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A new park just for the cassowaries



For cassowaries: Ranger Doug Wilson gives Acting Climate Change and Sustainability Minister Annastacia Palaszczuk and Member for Barron River Steve Wettenhall a guided tour of the new national park yesterday. Picture: CHRIS HYDE

CAIRNS has a new national park, in a broadened effort to protect species such as the cassowary.

The State Government has created the new Macalister Range National Park, 25km northwest of Cairns, to cover more than 5000ha of crucial cassowary habitat.

The park is part of more than 7650ha of new national park areas that have been expanded across the North.

Other areas within the Far North to be expanded include:

- Girringun National Park, near Ingham (1460ha).
- Paluma Range National Park, near Ingham (361ha).

■ Japoon National Park, near Mission Beach (13ha).

■ Barron Gorge National Park, near Cairns (4ha).

■ Kuranda National Park, near Kuranda (0.5ha).

Acting Climate Change and Sustainability Minister Annastacia Palaszczuk said there were plans to establish walking trails through the new national park.

"We want to make sure tourists have a great experience when they come here," Ms Palaszczuk said.

"We want to encourage people to get out of Cairns and experience our World Heritage and our national parks."

She said the new national park and park expansions would expand the amount of protected areas for the endangered cassowary.

There have been 14 cassowary deaths in the past 12 months, mostly killed on roads in the Mission Beach area.

It is estimated there are only 1500 of the birds still remaining in the Far North.

"We need to expand their habitat, we need to raise awareness and we've already put in go-slow zones around the Mission Beach area," Ms Palaszczuk said.

A management plan for Macalister National Park has yet to be formalised.