

**Question on Notice
No. 481
Asked on Tuesday, 15 April 2008**

QUESTION:

MR HOOLIHAN asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) —

In view of damage being done by motor vehicles to Three Rivers Beach and Nine Mile Beach, would he outline the current position with the proposed Management Plan for Byfield National Park?

ANSWER:

The Byfield National Park is located 30 kilometres north of Yeppoon. It is bordered to the north and west by the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area.

The Byfield area and the adjacent Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area make this one of the largest undeveloped areas on the Queensland Coast.

The Byfield area offers a wide range of nature-based recreation opportunities in a coastal dune setting. A large part of the area is accessible only to four-wheel-drives and many people access the area for the remote experience and beach camping adventure.

With the improvement in four-wheel-drive vehicles and better access to the park from Yeppoon and Rockhampton, visitor use has increased to a level that makes management essential to preserve the special natural values. The challenge for us is to protect and manage the special values, while at the same time providing for sustainable and enjoyable visitor access.

Unfortunately, we continue to see some four-wheel-drive users acting in a completely unsafe and reckless way at Byfield. Despite publicity, ranger patrols and prominent signage, a number of irresponsible park users are causing great damage to the Byfield National Park.

I call upon people to treat the Byfield area as they would their own property – the park and State forest should be respected and not treated like a wasteland.

The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) is currently preparing a draft management plan for the Byfield area. This plan will include the national park, State forest, conservation park, the beaches adjacent to these lands and Corio Bay.

I am well aware of the considerable public interest in vehicle usage of the adjacent beaches. At this point I have not committed to any direction in relation to vehicle management on tracks and beaches in the area.

The plan is in the final stages of preparation within the EPA and I expect to receive the draft plan soon.

The release of the draft plan and invitation to comment will provide a formal opportunity for interest groups and the local community to have a say in the future management of the Byfield area.

All responses received in the public comment period will be considered in the finalisation of the management plan.