

# Queensland Trust for Nature buying and selling land to protect the environment for future generations

November 2, 2015 Vanessa De Groot The Courier-Mail

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/realestate/news/brisbane-qld/queensland-trust-for-nature-buying-and-selling-land-to-protect-the-environment-for-future-generations/news-story/3de16fc5479c2842a9a18784d17a6092?sv=429126b54dec95062505753673d0a19d>

Avoid Island is a Queensland Trust For Nature (QTFN) owned Nature Refuge offshore between Gladstone and Mackay and the third largest rookery for the southern Queensland flatback turtle population.



JUST as some foods get the Heart Foundation tick, in Queensland some properties are getting what could be considered an environmental tick.

This means they can't be developed; instead their flora, fauna and ecosystems will be protected and conserved for future generations.

It is an initiative of the Queensland Trust For Nature (QTFN), a not-for-profit organisation focused on the protection of the state's unique biodiversity, with the aim of creating Queensland's largest nature bank.



Queensland Trust for Nature Mount Samson Nature Refuge is a 211ha property adjoining D'Aguilar National Park

It does that by operating a revolving fund that is used to buy environmentally significant properties and protect them with a nature refuge covenant - by negotiating a conservation agreement with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. The

land is then resold and the proceeds reinvested in further strategic purchases.

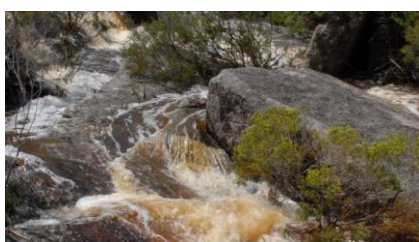
The QTFN targets private land in rural and urban fringe areas, with a high priority on linking wildlife corridors, revegetating endangered and vulnerable ecosystems and increasing buffers to National Parks.

Some of the properties it buys are Queensland's most at-risk ecosystems, many of which are too small to be considered for National Parks.

QTFN general manager Ben O'Hara said properties had to meet certain criteria.

"We have to see a risk of the ecosystem being degraded or cleared," he said.

"If it is protected through topography or current clearing laws we are less likely to buy it than those we regard as more at risk.



"We're very judicious about how we invest our funds for the environment's sake."

Queensland Trust for Nature (QTFN) Scotney Nature Refuge is more than 42ha at Ballandeen, near Stanthorpe.

Buyers purchasing properties after the Trust has put the conservation agreement in place have a normal freehold title and can do whatever they desire with the block, as long as they provide ongoing management and stewardship of the property.

“The properties are sold to anyone – Mary and Joe Punter – who want to live in a beautiful secluded environmental setting,” Mr O’Hara said.

He said the conservation agreement removes the development potential of the property, but owners can still build a house on the block and even undertake potentially profitable activities such as eco-tourism and grazing.

Whether or not the QTFN adds value to the properties it buys and covenants is debatable, according to O’Hara.

“In rural areas real estate agents believe the best block is a cleared block, but to society the value of conserving the environment could be immeasurable,” he said.

“These properties are of a high environmental value and we’d love to see them regarded as superior in that sense – it’s like a Heart Foundation tick for the environment.”

Since it was established in 2004 QTFN has acquired more than 101,900 hectares across 16 properties, providing habitats for marsupials and birds including the Lumholtz’s tree kangaroo, the bush-tailed rock-wallaby and the flatback turtle.



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