

# Speak Out Loud:

## Stories of Strength from the Southern Downs

**EPISODE:** RECREATION IN NATIONAL PARKS

**GUEST:** Jolene Nelson, Acting Senior Ranger- Visitor Management South West Region, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships, Department of Environment and Science

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### SUMMARY OF EPISODE

Jolene Nelson joins me on the podcast today. Jo is the Visitor Management Ranger for the South West Region and she chats with me about the National Parks in the area, the activities that are on offer, and she shares with us the recovery journey that she's seen following the bush fires, particularly at Girraween National Park where she's worked for over 20 years. The region has some incredible green spaces and I really hope that this episode inspires you to get out there, to get active and to connect with nature.

Listen to the podcast conversation to hear Jolene share:

- her connection to the Southern Downs and particularly Girraween National Park
- the protected areas in the region including Girraween and Sundown National Parks and Broadwater and Passchendaele State Forests in Queensland as well as Bald Rock and Boonoo Boonoo National Parks just over the border in New South Wales
- recreational opportunities including camping, walking, hiking overnight, mountain biking, bird watching, rock climbing, orienteering, paddling, swimming, 4WDing and simply enjoying nature
- the impact of weather and climate events on the National Parks including drought, wild fires and floods
- the difficulty of seeing the environment struggling with ongoing drought followed by the amazing recovery that happens in nature
- the cycles of stress and recovery that are evident in nature which bring a strong sense of hope
- National Parks Rangers have responsibility for fire management including planning and preparing fire strategies in partnership with other organisations
- seasonal tasks to prepare for fire seasons and minimise risk includes fire trail management and maintenance, updating neighbourhood contacts, prescribed burns and cultural burns
- the importance of being prepared, trained and ready to respond to wild fires
- the different activities available in Girraween and Sundown

- nature experiences including wildflowers, reptiles, possums, gliders, wombats and birds
- how spending time in nature can help you feel calmer, reset, reboot and disconnect from a busy life
- where to get more information about the National Parks in the area
- Girraween is currently undergoing a face lift with upgraded camping areas to better cater for visitors
- enjoying time in nature at National Parks is a popular way for people to cope with the pandemic

## CONTACT QUEENSLAND NATIONAL PARKS

Department of Environment and Science <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/>

## RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THE PODCAST

Girraween National Park <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/girraween>

Sundown National Park <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/sundown>

Broadwater State Forest <https://www.trailforks.com/region/broadwater-state-forest-15031/>

Passchendaele State Forest (HQ Plantations) <https://www.hqplantations.com.au/plantations>

Responsible Recreation in Plantation Forests <https://www.hqplantations.com.au/sharing-our-plantations/responsible-recreation>

Bald Rock National Park (NSW)

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/bald-rock-national-park>

Boonoo Boonoo National Park (NSW)

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/boonoo-boonoo-national-park>

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/>

Emergency Services – Fire, Ambulance, Police  
P: 000 (Triple Zero)

Queensland Rural Fire Service

<https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/about-us/frontline-services/rural-fire-service>

View the Hope + Growth 2019 Bushfire Photography Exhibition online

<https://www.srag.org.au/hope-growth>

Southern Downs Regional Council <https://www.sdrc.qld.gov.au/>



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*The information shared in the podcast and handouts is intended for general information only. To the best of our knowledge, this information was correct at the time of publishing. Please consult with your doctor or health provider for support based on your individual needs.*

*Speak Out Loud: Stories of Strength From the Southern Downs Podcast*  
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