for further information.	DES
		4.2.4 Identify stock routes with high natural and/or cultural values that pass through or adjacent to protected areas.	DES, Resources
4.2.5 Determine appropriate widths of stock routes traversing through or adjacent to a protected area estate.	DES, Resources		
Goal 5: Safety is a key factor in the use of stock routes	Objective 5.1: Stock routes are used safely by all users, including motorists	5.1.1 Identify locations where there are safety concerns in relation to vehicle use and travelling stock based on statistics to identify high risk areas (black spots).	DTMR, local governments
		5.1.2 Develop a guideline to address stock movement and safety concerns in relation to vehicle use and travelling stock.	DTMR, LGWG

Goal	Objective	Actions	Responsibility
		5.1.3 Inform and educate the public on stock movement on roads through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> road safety/education campaign about safe use of the network (using a range of approaches) social media to inform public of stock movements i.e., 131940 traffic app. targeted campaigns at specific groups e.g., 'Grey Nomads' 	DTMR
Goal 6: Culturally appropriate management of cultural values	Objective 6.1: Identify areas containing cultural values that need to be managed.	6.1.1 Develop a clear guideline for managing cultural values on stock routes.	DSDSATSIP
		6.1.2 Educate users of stock routes of the statutory duty of care in relation to cultural heritage as established by the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> .	DSDSATSIP

¹- Category definitions are described in 'Stock route categories' located at resources.qld.gov.au

TABLE 2: Additional actions that are aspirational or do not align with an agency's core business. To be implemented if the opportunity arises.

Goal	Objective	Actions
Goal 1: There is a common understanding of the purpose, extent,	Objective 1.1: The extent, attributes and values of the declared network are identified and mapped	Examine the feasibility of providing live information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> water facility status stock route usage pasture availability.

attributes, and values of the network to enable its effective management and use.	Objective 1.2: The purpose of the network and multiple values and uses is known and communicated.	Educational and communication material is readily available to the public, landholders and users of stock routes.
Goal 2: There is accountable administration and use of the network	Objective 2.1: Roles and responsibilities are known, understood, and communicated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A generic website is developed and maintained to contain documents which are readily accessible to local governments and other stakeholders. • Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and documented for each stakeholder.
	Objective 2.2: Resource allocation is reasonable and appropriate to maintain a viable network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the feasibility of alternative arrangements for managing grazing on the stock route network. • Examine the feasibility of more flexible use of agistment permits to address drought and/or need to manage pasture.
	Objective 2.3: Effective processes are used to administer and manage the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective and transparent policies and processes are developed in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ managing exclusion fencing on stock routes to ensure fences have no impact on the network. ○ sustainably managing stock route resources to adapt to climate variability ○ other uses on the stock routes, including for recreation and tourism • Acknowledgement included in all relevant documents that other uses can occur on Queensland’s road network including their use for travelling and agisting stock.
Goal 5: Safety is a key factor in the use of stock routes	Objective 5.1: Stock routes are used safely by all users, including motorists	Investigate the feasibility of enabling drovers to manage fatigue through a rest day, subject to an appropriate fee.

Goal 6:

**Culturally appropriate
management of
cultural values**

Objective 6.1:

Identify areas containing cultural
values

Encourage local governments to consider cultural values associated with stock routes when preparing a Stock Route Management Plan and making or amending the planning scheme.

Attachment 1: List of acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DSDSATSIP	Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
DES	Department of Environment and Science
Resources	Department of Resources
DSDILGP	Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Local Planning and Planning
DTMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads
GBO	General Biosecurity Obligation
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
NLIS	National Livestock Identification System
SRMS	Stock Route Management System

Attachment 2: Relationship with the *Stock Route Management Act 2002*

The *Stock Route Management Act 2002* contains several legislative principles to provide the overriding intent of legislation and direction for the goals and outcomes of the strategy. The strategy has been developed through integrating the legislative principles, knowledge acquired from past experiences and practices, and future directions and visions for stock route management.

The legislative principles of stock route network management as prescribed by the *Stock Route Management Act 2002* are:

Public awareness - public awareness and knowledge of the network's multiple uses, environmental values and cultural values must be raised to increase the capacity and willingness of individuals to protect the network.

Commitment - effective management of the stock route network requires a long-term commitment by the community to management of the network.

Consultation and partnership - consultation and partnership arrangements between local communities, industry groups, state government agencies and local governments must be established to achieve a collaborative approach to stock route network management.

Management - the stock route network is to be managed to:

- ensure it remains available for public use
- maintain and improve the network's natural resources and travelling stock facilities for use by travelling stock and for other purposes.

Payment for use - a person who benefits from using the network must pay a reasonable amount for its use.

Planning - stock route network management must be consistent at local, regional, and state levels to ensure resources for managing the network are used to target management priorities.

Monitoring and evaluation - regular monitoring and evaluation of the network's natural resources and travelling stock facilities are necessary to improve stock route network management practices.